
Training Programmes and Success of Agri Clinics and Agri Business Centres (Acabcs) In Karnataka – An Evaluation

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Abstract: Agriculture Sector is contributing 16.5% to the GDP of the country and has enclosed more than 50% workforce are still engaged in agriculture and allied activities. (Economic survey 2019-20) Though higher workforce is involved, they are not self-reliable to earn their livelihood and it is indispensable to rethink the shift of agricultural sector. In this scenario Agri entrepreneurship or farm entrepreneurship apparently benefits the small-scale farmers to be self-reliable and independent. The National Institute for Management of Agricultural Extension (MANAGE) has classified 32 activities of agribusiness all over India (as on 5th February 2021) covering horticulture, floriculture, sericulture, dairy farming, poultry, agri clinics and agribusiness centres. Agri Clinics and Agri Business Centres (ACABCS) in the post globalization era have emerged as an important commercial activity in agriculture and Agribusiness undertakings formed by trained agriculturists. Such business may include sale of inputs, maintenance and custom hiring of farm equipment with other facilities in agriculture and allied areas as well as market linkages for revenue generation, post-harvest administration and entrepreneurial progress. Nodal Training institutes are contributing significantly for the development and growth of ACABCS. With this background, the study is undertaken at with an objective of examining the relationship of training programmes and the success of ACABCS in Karnataka. Sixty (29 Trained and 31 untrained) sample Agripreneurs drawn from Bengaluru urban and rural districts were contacted with a structured questionnaire to understand their business growth and success level with the help of various parameters. Hypothesis testing was done with the help of Chi square test. For analysis simple percentage technique was applied. It has also come out with few findings and suggestions.

Keywords: Agripreneurs, Commercial banks, Finance, Economy, SBE

INTRODUCTION

India positions second in worldwide farm produces and in India most of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. But, the contribution from the sector to gross domestic product is not up to the mark and is negligible when compared to the workforce it has involved. According to Economic survey 2019-20 Agriculture Sector is contributing 16.5% to the GDP of the country and has enclosed more than 50% of workforce involved in agriculture and its associated activities. If technology and strategy interventions are not blended with agriculture, the productivity would continue to remain and burden on agriculture continue with huge number of disguised unemployment. With this context bringing the structural changes in Indian agriculture through innovative agricultural entrepreneurship is most essential. Entrepreneurship is the process of inculcating the essential entrepreneurial skills to a common man by providing the desirable knowledge and getting technical, finance and managerial expertise. Since the dawn of entrepreneurship it has been confined only to the industries and business undertakings but now bringing the entrepreneurship to the agriculture sector could help the country to be sustainable in agriculture.

In the past, agriculture is seen as life leading activity with huge number of disguised unemployment in rural households, consequently the contribution from agriculture sector has also been neglected and it was considered as a low-tech industry which has no potentiality to gear more contribution to the economy and development. Since most agriculturists are forced to drift to the neighbouring towns and cities particularly in the unorganized and untrained sector in search of work highlighting the essential for developing more advanced mechanism in rural economy thereby increasing employment opportunities in the Agri sector, which can be termed as Entrepreneurship in Agriculture. It not only develops another source of employment but also helps in changing farming approaches and brings modernization to process.

The National Institute for Management of Agricultural Extension (MANAGE) has classified 32 activities of agribusiness all over India (as on 5th February 2021) and horticulture, floriculture, sericulture, dairy farming, poultry, agri-clinics and agri-business centres are a few among them.

Agribusiness

Agribusiness is the business segment encircling farming and farming-related profitable activities. The occupation involves the entire steps essential to send an agricultural products to market: processing and distribution, manufacture and a vital component of the economy in nations with arable land, since agricultural goods can be exported.

Agri-Business Centres

Agri-Business Centres are profitable units of Agri-ventures recognized by skilled farming specialists and may include preservation and sale of inputs, custom hiring of farm equipment and other services in farming and allied areas, including market linkages for income generation, post-harvest administration and entrepreneurship growth.

Agri-Clinics

Agri-Clinics are formed to provide professional guidance and services to farmers on various aspects to enhance productivity of crops/animals thereby upsurge the income of farmers and providing support in the areas of post-harvest expertise, plant protection, crop insurance, soil health, feed and fodder administration, harvesting practices, clinical services for animals, prices of numerous crops in the market.

Agri Clinic and Agri Business Centres Scheme (ACABCS)

The ACABC scheme is being executed by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India, with NABARD acting as grant channelizing agency with the following purposes

- To enhance the efforts of public extension by essentially providing extension and other amenities to the farmers on payment basis or free of cost as per commercial model of agripreneurs and also the local needs and affordability of target cluster of farmers;
- To sustainance the agricultural progress and
- To generate profitable self-employment chances to unemployed agricultural graduates, agricultural diploma holders, intermediate in agriculture and biological science graduates with PG in Agri-related courses.

Following table presents the list of nodal training institutes for ACABCS in Karnataka

Table 1: Nodal Training Institutes for ACABCS in Karnataka as on 15.01.2021

Sl.No.	Nodal Training Institute
01	University of Horticultural Sciences (UHS), Bagalkot
02	University of Agricultural Science (UAS)
03	University of Agricultural & Horticultural Sciences, Karnataka
04	Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Sciences & Technology Trust
05	Shriram Gramin Sanshodhan Va Vikas Pratishthan, Belgaum Sub Centre
06	Institute for Studies on agriculture and Rural Development (ISARD), Dharwad
07	Indian Institute of Plantation Management, Bengaluru

Source: www.agriclinics.net

The above nodal training institutes are instrumental in providing the necessary training to ACABCS in Karnataka.

Table 2: Training Curriculum under ACABC Scheme

Sl No.	Curriculum
1	Self Transformation Skills
	Registration, induction, orientation on ACABC scheme, interpersonal relationship, leadership, communication stress management, group management, conflict management, time management, small enterprises management, interaction with agripreneurs etc.
2	Specific domain skills/ Technical skills
	Introduction to agro ecological zone of India, zone wise group discussion on major crops practices, value addition, pest management, disease management, weeds management, agri marketing etc.
3	Entrepreneurial and Management skills
	Project identification, tools and techniques, market survey, preparation of business plan, cost

	estimation, account and finance, digital marketing, product development etc
4	Extension strategies for Agri entrepreneurship
	Preparation and operation of strategic research extension plan (SREP), extension planning, writing skills in success stories, introduction to Govt schemes etc

Source: www.agriclinics.net

It can be observed that Training Curriculum under ACABC Scheme covers to enhance different skills necessary for the successful operation of the agri-venture units.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chaitra et.al (2020) pointed out that Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres scheme is an effective scheme of occupational opportunities to agricultural students and also help in refining the Indian rural economy recommended that agricultural universities as well as research institutions and various auxiliary organizations should provide regular support and direction to the agriculture graduates engaged in agri-business activities also highlighting the necessity of connecting the financial organizations with training establishments to boost the growth of Agripreneurship.

Taufiq Ahmad et.al (2019) described that agricultural graduates involved in the agribusiness would receive consistent support and guidance from the MANAGE and NABARD for the development in the performance of Agriclincs and Agri-business center scheme. And felt that it is much needed to setup a state level co-ordination committee between MANAGE and Nodal training Institutes in order to ensure smooth implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the training programmes.

Parihar et.al (2019) analysed that agri-clinics and agri-business centres scheme became popular and necessary for agri graduates due to focused training, credit facility, grant and handholding sustenance for the institution of agri-business/agri-venture. And it was suggested that there should be lots of scope to cover more farmers and provide them useful agri extension services through this scheme and by providing quality training helping them to found their agri venture successful.

Kumari et.al (2016) noted that Agriclincs and Agribusiness centers deliver a major opportunity to make profitable self-employment chances to unemployed agricultural students to backing agricultural growth. It also identified that major agripreneurs are facing the opposition from the dealers who are already established in the market, availing of bank loans, high rate of bank interest, non-availability of trained labour, non-co-operation of farmers, illiteracy and lack of knowledge of marketing and infrastructure are the major problems faced by agripreneurs.

Venkatta Kumar et.al (2016) pointed out that Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres Arrangement is the new scheme executed in India with its efforts to convert unemployed agricultural graduates as Agripreneurs through entrepreneurship extension training and suitable monetary funding to extend broad-based extension to the farming community.

Shoji lalbairwa et.al (2014) stressed that Agri-clinics and agri-business centres plan has become extensive and is essential for agri-graduates due to devoted training, credit support, funding and handholding support for the creation of agri-business/agri-ventures so that trained entrepreneurs can establish their Agri venture with confidence and get success.

Chandrashekar et.al (2012) feel that an individual while shifting profession, or anticipates to take-up new business may need training in a definite area and Agri-Clinic and Agri-Business Centers provide satisfactory training to the agricultural graduates. And the quality of such training programs reflects the quality of extension services provided by them to farmers and also the number of ventures established after successful training programmes.

Shah et.al (2012) analysed the positive impact of ACABC scheme where beneficiaries of scheme generated substantial profits from the crop enterprise and livestock-rearing vis-à-vis non-beneficiaries. The key reasons that led receivers to derive significantly advanced income were higher area distribution under high-value perennial crops, improved administration of cultivation practices, higher yield of crops, better quality, higher amounts for output, scientific approaches of rearing animals, higher yield, better prices, and consequently, higher value of productivity from animals.

Significance of the Study

The Agri clinics and Agri business centres are the major Agripreneurial activities in Karnataka established in both rural and urban areas with enormous scope. But, absence of subsidy component, high rate of interest and inadequate hand holding support from the training institutes are the key problems faced by the agripreneurs in establishing their business. On the other hand, non-co-operation of farmers in repayment of credit, high competition from the well-established dealers and deficient cash on hand while commencing the business are the main problems in running the start-up ventures. Credit assistance, Nodal training institutes, subsidy and monitoring of scheme are not accessible to all potential aspirants to take up the ventures. With this background,

present study is intended to analyse how the training programmes can help in the development of Agripreneurs and their units through timely assistance and action plans.

Objective of the Study

The study is carried out with an objective of examining the relationship of training programmes and the success of ACABCs in Karnataka.

Hypothesis of the Study

H0: There exists a positive association between training programmes and the success of ACABCs in Karnataka.

H1: There exists no positive association between training programmes and the success of ACABCs in Karnataka.

METHODOLOGY

The study is explanatory in nature

Scope of the Study

The present study covers sixty ACABCs situated in the districts of Bengaluru rural and urban, covering Devanahalli, Nelamangala, Bengaluru South and Anekal taluks.

Sources of data

Primary data have been collected through a structured questionnaire from owners of ACABCs in Bengaluru. Secondary data have been collected from published sources of books, journals, newspapers and online sources.

Sample Design

The present study has considered Convenience Sampling method with the sample size of 60 covering 29 trained and 31 untrained respondents (Agri clinics and Agri business centres owned and managed by single owners) of Bengaluru urban and rural districts

Survey Period

The field survey has been carried out for a period of three weeks during December 2020

Research Instrument

In order to collect the data, well structured questionnaire was administered to sample Agripreneurs.

Tools for analysis

Simple Percentage analysis is used for the purpose of analyzing the collected data

Hypothesis testing

For testing the hypothesis, Pearson chi square test is employed

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 3: Socio- Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Marital Status	No of Respondents	Income PA	No of Respondents
Male	48	Married	45	Less than 100,000	18
Female	12	Unmarried	15	100,000 - 300,000	30
Total	60	Total	60	300,000 - 500,000	12
				Above 500,000	00
Age	No of Respondents	Education	No of Respondents	Total	60
Below 25	06	No Formal Schooling	16	Location	No of Respondents
25-35	22	SSLC	24	Urban	28
35-45	25	PUC	05		
Above 45	07	Graduation	12	Semi urban	12

TOTAL	60	Diploma/ITI	00	Rural	20
Parental Occupation	No of Respondents				
Agriculture	33			Total	60
Others	17				
Total	60	Post-Graduation	03		
		Total	60		

Source: Field survey

The survey result as presented shows that 80% respondents are male and in the age group of 35-45 and 40% of them have education up to SSLC, 75% are married and 50% are in the income level up to 1, 00,000-300,000 and 46% have established their ventures in urban areas.

Table 4: Reasons for commencement of ACABCs

Reason	No. of Respondents
Advice of family friends	17
Government incentives and Availability of Market	23
Suitability of climate	11
Familiarity with Business	04
Ease of access to finance	00
Family skills or acquired skills	05
Total	60

Source: Field survey

From the above it can be observed that amongst 60 respondents, 28% are influenced by family and friends and 36% by government incentives and market availability followed by climate, family or acquired skills are cited as the reasons for starting up their agri ventures.

Table 5: Registration, training programmes attended, number of members and type of activity undertaken

Registration of enterprise	No of Respondents	Attended training programme	No of Respondents
YES	33	Yes	29
NO	27	No	31
Total	60	Total	60
No. of Members in organization	No of Respondents	Type of activity	No of Respondents
Less than 2	35	Production	05
2-4	15	Sale	15
4-6	10	Trade & service	30
More than 6	00	Retailing	10
Total	60	Total	60

Source: Field survey

The table states that amongst respondents, more than 50% respondents have registered their enterprises, 48% are trained and 58% are having less than two workers in their organisation, while half of them are in trade and service activity.

Table 6: Response of trained and untrained agripreneurs on various success parameters of their ACABCs

Sl. No	Statement	Trained (29)		Untrained (31)	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	I have satisfaction with my Business Growth	20	09	13	18

2.	My venture is capable of achieving Business Goals	19	10	12	19
3.	My Life Standard has improved after starting up of this business	21	08	10	21
4.	There has been a significant growth in my personal Income	21	08	14	17
5.	My saving capacity and accumulation of resources is improving	18	11	10	21
6.	Return on Investment (ROI) from the business is increasing year after year	21	08	12	19
7.	There has been an increase in the no. of employees from the beginning of business	19	10	08	23
8.	Level of customer satisfaction related to business activities has been improving	19	10	04	27
9.	The market coverage of business enterprises is increasing	18	11	07	24
10.	My venture is successful in facing the environmental challenge and strong competition	22	07	08	23
11.	I have availed subsidies and grants from the government	23	06	11	20
12.	I am aware of the different schemes and programmes offered by the government for the development of agri-ventures	26	03	05	26
13.	I have all the necessary skills required to run my Agri business	24	05	12	19

Source: Field survey

From the table it is evident that comparatively trained agri business owners are able to achieve good progress through proper training.

Table 7: Testing of Hypothesis Chi-Square Test

Particulars	Pearson Chi-Square Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Attended training * Business Growth	4.423 ^a	1	.035
Attended training * Business Goal Achievement	4.312 ^a	1	.038
Attended training * Life Standard	9.675 ^a	1	.002
Attended training * Personal Income	4.578 ^a	1	.032
Attended training * Saving Capacity	5.350 ^a	1	.021
Attended training * Return on Investment	6.877 ^a	1	.009
Attended training * No. of Employees	9.547 ^a	1	.002
Attended training * Customer Satisfaction	17.546 ^a	1	.000
Attended training * Market Coverage	9.613 ^a	1	.002
Attended training * Able to face Environmental Challenge & Competition	15.017 ^a	1	.000
Attended training * Availed subsidies and grants	11.720 ^a	1	.001
Attended training * Aware of schemes and programmes	32.437 ^a	1	.000
Attended training * Skilled	12.113 ^a	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	60		

The results of the above test reveals that as the p value is less than 0.05 in all the above considered parameters of success of Agri clinics and Agri Business Centers, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Thus, it can be stated that there exists a strong association between the training programmes and the success of ACABCs in Karnataka.

Major Findings of the Study

- More than three fourth respondents are male and in the middle age category, 75% are married and half of them are in the income level of 1,00,000-300,000 and more than 45% have established their ventures in urban area while family, friends and government incentives have a key role for setting up their ventures
- More than 50% respondents have registered their enterprises and trained while nearly 60% of them have less than two workers in their organisation, and most of them are in the trade and service activity
- Training has resulted in high personal income, increased savings rate and better life standard of agri venture owners, supported business growth and goal achievement of agripreneurs. Along with this, Return on

Investment, employee retention capacity, customer satisfaction level, market coverage and the ability to adjust to environmental changes have also increased

- Training programme by providing much needed information to agri venture owners creating more awareness and making them able to reap the benefits of government schemes, programmes, subsidies and grants designed to benefit them
- Trained agri venture owners are confident of their entrepreneurial skills as compared to untrained agri venture owners clearly signalling the positive impact of training on managerial skills development.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

It is very clearly observed and revealed through survey of ACABCs that Training programmes have positively contributed for the success of established agri ventures in many aspects and through proper training it is possible that agripreneurs can learn and enhance the necessary skills for managing their agri ventures successfully. Overall, it multiplies the confidence of agri-venture owners through proper training and development. Since it is suggested for the untrained agripreneurs to get the benefits of such training programmes in order to succeed in their respective agri business and to make their agri venture prosperous. It is suggested to widespread the awareness about training programmes by ACABC and MANAGE in order to make the training programme more fruitful.

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