



MANAGE Agricultural Extension “Evening4Learning (E4L)” Webinar Series



Theme: “Innovations in Extension with Entrepreneurship”



Topic: : “Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres: Fostering Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Extension”



Schedule:

28-04-2024, 19:45-20:30 PM



About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension “Evening4Learning” Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The four-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.

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Agricultural Extension
“Evening4Learning”
Webinar Series
April 27-30, 2024
19.00-20.30 pm (IST)

Theme: Innovations in Extension with Entrepreneurship



Speaker

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 Saravanan Raj

About the Speaker

Dr. Saravanan Raj is the Director (Agricultural Extension) at MANAGE, Hyderabad. He heads the Centre for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (CAEIRA) and serves as the CEO of MANAGE–Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (CIA), a Centre of Excellence in Agri-Business Incubation and knowledge partner for implementing the RKVY-RAFTAAR scheme of the Government of India. He is also working as the CEO of MANAGE–Fisheries Innovation and Startup Hub (MANAGE–FISHub), a national-level incubation and innovation hub established with the support of the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD), Government of India. He specializes in public-private extension, privatization of extension services, institutional pluralism, ICTs and digital media in agricultural extension, extension innovations, and agri-startups and policy issues. With extensive experience in agricultural extension, innovation, and entrepreneurship development, he has played a key role in promoting digital and market-oriented extension approaches and strengthening the agri-startup ecosystem in India.

Need for Agripreneurs in Agricultural Extension

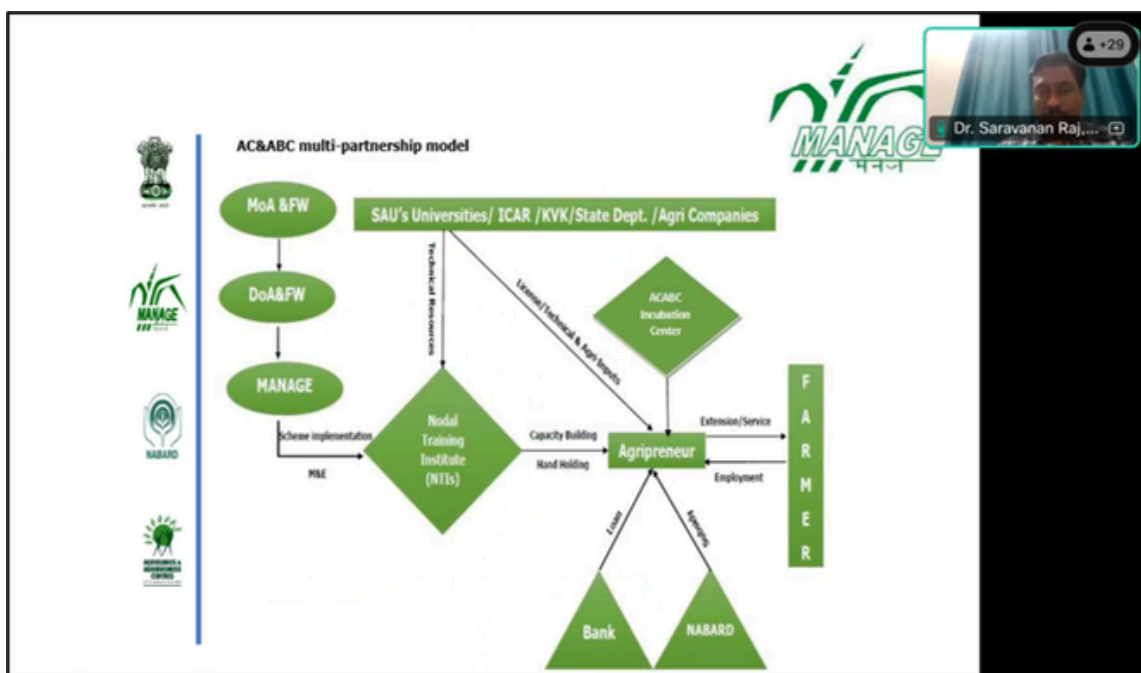
Small and marginal farmers constitute nearly 86 per cent of India's farming population, yet many continue to face constraints such as limited access to quality inputs, timely technical guidance, market information, credit, and remunerative market opportunities. Although India has one of the world's largest public agricultural extension systems, persistent challenges related to productivity enhancement, value addition, post-harvest management, processing, and market integration continue to affect farmers' livelihoods. In this context, agripreneurs have emerged as important actors in the agricultural innovation and extension ecosystem, complementing public extension efforts and bridging critical gaps in service delivery. Their entrepreneurial approach enables them to provide farmer-centric solutions that are responsive to local needs while remaining economically sustainable.

Agripreneurs combine the principles of entrepreneurship, innovation, and extension to deliver localized, demand-driven, and commercially viable services to farming communities. They facilitate access to technical advisories, improved technologies, quality inputs, market intelligence, value-chain services, and business opportunities, thereby supporting farmers throughout the production-to-market continuum. Owing to their close interaction with farming communities, agripreneurs are often well positioned to understand local challenges, customize solutions, and facilitate the timely dissemination and adoption of innovations. Beyond improving farm productivity and profitability, they contribute significantly to employment generation, rural enterprise development, and the creation of a more pluralistic, inclusive, and responsive agricultural extension system capable of addressing the evolving needs of the agri-food sector.

Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (AC&ABC)

The Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (AC&ABC) Scheme, launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in collaboration with MANAGE and NABARD, is one of India's flagship initiatives for promoting agripreneurship and strengthening the agricultural extension system. Introduced in 2002, the scheme was designed to harness the technical expertise of agriculture and allied-sector graduates by transforming them into self-employed agripreneurs capable of delivering professional advisory and business services to farmers. Its core objectives are to supplement the efforts of the public extension system, support agricultural development, and create sustainable self-employment opportunities for agricultural professionals.

Under the scheme, eligible graduates receive specialized entrepreneurship and business management training, along with technical and managerial skills required to establish agri-ventures. These ventures function as Agri-Clinics, providing expert advisory services on crop production, soil health, plant protection, livestock management, post-harvest practices, and market information, or as Agribusiness Centres, offering commercial services such as input supply, custom hiring of farm machinery, value addition, processing, marketing, and other farm-based enterprises. The programme also facilitates access to institutional credit, handholding support, and credit-linked subsidies, thereby enabling trained candidates to establish and scale their enterprises.



Over the years, the AC&ABC Scheme has emerged as a powerful model for integrating entrepreneurship with agricultural extension. According to official government data, more than 90,000 candidates have been trained, and over 40,000 agri-ventures have been established across the country, creating employment opportunities while extending critical services to farming communities. These agripreneurs act as important intermediaries between research institutions, markets, and farmers, facilitating the dissemination of technologies, improving access to inputs and services, and promoting market-oriented agricultural development. Through its focus on innovation, enterprise creation, and farmer-centric service delivery, the AC&ABC Scheme has significantly contributed to strengthening India's pluralistic extension ecosystem and advancing rural economic development.

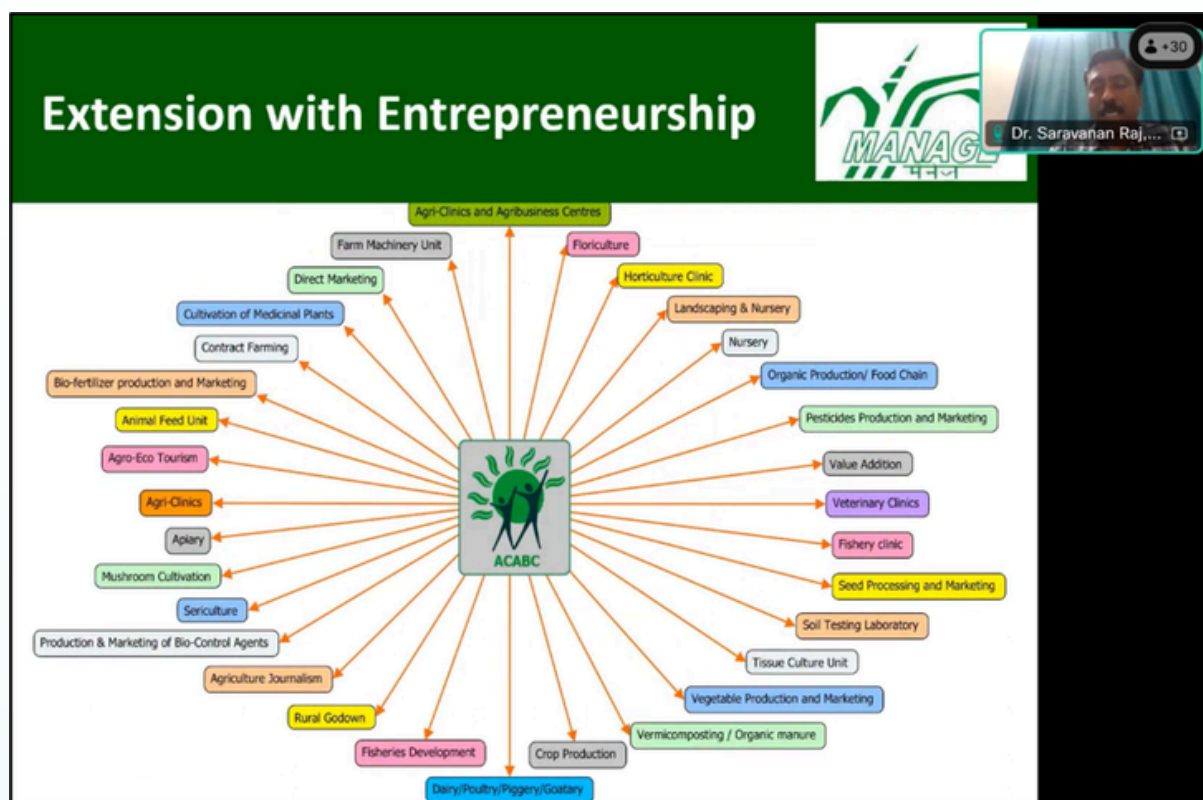
Diverse Areas of Agripreneurship

Agripreneurship encompasses a broad spectrum of enterprises that combine business opportunities with agricultural extension and advisory services. The Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (AC&ABC) Scheme has demonstrated that agripreneurs can successfully operate across the entire agricultural value chain—from input supply and production support to processing, marketing, and value addition. These enterprises not only generate income and employment but also facilitate technology dissemination, improve farmers' access to services, and strengthen market linkages.

Agripreneurs are engaged in a diverse range of activities, including:

- Agricultural Consultancy and Advisory Services
- Farm Machinery and Custom Hiring Centres
- Input Production and Distribution
- Horticulture, Nursery, and Landscaping Enterprises
- Tissue Culture and Seed Production Ventures
- Vermicomposting and Bio-input Enterprises
- Contract Farming and Direct Marketing
- Processing, Branding, and Value Addition

Beyond these areas, agripreneurs are increasingly venturing into livestock services, dairy enterprises, fisheries, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, agri-tourism, agricultural insurance, ICT-enabled advisory services, agri-journalism, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and digital agriculture solutions. These diverse enterprises illustrate the growing role of agripreneurship in creating a dynamic, market-oriented, and innovation-driven agricultural ecosystem while complementing the public extension system and contributing to rural economic development.



Innovation and Technology-Based Extension

It was noted that agripreneurs increasingly leverage mobile-based advisory services, ICT-enabled extension platforms, farm innovations, low-cost technologies, and customized advisory solutions to address the diverse needs of farming communities. These models enable the timely dissemination of information, improve farmers' access to technical guidance, and facilitate the adoption of improved agricultural practices.

Agripreneurs combine entrepreneurial ventures with extension functions, thereby promoting farmer education, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing while ensuring the commercial sustainability of their enterprises. This integration of business and advisory services has contributed to the development of innovative, farmer-centric approaches for agricultural development.

Value Chain and Market-Oriented Approaches

Many agripreneurs provide end-to-end support across the agricultural value chain, encompassing activities from field preparation and crop production to processing, marketing, and consumer outreach.



By offering integrated services and facilitating market linkages, these agripreneurs help farmers enhance productivity, access better market opportunities, and improve overall profitability. Such value-chain-based interventions contribute to reducing inefficiencies, strengthening farmer-market connections, and ensuring greater returns for farming communities.

Livestock and Allied Sector Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial opportunities are increasingly emerging in the livestock and allied sectors, with veterinary professionals and livestock entrepreneurs providing a range of services related to animal breeding, artificial insemination, animal healthcare, indigenous breed conservation, and livestock advisory support. These initiatives contribute to improving livestock productivity while strengthening service delivery and creating new avenues for entrepreneurship in the sector.

Business Models of Agripreneurs

Agripreneurs adopt diverse and innovative business models to sustain their enterprises and extension activities. While many do not directly charge farmers for advisory services, they generate revenue through input sales, produce aggregation, value addition and processing, branding, market linkages, and agri-tourism ventures. Such models enable agripreneurs to sustain their extension services while creating economic opportunities and enhancing farmers' livelihoods.

Employment Generation and Rural Development

Agripreneurs make a significant contribution to rural employment generation by creating diverse livelihood opportunities for rural youth and skilled workers across agricultural and allied activities. In addition to generating direct employment within their enterprises, agripreneurs extend advisory, input, marketing, and value-chain services to a large number of farmers. Studies indicate that, on average, an agripreneur reaches nearly 800 farmers through a combination of extension and value-chain services, thereby creating a multiplier effect on employment, entrepreneurship, and rural economic development.

Collaborative Extension Ecosystem

Agripreneurs increasingly operate within a pluralistic agricultural extension system, collaborating with fellow entrepreneurs, government agencies, foundations, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), and private organizations to deliver specialized and demand-driven services to farmers. Successful models emerging from states such as Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh highlight the growing role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in strengthening agricultural extension. These collaborative approaches facilitate the convergence of expertise, resources, technology, and market linkages, thereby enhancing the reach, efficiency, and effectiveness of extension services.

Key Highlights

- 1. Agripreneurs as Extension Partners:** Agripreneurs are emerging as important actors in the agricultural innovation and extension ecosystem, complementing public extension systems and bridging gaps in access to quality inputs, technical guidance, market information, and other essential services.
- 2. ACABC as a Major Agripreneurship Initiative:** The Agri-Clinics and Agr-Business Centres (AC&ABC) Scheme has played a significant role in promoting self-employment among agriculture and allied-sector graduates while strengthening farmer-oriented advisory and agribusiness services.
- 3. Diversification Across the Agricultural Value Chain:** Agripreneurship extends beyond input supply and advisory services to include farm machinery, nurseries, seed and tissue culture, bio-inputs, livestock, fisheries, processing, value addition, branding, marketing, and digital agriculture.
- 4. Innovation, Technology and Market Orientation:** Agripreneurs increasingly leverage ICT-enabled advisory services, customized technologies, integrated value-chain approaches, and market linkages to provide timely, demand-driven solutions and improve farmers' productivity and profitability.
- 5. Employment and Collaborative Rural Development:** Agripreneurs contribute to rural employment, enterprise development, and livelihood enhancement, while collaborating with government agencies, KVKs, foundations, private organizations, and other entrepreneurs to create a more pluralistic, inclusive, and responsive agricultural extension ecosystem.

YouTube Link:

<https://youtu.be/DeFlGCaas38?list=PL6mI4tMrzHzTHqX8i3oQ6o-B4Pfc5gPQs&t=843>

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