



DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEME

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ABSTRACT

Agriclinics and agribusiness centre schemes is a scheme launched to bring about a revolutionary change in status of agriculture sector and persons indulged in agriculture sector. By introducing this scheme, Government of India, is trying to avail extension services to deprived persons and the sector namely agriculture sector. As we all know that, India is an agricultural economy and more than 50 percent of the population earns livelihood from agriculture sector only. Hence, to increase the income of the farmers and overall development of the economy, focus is shifted towards agriculture sector. Hence, ministry of farmer's welfare, government of India introduced Agriclinics and Agribusiness centre scheme in 2002. The, major thrust area of the scheme is 'conversion of agriculture graduates into agripreneurs. For this purpose, GOI, with the help of different agencies namely MANAGE, NABARD, BANKS, NODAL TRAINING INSTITUTES, STATE GOVERNMENT, AGRIPRENEURS, all are making this scheme practically possible. And it could be said that such schemes could definitely bring changes in the status of the farmers as well as agriculture graduates, thereby making them independent and self sufficient. This way they can also be linked with the flow of economic development of the country. And it can be said that with more and more awareness among rural sector people, regarding this scheme, this scheme could be made more and more successful.

KEYWORDS: AGRICLINICS, AGRIBUSINESS, AGRIPRENEURS

INTRODUCTION

India is an agricultural economy, because agriculture and its allied sector act as the main source of living for about 80 percent of the rural population of the country. India's GDP trend shows that, share of agriculture sector in Indian GDP is increasing slowly, as contribution percent was 17.6% (2018-2019), 18.4% (2019-2020) and 20.2% (2020-2021). Around 52 % of the population of labour is employed by agriculture sector. This was the not the scenario with respect to agriculture sector since independence. Indian agriculture sector has undergone continuous change in its structure, since Independence. Indian agriculture has shifted towards making Indian economy, a self reliant economy in food production. Green revolution played a very significant role in making India, a food sovereign country. But the economic and social status of farmers did not undergo improvement despite of the fact that Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in Indian economy.

Indian agriculture shifted from subsistence level to commercial level. And more focus was required to be given towards commercialisation of agriculture sector. Hence, with modernisation in agricultural practices, a need was felt for more customized extension services for agriculture. Government of India, in a steering committee under the chairmanship of Prof. M. S. Swaminathan, decided upon setting up of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centres. So that these centres could enhance the productivity of agriculture sector and improve the standard of living of farmers and agricultural graduates. AC&ABC schemes are government sponsored, which provide self employment opportunities to unemployed agriculture graduates, who will help poor and marginal farmers by giving expert advice and other services which could help to increase the farm productivity and income of the farmers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present section deals with literature review available concerning the study entitled, “**Descriptive study of agriclincs and agribusiness centre schemes**”.

- **Dr K M Singh (2004)** in his paper titled, “An introduction to agriclincs and Agribusiness centre programme of government of India” explained regarding the importance and given a brief introduction of Agriclinic and Agribusiness centre scheme. He explained how this had brought changes in attitude of farmers. He discussed regarding training process and the process conversion of agrigraduates into agripreneurs. He also thrown light on hand holding facility provided by training institutes. Overall he discussed each and every aspect of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre schemes.
- **Shojilal Bairwa, S Kushwaha(2014)** in their paper titled – “Present status of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre schemes in India: An Analysis” concluded that success rate was 37 percent against 30977 trained candidates. Hence they suggested some improvements in training programmes, subsidy pattern and monitoring pattern of the scheme. The study depicted that MAHARASTRA, TAMIL NADU, UTTAR PRADESH, BIHAR, emerged as leading states. And suggested that more government attention is required in north eastern states for better performance.
- **Pragnesh Kumar (2020)** in a case study – “Performance of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre scheme in India – A case of Gujrat.” Reported that, it was a very good initiative of government of India in generating employment opportunities in rural sector. And through the scheme of AC&ABC, extension facility was enhanced in rural sector. It was concluded that most successful states in terms number of

candidates trained and agriventure established was Maharastra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The study showed that dairy/poultry /piggery/ (24.73%) , Agriclincs (13.38%) were the top agriventures established in Gujrat under the scheme of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre .

- **E-Bulletin , MANAGE (2004)** , titled “Agriprenuer – A virtual experience sharing platform” discussed regarding salient achievements ,as how many Agriventures were established and agriprenuers work in covid 19 and even discussed regarding refresher training courses.

ORIGIN OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEMES

In order to strengthen the agricultural extension services to farmers and to tap the potential of unemployed agricultural graduates by transforming them in agriprenuers, the union finance minister has announced on 28 February '2002, to set up AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE (AC&ABC) SCHEME with support of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

The AC&ABC scheme was launched on 9 April '2002. The main aim of the scheme is to strengthen agricultural extension services for each and every farmer in the country. AC& ABC schemes are subsidy based credit linked scheme.

The AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEMES is the main scheme of the ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare , Government of India , implemented by the national Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad in association with NABARD.

The main purpose is to train agriculture and allied subjects graduate to start their own agriventure and & offer extension services to farmers as they are the one who could better understand the problems and hardships faced by farmers .MANAGE , Hyderabad , is the nodal agency for providing training to eligible candidates through nodal training institutes (NTIs) across the country .MANAGE with the help of its nodal training institutes motivates the candidates for setting up their own AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRES, and become an Agriprenuer.

This could result as increase in performance of an individual as an entrepreneur and can contribute towards employment generation, poverty reduction, and human resource development and can complete in national and international markets.

AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE

Agribusiness centres are commercial units of agriventures established by trained agriculture professionals, who undergone training under the nodal training institutes. Such ventures include maintenance and hiring of farm equipments, sale of inputs and other services in agriculture and allied areas. The centres are established by the agriprenuers for the improvement of agricultural output and increase in the income of the farmers. Agribusiness centres would advice farmers on the matters like – farm practices, post harvest techniques, price trends, market news, risk mitigation, crop insurance, crop selection, weather forecast, credit and input access and important agricultural information.

These centres provide opportunity to agricultural graduates to set up agribusiness centres and become Agripreneurs. Hence, these centres would result as a big support to agricultural development and growth.

AGRICLINICS

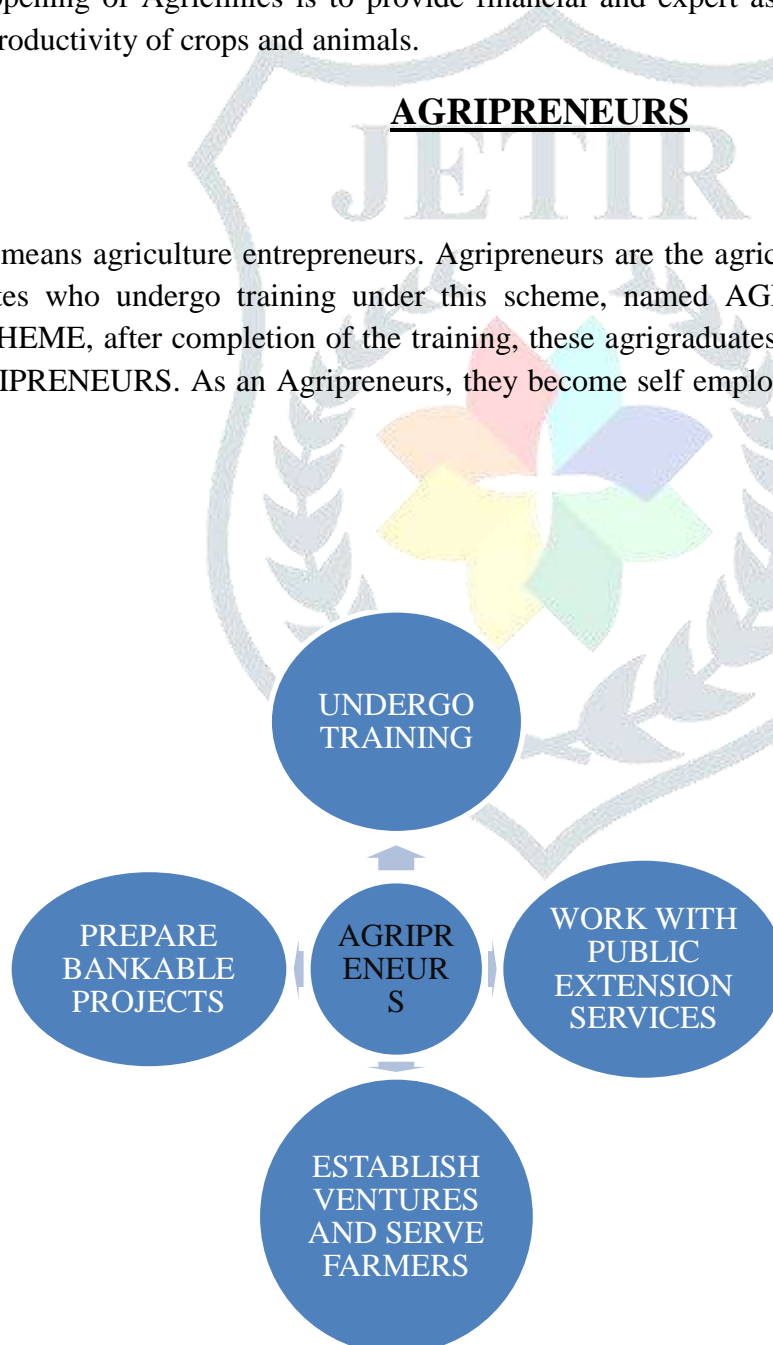
Agriclinics are used to denote clinics for agriculture sector. These are established so that farmers could get expert advice and better services and can increase their income and living. Agriclinics are specialised centres set up to solve farmers and provide them guidance on how to use better technology, how to improve soil health, cropping practices and post harvest technology. Agriclinics not only focus on agricultural produce like food grains, crops etc but also works towards the betterment and needs of clinical services for the animals.

Major support areas for Agriclinics are – soil health, cropping practices, crop insurance, post harvest technology, clinical services for animals, food and fodder management, pricing strategy of crops in the market, plant protection etc.

The idea of opening of Agriclinics is to provide financial and expert assistance to farmers, so that they can increase the productivity of crops and animals.

AGRIPRENEURS

Agripreneurs means agriculture entrepreneurs. Agripreneurs are the agricultural graduates, post graduates and even doctorates who undergo training under this scheme, named AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEME, after completion of the training, these agrigraduates set up their agribusiness centres and become AGRIPRENEURS. As an Agripreneurs, they become self employed and even provide employment to others.



Agripreneurs are the last link to transmit expert advice, consultancy services, input facility to farmers, so that agricultural sector productivity would enhance. They provide these services to farmers by charging fee for their service. Agripreneurs are the ones who make this scheme possible in real terms.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SCHEME

The major objective of the scheme is as under-

1. To support agricultural development.
2. To create gainful self employment opportunities for unemployed agricultural graduates.
3. To assist in the extension service programme of the government to make the extension services available to unprivileged farmers as per the local needs and affordability of target group of farmers.

The main objective of the scheme is to promote the establishment of agriclincs and agribusiness centre scheme (AC&ABC) scheme in the country. A plan has also been prepared by the government under the scheme to convert normal agricultural graduates in AGRIPRENEURS. Such interested candidates undergo training under the scheme of AC&ABC and get a loan of 20 lakhs, if their projects are approved under the scheme, by banks. And this way business and agriculture are linked and farmers become an entrepreneur.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CANDIDATES UNDER THE SCHEME OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE

- Graduates in agriculture and allied subjects from state Agricultural Universities, central agricultural universities /ICAR recognized, UGC recognized universities.
- Diploma (with at least 50 % marks), post graduate diploma holders in agriculture and allied subjects from state agricultural university, central agricultural university.
- Diploma in agriculture and allied subjects offered by other agencies are also considered subject to the approval from the Department of Agriculture and cooperation, Government of India.
- Biological science graduates / post graduation in agriculture and allied subjects.
- Degree courses recognized by UGC, having more than 60% of the course content in Agriculture and allied subjects.

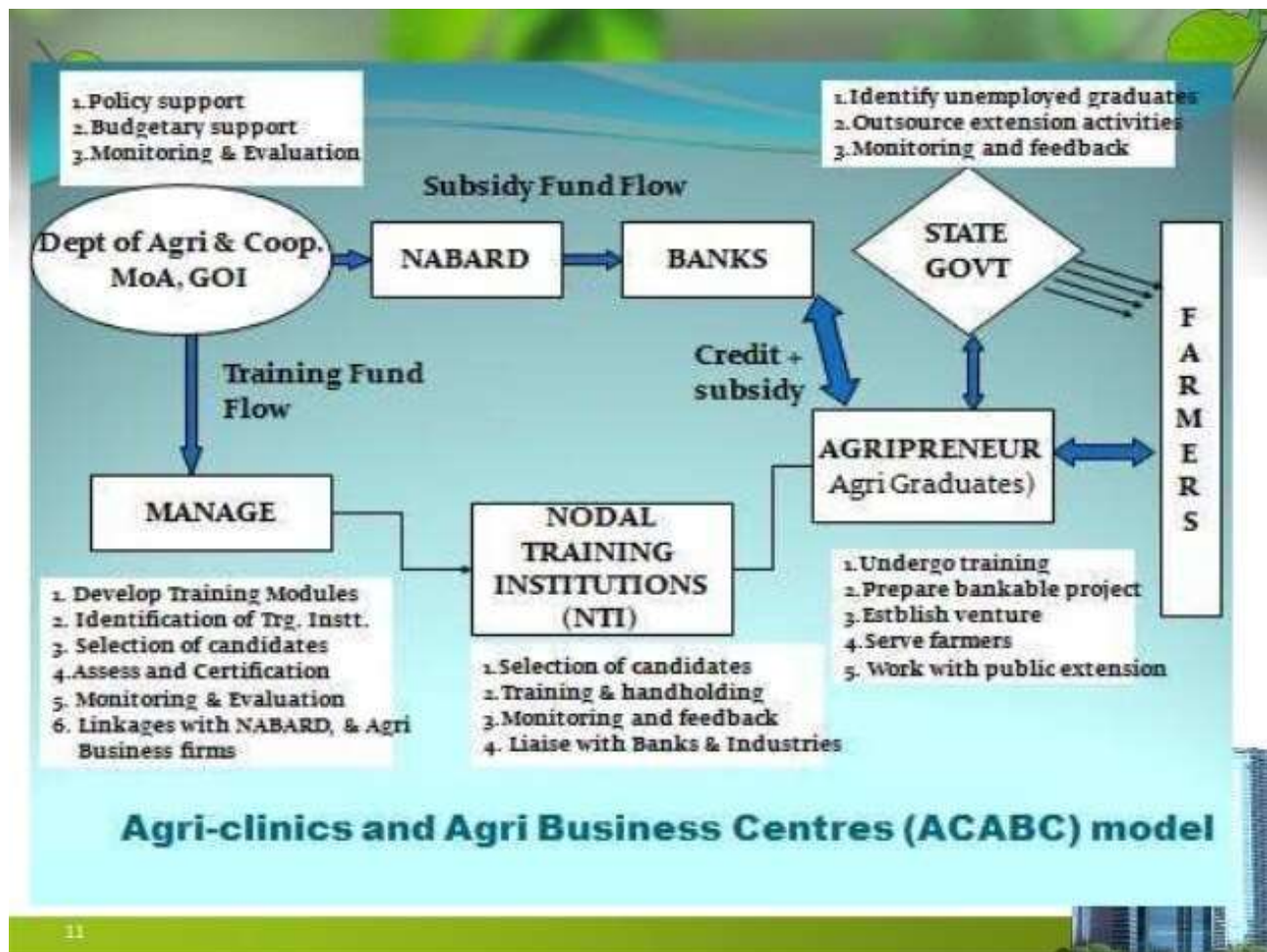
- Diploma / Post graduate diploma courses with more than 60% of the course content in Agriculture and allied subjects, after Bachelor of Science with biological sciences, from recognized colleges and universities.
- Agriculture related courses at the intermediate (i.e. plus two) level, with at least 55 percent marks.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEMES

1. This scheme is a special initiative to promote agripreneurship in Indian economy.
2. Under this scheme, training institutes have been established in almost all states.
3. The government has tied up with the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, an organisation of the ministry of Agriculture, in association with NABARD has launched this unique programme to take better methods of farming to each and every farmer across the country.
4. Under this scheme, there is a provision of 45 days residential training to eligible candidates who want to start up Agriclinc or Agribusiness centre.
5. The agricultural graduates who undergo training are imparted knowledge and skills to understand the procedures related to Agriclincs and Agribusiness.
6. Under the scheme, trainees are also sent to tour of professional institutes of entrepreneurs who made this scheme successful.

Hence, above mentioned are some of the special features of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre scheme initiated by government of India for agricultural development in the economy.

STRUCTURE OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE SCHEMES



(Source: Google from slidetodo.com)

The above flow diagram clearly explains the structural formation and how Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre schemes operate can be easily understood with the help of above diagram. The entities involved in Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre scheme are as under,

1. Department of agriculture cooperation and farmers welfare (DOA & FW)
2. National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
3. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
4. Banks includes commercial banks, regional rural banks, state cooperative banks, and such other institutes eligible from NABARD.
5. Nodal training Institutes (NTIs)
6. State Government

DOA & FW , act as the prime agency by supporting policies made by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare , government of India and acts as the financial support between Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare , Government of India (MOA &FW , GOI) and National Institute of Agriculture Extension , Management (MANAGE).

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) is the monitoring and implementing agency of this scheme. MANAGE , is the nodal agency in AC&ABC scheme. MANAGE, identifies and select training institutes on some parameters and select candidates, who will undergo training under the scheme. MANAGE also does regular assessment and certification of Nodal Training Institutes. MANAGE , acts as the link between NABARD and Agribusiness firms and offer handholding support to trained agri professional in setting up their AGRIVENTURES , , till these agrigraduates become expert in their area.

NABARD is the nodal institute for the banks which are responsible for monitoring credit support to agriclincs and agribusiness centres. NABARD also provide refinance facilities to the banks under this scheme. NABARD is responsible for financial guideline, regarding this scheme for implementation.

Banks are the major institutional credit source for making this scheme actually possible by offering loans for setting up of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centres.

Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) are the institutes selected for imparting training to selected agricultural graduates. NTIs by imparting training convert the agricultural graduates in AGRIPRENEURS. NTIs acts as a guide, trainer and mentor to the agricultural graduates.

Hence can be said that all the entities have important role for better results. This way agricultural graduates when become entrepreneurs namely AGRIPRENEURS, are the ones who actually by offering services to farmers are contributing towards agriculture sector development.

CONCLUSION

Agriclincs and Agribusiness centre scheme is the scheme introduced by Government of India in collaboration with NABARD and MANAGE, as the authorized body. NABARD has sponsored the scheme and MANAGE , is the nodal agency which selects agricultural graduates and also selection of training institutes is in their hand. MANAGE decides the syllabus regarding information and skills which is to be developed among the agriculture graduates. MANAGE, even helps the individuals in preparation of proposals by the trained candidates, so that their loans could be approved easily and they can start up their own Agribusiness centre and Agriclincs. And this way they can provide expert advice and services to the farmers on fee basis and become self employed. These agrigraduates are the main link in making the objective of this scheme practically possible. That is ,providing extension services to priority sector which is agricultural sector , and without focusing on development gaps in agriculture sector , Indian economy could not achieve its desired position in social ,economical and financial aspect .

Hence with the introduction of AC&ABC scheme, GOI has taken an excellent initiative to tap the gap of development in rural India. By going through the roles of various institutions it can be concluded that this scheme is going to bring out tremendous and very propounding changes in rural sector of the Indian economy.

Hence, in my opinion this scheme would definitely bring changes in the outlook and attitude of rural people, mainly farmers, who are the food providers of our country. And by converting normal agricultural graduate in entrepreneurs is moving our Indian economy towards more self reliant economy. Since Independence, the growth in GDP from agriculture sector is a good indicator that such initiatives are actually beneficial for Indian economy.

SUGGESTIONS

In my opinion, as these schemes are no doubt proving beneficial for agriculture sector as well as agricultural graduates or can say rural youths, by making them self employed. Hence , it can be said that the direct benefit from the scheme of AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRE is being enjoyed by the agriculture graduates, and this scheme is not providing any direct benefit to farmers at root level, as there is lack of awareness among the farmers regarding such government sponsored schemes. Hence, more and more efforts should be taken so that a day will come, where all the farmers could say- “YES! I KNOW ABOUT THIS SCHEME AND ALSO AVAILED BENEFIT FROM THIS SCHEME.”

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