



C.A Dated On 11th July 2018

General Studies-1

Zero-budget natural farming

Why in News?

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for promoting zero-budget natural in agriculture to make farming viable and sustainable.

What is it?

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a set of farming methods, and also a grassroots peasant movement, which has spread to various states in India.

It has attained wide success in southern India, especially the southern Indian state of Karnataka where it first evolved.

The movement in Karnataka state was born out of collaboration between Mr Subhash Palekar, who put together the ZBNF practices, and the state farmers association Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS), a member of La Via Campesina (LVC).

Advantages of ZBNF

The *neoliberalization* of the Indian economy led to a deep agrarian crisis that is making small scale farming an unviable vocation.

Privatized seeds, inputs, and markets are inaccessible and expensive for peasants.

Indian farmers increasingly find themselves in a vicious cycle of debt, because of the high production costs, high interest rates for credit, the volatile market prices of crops, the rising costs of fossil fuel based inputs, and private seeds.

Debt is a problem for farmers of all sizes in India.



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Under such conditions, 'zero budget' farming promises to end a reliance on loans and drastically cut production costs, ending the debt cycle for desperate farmers.

The word 'budget' refers to credit and expenses, thus the phrase 'Zero Budget' means without using any credit, and without spending any money on purchased inputs.

'Natural farming' means farming *with* Nature and *without* chemicals.

General Studies-2

National Rural Livelihoods Mission

Why in News?

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi will be holding 'Direct Samvad' with the members of Self Help Groups under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission(DAY-NRLM) and beneficiaries of DDU-GKY and RSETIs, through video conferencing.

About NRLM:

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is one of the flagship programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to alleviate rural poverty.

The centrally sponsored programme, seeks to mobilize about 9 crore households into SHGs and link them to sustainable livelihoods opportunities by building their skills and enabling them to access formal sources of finance, entitlements and services from both public and private sectors.

It is envisaged that the intensive and continuous capacity building of rural poor women will ensure their social, economic and political upliftment.

DAY-NRLM has emerged as the largest institutional platform for women's empowerment.

Achievements of Scheme:



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The Mission has now initiated implementation in 4884 blocks spread across 600 districts in 29 States and 5 Union Territories. As of May'18, more than 5 crore women have been mobilized into 45 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs).

In addition, 2.48 lakh Village Organizations and 20,000 Cluster Level Federations have also been promoted.

The Mission has created dedicated sensitive support structures in all states.

Every state now has a State Rural Livelihoods Mission manned by over 20000 professionals at various levels for providing training and capacity building and long term hand holding support to the Women's organisations.

However, the cornerstone of the Mission's implementation strategy is the community driven approach adopted under the programme.

More than 1.8 lakh community members have been trained and deployed to provide support to the community institutions in a variety of themes, such as bookkeeping, training and capacity building, financial services etc.

Finance through NRLM:

DAY - NRLM is also providing Interest Subvention to women SHGs availing Bank loans upto Rs. 3.00 lakhs.

The interest subvention scheme ensures availability of loan @ 7% per annum.

In select 250 districts an additional subvention of 3% is also allowed on timely repayment of loans reducing the effective interest rate to 4%. Since Inception, Rs. 2324 crores have been provided under the scheme.

General Studies-3

Ease of Doing Business Index

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, released the final rankings of States in Ease of Doing Business in New Delhi today.

The top rankers are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Haryana. Jharkhand and Gujarat stood fourth and fifth respectively.



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DIPP, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank conducted an annual reform exercise for all States and UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP).

The aim of this exercise is to improve delivery of various Central Government regulatory functions and services in an efficient, effective and transparent manner.

Assesment Parameters:

The current assessment under the BRAP 2017 is based on a combined score consisting of **Reform evidence score** that is based on evidences uploaded by the States and UTs and **Feedback score** that is based on the feedback garnered from the actual users of the services provided to the businesses.

It is for the first time that DIPP has introduced taking feedback to ensure that the reforms have actually reached ground level.

India climbed up 29 spots to the 100th position out of 190 surveyed countries in the World Bank's ease of doing business (EDB) index 2018.

Malaria control through use of Technology:

More than 80% of a dengue fever-spreading mosquito has been wiped out in an Australian town during a landmark trial, scientists said on Tuesday, offering hope for combating the dangerous pest globally.

Researchers from Australia's national science body CSIRO bred millions of non-biting male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in laboratory conditions at James Cook University (JCU) in a project funded by Google parent company Alphabet.

The mosquitoes were infected with the *Wolbachia* bacteria, which renders them sterile.



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How does it Work?

They were then released into the wild at trial sites around the Queensland town of Innisfail where over three months they mated with females who laid eggs that did not hatch, causing the population to plummet.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is one of the world's most dangerous pests, capable of spreading devastating diseases like dengue, Zika and chikungunya.

It is responsible for infecting millions of people around the world each year and JCU's Kyran Staunton said the successful trial was a major step forward.

The so-called sterile insect technique has been used before but the challenge in making it work for mosquitoes was being able to rear enough of them, identify males, remove biting females, and then release them in large enough numbers to suppress a population.

Debug project

Verily — a life sciences company funded by Alphabet — has developed a mosquito rearing, sex sorting and release technology as part of its global Debug project.

Western Ghats

One of the Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots and UNESCO World Heritage site, the Western Ghats has come fourth in the list of the Lonely Planet, considered a Bible by travellers worldwide.

Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), which has started blooming after 12 years in the famed hill station of Munnar has found mention in report.



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About Western Ghats:

Traversing Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, these rugged hills are UNESCO listed as one of the top spots for biodiversity in the world, protecting everything from wild elephants and tigers to the neelakurinji flower, which blooms only once every 12 years and will be painting the hills in purple livery from August to October 2018.

Western Ghats supports the life of 7,402 species of flowering plants, 1814 species of non-flowering plants, 139 mammal species, 508 bird species, 179 amphibian species, 6000 insects species and 290 freshwater fish species.