

Present Status of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centers Scheme in India: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme is a subsidy based credit linked scheme for setting up agriventure by agricultural graduates launched by government of India towards strengthen technology transfer, public extension system and employment generation in rural areas. The study paper focused on the origin, objective, and progress of Agriclincs and Agribusiness centres scheme in India after completion of more than one decade time from its inception. It is an attempt to assess the performance of Agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme on the basis of states wise progress, training institutes wise progress and project wise progress. The present study is based on the secondary data collected from various journals, research articles and websites. In the analysis of data, it was found that southern states (Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) have good and encouraging progress of ACABCs scheme comparison then north eastern states which have poor performance in the establishment of agriventure and other aspects. The government need to special focus on the north eastern states of the country to meet the objectives of the agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme.

Keywords: Agriclincs, Technology Transfer, Progressive Analysis, & Employment Generation.

INTRODUCTION

- Background – Agriculture is the lifeline of Indian economy and provides the underpinning for our food, livelihood security and support for the economic growth and social transformation of the country. About 75 percent of the population is dependent directly or indirectly on agricultural and allied sector along with the contributing 13.7 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). It will continue to be central

part to all strategies of planned socio-economic development of the country. With the transformation of Indian agriculture from subsistence level to commercial level, agricultural extension system faces several challenges. The relative proportion of Agrigraduates finding employment in public sector in India is also shrinking gradually, therefore more jobs opportunities should be create in private sector (George and Bhaskaran, 2004). Government of India envisages for achieving 4% annual growth rate in agriculture and allied sector during the 11th five year plan(2007 to 2012) and strongly recommended to evolve strategies to be reoriented to meet the needs of the farmers (Shekara *et al.*, 2011).

- Origin of Agriclinic and agribusiness Centre Scheme – Government of India constituted a steering committee on agriculture and allied sectors under the chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan. The committee suggested creation of agriclinics and agribusiness centers managed by agri-graduates so as to provide consultancy services to the farming community in rural areas (Karjagi, *et al.*, 2006). In India, there is need for revitalization of extension system in the country to address these issues, providing value added extension services to the farmer through additional qualified main power and adequate infrastructure (Shekara *et al.*, 2011). Parimaladevi *et al.*, (2006) reported that trained agricultural graduates have positive and favorable attitude towards self employment and to starting of agribusiness/agriventure in rural areas. MANAGE also observed that around 15,000 agrigraduates pass out every year from agricultural universities in India and only around 2500 agrigraduates are able to find jobs in private and public sectors. Thus every year around 11500 agrigraduates are available for supporting the agriculture. The ratio of quantitatively farmer to extension worker worked out to be 1000:1. It meant for every 1000 farmers there was only 1 extension worker (Global Agrisystem, 2010). In this background, it has been decided by Government of India to launch a Scheme for establishment of Agriclinics and Agribusiness Centres (ACABCs). Subsequently, the Union Finance Minister had announced this scheme in the Budget speech on February 28, 2001 for the year 2001-02 (Karjagi *et al.*, 2006). Table 1 shows the general information about the Agriclinics and agribusiness centers (ACABC) scheme in India.

- Table1: General Information Regarding Agriclinic and Agribusiness Centres Scheme (ACABCs)

S.N.	Particulars	Remarks
1.	Recommendation of Agriclinic and agribusiness centres scheme by the committee	M.S. Swaminathan committee
2.	Date of announcement of scheme by Union Finance Minister	28 th February 2001
3.	Date of launching of the scheme	9 th April 2002
4.	Eligibility criteria	Graduate in agriculture and allied

		subjects
5.	Implementing agencies	MANAGE, NABARD, Department of Agriculture, Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) and Commercial Banks.
6.	Total numbers of NTIs in India	116
7.	Total numbers of Agrigraduate trained under the scheme	30977
8.	Total numbers of agriventure established under the scheme	11641
9.	Maximum number of agriventure established under the scheme in India	Uttar Pradesh (3097)
10.	Maximum number of agriventure established under the scheme in India	Mizoram, Sikkam, and Tripura (00)
11.	Subsidy and margin money under the scheme	Subsidy – 33% for General candidates and 44% for SC/ST/Women candidates Margin – Accordance to RBI guideline

Source: Compiled by Authors

- Objectives of Agriclinic and agribusiness Centre Scheme – Agriclinics and agribusiness centers (ACABC) provides agricultural advisory services to farmers through technically trained agricultural graduates at the village level, known as “agripreneurs. The central government provides 33 percent of the cost of project as a subsidy. The ACABC program evolved from the perceived need of farmers for locally available, reliable, effective, and knowledgeable third-party advice (Planning Commission, 2006). The objectives of the program are to supplement the public extension system, increase the availability of inputs and services for farmers, and provide employment to agriculture graduates (Global Agrisystem 2010). This service aims to fill the gap in the public-sector extension system where currently the input dealer plays a major role in providing advice to guide input use. The program is open to agricultural graduates nationwide and has been implemented since 2002 (Karjagi *et al.* 2009). The centres provide a wide range of services, depending on the interests of the graduates, and can include, but are not limited to, soil, water quality, and input testing laboratory; plant protection services; vermin composting units; horticulture; veterinary clinic; and agro service centres for farm machinery and primary processing (NABARD, 2010). These centres will provide a package of input facilities, consultancy and other services with the aim of strengthen transfer of technology and extension services and also provide self employment opportunities to technically trained persons.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The general objective of the study is to evaluate present situation and performance of Agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme in India after completion of one decade time. This study is based on the secondary data collected from various journals, research studies and websites as on June 2013. A wide Range of literature also reviews to understand various issues of Agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme. The another knowledge sources for study collected from different research articles, studies and documents to make the study more useful and relevant. The ultimate purpose of this study was to analyze the different aspects, issues and progress of the ACABCs scheme on the basis of performance of states, nodal training institutes and project.

PROGRESS OF AGRICLINICS AND AGRIBUSINESS CENTRES SCHEME

Agriclincs and agribusiness Centres scheme now become popular among Agrigraduate and served as a backbone to supplement the public extension services in agriculture. Till to date, the number of application received for two months training under agriclincs and agribusiness centers scheme (ACABC) were estimated to be 32242, while the number of trained people accounts for 30977. The number of agriventure established during this period was estimated to be 11641 depicting a success rate of almost 37%. It is interesting to mention here that there are 116 nodal training institution (NTIs) identified by MANAGE all over the country for training purpose. As per the mid-term evaluation conducted by global Agrisystem private limited in respect of agriclincs and agribusiness centers scheme (ACABC), “the programme is being successfully implemented in 31 states across the country. It has generated for 4152 established agripreneurs, in turn these employed agriculture graduates have created further 25000 jobs across segments. Thus benefiting more than one lakh farmers in more than 7000 villages across the country” (Global Agrisystem, 2010). The scheme agriclincs and agribusiness centre has been implemented in 31 states across the country and agriventures have been established in 35 categories related to agriculture and allied sectors. It was observed that various states have different success rates in implementing the scheme. States in the Northern and Southern region have very encouraging record, while states of North Eastern region have shown poor performance in terms of setting up of ventures (Global Agrisystem, 2010). Table 2 shows the summarize view of progress of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre scheme made during inception to January 2013.

Table 2: Overviews of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre scheme as on January 2013

S.N.	Name of the State	No. of application received	No. of trained graduate	No. of Agriventure established	No. of Nodal Training Institutes
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1436	1276	496	7
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	17	14	1	1

3.	Assam	433	427	150	2
4.	Bihar	2814	2749	900	6
5.	Chandigarh	2	2	1	0
6.	Chhattisgarh	387	281	128	4
7.	Delhi	12	12	2	1
8.	Goa	5	3	1	0
9.	Gujarat	1063	1037	342	6
10.	Haryana	442	424	144	2
11.	Himachal Pradesh	392	386	107	3
12.	Jammu & Kashmir	1174	1158	147	5
13.	Jharkhand	512	508	108	5
14.	Karnataka	2558	2442	982	4
15.	Kerala	181	174	34	1
16.	Madhya Pradesh	835	810	263	6
17.	Maharashtra	6470	6294	2682	14
18.	Manipur	355	354	109	1
19.	Meghalaya	9	9	3	1
20.	Mizoram	34	34	0	1
21.	Nagaland	150	147	13	1
22.	Orissa	549	507	103	6
23.	Pondicherry	86	86	48	1
24.	Punjab	398	395	134	4
25.	Rajasthan	2480	2367	829	6
26.	Sikkim	0	0	0	0
27.	Tamil Nadu	2877	2739	1214	9
28.	Tripura	3	1	0	0
29.	Uttar Pradesh	5910	5735	2584	14
30.	Uttarakhand	293	273	63	2
31.	West Bengal	365	333	53	4
	Total	32242	30977	11641	114

Source: MANAGE, 2013

- States wise Progress of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre Scheme

Agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme implementing in the 31 states of the country including union tertiary. It is observed that Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka are the leading states in overall performance of agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme. These states have maximum number of trained candidates, agriventure established, nodal training institutes and No. of training batches completed under the scheme. Maharashtra is leading state in number of candidates trained (6904) followed by Uttar Pradesh (6055), Tamil Nadu (3006), Bihar (2815), Karnataka (2587) and Rajasthan (2377). Total no. of agriventure established under ACABCs is 11641 in the country. Uttar Pradesh has highest number of agriventure established (3097) followed by Maharashtra (3034), Tamil Nadu (1592), Karnataka (1050) and Bihar (909). While, on the other hand, the seven sister states and union tertiary of the country have very poor performance of the scheme due to various region such as lack of periodical inspection of training programme, lack of loan availability and lack of positive attitudes towards agriclinics and agribusiness ventures. Table 3 shows the state wise progress of agriclinics and agribusiness Centre scheme in top ten states.

Table 3: Progress of top (10) States having under ACABCs Scheme as on June 2013

S.N.	Name of the State	No. of Candidates Trained	No. of Ventures Established	No. of Trainings Completed (batch)
1	Maharashtra	6904	3034	214
2	Uttar Pradesh	6055	3097	194
3	Tamil Nadu	3006	1592	94
4	Bihar	2815	909	85
5	Karnataka	2587	1050	81
6	Rajasthan	2377	859	77
7	Andhra Pradesh	1363	501	52
8	Jammu and Kashmir	1195	158	39
9	Gujarat	1029	363	42
10	Madhya Pradesh	891	329	26

Source: Compiled by author from database available at ACABC Cell, MANAGE

- Project wise Progress of Agriclinics and Agribusiness Centre Scheme

MANAGE identified 20 various agricultural projects for Agrigraduate as businesses opportunities under agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme. In top five projects, Agriclinics project have maximum undertaken (18561) by trained Agrigraduate as their business choice for establishment of agriventure and it followed by agriclinics and agribusiness centres (5237), Dairy/poultry/piggery unit (2095), Veterinary clinics (757), Vermicomposting and Organic manure (434) and Nursery (310). The other project under this scheme does not undertake by agrigraduates due to lack of suitable environment, Product demand, less

scope and non viable agricultural projects. Table 4 shows top ten projects on the basis of maximum undertaken by agripreneurs under scheme as on June 2013.

Table 4 – Top Ten (10) Projects under Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre Scheme as on June 2013

.No.	Project Description	No. of Ventures Established
1	Agri-Clinics	18561
2	Agri-Clinics and Agribusiness Centres	5237
3	Seed Processing and Marketing	268
4	Dairy/Poultry/Piggary/Goatary	2095
5	Vermicomposting / Organic manure	434
6	Veterinary Clinics	757
7	Farm Machinery Unit	298
8	Fisheries Development	246
9	Nursery	310
10	Direct marketing	170

Source: Compiled by author from database available at ACABC Cell, MANAGE

- Training Institute Wise Progress of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centre Scheme

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) will be responsible for providing training to eligible candidates, through Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) and motivating them for setting up of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres. MANAGE identified 116 NTIs in all over the country for the training purpose for Agrigraduate under the scheme. Uttar Pradesh has maximum no. of training institutes (14) followed by Maharashtra (12), Tamil Nadu (9), Andhra Pradesh (7) and Rajasthan (6) and seven sister states of India has minimum no. of training institutes i.e. Arunachal Pradesh (0), Sikkim (0), Tripura (0), Manipur (1), Meghalaya (1), Nagaland (1), and Mizoram (1). Similarly, union tertiary states i.e., Delhi (1), Kerala (1), Goa (0) and Chandigarh (0) also poor in nodal trainings institutes.

Shree Maa Guru Gramodhyog Sansthan , Varanasi is a leading nodal training institute among all (116) NTIs which have maximum number of trained candidates (3031), agriventure established (1873) and training batches completed (90) followed by Krishna Valley Advanced Agriculture Foundation, Mitcon Consultancy Services Ltd., Pune, M/s. Terra-Firma Bio Technologies Ltd, Bangalore and Voluntary Association for People Service, Madurai under the agriclinc and agribusiness scheme. On the other hand, the ISAP, Gujarat has minimum number of trained candidates (7) and the minimum number of agriventure established by the SRISTI foundation, Ranchi and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel University of agriculture and technology were 1 and 1 respectively. The major challenges in successful implementation of scheme are lack of agrigraduates for training under the Scheme. Table 5 shows the nodal training institute's wise progress of Agriclincs and agribusiness centre scheme.

Table 5: Top Ten (10) Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) under Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres Scheme as on June 2013

No.	Name of the Institute	No. of Candidates Trained	No of Agriventure established	No. of Trainings/batches completed
1	Shree Maa Guru Gramodhyog Sansthan , Varanasi,	3031	1873	90
2	Krishna Valley Advanced Agriculture Foundation , Sangli	1825	826	55
3	Mitcon Consultancy Services Ltd., Pune	1763	754	51
4	M/s. Terra-Firma Bio Technologies Ltd, Bangalore	1743	716	52
5	Voluntary Association for People Service, Madurai	1355	793	40
6	Jaipur School of Business & Finance Management , Jaipur	1260	508	36
7	SRISTI foundation, Patna	996	353	29
8	Jubilant Agriculture Rural development Society, Moradabad	754	381	27
9	Centre for Alternate Rural Employment, Namakkal	726	404	24
10	Participatory Rural Development Initiatives, Hyderabad	604	249	20

Source: Compiled by author from database available at www.agriclinics.net

CONCLUSION

Although, agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme now become popular among agrigraduates due to specialized training, credit facility, subsidy and handholding support for the establishment of agribusiness/agriventure, but the success rate of total agriventure establishment is low against total trained candidates in the country. The success rate is 37 percent against 30977 trained candidates including male

and female candidates (18317 male and 1187 female as on 2009). There is a need to rethinking on the whole gamut of components of scheme such as training programme, Nodal training institutes, Credit assistance, subsidy and monitoring of scheme for successful implementation of scheme efficiently. The objectives of scheme such as technology transfer, employment generation and strengthen the extension service system, has been met to some extent, yet there is a need to involve private extension staff and agribusiness experts to improve the performance of the scheme. It is observed in the present study that Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka are the leading states in overall performance of agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme. These states have maximum number of trained candidates, agriventure established, nodal training institutes and No. of training batches completed under the scheme. While, on the other hand, the seven sister states and union tertiary of the country have very poor status of performance of the scheme. The maximum number of agriventure established are 18561 under the agriclinics project categories followed by agriclinics and agribusiness centre, Dairy/poultry/piggery farm under the project wise progress of ACABCs scheme. Government should give more attention on the north eastern states, where the overall performance of agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme was reported very poor. Government should made suitable policies especially for these states for the proper implementation and improvement in the performance of ACABCs scheme, so that the objectives of scheme can be achieved effectively and efficiently. One of necessity feels after this study that agri graduates engaged in the agribusiness should received regular support and guidance from the agricultural department, Manage and NABARD for the improvement in the performance of ACABCs scheme. There is also need a state level coordination committee between MANAGE and Nodal training Institutes in order to ensure smooth implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the training programme under the agriclinics and agribusiness centres scheme in India.

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