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Rythu Bandhu Scheme

Why in news?

The total funds disbursed under Rythu Bandhu scheme is set to touch Rs 50,000 crore.

What is Rythu Bandhu scheme?

- Under Rythu Bandhu Scheme, Telangana government credits Rs. 5000 per acre through direct benefit transfer into bank accounts of land-owning farmers at the beginning of Rabi and Kharif seasons.
- As many as 66 lakh farmers (**regardless of the extent of land owned by them**) were identified as beneficiaries covering a total of 1.52 crore acres.
- A farmer who owns 2 acres would receive Rs 20,000 a year, whereas a farmer who owns 10 acres would receive Rs 1 lakh a year from the government.

What is the government's rationale behind the benefit transfer?

- Farmers can take care of their initial investment needs and do not fall into a debt trap.
- Investment enhances agriculture productivity and income to the farmers, besides breaking the vicious cycle of rural indebtedness.
- The grant also helps them cover the expenses on input requirements such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and labour.

How does it fare against the PM-KISAN scheme?

- The Telangana government claims Rythu Bandhu scheme is better than Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)
- Under PM-KISAN, a land-holding family receives an income support of 6,000 per year, **irrespective of their land holdings**.
- In effect, it only provides support to the family and not to the farm units
- However, Rythu Bandhu transfers an anticipated input expenditure **for each acre of land** and there is no restriction on the number of acres owned by a farmer.
- PM KISAN provides the support in three equal instalments.
- However, in Rythu Bandhu, farmers get the cash assistance all at once ahead of the crop season.

What is the situation in case of landless farmers?

- The Rythu Bandhu scheme comes under criticism that it ignores the plight of landless or tenant farmers.
- Farmer bodies have been demanding to extend scheme to tenant farmers as well.
- However the government has repeatedly expressed its difficulties to extend the benefit to landless farmers.
- It is difficult to bring tenant farmers under the ambit of the scheme because of the informal nature of the agreements they enter into.
- So, the tenant farmers either get the inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides from the landowner on a share-crop agreement basis or bear the expenses on their own.

Reference

1. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-rythu-bandhu-telangana-govt-dbt-scheme-farmers-7696651/>



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