

Proceedings

Workshop on CSR for Agricultural Development Agriculture during Pandemic and Role of CSR

Jointly Organised by



Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation (CCA)

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) Hyderabad, India
(An Organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, GoI)

www.manage.gov.in

About the Publication

This publication is the outcome of the Workshop of CSR for Agricultural Development: Agriculture during Pandemic and Role of CSR conducted on 27.10.2021 jointly by MANAGE and BIMTECH.

Inside Publication

This publication is the summary of the presentations of the panellists who have presented in the Workshop on CSR for Agricultural Development: Agriculture during Pandemic and Role of CSR. It highlights the major interventions of the companies in agriculture, especially the role of CSR in supporting farmers during the pandemic. The interventions discussed in this Proceedings may be emulated by other companies, public institutions, line departments, NGOs, CSOs, FPOs, entrepreneurs etc., at scale

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge all the renowned panellists for sparing their valuable time and sharing their role in agriculture during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Citation:

Balasubramani, N., Vincent A. (2021). Workshop Proceedings on CSR: "Virtual Workshop of CSR for Agricultural Development: Agriculture during pandemic and Role of CSR". Proceedings-4. Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation (CCA), National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, India.

Workshop on CSR for Agricultural Development: Agriculture during Pandemic and Role of CSR



BACKGROUND

COVID-19 has extremely disrupted the socio-economic circumstances of the world. The impact was widely felt by all the sectors in India, especially agriculture as it plays a major role in supply chain management. It also influences the growth of secondary and tertiary sectors through its forward and backward linkages. Agricultural growth helps in reducing poverty, ensuring food & nutritional security and contributing to overall economic development. However, this sector was affected enormously due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown imposed by the Government in response to containing the COVID-19. However, agricultural institutions/organisations, line departments, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, grassroots level organisations, FPOs, NGOs, CSOs, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders have undertaken several steps to ensure supply and demand gaps. Companies have also significantly contributed to the sustaining of the agricultural value chain through their interventions such as creation of market linkages, providing advisory support services etc. Against this backdrop, this Workshop has served as a platform for companies to share their different interventions undertaken in agriculture during the Pandemic.

Speakers and presenters



A total of eight (08) panellists with expertise in the implementation of successful agricultural projects under CSR, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic have shared their experiences.

Who has participated?



Around 80 delegates such as Scientists, Extension Officials, Development Functionaries, Research Scholars and other officials from government and non-government organisations who are associated with agriculture and allied sectors have participated in the Workshop.



Moderator

The workshop was moderated by Prof. K K Upadhyay, Centre for Sustainability and CSR, BIMTECH



Message from Chief Guest -

Dr Arunaditya Sahay

Dean (Research), Professor of Strategic Management, BIMTECH

The highlights of the presentation are as follows



Highlights

CSR is not new to India. It is practised for long period. Shri Jamshed Tata has pioneered CSR in India. He stated that “Before you produce an ounce of steel, it is very important to ensure greenery, educational institutes, recreation, playground etc”., around the steel plant. The important aspect of industrial development is people’s welfare. India was the leader in CSR even before the introduction of the Companies Act, 2013. Though most of the CSR funds are spent on education and livelihoods, CSR spent on agriculture is increasing. Also, within agriculture, the richer states get more CSR funds than backward states such as Bihar. A sensitisation workshop like this needs to contribute to the policy changes, thereby facilitating companies to spend more on agriculture, which will, in turn, contribute to the growth of all other sectors.



Mr Vishal Bhardwaj

Chief Executive Officer and Group Head, Corporate Social Responsibility, Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF)



Highlights

The focus of the Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF) is on the development of agriculture for two major reasons. Firstly, sugar factories are one of the major sources of income for DBF and secondly, most DBF activities are co-existent with village economy, where agriculture is the predominant profession.

Interventions on agronomy

DBF has promoted Sustainable Sugarcane Intensification (SSI) among 100 farmers so far. Besides, it has popularised intercropping and drip irrigation on 100 acres of land. These good practices in sugarcane production have increased sugarcane yield significantly and income of sugarcane growers by 15-20%, compared to those sugarcane farmers who have not adopted SSI practices. It has prioritised its extension activities on the promotion of organic agriculture including creating awareness of the preparation of vermicompost and farmyard manure. Around 2965 farmers benefited from the adoption of vermicompost and farmyard manure units. A portion of the DBF CSR fund is spent on the promotion of farm ponds in farmers' fields. Further, DBF has partnered with the 2030 Water Resource Group of the World Bank to promote farm ponds. Most of the farm pond initiatives are implemented in Gondlamau Development Block of Sitapur district, Uttar Pradesh where one of the Sugar Mills of DBF is located. Besides, DBF is designing the tools to measure the impact of water conservation initiatives undertaken by them

Interventions on water management

DBF is also investing its CSR fund in the development of integrated watershed management. Achievement of Integrated Watershed Project during COVID-19 is given below.

S.No.	Particulars	Achievement (Nos)
1.	No of farm ponds	42
2.	No of check dams	06
3.	No of village ponds	08
4.	No of roof rainwater harvesting structures	484
5.	No of recharge wells	17
6.	No of gabion structures	9
7.	No rockfill dams	01
8.	No of bore well recharge	08
9.	Acres of land brought under drip irrigation	73
10.	No of villages	101
11.	No of beneficiaries	28,000

Besides, DBF has developed 1281 m³ of trench cum bund, 500 meters of field bund, 600 m³ of catch pits and 272.60 m³ of channel and drain diversion works, 711 m of stone check work, 215 m of pebble bunding works, 6 m of stone gully plug completed. Also, around 500 tribal families whose income were dependent on horticulture plantation was ensured despite the COVID-19 has affected the new saplings of plantation in Assam. This was possible because of the intercropping with turmeric. Importantly, these integrated watershed development activities have created 3000 man-days of work for the village people during the second wave of COVID-19.

Major impact of Integrated Watershed Projects of DBF

S.No.	Particulars	Achievement (Nos)
1.	Additional water harvesting capacity created every year	2895 crore litre of water
2.	Areas brought under micro irrigation	2140 acres
3.	Land development under watershed projects	22,733 acres
4.	Total beneficiaries	More than 21,000 families

These watershed activities have increased the groundwater table, increase in mixed/inter-cropping pattern, 25 % increase in crop yield and 15 % increase in income etc.

Interventions on farmers collective

DBF has promoted 15 Farmer Producer Organisations in 15 states, i.e one FPO in every state. These FPOs provide a platform for farmers to sell their produce collectively and thereby facilitating them to earn a fair income. These FPOs have also ensured a continuous supply of fertiliser and other inputs for crop production during COVID-19. DBF facilitated the tying up of FPOs with district administration of both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh states during COVID -19 to ensure the continuous supply of vegetables to consumers.



Mr Pratyush Panda

Vice President, Associate Cement Companies (ACC)



Highlights

Associate Cement Companies (ACC) has increased its CSR fund to implement agricultural projects and interventions to 20% due to its participation in CSR Workshop organised by MANAGE and BIMTECH. This increased share of CSR funds will supplement the shortage of funds in the public extension systems.

Interventions on agronomy

ACC has partnered with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) for creating awareness and demonstration about SRI cultivation. As a result, most of the farmers have adopted SRI on about 200 acres. ACC reports that the paddy yield under SRU rose by 28%. Also, it has partnered International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to create agripreneurs to serve as the link between farmers and ACC. Further, they are trained in production of low-cost manures and biopesticides. Thereby, they can produce and sell them to farmers at low cost.

ACC has created a Mobile based App to disseminate MSP of different crops to farmers. The agripreneurs trained by ACC serve as the medium for providing information on MSP to farmers in their locations. They charge a minimum of Rs. 5 per quintal for an advisory service provided.

ACC's success can be linked to its close partnership with grassroots level institutes like KVK for knowledge and technical backstopping. Hence, the companies who are spending CSR funds on agricultural development have to focus on developing a partnership with grassroots level institutions. It is the key to the implementation of agricultural-related activities at the farmer level. This will help the companies to reach out to a larger number of farmers. Further, there is a need for MoUs between MANAGE and Corporates to support grassroots level agricultural institutes.



Mr Ashwini Saxena

CEO, JSW Foundation



Highlights

Agriculture is still a major occupation of the rural population. At present, most of the younger generation is not preferring to do farming due to unprecedented and unparalleled challenges faced by this sector.

Considering the importance of agriculture, there is a need for developing appropriate technology that suits the local conditions and adapting to the increasing risks of climate change. Several technologies were developed by ICAR research institutes. However, many of them were not reaching farmers. Hence, companies can help in disseminating these proven technologies to farmers through their CSR funds. For example, there was a need for developing rice with more milling quality in Odisha, however, farmers were cultivating short course rice, which were having poor rice milling quality. In this context, JSW has introduced the long course rice variety with high milling quality through various extension training programmes and demonstrations. This demonstrates that there is a need for CSR to solve the farmers' level issues by introducing the right technology developed at the research institutes. It is very difficult for one Institution to solve all the problems of farmers, therefore companies have to follow an integrated approach and establish convergence with the government programmes and schemes to leverage the funds, resources and manpower. JSW is aiming to cover 1, 00, 000 farmers by partnering with several stakeholders and these stakeholders will serve as knowledge providers, technical supporters and capacity building partners.

Further, the companies have to ensure that technologies are also capable of reducing the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, besides improving productivity. Moreover, companies have to extend handholding support, conduct experiments and investment support to ensure a large scale adoption. There is also a need for pilot testing of technologies through CSR funds to create models to respond to climate change.

Interventions on water management

Water is becoming a critical resource in agriculture. Considering its role in crop production, JSW is promoting several water-saving technologies in parts of Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. It is implementing watershed projects to augment the irrigation facility to enable farmers to meet their irrigation requirements and help them to diversify their cropping pattern. Therefore, companies need to invest their CSR funds more in water-saving technologies, which will help in addressing the risks related to groundwater dwindling, paucity of water etc.



Ms Aman Pannu

Head Corporate Communications & CSR,
DCM Shriram Ltd



Highlights

DCM Shriram Ltd has four sugar factories in Uttar Pradesh. The sugar brand of Shriram has reached all over India. The specific CSR program of DCM is Jeetega Kisaan, which aims at skilling farmers and improving the livelihood of rural people. Further, it aims to enhance the income of farmers through the introduction of a better package of practices and by creating market linkages. Jeetega Kisaan program is implemented with the principle of one programme with multiple impacts.

Interventions on water management

Water conservation is the major component of the program. This programme is implemented in 18 villages in the Kota district, Rajasthan state (located nearer to its factory).

Intervention on miscellaneous agricultural activities

DCM Jeetaga Kisaan is working with more than 1800 households to ensure their self-reliance. Major activities of the programme are increasing the resilience of the communities, creation of FIGs/FPOs, establishing market linkages, implementing demand-led interventions, establishing convergence with government departments for better assistance. DCM also has agronomic advisors at the field level to provide regular extension services to the farmers. DCM's priority during COVID-19 was to create awareness on COVID-19 and preventive measures. All the communication channels such as phone calls, SMS, WhatsApp message etc. were used. Video clips made in local languages on precautionary measures of COVID-19 were sent to farmers to keep them informed.

Marketing intervention during COVID-19

DCM Shriram Ltd has made arrangements for providing local sale points at the farm field level during the COVID-19 curfew. Farmers were also linked with buyers, the direct linkages resulted in direct procurement of farm produce. An amount of Rs.4 lakh worth of farm produce was sold by the farmers directly to the buyers during the pandemic under the Jeetaga Kisaan programme.

Virtual connection during COVID-19

DCM Shriram Ltd has also organised a series of Webinars on agronomic advisories such as irrigation and inputs management during COVID-19 lockdown. Further, DCM Shriram Ltd has created access for farmers to get inputs at right time regardless of the challenges during the pandemic. Farmer Field Days were organised using the demo plot and the demonstration was recorded and disseminated to several farmers through social media including WhatsApp. This enabled the farmers to adopt good practices and overcome the challenges faced by agriculture during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Convergence with government schemes

DCM Shriram Ltd is creating awareness of the government schemes to farmers and linking them to various schemes to avail the benefits thereof. DCM Shriram Ltd has screened around 700 farmers for government schemes such as PM Kisan Summan Yojana, CM old Age Pension Scheme, CM Window Pension Scheme, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana etc. Farmers have received the total benefits worth Rs. 91 lakh. On average, the various agricultural interventions such as agronomic, marketing and linkages with programmes and schemes of government through the Jeetaga Kisaan project have resulted in farmers' income increase by 35 to 40%.



Mr Sanjeev Kumar

Managing Trustee, The Goat Trust



Highlights

The Goat Trust has its presence in 20 states across the country. The major activities of the Goat Trust are technology backstopping (e.g. breeding for quality goats, feed and feeding, health and hygiene, housing and sanitation); Financial services (e.g. micro leasing, community-based insurance and livestock credit); trade and market (e.g. transparent live body weight pricing, mobile-based buyer-seller information, value-added products of goat milk and goat dung, breed marketing, meat value chain) and Institutional reform (e.g. vet hospital with community-managed services, Community Livestock Business Centre and state-level producer company).

Further, the Goat Trust has 10 Community Livestock Business Centres (CLM), at 10 clusters i.e. One CLM per 100 villages, also it engages one community livestock manager at the cluster level (one cluster consists of 10 villages). I.e one community livestock manager per 10 Pashu Sakhis. One Pashu Sakhis per 10 villages. Over 10000 Pashu Sakhis are providing livestock advisory services to 3 lakh families. The Goat Trust initiatives during COVID-19 include ensuring the continuous supply of goat milk, establishment of local meat bank to ensure meat supply to consumers, establishment of commercial goat farming units, IT-based technical and marketing support and also promotion of community kitchen gardens, which has helped the women in rural areas to ensure food security. Courses –Six months Diploma in Livestock Business Management. These interventions will help farmers to adopt good practices in livestock management and respond effectively to the risk of climate change in livestock.



Ms Dipnrita Chakraborty

Regional Director – Corporate Social Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill India Private Ltd



Highlights

Climate change risks have impacted agriculture in many ways. However, appropriate interventions tailored to climate change risk management can minimise the vulnerability.

Intervention on poultry

Odisha is prone to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods etc., therefore, the state requires several adaptation measures to overcome the risks associated with disasters. Considering the vulnerability of the region, Cargill India Private Ltd has been implementing the “Hatching Hope Project” in agriculture in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha state to enable farmers to adopt income-generating activities and adapt to climate change risks. It has promoted backyard poultry and kitchen garden during COVID-19 through the Hatching Hope project to help the rural household to gain sustainable income despite the risks resulting from disasters. It is working with several partner institutes to promote both backyard poultry and kitchen garden. Around 2000 households in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha have adopted backyard poultry and this has led to an increase in consumption rate and thereby ensuring nutritional security. Community involvement is the key to this project. The adoption rate is increasing year on year. During the COVID-19 times, households which have adopted backyard poultry and kitchen gardens were able to earn an additional income of Rs.10,000 every three months. Cargill India Private Ltd is also assisting rural households to adopt micro-enterprises to enable them to earn a reasonable income. Besides, 30,000 women farmers were trained by Cargill India Private Ltd to become business expertise for self-employment generation.



Mr Vikas Bhatia

Senior Manager, Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited



Highlights

Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited’s interventions on agriculture aim to improve the productivity of soil and thereby enhance the productivity of crops. Project Bhoomi is being implemented by Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited.

Interventions on agronomy

Soil quality is depleting, especially in Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, therefore, to improve the soil quality, Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited has established two Soil Testing Labs (using the state of art technology) at Kota (Rajasthan state) and Agra (Uttar Pradesh state). These labs have enabled the farmers to get their soil tested and apply fertiliser based on the soil nutrient status. Every year, thousands of soil sample is tested at these two soil testing labs.

Interventions on ICT

The second most important intervention of Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited is the introduction of a Toll-Free number for providing advisory services to farmers based on farmers' queries. The toll-free number is operated through "Hello Uttam Number"- 1800 180 555. The farmers are informed about this number through all packed inputs of Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited. It has appointed agricultural scientists to answer the queries raised by farmers.

Technological intervention

Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited is demonstrating the importance of PUSA decomposers in crop residue management to the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, thereby minimising the emission of GHGs. PUSA decomposers (fungal culture) – A technology capable of decomposing the stubble in the field itself. For the first time, PUSA decomposer was demonstrated in Rajasthan on a pilot basis. The use of PUSA decomposer has increased the nitrogen level in the soil. This has further resulted in saving of Rs. 700 to 800 per ha. Also, farmers are advocated to use of bales machines as part of crop residue management (an ex-situ process of crop residue management).

Interventions on farmer collectives

Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited is supporting Farmers Producers Organisations (FPOs) to facilitate the farmers to avail loan and market farm produce collectively.

The convergence and partnership established with suitable partners have enabled Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited to effectively promote the interventions and ensure the adoption at the farmers level. Therefore, identification of suitable partners and fostering convergence are essential for companies to promote agricultural interventions under CSR.



Mr Rishi Pathania

Head-CSR, UPL limited



Highlights

The four CSR initiatives of UPL in India are, (i) creating an institution of excellence, (ii) promoting sustainable livelihoods, (iii) conserving nature and (iv) ensuring the localised needs (specific local area needs of the people where its factories are located) and national needs (rebuilding or providing relief measures to people affected from natural calamities). Agriculture is categorised under the sustainable livelihood initiative of UPL. It focuses on the marginalised section of society including farmers, women and youth.

Strengthening the community is the most important activity of UPL. So far, UPL has impacted 0.5 million lives globally through its CSR initiatives and around 70 communities benefited through more than 80 development programmes.

One of the major agricultural projects of UPL is Khedut Pragati, which aims to improve the quality of farmers' lives through the promotion of sustainable and profitable ventures. This will help in increasing per acre yield, optimum utilisation of resources, reducing the cost of cultivation. The approaches followed by UPL under the project are, identification of the needs of farmers, conducting regular capacity building programmes, on-farm demonstration in all clusters, formation & strengthening of farmers' organisations, farmers' organisations and providing support to market linkages.

UPL has developed a Centre for Agriculture Excellence at Naholi, Vapi. It serves as the capacity building institution for farmers in the Vapi region. More than 18000 farmers were trained and benefited up until 2021.

Some of the other notable agricultural initiatives of UPL include conducting demonstrations on flower cultivation, creeper vegetable cultivation, tissue – sugarcane, agro horti forestry model etc. For demonstration, UPL has partnered with State Agricultural Universities and KVKs. Also, UPL has partnered with GGRC to provide micro irrigation in these clusters (additional 12-15 % subsidies for adopting the micro irrigation).

UPL has covered 79 villages, formed 87 farmer groups and worked with 3880 farmers. During COVID-19, UPL has organised online webinars on the package of practices of Marigold with the help of the scientists in KVKs. A farmer like Shri Jyantibhai Patel at Selod village, Jhagadia Bharuch district, Gujarat state is earning around Rs.75,000 in a month due to the adoption of better package of practices, which he learned from Webinars. Further, the breed improvement programme has helped UPI to perform around 3296 AIs so far. (Out of which, around 900 AIs were performed during COVID-19) in about 21 villages covering 433 households.

Bori Bagicha /kitchen garden in tribal area: Kitchen garden is promoted in tribal areas of Gujarat state for the last 6 years. This initiative has benefited 4026 households in 58 villages.

Interventions on FPOs

Some of the Producer Group Company (FPC) are supported by UPL to facilitate better market access for farmers. The FPCs were formed in 6 clusters. As of now, UPL has five registered FPCs. The details are given below.

Table. The details of the registered FPCs of UPL

S.No.	Name of the Company	Location	No of farmers	Equity generated (Rs)	Business development
1.	Valsad Vibhag Farmer Producer Company Limited	Pardi Block, Valsad district, Gujarat	474	5,00,000	Facilitate backward linkage and arrangement of paddy seed
2.	Purna Farmer Producer Company Limited	Waghai cluster, Dang district, Gujarat	333	1,50,000	Market linkage and packaging support for strawberry crop and vegetable
3.	Punch Koshi Farmer Producer Company Limited	Shamghan Cluster, Dang, Gujarat	350	3,50,000	Market linkage and packaging support mango and cashew
4.	Jay Reva Farmer Producer Company Limited	Ankleshwar, Bharuch district, Gujarat	215	2,15,000	Market linkage and packaging support for pulses
5.	Shree Harsiddhi Farmer Producer Company Limited	Matar, Kheda. Gujarat	300	1,50,000	Facilitate backwards and forward linkage for paddy
			1672	13,65,000	

Processing unit for Nagli

Processing unit for Nagli (finger millet) was established to support tribal women farmers who grow finger millets in Dang district of Gujarat state. It has benefited around 50 women farmers with a turnover of Rs. 20 lakhs.

Interventions on direct market linkage

Further, FreshVeg2U is an initiative of UPL under Khedut Pragati for market linkages to enable farmers to directly sell fresh vegetables to consumers. FreshVeg2U – a mobile vegetable van that is sent to farmer field to collect farm produce and sell directly to consumers. A total of three vans are available at present to procure farm produce cultivated by 75 farmers. The turnover was about 50 Lakhs in three years.

Overall scenario of UPL Agriculture initiatives

S.No.	Project	No. of farmers
1.	UPL Centre for Agriculture Excellence, Naholi, Vapi	18,142
2.	Agriculture Development Initiative @ Cluster	3,880
3.	Breed Improvement @ Bharuch	433
4.	Bori Bagicha/Kitchen Garden @ Tribal Area	4026
5.	Farmer Producer Company	1672
6.	Marketing linkage through FreshVeg2U	75
7.	Processing unit for Nagli (finger millet)	50
8.	Total life impacted	28,278

Conclusion

Companies are promoting several interventions such as watershed development, introduction of innovative technologies, formation of FPOs for market linkages, providing advisory through ICTs etc., which have supported farmers in terms of supplying agricultural inputs, reducing the intermediaries both in backward and forward linkages, facilitated in bridging the gaps of supply and demand disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, conserved natural resources, ensuring food and nutritional security. The outcome of the Workshop suggests that the above interventions have played a significant role in safeguarding the interest of farmers and ensuring their income, especially during such extreme events. Hence, in future also, the support of the private companies in terms of finance, improved technologies, innovations, novel approaches to supply chain management, market linkages etc. is required for the public extension systems to effectively respond to such extreme events.



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