

**RESEARCH PAPER**

Evaluation of various training aspects of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres (ACABC's) Scheme in North Eastern Region

K.C. Prakash*, K. Ranaselva and E.P. Banuu Priya¹

Indian Institute of Plantation Management, Bengaluru (Karnataka) India

(Email: k.c.prakash26@gmail.com)

Abstract : India, a country being largely dependent on agriculture, realised the importance of the welfare of farming community and the graduates of agriculture, implemented the scheme ACABC in the year 2002 across the country. The scheme aims at utilizing the untapped potential of the knowledge possessed by the agri graduates to serve the partners of agriculture. The graduates are trained under the scheme and provided with credit facility. 34 per cent of agriprenuers react well to social media commination as source of advertising. Unemployment issue drives the need to build their own ventures and are more mature in attending the training sessions conducted by the “qualified personnel”. Almost all particpnts show positive alignment towards boarding and lodging facilities, also interestingly along with newspaper communication also the wi-fi provision are appreciated. There is scope for improvement in transportation, if provided by the nodal institutions. Overall the acceptance of the training is 53.22 per cent satisfied with ACABC training.

Key Words : Unemployment, Training, Respondents, Agriprenuers

View Point Article : Prakash, K.C., Ranaselva, K. and Banuu Priya, E.P. (2020). Evaluation of various training aspects of Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres (ACABC's) Scheme in North Eastern Region. *Internat. J. agric. Sci.*, **16** (2) : 187-192, DOI:10.15740/HAS/IJAS/16.2/187-192. Copyright@2020: Hind Agri-Horticultural Society.

Article History : Received : 08.03.2020; Revised : 05.05.2020; Accepted : 11.05.2020

INTRODUCTION

India, a country whose population is largely dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. Like, most developing countries should rely on secondary sector for its growth in vibrant economic activities and realized that it requires a change in focus from “Agriculture” to “Agri-business”. Also, the gap in advancement after the green revolution in agriculture must be filled by professionals to succeed in this sectors. Statistics also shows that, in

India more than 12000 agricultural graduates pass out from the state agricultural universities (SAUs) all over the country every year, of which only 2000 find job in private and public sector, leaving a huge number of graduates unemployed (Global Agri-System, 2008). In order to tap the potential of these unemployed agricultural graduates towards dynamic agro-advisory services and to provide them employment opportunities by making them agri-prenuers, Agri-clincs and Agri-business centers (ACABC) scheme was launched in 2002 by

* **Author for correspondence :**

¹Tasty Bite Eatable Ltd., Pune (M.S.) India

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Singh, 2019). Agribusiness and agro-industrial sector in India contributes a considerable share of overall employment of industrial sector, as well as in value addition and income generation (Gandhi *et al.*, 2011).

Agriclinics and Agribusiness Centres Scheme (ACABC) is a subsidy based credit linked scheme for setting up agri-venture for agricultural graduates launched by government of India towards strengthening of technology transfer, public extension system and employment generation in rural areas. Exploration on the ACABC scheme articulates that effectiveness of training programme is barely successful. Though, the scheme was adequately formulated, the implementation lacunae resulted in only around 3 per cent success rate in establishing agribusiness ventures by the trained graduates in North Eastern states. Hence, the study focus on the general aspects of training to understand the successful implementation of ACABC scheme to the participants. To suggest implementable strategies to achieve substantial success rate in establishing agribusiness ventures and to serve the farming community.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The need for a comprehensive and systematic study aimed at designing the factors and measures required for assessing the impact of ACABC scheme, which is intended to supplement the public extension system efforts in providing broad-based extension services to the farmers, to provide gainful employment to the fresh and unemployed agricultural graduates and promote investment in agribusiness activities at rural India. The framework of the study briefly describes the methodology of sampling design, data collection and tools of analysis.

Pilot survey:

It is to ensure the work ability of the design and it sub-divided into.

- To determine the sample size
- To test the questionnaire
- To improve the fieldwork organization.

A small sample of hundred respondents from all the eight states of the North Eastern state. It comprised of all the types of consumers *i.e.* urban, semi-urban and rural. The researcher accompanied with the associated visited many places of the state to administer the first draft of the questionnaire. The problems arising in the

field situations were carefully noted and recorded.

Sampling frame:

The data are collected from all 8 states of North Eastern state.

Locale :

– Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

Data collection:

– Pre-test questionnaire and secondary data from MANAGE, NABARD and other published documents.

Analysis and testing:

The data was collected from the sample agri-prenuers and training institutes on the general aspects of training such as information about the training programmes, place and year of training, factors motivated to join in the training programme, facilities provided by the training institutes, training needs of the trainees and detailed data on study materials and classes conducted by the training institutes under the agri-clinic and the agri-business centre scheme. The data on the other aspects of the training like, seriousness of the candidate about the training and the final feedback of the trainees was collected from the pre-tested mailed questionnaires.

The frequency, scores, averages, percentages and ranking technique were used for analysing the training needs, profile of the trainees/trained agricultural graduates, factors responsible for joining the training programme and the facilities provided by the training institutes. Ranks were assigned after calculating the percentages.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of respondents (frequency)}}{\text{Total no. of respondents}} \quad \dots(1)$$

Similarly to study the feedback of the trainees about the training institutes, scores and percentage for each component (both training and infrastructure) were calculated as per the eq. 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

General aspects of agri-clinics and agri-business scheme in north eastern states:

The training programme conducted by the various nodal institutes although are expected to provide similar set of course contents and facilities, it may vary from institute to institute, as the infrastructure and the trainers in each of these institutes vary. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the general aspects of the training programme to understand the dents in the system. An interview with the trainees and the general public of the study area hence, was conducted to find the source through which they obtain information, the factors which influenced them to join the programme and facilities available at their use in the nodal training institutes.

Sources of information about ACABC training programmes:

To study the sources of information about ACABC training programme, the data on different forms of knowledge source is collected from 100 trained graduates/farmers in the study area. The data collected was subjected to analysis for calculation of averages and percentages, the following Table 1 summarize the results obtained from the interview.

It was observed that for majority of the interviewees,

electronic media is the source of information. This may be due to the increased usage of mobile phones and cheaper internet rates. Although the overall percentage suggests that the people from these states use electronic media to extract information, it cannot be generalized to all the states. In the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland respondents have viewed the University notice board as their information source. Similarly, in Assam, majority of the respondents have relatives serve as their information source. The same result is confirmed by Rao and Rupkumar, 2005. Karjagi *et al.*, 2009 also reported that friends and other (university notice board) were major source of information followed by electronic media in southern zones of India. Only respondents from Tripura and Sikkim prefer electronic media than other sources. This may be due lack of proper information from other sources.

Factors responsible for joining the ACABC training programmes:

To study the factors responsible for joining the training programme, the data collected on several factors *viz.*, self-motivation, access to credit, unemployment, free training and or institutional linkage etc., which have made them to join training programme were collected from

Table 1: Sources of communication for ACABC training programme

Knowledge source	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	Total
Friends	3	4	5	0	1	3	0	0	16
Relatives	0	5	2	2	1	3	0	0	13
Advertisements	0	5	3	1	2	8	0	0	19
Electronic media	2	9	7	2	3	4	3	4	34
University notice board	3	7	4	0	1	3	0	0	18
Total	8	30	21	5	8	21	3	4	100

*Field study (n=100)

Table 2 : Factors responsible for joining the ACABC training programme

Factors	Scores	Ranking
Unemployment issue	89	1
Frustrated of remuneration in current job	75	4
Goal to become an entrepreneur	53	7
Free training	67	5
Institutional linkage	76	3
Access to credit facility	84	2
To gain knowledge on commodity marketing	47	8
Learning new technologies	32	9
Joining the training to get free food and accommodation in the city while searching for jobs	57	6

*Field study (Multiple choice, n=100)

sample agri-prenuers. The data collected were presented in Table 2 scored based on their preference and ranked according to the scores by each factor for the whole North Eastern state.

It was found that raising unemployment issue drives self-motivation to start up their own ventures, this factor is a major influence that forces the agri graduates and the general public of the study area to participate in ACABC training program and take up entrepreneurship as a career option. These results are almost similar as found with previous researchers. Karjagi *et al.* (2009) also found that self-motivation for own business and efficient utilization of resources (Land, Education, Training, Credit etc.) were the prime factors to join the training program in southern zone of India. Also, this observation proves that the objective of the scheme is partly met and also indicates that the scheme moves in the right direction. The ACABC scheme guarantees easy access to bank loans for the graduates trained under the scheme. Interestingly, this factor is ranked as the second most significant factor that encourages the graduates to take up the training programme. The factor that is thirdly ranked is the institutional linkage which shows that the candidates aspire to get linked with institutions. This may be due to the reason that support from institutions would help the entrepreneurs in getting things done as required. Although the objective of the scheme is partly met, the

other half is still under question as learning new technologies is the factor that least bothers the graduates. In other words, learning new technologies is not a factor that the agri graduates consider in their decision making process. This would further question the quality of the course content. Only if higher interest towards learning is created, the farmers would be benefitted from the outcome of the training programme.

Facilities used by agriprenuers at the nodal training institutes (NTI's):

The apex institute MANAGE has set the guidelines for nodal training institute (NTI's) to provide lodging, boarding, classroom, library, field for practical, computer with internet, newspaper and other facilities to the trainees under ACABC. In this context, facilities provided by training institutes were evaluated and results are presented in Table 3.

The usage of facilities provided for the trainees during their residence in the campus were studied from the respondents in the interview. It was found that all the candidates who were interviewed made use of the boarding and lodging facilities provided to them by the nodal institute. However, none of the respondents accessed the library or the machineries in the institute. The reason for their inaccessibility to the library facilities of the nodal institute could be the policies and systems

Table 3 : Facilities used by agri-prenuers at the nodal training institute

Facility	Number @ Nodal training institutes in NE	Percentage (%)
Boarding and lodging	100	100
Classroom	100	100
Library	0	0
Computer	21	21
Phone/Fax	07	7
Machinery	0	0
Newspaper	51	51

*Field study (Multiple choice, n=100)

Table 4 : Training preference of agri-prenuers under ACABC scheme

Training areas	Scores	Ranking
Agribusiness management	31	4
Marketing management	45	2
Finance management	51	1
Human resource management	29	5
Food business management	32	3
Information technology	28	6

*Field study (Multiple Choice, n=100)

followed by different libraries. Most of the libraries in the institutes offer access only to the institute members and do not lend/ give access to non-members. The trainees however, could get newspapers to update themselves and 51 per cent of the respondents read newspapers during their stay at the institute. The computers and telephone facilities in the institute were used by 21 per cent and 7 per cent of the respondents, respectively. These results are similar as obtained by Rao and Rupkumar, 2005 and Karjagi *et al.*, 2009 in their research areas.

Training preference of agri graduates under the scheme of ACABCs:

To access the training needs of the trainees, the data on several training areas such as agribusiness management, information technology, general marketing and financial management were collected from the sample agri-prenuers. The data collected were scored and ranked on the basis of preference and presented in Table 4.

The activities under which the agricultural graduates are trained during the two month residence programme falls under 32 categories. The trainers would understand

the need of the group and offer the respective course content during the period. The respondents of the study were asked about their training preferences. Majority of the respondents preferred to learn the finance management concepts followed by marketing management. Karjagi *et al.* (2009) reported that general marketing is the most important areas of training under ACABC scheme which is in agreement with the results of NE state. Finance management is the crucial part of any business. The agricultural graduates would have a better knowledge on the production and operations of the agri-venture. However, their knowledge on financial concept that runs a business and marketing concepts that fetches their product to the consumer might be limited. It is almost mandatory for any entrepreneur to know the basics of finance so that he/she can run the business successfully. Hence, it could be understood that the agri-prenuers wanted to get a better know-how on handling the financial resources. Knowledge on market is also of significant factor in selling the product. The preference of the agri-prenuers for the training is, therefore, justified. Least importance was given to human resource management and information technology.

Table 5 : Seriousness of trainees about ACABC training programmes

Particulars	Scores	Ranking
Attendance	51	1
Inappropriate habits	12	4
Damage to institution property	0	5
Misbehaviour towards trainers	21	3
Total seriousness about the training	41	2

*Field study (Multiple choice, n=100)

Table 6 : Final feedback of the trainees about the training institute

Sr. No.	Particulars	Scores	Ranking
	Training components	67	3
1.	Faculty	53	4
2.	Theory	45	6
3.	Study materials	49	5
4.	Audio-visual interaction	32	8
5.	General interaction	67	3
	Infrastructural components		
1.	Lodging	87	2
2.	Boarding	97	1
3.	Transportation	12	9
4.	Others	37	7
	Overall feedback (Mean scores)	53.22	--

*Field Study (Multiple Choice, n=100)

Seriousness of trainees about the training programme:

To assess the seriousness of the trainees about the training programme under the scheme ACABC, the data on some of the factors like attendance, misbehaviour, inappropriate habits and damages made to the property of the institution were considered. The total seriousness about the training programme was calculated with the help of averages and percentages and the results are presented in Table 5.

Most of the respondents ranked attendance as their first major positive sign. This may be because of their interest and need of the training in undertaking the projects. The trainees were concerned about their attendance during the training programme followed by which they ranked their seriousness for the total training programme. These were the two major factors that would exhibit their seriousness in training. The respondents cared about the institutional properties the results is nil, due to the responsibility and maturity in the minds of trainee. Karjagi *et al.* (2009) reported that similar results in their respective study areas on seriousness of the trainees of ACABC.

Final feedback of trainees about the training and nodal training institutions:

To know the final feedback of the trainees about the training institutions, the data collected from 100 sample trainee on components like faculty, theory, study visits, interactions, video aids and conferencing and infrastructure components. The details of the feedback of trainees are presented in Table 6.

The feedback from the respondents about the overall training programme including its contents and infrastructure was obtained. It was found that the respondents were highly satisfied with the boarding and lodging facilities provided to them by the institutes. They were also moderately satisfied with the faculties and the course content which shows that there is also slight scope for improvement in the course content. The respondents were not satisfied with the transportation facilities arranged by the institutes.

Conclusion:

In North East region, the general aspects expected

from the respondents. ACABC participants get awareness about the training mostly through electronic media *i.e.* facebook, twitter, group chats. Friends and family is next source for communication for gaining the popularity among the people about scheme.

– Unemployment issues is the strongest driving factor for people that urges them to attend the training.

– Boarding and lodging facility are key factors for success, provided to them by nodal agency.

– No candidates utilize the library facility, whereas positive inclination is towards wifi connection provide to participants.

– Marketing and finance/account keeping are the major interest area for the candidates

– Participants are more mature in attending the training sessions conducted by the “qualified personnel”.

Acknowledgement:

This research was conducted with funds provided by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) for the Project on Impact of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers Scheme in Agri-entrepreneurship Development in North Eastern Region.

REFERENCES

Global Agri System (2008). Agriclincs and Agri Business Centers-Evaluation Study. pp. 1-87.

Gandhi, P., Vasant and Jain, Dinesh (2011). Institutional innovations and models in the development of agro-food industries in India: Strengths, weaknesses and lessons. Working Paper No. 2011-04-03, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India, pp. 1-51.

Karjagi, R., Khan, H.S.S. and Vijaykumar, H.S. (2009). Problems of trained agripreneurs under the scheme of agriclincs and agribusiness centres in starting and running their agriventure: A study in South India. *Karnataka J. Agric. Sci.*, **22**(1): 233-234.

Rao, M. V. and Rupkumar, K. (2005). Concurrent evaluation of Agriclincs and agribusiness centres scheme (AAG) in Maharashtra. A report, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, pp. 57-124.

Singh, R.B. (2019). *Agricultural transformation – A roadmap to new India.* National Academy of Agricultural Sciences. 287.