New schemes for Agricultural Development

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Abstract

Recently, the Union Cabinet announced seven new schemes with a total outlay of nearly Rs 14,235.30 crore for the agriculture and allied sectors. The schemes are centered on advancing research and education, enhancing climate resilience, optimizing natural resource management and promoting digitization of agriculture sector with the objective of developing livestock and horticulture. The overarching objective of these initiatives is to equip farmers with the necessary capabilities for adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Key words: Digital Agriculture Mission, KVK, Agriculture education and research. Natural resource management

Introduction

The Union Cabinet on Monday announced seven new schemes with a total outlay of nearly Rs 14,000 crore for the agriculture and allied sectors. The schemes focus on research and education, climate resilience, natural resource management and digitization of Agriculture sector along with growth of livestock and horticulture. The aim of the schemes is to prepare farmers for climate-resistant agriculture. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that the programmes approved included a Rs 2,817 crore digital agriculture mission and a Rs 3,979 crore scheme for crop science. The crop science for food and nutritional security programmes has six pillars that include research and education, plant genetic resource management, genetic improvement for food and fodder crop, pulse and oil-seed crop improvement, research on insects, microbes, pollinators, and improvement of commercial crops. The Cabinet also approved an outlay of Rs 2,291 crore for strengthening agriculture education, management and social sciences. This programme will be under Indian Council of Agricultural Research. The aim is to modernize agri-research and education in line with New Education Policy 2020. The use of latest technology like Digital DPI, Al, big data, remote, etc. will be promoted and the programme includes natural farming and climate resilience. The Digital Agriculture Mission with a total investment of Rs 2,817 crore has two foundation pillars of Agri Stack and Krishi Decision Support System. The minister said a Rs 1,702 crore scheme has also been cleared for sustainable livestock health and their production. The scheme aims to increase farmers' income from livestock and dairy. Under this scheme, the focus will be on animal health management and veterinary education, dairy production and technology development, animal genetic resource management, production and improvement, and animal nutrition and small ruminant production and development. Another major scheme cleared by the Cabinet relates to sustainable development for horticulture. “With a total outlay of Rs 860 crore, the measure is aimed at increasing farmers' income from horticulture plants,” the minister said. The programme comprises tropical, sub-tropical and temperate horticulture crops; root, tuber, bulbous and arid crops; vegetable, floriculture, and mushroom crops; and plantation, spices, medicinal, and aromatic plants. The Cabinet also gave approvals to a Rs 1,202-crore scheme for Natural Resource Management. There are more than 700 KVKs across the country.

Digital Agriculture Mission

The Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM): The Digital Agriculture Mission has two foundation pillars which are Agri stack and Krishi decision support system. Agri Stack: It is a collection of technologies and digital databases that focuses on farmers and the agricultural sector. AgriStack will create a unified platform for farmers to provide them end to end services across the agriculture food value chain. Under the programme, each farmer will have a unique digital identification (farmers’ ID) that contains personal details, information about the land they farm, as well as production and financial details. Each ID will be linked to the individual's digital national identity Adhaar.

Krishi Decision Support System: It aims to integrate and store in a standardized form relevant geospatial and non-geospatial data, such as remote-sensing data, weather data, soil data, crop signature library, reservoir data, groundwater data, and data pertaining to Government schemes. Soil Profile Mapping: Under this, detailed soil profile maps on a 1:10,000 scale for approximately 142 million hectares of

agricultural land have been envisaged, with 29 million hectares of soil profile inventory already being mapped.

The Crop Science for Food and Nutritional Security programmes: These are anchored on six key pillars, advancing research and education, managing plant genetic resources, genetic enhancement of food and fodder crops, improvement of pulse and oil seed crops, research on entomology, microbiology, and pollination, as well as the advancement of commercial crop varieties. Strengthening Agricultural Education, Management and Social Sciences: It aimed at bolstering agricultural education, management, and social sciences under the aegis of the Indian council of Agricultural research.

This initiative seeks to modernize agricultural research and education in alignment with the new education policy 2020. The programme will emphasize on cutting-edge technologies such as Digital DPI, AI, big data, and remote sensing. Additionally, it will encompass components focused on natural farming and climate resilience. Sustainable livestock health and production: This scheme was dedicated to enhancing sustainable livestock health and production, with the objective of augmenting farmers' income from livestock and dairy sectors. This scheme will prioritize areas such as animal health management, veterinary education, advancements in dairy production and technology, animal genetic resource management and improvement, as well as animal nutrition and the development of small ruminants.

Sustainable development of Horticulture: The Cabinet has also approved a significant scheme focused on the sustainable development of horticulture. This initiative aims to enhance farmers' income through the cultivation of horticultural crops. The programme encompasses a wide range of crops, including tropical, subtropical, and temperate horticultural varieties; root, tuber, bulbous, and arid crops; as well as vegetables, floriculture, mushroom crops, plantation crops, spices, medicinal, and aromatic plants. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs): Krishi Vigyan Kendras aim to bolster agricultural extension services and sustainable resource management practices nationwide. KVK aims to evaluate location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises through technology assessment, refinement and demonstration. Natural Resource Management (NRM): NRM scheme was also approved by the cabinet. It is the sustainable use of natural resources to meet current needs while ensuring future generations can meet their own needs.

Conclusion

While agri-tech holds substantial promise for transforming India's agricultural landscape through enhanced productivity, efficiency, and sustainability, its successful implementation is contingent upon overcoming several critical challenges. Additionally, integrating agri-tech with traditional practices, addressing regulatory and policy gaps, and considering environmental and social impacts are essential for fostering an inclusive and sustainable agrarian transformation.

References

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