

A Study on Development of Agri-Entrepreneurs with Special Reference to Scheme for Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers (AC and ABC) in India

D.Kamatchi*

*** Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Periyar University, Salem-11.
Email id : kamatchi.suriya@gmail.com Mob:9566683058**

Abstract

Agripreneurship plays a vital roles in growth and development of national economy through entrepreneurship development which is increases the income level and employment opportunities in rural as well as urban areas of the country. The government schemes must focus on attracting youth to the agriculture sector by transforming it into a business and offering them new avenues and opportunities to engage along the agriculture value chain. The Govt. of India has a large number of entrepreneurship development schemes for development in agricultural sector of which one is the Agri-clinics and Agribusiness Centres Scheme (AC&ABC). This is implemented by MANAGE in association of NABARD and it is an appreciable effort to take better methods of farming to farmer across the country. This programme aims is increasingly investing in the commercialization of agriculture and building the capacity of farmers to enhance their incomes by tapping the expertise available in the large pool of Agriculture Graduates. This scheme to provide expert advice and services to the farmers on various aspects and to enhance the productivity of crops and increase the income. Committed to this programme in the year 2017-18, a total of 5646 candidates were trained and 2502 agriventure were established achieving the success rate 44.31%. In this paper the research focused the special scheme of AC and ABC in India.

Keywords: Agri-entrepreneurs, Agri-Clinic, Agri-Centre's, Farming, NABARD, MANAGE

Introduction

Agriculture sector plays a predominant role in the sustainable growth and development of Indian economy. It provides for the food products and nutrition requirements to the needed people. Indian people and creates employment opportunities through forward and backward linkages to support 60% of the Indian population. While it has achieved substantial progress over

the years regarding food security, accessibility and affordability. The agriculture sector is still challenged by low productivity, low profitability, increase in input costs, and wastage of crops due to lack of storage and supply chain management etc. Agri-entrepreneurs have entrepreneurial skills, models and innovative ideas to economically solve problems in the agriculture sector and increase the profitability of the farming. It can play a significant role in solving the challenges related to information dissemination, farm management, capital availability, mechanization of farm and the agriculture supply chain.

Basic Concepts

Agri-Entrepreneur

Agri-entrepreneur defined as “Entrepreneur whose main business is agriculture or agriculture related”. In simply Agriculture + Entrepreneur = Agripreneur.

Agripreneurship defined as “generally, sustainable, community-oriented, directly – marketed a agriculture. Sustainable agriculture denotes a holistic, system oriented approach to farming that focuses on the interrelationships of social economic and environmental processes”.

Agri-Clinics

Agri-Clinics are envisaged to provide expert advice and services to farmers on various technologies including soil health, cropping practices, plant protection, crop insurance, post-harvest technology and clinical services for animals, feed and fodder management, prices of various crops in the market etc. which would enhance productivity of crops/animals and ensure increased income to farmers.

Agri-Business Centres

Agri-Business Centres are commercial units of agri-ventures established by trained agriculture professionals. Such ventures may include maintenance and custom hiring of farm areas, including post harvest management and market linkages for income generation and entrepreneurship development. equipment, sale of inputs and other services in agriculture and allied.

Need for Entrepreneurship in Agriculture

Over the last few decade, the agriculture sector position has changed dramatically due to economic liberalization, a reduced protection of agricultural markets, and a dynamic changing, more critical in the society. Agricultural firms have to adapt to the vagaries of the market, changing consumer habits, enhanced environmental regulations, new requirement for the product quality, chain management, food safety, and sustainable agriculture and so on. These changes have cleared the method for new entrants, innovation and portfolio entrepreneurship. It is recognized by the politicians, practitioners as well as scientist that farmers and growers increasingly require entrepreneurship for sound management and craftsmanship, to be sustainable in the future. Entrepreneurs have played a significant role in solving some of the pressing problems in the society by providing economical solutions, thereby converting the challenges into opportunities. Education, Media, Entertainment, Transportation, e-commerce etc. are some of the sectors which have been revolutionized by entrepreneurship. The challenges and opportunities are prevalent in the Indian agriculture landscape. The entrepreneurship can provide an innovative solution to some of the critical agricultural issues such as crop productivity, Input cost, and wastage of crops.

Steps to become an Agri-Entrepreneur

- To identify the needs of the society.
- To look out for an area that produces high yield; an area whose climate allows for the best yield for your targeted crop.
- To prepare Business Plan. A business plan gives the guidance and direction in executing the business development strategies in agriculture.
- To connect with mentors in your field and learn more about your business from experienced farmers. The experienced farmers gives solutions for all the challenges you meet in the field.
- To join the farmers' association and getting guidance and monitoring.

- To diversify the business portfolio. This diversification plan is important as the business growth, but must be properly managed to ensure that overheads accruing from the diversification exercise does not ruin the anticipated profits.

The Scheme of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers (AC and ABC)

Nowadays, the diversification and modernization of agricultural practices, there is a need to augment support and extension services for agriculture. For this purpose, the government of India setting a scheme for agriclincs and agribusiness centre's by agricultures graduates has be launched with the support of NABARD. The main aim is to tap the expertise available in the large pool of Agriculture Graduates. Irrespective of whether you are a fresh graduate, or whether you are currently employed or not, you can set up your own Agri-Clinic or Agri-Business Center and offer professional extension services to innumerable farmers. The Government of India is also providing start-up training to graduates in Agriculture, or any subject allied to agriculture activities. Those completing the training can apply for special start up loans for venture.

Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers Scheme (AC&ABC) is the flagship program of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, (MoA&FW) GoI. MANAGE has been implementing a two month free residential certificate training in Agri-entrepreneurship development for eligible agricultural graduates/diploma holders in their respective states through a network of 114 Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) across India. This programme aims is increasingly investing in the commercialization of agriculture and building the capacity of farmers to enhance their incomes by tapping the expertise available in the large pool of Agriculture Graduates. Committed to this programme in the year 2017-18, a total of 5646 candidates were trained and 2502 agriventure were established achieving the success rate 44.31%.

Features of this Scheme

Earn money and prestige by becoming a consultant to farmers

Agribusiness Centre's would provide paid services for enhancement of agriculture production and income of farmers. Centre's would need guidance to the farmers on crop selection, best farm practices, post-harvest value-added options, key agricultural information (including perhaps even Internet-based weather forecast), price trends, market news, risk mitigation and crop insurance, credit and input access, as well as critical sanitary and phyto-sanitary considerations, which the farmers have to keep in mind

Free Training to set up your Agri Clinic or Agri Business Centre

As an integral part of this nationwide initiative, specialized training will be provided to Agriculture Graduates who are interested in setting up such a centre. Being provided free of cost, the 2-month training course will be offered by select institutes across the country. Initiated by SFAC, and co-ordinated by MANAGE, the course comprises Entrepreneurship and Business Management, as well as skill improvement modules in your chosen areas of activity.

Bank loan available for Agri Clinics and Agri Business Centre's

Ceiling of project cost for subsidy has been enhanced to Rs.20 lakhs for an individual project (25 lakhs in case of extremely successful individual projects) and to Rs.100 lakhs for a group project. Depending on the type of venture you want to set up, and with a moratorium of up to 2 years, Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre Loans can be repaid within 5 to 10 years as per easy installment. The rate of interest, margin and security on loans will be decided through respective bank, as per RBI norms.

Objectives of the Scheme

- To supplement efforts of public extension by necessarily providing extension and other services to the farmers on payment basis or free of cost as per the business model of agripreneur.
- To support agricultural development

- To create gainful self-employment opportunities for unemployed agricultural graduates, agricultural diploma holders.

Eligibility Criteria for this Scheme

The scheme is eligible to following categories of candidates:

- Graduates in agriculture and allied subjects from State Agriculture Universities (SAUs)/Central Agricultural Universities/Universities recognized by ICAR/UGC. Degree in Agriculture and allied subjects offered by other agencies are also considered subject to approval of Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, GOI, on recommendation of the State Government
- Diploma (with at least 50% marks)/Post Graduate Diploma holders in Agriculture and allied subjects from State Agricultural Universities, State Agriculture and Allied Departments and State Department of Technical Education.
- Diploma in Agriculture and allied subjects offered by other agencies are also considered subject to approval of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare, GOI on recommendation of the State Government
- Biological Science Graduates with Post Graduation in Agriculture & allied subjects
- Degree courses recognized by UGC having more than 60 percent of the course content in Agriculture and allied subjects
- Diploma/Post Graduate Diploma courses with more than 60 percent of course content in Agriculture and allied subjects, after B.Sc. with Biological Sciences, from recognized colleges and universities.
- Agriculture related courses at intermediate (i.e. plus two) level, with at least 55% marks.

Conclusion

The agriculture sector has a large potential to contribute to the national income while at the same time providing direct employment and income to the numerically larger and vulnerable section of the society. Agripreneurship is not only an opportunity, it also a necessity for improving the production and profitability in agriculture sector. The National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad is implementing the Scheme of

Agri-clinics and Agri-Business centers initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The Scheme aims at supplementing existing extension network to accelerate process of technology transfer in agriculture and strengthening input supply and services. The scheme enumerates availability of better methods of farming to farmers and better opportunities for self-employment to the Agricultural Graduates.

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