Digital Ecosystem for Agriculture

Why in news?

Government has launched an initiative called **India Digital Ecosystem for Agriculture (IDEA)** that would place the farmer in the centre of the agriculture ecosystem leveraging open digital technologies

What is the scheme about?

- The scheme aims to develop "evidence based" policy for the agriculture sector, driven by big data and analytics and powered by information technology
- It will incorporate the National Farmers Database which is being built by **Microsoft** under the aegis of Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DoAFW)
- It will include farmers' digitised land records and information from running schemes like PM Kisan, soil health cards, PM Fasal Bima Yojna, etc.
- Land records database is to be crosslinked with Aadhaar to create an unique FID or a **farmers' ID** where an user can access virtually the entire universe of a farmer's activities
- It also aims to create **Agristack** that would serve as a foundation to build innovative agri-focused solutions using emerging technologies
- The government is hoping that agristack will help eventually to achieve the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022

What are the challenges in the implementation of this scheme?

- Complicated land records
- Leaves out the tenant farmers who comprise about 12 per cent of agricultural households
- No legal recognition of land tenancy agreements in India
- Doesn't solve the problem of women farmers where substantial portion of landholdings are managed by women but land titles continue to be held by

men

- Suspicions on whether agristack is the precursor to a complete privatisation of agriculture since government has signed MOUs with Amazon, Patanjali, ESRI, StarBazaar, etc.
- Formation of ‘Agristack’ also implies commercialisation of agriculture extension activities as they will shift into a private sphere.
- Concerns over data privacy in the absence of a data protection law

Source: The Hindu Businessline, Down To Earth

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