GOBAR-Dhan Scheme

Why in news?

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Union government has announced GOBAR-Dhan scheme.

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What is GOBAR-Dhan scheme?

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- Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources-Dhan (GOBAR-Dhan) has been announced during budget.
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- Under this scheme Cattle dung, kitchen waste and agricultural waste can be tapped to create biogas-based energy
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- The objectives of this initiative is to make villages clean and to generate wealth and energy from cattle and other waste.
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- The Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin will pilot this initiative.
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- The GOBAR-Dhan initiative is expected to create opportunities to convert cattle dung and other organic waste to compost, biogas and even larger scale bio-CNG units.
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- This programme, expected to be launched in April, aims at the collection and aggregation of cattle dung and solid waste across clusters of villages for sale to entrepreneurs to produce organic manure, biogas/bio-CNG.
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What are the prospects of this initiative?

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- India’s cattle population is at 300 million, putting the production of dung at about 3 million tonnes per day, this will help to tap the full economic potential of such waste.
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- A major thrust is now underway to promote general cleanliness and effective solid and liquid waste management in rural India.
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- With the largest cattle population in the world, rural India has the potential to leverage huge quantities of GOBAR into wealth and energy.
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- According to a 2014 ILO study, the productive use of dung could support 1.5 million jobs nationally, there is a significant potential for farmers to generate income from the sale of cow dung.
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- The value of one kg of cow dung multiplies over 10 times, depending on whether the end product is fresh dung or as input for a one megawatt biogas plant along with compost output.
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What are few successful insights in this regard?

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- One of the challenges for operating biogas plants, and even related higher value chain operations like bio-CNG plants, is the aggregation of cattle waste and maintaining a regular supply to plant operators.
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- Much can be learned from rural communities who have aggregated cattle dung to operate biogas plants.
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- These plants which typically supply cooking gas at a cost lower than the conventional LPG gas cylinder.
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- A Cooperative Service Society in Punjab, does this by aggregating cattle dung and other organic waste to run the biogas plant and providing metered cooking gas to members.
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- Likewise, the Gram Vikas Trust started the GOBAR Bank initiative in Surat, Gujarat, where members bring fresh cow dung to the community biogas plant.
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- The dung is weighed and accounted for in their passbooks, In return they get cheap cooking gas as well as bio-slurry, the residue from the biogas plant which is used for vermicomposting and organic farming.
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- Different business models are being developed, incorporating both small and large-scale operations at all ranges of the bio-energy value chain.
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How this initiative can be enhanced?

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- Generating wealth from waste in rural areas will require the involvement of all actors and sectors, Investments from the private sector and local entrepreneurs will be needed.
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- Panchayats and village communities will have to play key roles to leverage the animal and organic waste that goes into water bodies, dumping sites and landfills.
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- Informal sanitation service providers can be integrated into the system by training and licencing them.
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- With appropriate policy interventions the sector can be scaled up into opportunities for growth, leading to increased incomes, long-term livelihoods and, of course, more Swachh villages.
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Source: Indian Express

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