

THIRD WAVE IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE: INTRODUCTION TO AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRES SCHEME

P. Chandra Shekara

The independent and happy farmer of yesterday is dependent and unhappy today. He depends on multiple players i.e. seed, fertilizer, pesticide, machinery, companies, traders, processors and government policies to increase his profit to meet the growing demands from the same piece of land. Further unfavourable natural conditions, market fluctuations, changing consumer demands and issues like WTO are making the profession of agriculture uncertain and challenging. The relationship between the farmer and the controlling forces, is undergoing considerable changes in the recent time.

While the, government is making sincere efforts to generate technologies through ICAR organizations and State Agriculture Universities and transfer the technologies through extension army, wide extension gaps still remain due to the complex agriculture scenario. Around 12,000 agriculture graduates every year pass out through 35 agriculture universities of which only about 2000 find jobs in private and public sector, leaving 10,000 jobless every year. Thus, this accumulated huge technically trained manpower is unutilized inspite of wide extension gaps. This lot is waiting for opportunities to serve the farmer and earn livelihood through that.

Against this backdrop, the centrally sponsored schemes of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres was introduced by the Government of India for the tenth five year plan period. The basic objectives of the scheme are as follows:

1. To supplement public extension efforts.
2. To provide specialized extension services and
3. To create self-employment opportunities for unemployed agriculture graduates.

*Co-ordinator, Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres Cell, MANAGE,
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 500 030.*

Under the scheme, it was proposed to provide free training to unemployed agriculture graduates for a period of two months in their respective states in Agripreneurship development. It was also proposed to establish 25,000 Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres throughout the country during the tenth five year plan. Trained graduates are eligible to take loan and establish service centres. The scheme is jointly implemented by the Government of India, SFAC, MANAGE and NABARD, in association with 58 reputed training institutes in the country.

Agriclincs provide information based advisory services to farmers on a payment basis whereas Agribusiness Centres provides input supply, farm equipment on hire and other services.

Eligibility: All graduates passing out from Agriculture Universities are eligible under the scheme. They may be from Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Dairy Technology, Horticulture, Sericulture, Forestry, Home-Science, Agriculture Engineering and Agriculture marketing etc. There is no age or sex bar. The aspirants may be fresh graduates, in service candidates or retired people, but willing to become entrepreneurs. In-group projects consisting of five members, one member could be a non-agriculture graduate.

Application Procedure : Willing graduates needs to apply to MANAGE, which is coordinating training at National Level. Applicants are invited for training on first come first serve basis in their respective states. The training is provided free of cost that includes lodging, boarding, study material and project reports.

Training Methodology: The two months training period is broadly divided into three phases.

Phase – I: Participants are exposed to all possible agriventures by considering the local conditions. An indicative list of 20 ventures is given below which is not exhaustive. Hence, there is scope to add enterprises during this phase.

Project Details:

Project01 Soil, Water Quality and Input Testing Laboratory Service Centre

- Project02 Plant Protection Service Centre (Pest Surveillance, Diagnostic and Control Services including Integrated Pest Management)
- Project03 Maintenance, Repairs & Custom Hiring of Agricultural Implements and Machinery including Micro-irrigation Systems, (sprinkler and drip)
- Project04 Agri Service Centres including at least the above three activities mentioned above (group activity)
- Project05 Seed Processing Units
- Project06 Micro-propagation through Plant Tissue Culture Labs and Hardening Units
- Project07 Setting up of Vermiculture Units, Production of bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides, bio-control agents
- Project08 Setting up of Apiaries(Bee-keeping) and Honey and Bee Products Processing Units.
- Project09 Provision of Extension Consultancy services
- Project10 Facilitation and Agency of Agricultural Insurance Service
- Project11 Hatcheries and Production of fish finger-lings for Aquaculture
- Project12 Provision of Livestock Health Cover, setting up of Veterinary Dispensaries & Services including Frozen Semen Banks and Liquid Nitrogen Supply
- Project13 Setting up of Information Technology Kiosks in rural areas for access to various agriculture related portals.
- Project14 Feed Processing and Testing Units
- Project15 Value Added Centres
- Project16 Setting up of Cool Chain from the farm level onwards(group activity)
- Project17 Post-harvest Management Centres for sorting, grading, standardization, storage and packing

Project18 Setting up of Metallic/Non-Metallic Storage Structure and Rural Godowns

Project19 Retail Marketing Outlets for Processing Agri-products

Project20 Rural Marketing Dealerships of farm Inputs and Outputs

Phase-II : Graduates can select one or a group of enterprises relevant to their area and conduct the market survey. This process facilitates a graduate to understand the problems and prospects of his business in the practical context.

Phase-III: Graduates write their own bankable projects based market survey under the guidance of experts.

Basically training aims at building the confidence needed for an entrepreneur, workout profitable projects and establish networks with business partners for sustainability.

Handholding Mechanism: Training is not end in itself. It is just a means of achieve the end. To ensure the result, hand holding support is given to trained graduates in the field through training institutes for a period of ten months. The guidelines for providing hand holding support as follows are:

1. The money shall be utilized for the purpose of providing handholding facility to the agripreneurs passing out from an institute in respective batch only.
2. The hand holding facility will be provided for at least one year during pre-establishment and post-establishment period.
3. The Nodal Officer will co-ordinate the handholding activities and he shall be responsible for the results.
4. Regular (at least monthly) contact must be maintained with agripreneurs in the field through post / phone / fax / e-mail / visit and progress will be documented and reported to MANAGE.
5. Hand holding activities also include the following areas:
 - a) Helping the agripreneurs to obtain license for input trade.
 - b) Establishing rapport between service provides i.e. agripreneurs and clients i.e. farmers / farmers organizations / co-operatives.

- c) Assisting the agripreneurs to start an enterprise with out any loan or with his / her own small initial investment.
 - d) Facilitating loan sanction from banks to the agripreneurs by establishing rapport between agripreneurs and banker / NABARD.
 - e) Helping the agripreneurs in procuring technology / software / machinery.
 - f) Liaisoning between agripreneurs and state government, central government departments to pass on the benefits of other programmes to agripreneurs.
 - g) Establishing network between agribusiness companies, NGOs and Agripreneurs for business / service support.
 - h) Motivating the agripreneurs to take up innovative projects and assisting them in implementation.
 - i) Networking technology generators, i.e. agriculture Universities / ICAR organizations with Agripreneurs.
 - j) Networking with IT companies in Agriculture field with Agripreneurs.
 - k) Promoting cyber extension.
 - l) Promoting networking among agripreneurs (organization of trained agripreneurs).
 - m) Convening agripreneurs meet to discuss progress and problems.
 - n) Organizing institute level interface between agripreneurs, bankers, agribusiness companies, NGOs, State Government departments for handholding mechanism.
 - o) Organizing similar interface meetings at state level in co-ordination with other nodal officers of the state.
 - p) Circulation of Books / CDs / Literature which leads to establishment of enterprises.
6. Handholding efficiency would be measured in terms of established enterprises from the agripreneurs.

7. Monthly progress reports and quarterly financial reports shall be sent to MANAGE.

Scheme: The scheme aims at bringing a large pool of unemployed agriculture graduates back to the villages to help farmers by providing value added extension services. The scheme also ensures the participation of all agriculture graduates irrespective of age and sex. The salient features of the scheme are.

Eligibility

- ▶ Any graduate from Agriculture University.
- ▶ A Management Graduate in Group Project.
- ▶ No Age Bar

Project Cost

- ▶ Individual project – Upto Rs.10.00 lakhs.
- ▶ Group Project (5 Members) – Upto Rs.50 Lakhs.

Margin Money : 10-15 %

Rate of Interest : 12-14 % as determined by Bank (Commercial Bank / RRB / Co-operative Bank).

Security : Hypothecation of assets, mortgage of lands or third party guarantee.

Repayment Period

- ▶ 5 – 10 years.
- ▶ First two years grace period.
- ▶ Handholding: Upto one year

Project Activities

- ▶ 20 Projects mentioned.
- ▶ Any Project which helps the farmers.

Response: The scheme received very good response from unemployed agriculture graduates. Statewise responses are as follows:

S.No.	Name of the State	Applications Received
1	Andhra Pradesh	755
2	Arunachal Pradesh	6
3	Assam	199
4	Bihar	1367
5	Chandigarh	7
6	Chattisgarh	114
7	Goa	11
8	Gujarat	702
9	Haryana	572
10	Himachal Pradesh	449
11	Jammu & Kashmir	211
12	Jharkand	374
13	Karnataka	1199
14	Kerala	225
15	Madhya Pradesh	816
16	Maharashtra	2059
17	Manipur	134
18	Meghalaya	5
19	Mizoram	2
20	Nagaland	8
21	New Delhi	316
22	Orissa	590
23	Pondicherry	9
24	Punjab	377
25	Rajasthan	1609
26	Sikkim	8
27	Tamil Nadu	611
28	Tripura	7
29	Uttar Pradesh	3687
30	Uttaranchal	315
31	West Bengal	480
Total		17226

Training Network: To carryout this massive training exercise, a large number of reputed training organisations have entered into tripartite MOUs with MANAGE and SFAC. These organisations are state agriculture universities, ICAR organisations, Agribusiness Companies, NGOs and reputed state training institutes. Statewise classification of training organisations is as follows:

S.No.	Name of the State	No. of Organisations
1	Andhra Pradesh	5
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0
3	Assam	1
4	Bihar	3
5	Chandigarh	0
6	Chattisgarh	0
7	Goa	0
8	Gujarat	4
9	Haryana	1
10	Himachal Pradesh	1
11	Jammu & Kashmir	1
12	Jharkand	2
13	Karnataka	3
14	Kerala	1
15	Madhya Pradesh	5
16	Maharashtra	4
17	Manipur	1
18	Meghalaya	0
19	Mizoram	0
20	Nagaland	0
21	New Delhi	0
22	Orissa	3
23	Pondicherry	0
24	Punjab	3
25	Rajasthan	5
26	Sikkim	0
27	Tamil Nadu	4
28	Tripura	0
29	Uttar Pradesh	8
30	Uttaranchal	1
31	West Bengal	2
Total		58

Success Stories: Within a short span of time, the scheme has started yielding results. Results are in terms of establishment of Agri-Clinics and Agribusiness Centres in various parts of the country. The results also indicates that there is a change in the attitude of unemployed agriculture graduates due to scheme. The success stories also indicate the innovations and varieties in the Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres. The details are as follows:

State wise Success Stories

S.No.	Name of the State	No. of Success Stories
1	Karnataka	81
2	Rajasthan	53
3	Maharashtra	52
4	Andhra Pradesh	50
5	Gujarat	33
6	Tamil Nadu	19
7	Orissa	15
8	Bihar	11
9	Haryana	10
10	Uttar Pradesh	9
11	Kerala	3
12	Madhya Pradesh	1
13	Pondicherry	1
Total		338

Activity wise Success Stories

S.No.	Name of the Project	Total
1	Agriclincs	4
2	Agri-Clinics and Agribusiness Centres	100
3	Agricultural Engg. Insurance	1
4	Agro-Eco Tourism	3
5	Animal Feed Unit	1
6	Aquaculture & Shrimp	1
7	Bio-fertilizer production and Marketing	11
8	Clearing and Forwarding Agency	1
9	Consultancy Service	59
10	Contract Farming	5

S.No.	Name of the Project	Total
11	Crop Insurance	1
12	Crop Protection Centre	10
13	Cultivation of Medicinal Plants	4
14	Dairy	5
15	Direct Marketing	2
16	Dry Flowers Marketing	1
17	Farm Inputs and Marketing	7
18	Farm Machinery Unit	3
19	Fisheries Development	4
20	Floriculture	7
21	Food Processing	1
22	Herbal Processing Unit	1
23	Honey Agri Business	2
24	Integrated Farming	2
25	IT Kiosk	4
26	IT and Multimedia Software Dev.	1
27	Landscaping + Nursery	4
28	Mango Orchard	1
29	Micro Irrigation Systems	1
30	Mushroom Cultivation/Marketing	6
31	Nursery	10
32	Organic Bio-Fertilizers	1
33	Organic Production/ Food Chain	5
34	Pesticides Production and Marketing	5
35	Post Harvest Management	9
36	Poultry	3
37	Prawn culture	2
38	Research and Development	2
39	Seed Processing & Agribusiness	3
40	Seed Production and Marketing	9
41	Soil Testing Laboratory	6
42	Thermo foam tray production	1
43	Tissue Culture Unit	1
44	Vegetable Production and Marketing	8
45	Vermicomposting	16
46	Veterinary Clinics	3
47	Wine Park	1
Total		338

Conclusion

The farmer, farming and agriculture scenario at the national level is changing. Public extension is shrinking and private sector is not large enough to reach the entire country, Private - Public Partnership is yet to occur. Hence, the extension gap is widening.

To bridge this gap, using a large pool of unemployed agriculture graduates, this third wave called Agripreneurship is emerging and is certain to make the impact at farmers level. To see the larger success under the scheme, policy support from central and state government, networking with agribusiness companies and NGOs, Co-operation of bankers and most importantly the confidence of agriculture graduates play a very important role. If the dream comes true, the day of ever green revolution is not too far.