



Date - 19 March 2022

Agristack

- The government is working on creating a digital 'stack' of 'agriculture datasets', at the core of which is the creation of 'land records'.
- To be done by old and unclear land records in such 'centralized stack'; Personal and financial statements of farmers will be used without strong data protection law. And since the level of digital literacy in rural areas is quite low. Therefore, experts say that such 'Agristack' (AGRISTAC) is problematic.

Regarding Agristack:

- 'Agristack' (AGRISTACK), focusing on farmers and agriculture sector, is a collection of proposed technologies and digital databases by the Central Government.
- Kendra Government claims, that such new databases are being prepared to deal with issues such as decrease and wastage decrease in the agricultural supply chain.

Features and Importance:

- Under the Government's goal, Microsoft (Microsoft) to develop a farmer interface for 'smart and streamlined agriculture' is to provide 'essential data set' of the farmers' personal information.
- These will help in the precise targeting of digital stores subsidy, services and policies.
- Under this program, every farmer in the country will be provided an FID "Farmers' ID) related to land records for specific identification. India has 140 million functional agricultural landworks (Farm-Land Holdings).

Due to related concerns:

- This project was being implemented without 'data protection law'.
- It can prove to be a process, in which private data processing institutions can be more information about the farmer himself, about the farmers.
- Without safeguards, private entities will be able to use farmers' data as much as they want.
- This information asymmetry is skewed towards technology companies, which can lead to further exploitation of farmers, especially small and marginal farmers.

Requirement:

- At present, the majority of farmers across India are small and marginal farmers with limited access to advanced technologies or formal credit. Improving technologies and access to formal credit can help improve crop production and fetch better prices.
- Under the programme, new proposed digital agriculture technologies and services include sensors to monitor cattle, drones to analyse soil and apply pesticides, significantly improve farm yields and boost farmers' income.

Act East Policy

- Recently a webinar was organized on "Act East Policy".

About Act East Policy:

- India's 'Act East' policy i.e. 'Work East Policy' is a 'diplomatic initiative' to promote economic, strategic and cultural ties with the wider Asia-Pacific region at various levels.
- It was introduced in 1991 by the then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's 'Look East Policy' i.e. 'Look East Policy' is considered to be the modern version.
- The "Act East Policy" was launched in November 2014 at the 'East Asia Summit' held in Myanmar.
- Under the "Act East Policy", the Government of India emphasizes on the 3 C's (Culture, Connectivity, and Commerce) to develop better relations with ASEAN countries.

Major difference between "Look East Policy" and "Act East Policy":

- The “Look East Policy” focused on economic integration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the policy was limited to Southeast Asia only.
- The “Act East Policy”, on the other hand, focuses on economic integration of ASEAN countries and security cooperation with East Asian countries.

Objectives of ‘Act East Policy’:

- To promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic ties with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at regional, bilateral and multilateral levels.
- To enhance the connectivity of North-East Indian states with other neighboring countries.
- According to experts- Government of India believes in 3 C’s i.e. Culture, Connectivity and Commerce, (3 C’s – Culture, Connectivity, and Commerce) to develop better relations with ASEAN countries under “Act East Policy”.

Importance:

- Under the Act East Policy (AEP), the ‘India-Japan Strategic Partnership’ has been taken to a whole new level, underscoring the importance of Indo-Pacific cooperation.
- India believes in a free, open and inclusive ‘Indo-Pacific’ founded on a cooperative and cooperative law-based order.
- ‘ASEAN centrality’ remains an enduring contemporary feature of ‘Indo-Pacific’ at the regional level.
- India has placed the ‘Indo-Pacific’ at the center of its contacts with countries in South, Southeast and East Asia. Gradually, the ‘Act East’ policy is turning into an ‘Act Indo-Pacific’ policy.

Swadeep Kumar