Context:

Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the “Van Dhan Internship Programme” organised by TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs here today.

Objectives:

- Interns will help the tribal population in becoming self reliant and entrepreneurs.
- He said that all interns are now part of “National Building Team”.
- Emphasizing on the need of entrepreneurship.

Points to remember:

- Organised by TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- 18 interns (to be called Minister’s interns) from some of the reputed Institutes of Rural Management/ Management Institutions/ Institutes of Social Work/ Social Services of the country are participating.
- These Interns will help the tribal population in becoming self reliant and entrepreneurs.
- They will support the TRIFED activities on livelihood promotion, value addition of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFTs), marketing and credit linkages.
- They will develop tools and techniques on institutional development including mechanism for determination of a just price or producer price of Minor Forest Products.

About Van Dhan Vikas Kendras initiative:

The initiative aims to promote MFPs-centric livelihood development of tribal gatherers and artisans.

It mainstreams the tribal community by promoting primary level value addition to MFP at grassroots level.

Implementation:

Implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level.
At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to implement at grassroot level.

Locally the Kendras are proposed to be managed by a Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs in the cluster.

Composition: As per the plan, TRIFED will facilitate establishment of MFP-led multi-purpose Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, a cluster of 10 SHGs comprising of 30 tribal MFP gatherers each, in the tribal areas.

**Significance of MFP:**

- **Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood for tribals living in forest areas.** The importance of MFPs for this section of the society can be gauged from the fact that around 100 million forest dwellers depend on MFPs for food, shelter, medicines and cash income.

- **It provides them critical subsistence during the lean seasons, particularly for primitive tribal groups such as hunter gatherers, and the landless.** Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP on which they spend major portion of their time.

- **This activity has strong linkage to women’s financial empowerment as most of the MFPs are collected and used/sold by women.** MFP sector has the potential to create about 10 million workdays annually in the country.