

Corporate Social Responsibility for Agricultural Development - A way forward

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Abstract

A huge investment is required to address the current challenges of agriculture. These challenges provide space for a pluralistic eco-system to involve various players. The Corporate sector is one of the important players in the current policy initiative to leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for agricultural development. However, a very small amount of CSR fund has been spent in the agricultural sector by the companies though there is huge potential for investment in the sector. Agriculture is yet to attract the attention of India's CSR. Countries that had relatively high Agriculture growth, saw substantial reduction in poverty. Hence, if the Corporates allocate more fund under CSR in agriculture, many challenges of the farm sector can be addressed. Corporates who have invested in Agriculture as part of CSR activities have seen a significant improvement in terms of adoption of improved agriculture practices, conservation of natural resources, reduction in external inputs and cost of cultivation, etc., in their project areas. The emphasis of CSR in the Agriculture sector needs to be in the areas of environmental sustainability, natural resource management, innovation and technology led development, social development, entrepreneurship development, livestock development, market development, farm advisory services, etc. In order to promote CSR activities in Agriculture, it is suggested to have a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), steering committee having broad based representation of various stakeholders, proper monitoring system at various levels, etc.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Agriculture

Introduction

Development of Agriculture continues to remain critical for India's economic growth, poverty reduction and ensuring food security of the country, as over 58 per cent of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. Green Revolution which brought food sufficiency to the country was due to a combination of technologies viz., hybrids and high yielding varieties,

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fertilizers and improved agronomic practices and public policy. This revolution was made possible through an organized and committed Agricultural Extension system that ably supported and supplemented the input intensive production system.

In spite of significant growth in agriculture, Indian Agriculture continues to face serious challenges such as depletion of natural resources, occurrence of extreme events of climate change, exploitation by the intermediaries, inadequate credit support *etc.* A big investment in agriculture is required to address the current challenges and achieve 4 per cent technology led agricultural growth. These challenges cannot be addressed by any single agency either in public or private sector. These challenges provide a space for a pluralistic eco-system to involve various actors and service providers such as corporates, private agribusiness companies, NGOs, producers' organizations with additional manpower, knowledge, skills, expertise and leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for overall development of agriculture and benefit of farmers.

The gradual transformation in CSR in India has gone beyond philanthropy to overall community development with more commitment. Similarly, the Government also started looking at corporates as partners and involving them in the process of development.

However, the data shows that, very meagre amount of CSR fund has been spent in the agricultural sector by the companies though there is huge potential for investment in the sector. Corporates cannot see agriculture in isolation. CSR may be seen in terms of "Creating Shared Value" wherein, business can help progress of agriculture and agriculture sector can help business to improve and flourish.

Overview of CSR Framework

As per the Section 135, sub section 1 of the Companies Act, 2013, every company having a net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more, or turnover of rupees one thousand crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more has to spend 2 per cent of their profit on CSR activities. Such companies are mandated to constitute a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board. The role of the committee is to approve the CSR Policy of the company, disclose its contents in the Board's Report and place it on the company's website, ensure Implementation of CSR activities, ensure 2 per cent of the profit on CSR activities and Disclose reasons for not spending. The rule is effective from 1st April, 2014.

Activities Not Falling in the Ambit of CSR

- The CSR projects that benefit only the employees of the company and their families shall not be considered as CSR activities in accordance with section 135 of the Act.
- One-off events such as marathons / awards / charitable contribution / advertisement / sponsorships of TV programs *etc.* would not be qualified as part of CSR expenditure.
- Activities which are not taken up in project mode.
- Expenses incurred by companies for the fulfillment of any Act / Statute of regulations (such as Labour Laws, Land Acquisition Act *etc.*) would not count as CSR expenditure under the Companies Act.
- Contribution of any amount directly or indirectly to any political party shall not be considered as a CSR activity.
- Activities undertaken by the company in pursuance of its normal course of business.

Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 about list of proposed CSR activities

As per the Schedule VII (Sections 135), the Activities which may be included by companies in their Corporate Social Responsibility Policies, relate to:-

- I. Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty.
- II. Promotion of education.
- III. Promoting gender equality and empowering women.
- IV. Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.
- V. Combating human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, malaria and other diseases.
- VI. Ensuring environmental sustainability.
- VII. Employment enhancing vocational skills.
- VIII. Social business projects.
- IX. Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Central Government or the State Governments for socio-economic development and relief and funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women; and
- X. Such other matters as may be prescribed.

In Schedule - VII, the following items have been inserted with necessary amendment in the said Act.

XI. Slum area development.

XII. Contribution to the Swachh Bharat Kosh set up by the Central Government for the promotion of sanitation.

XIII. Contribution to the Clean Ganga Fund set up by the Central Government for rejuvenation of river Ganga.

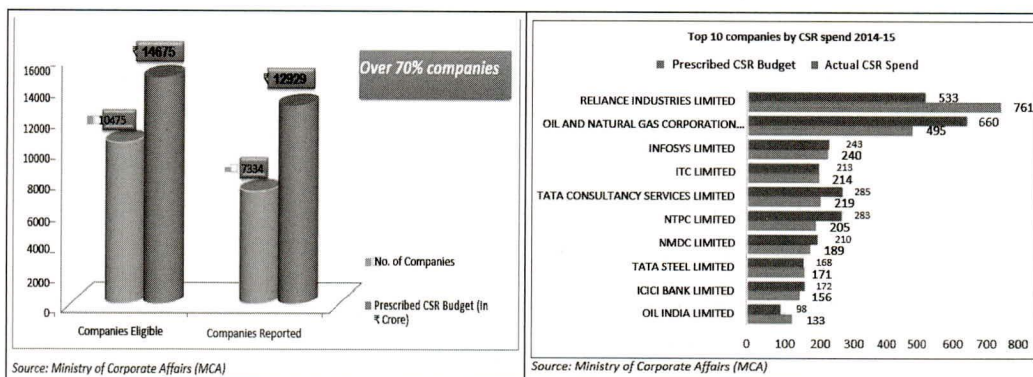
However, Agriculture is subsumed under 13 items of Schedule VII, and hence, agriculture is yet to attract the attention of India's CSR. Therefore, Agriculture should be added as a separate activity under priority sector among the activities enumerated in Schedule - VII of the Act like the Swachh Bharat Mission, Clean Ganga Mission, and Slum Area Development and get agriculture on the radar of CSR. A neutral and non – profitable organisation should facilitate to create a favourable ecosystem for stakeholders of CSR for agricultural development and CSR component should play a catalyst role for transforming agriculture, Thereby, partner companies may offer services to the agriculture sector through increased share of CSR fund in agriculture.

Why CSR in Agriculture?

Seventy five percent of the world's poor live in rural areas and most of them depend on agriculture directly or indirectly as a source of their livelihood. Overall GDP growth originating in agriculture, is at least twice as effective in benefitting the poorest half of the population as growth generated in non - agricultural sectors. Countries that had relatively high agricultural growth, saw substantial reduction in poverty. China's rapid growth in agriculture was initially responsible for the rapid decline in rural poverty from 53 per cent in 1981 to eight per cent in 2001. Similarly, 24 percentage point reduction in rural poverty in Ghana over 15 years is mainly due to strong agricultural performance (World Development Report, 2008).

Though agriculture is a promising sector for reducing poverty, the expenditure under CSR component in India on agriculture is very meagre. If the Corporates allocate more fund under CSR, many challenges of the farm sector can be addressed. Government of India also envisages to double the income of the farmers by 2022 through productivity enhancement, resource use efficiency or reducing the cost of production, increase in cropping intensity, diversification of high value crops *etc.* In order to achieve this and considering the vast majority of the people depending on agriculture, a significant amount of investment is required from various sources.

CSR expenditure in India for the year 2014 -15



Development Sector wise break up of CSR expenditure FY 2014-15

| Sr. No. | Sectors | Amount (in Crores) | Percentage |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. | PM Relief Fund | 192 | 2.22 |
| 2. | Others | 165 | 1.91 |
| 3. | Sports Promotion | 160 | 1.85 |
| 4. | Art & Culture | 157 | 1.82 |
| 5. | Slum Development | 123 | 1.42 |
| 6. | Administrative Overheads | 123 | 1.42 |
| 7. | Swachh Bharat Kosh | 121 | 1.41 |
| 8. | Any Other Fund | 36 | 0.42 |
| 9. | Clean Ganga Fund | 19 | 0.22 |
| 10. | Contribution to Corpus | 18 | 0.21 |
| Source : Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Sharma, N.N.2017 | | | |

With the increase in percentage of companies who are spending on CSR, the trend analysis of CSR spending shows a positive response of corporates. However, most of the spending was observed in education and healthcare sectors which may be due to high visibility of the initiatives. Although most of the businesses are directly or indirectly linked with agriculture and nine out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are related to agriculture, the analysis of overall CSR spending by corporates and spending in agriculture during the financial year 2014-15, shows that the expenditure in agriculture is negligible and there are only a few corporates who are spending a significant amount of their CSR budget on agriculture (Sharma. N.N, 2017). Hence, there is a need for leveraging CSR funds for the benefit of farmers and agricultural development.

Interventions of Corporates in Agriculture as CSR activities

There are some success stories, wherein, Corporates have invested in agriculture as part of CSR activities and made a significant improvement in the project areas in terms of adoption of improved agricultural practices, conservation of natural resources, reduction in external inputs and cost of cultivation, enhancing the collective bargaining capacities, strengthening value chain, empowerment of socio – economic status *etc.* A few success stories are given below.

Case - 1: Success story of ACC Limited in promoting LEISA as part of CSR

Issues: Farmers are heavily dependent on fertilizers and pesticides and agriculture is not seen as a profitable business venture.

Intervention: In order to reduce the cost of cultivation, use of traditional knowledge with modern agriculture techniques, help the farmers to increase income from their farm and provide customers with quality products, ACC Limited has initiated the promotion of LEISA as part of CSR in Bargarh in Odisha state. The interventions such as training to the farmers on preparation of Bio inputs for Integrated Pest Management, Integrated Nutrient Management, Formation of Farmers Interest groups and federating at higher level and developing local youth, linking them with Government schemes, Marketing support for Agri outputs *etc.*, were taken up by ACC Limited.

Outcome: ACC limited is working with 33 FIGs (Farmers Interest Groups) with membership of around 400 farmers and individual membership of 500. The vegetables are being sold in four prominent locations in Bargarh town with support from ATMA. The groups have been federated under the banner of Maa Samaleshwari Krishak Sangha. A total of 12 VLEs (Village Level Entrepreneurs) were trained for supporting farmers. The group has got an order of nearly Rs.3.0 lakhs from an FPO in U.P. Some more orders are expected from Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand groups.

Future Plan: ACC Limited has proposed to undertake the following activities in the future:

- Proposed to link the group with SFAC (Small Farmers Agri Business Consortium Farmers Federation) or with NABARD.
- Introduce farm mechanization to reduce dependency on labour.
- Increase the number of VLEs in each village from 2 to 4 and increase the scope of their operation in purchase of agri inputs and output product marketing.

- Product Registration, Standardization and Certification of input and output products (Rama Krishna, 2017).

Case - 2: Sustainable Cotton Cultivation as CSR activity of Dalmia Cement

Issues: Soil testing is seldom practiced among the farmers; excess application of fertiliser and insecticides is a common practice; farmers are witnessing a declining trend of yield and increased cost of cultivation; a minimum of Rs. 20,000 per acre is incurred towards cultivation; yield per acre is about one tonne and they earn Rs. 45,000 per tonne but not on par with the global yield; there is no collective selling of the produce; lack of latest technology and holistic approach to end to end cultivation process.

Interventions: Handholding and supporting farmers to accelerate cultivation of cotton that will fetch better returns for the farmers and ensure production in coherence with the environment where it is grown through various approaches such as organising 1200 farmers into 37 learners groups consisting of 20 to 30 farmers each; identification of a lead farmer per learner group; capacitating of lead farmers; individual Farmer Cards, establishing ensuring linkage with KVK, Cotton Research Institute and Association; mapping of local supply chain and equipping them to meet the global requisites; conducting regular trainings and exposure visits as per project objectives in addition to the innovative extension interventions like a street play on soil and water conservation and indigenous technology; organising of farmers into Farmers' Club and federating them into producer organisation.

Outcome: Based on the individual farmer's field book, there is reduction in pesticide use by 10%; reduction in fertiliser use by 10%; reduction of water use by 10%; yield increase by 5 - 10%; Elimination of child labour; Influence of women; Profitability increase by 5 - 10%; Formed six producers organisations. (Bharathi, 2017).

Case - 3: Integrated Watershed Development Program by NABARD & Lupin Foundation

Issues: Buchkewadi and Muthalne villages of Junnar block, Pune, Maharashtra were selected for watershed development as the area was facing severe water scarcity, soil erosion; area is technically feasible for undertaking watershed, the area consists of more backward community population and the community is willing to participate in the program.

Interventions: The activities such as water absorption trench, continuous contour trench, gully plug, plantation; construction of farm bund, stone bund,

stone outlet, water ways and grass plantation, cement nala bund, loose boulder structures, Gabion; percolation tank desiltation, MI Tank, farm pond, Shivkalin Tank; plantation of horticultural crop and installation of drip irrigation *etc.* were introduced by NABARD and Lupin Foundation.

Impact: (i) Social Impact: promoted and capacitated village based Institutions for sustainable development of the village; Social Fencing (Ban on open grazing & tree cutting); ensured sustainability of work by collecting Rs. 5 lakhs contribution from the community for maintenance; significant changes in village family assets.

(ii) Environmental Impacts: 24 ha fallow land is brought under cultivation; ground water level has been increased with average 2 m height; defunct wells were reduced from 12 to 4; seasonal irrigated area was increased by 200.72 ha.

(iii) Other impacts: Net cropped area in *Kharif* season increased by 96 ha; Net crop area in *Rabi* season increased by 218 ha; Crops grown in the area shifted from Paddy to cash crops like potato, onion, floriculture and horticulture; drip irrigation was promoted on 46 ha & polythene mulching on 12 ha area with loan support from CANARA bank; a total of 281 tribal families have benefited; 33 ha area was brought under horticulture cultivation; fodder quantity increased by 317 tons; Milk production increased from 190 lit/day to 540 liters/day; 36.20 ha area was brought under perennial irrigation; Buchkewadi village got state level Sant Van Gram Puraskar award during the year 2016; first prize for “Model Agriculture Village” was awarded by Zilla Parishad, Pune. (Venkatesh, 2017)

Selection of Activities by the Corporates under CSR

Companies generally prefer to invest CSR fund to offset the negative impact of their activities/production unit. Ex. Packaged drinking water plant, cool drinks manufacturing company *etc.* are preferred to invest in water conservation. Similarly, Thermal power plant may be preferred to invest in plantation as these activities are in the bottom line of their company. Besides this, most of the companies may be interested to invest in the activities which give immediate and tangible results. Ex: construction of toilet is a one shot investment, and the end result is visible within a short time; it will also help the companies to project their achievement easily. On the other hand, in agriculture and allied sectors it takes a long time to show the achievements and companies have to work in the remote and risky areas. Many corporates may not have adequate knowledge on the issues of the farm sector and the nature of activities that can be undertaken as CSR interventions. Sometimes, as a Responsive CSR, the corporates may be interested in creating generic social impacts

through distribution of certain freebies in their working area, which will not create any economic value to the people and the development may not be sustainable. Instead, as a strategic CSR, if they transform the value chain activities to benefit society through creation of economic value by leveraging capabilities to improve the salient areas of competitive context, the development would be long lasting.

Hence, the department of agriculture and allied sectors have to sensitize the companies falling in the ambit of CSR rules on various agriculture related issues; and potential areas of activities which can be supported for agriculture development through CSR fund. The potential activities should address the challenges of agriculture and allied sectors such as deteriorating soil health; depleting water and other natural resources; decreasing size of farm holding; input use inefficiency; costly and scarce agriculture labour; drudgery in farming operations; information, knowledge and skill gaps; poor access to credit and investments; slow diffusion of relevant technologies; competitiveness of quality and prices in export & domestic markets; inadequate focus on processing and value addition; Low profitability of agriculture; inadequate rural infrastructure; poor access to resources and services for women in agriculture; weak institutional linkages and convergence; occurrence of extreme events of climate change, low productivity of animals *etc.*

The real challenge remains in diffusion of the technologies generated by the research system to the farmers through an effective extension delivery system to address these challenges. Thus, extension is strategic to the growth of agriculture and allied sectors and enhancing the farmers' income. However, public extension services are criticized for poor performance with lack of accountability to clients, lack of relevance and quality of their programs. This is mainly due to various limitations faced by the extension system such as inadequate resources; inadequate competency and skills of extension workers towards market orientation, lack of value orientation and IT; limited Research-Extension-Farmer-Market linkages; lack of convergence between departments and schemes; inadequate budget; procedural delay in release of funds and lack of transparency; inadequate operational flexibilities; top down approach of schemes and programs; lack of farmer participation in extension planning and implementation *etc.*

Therefore, the proposed CSR projects in agriculture have to be Scalable, Replicable and Sustainable considering suitable ecosystems and human values; leveraging and convergence; inclusive growth; technology for empowerment; resilient supply chain *etc.*

Focus Areas for CSR in Agriculture for Sustainable Development

Environmental Sustainability: Environmental issues are most important to the agriculture sector, and the present agriculture sector is moving away from environmental sustainability for various reasons. Environment plays an important role in agricultural production. It has high influence on the growth, development and yield of crops, incidence of pests and diseases, water needs and fertilizer requirements. Any change in the environment may cause damage to crops, soils and affect the soil quality, air quality, water quality and bio-diversity of flora and fauna. Hence, there is a huge scope for investment through CSR fund on sustaining the environment.

Natural Resource Management: India has only 4 per cent of the fresh water resources and 17 per cent of the global population. Agriculture uses 70 per cent of the water resources. Population growth, extreme events of climate change, over exploitation, imbalanced external application of input, changing land use pattern, changing food habits, *etc.*, are increasing the pressure on fragile natural resources. Hence, conservation, optimum use and recycling of natural resources is very important for ensuring sustainable food and nutritional security.

Studies shows that watershed activities undertaken under CSR have made a significant impact in terms of increased crop productivity, increased cropping intensity, increased greenery coverage, reduced surface runoff and facilitated groundwater recharge, reduced soil erosion, increased fodder availability, helped to increase the milch animal population thereby doubling the farmers income within 4 to 5 years. Watershed activities have also helped the communities to address food security and livelihood issues without degrading natural resources. Therefore, there is a lot of scope for investment in natural resource conservation and management as CSR activities.

Innovation and Technology led Development: Some of the key areas that can revolutionize the profitability of agriculture are Information and Communication Technology, on-farm mechanization, precision farming, climate smart technologies, real time weather information, and dissemination of weather based advisory services through ICT platform, establishment of custom hiring centers, *etc.* Hence, there is a huge potential for investment under CSR in creating such infrastructure and support innovation and technology led growth.

Social Development: The important actors for development of society in the rural areas are Youth and Women. The success of agriculture is critical for the survival

of all rural communities (half the population), and to feed the whole population. Empowering women will make the largest difference to the whole family and avoid the most dramatic of human abuses. Malnutrition in rural areas needs to be tackled at the source - agriculture and rural communities. Engaging youth is critical for the long-term viability of agriculture. Therefore, there is a huge investment potential for social capital development through training, developing and nurturing them as producer's organizations *etc.*

Entrepreneurship Development: Agriculture all over the world is going through a phase of transition. In this changing scenario, agriculture is taking new shape and expanding its scope beyond the limits of mere crop cultivation and animal husbandry for livelihood of the rural population. Activities like diversification, value addition, precision farming, high-tech agriculture, agripreneurship, organic farming *etc.* are gradually getting due attention of people involved in redefining agriculture.

There is considerable complementarity between agriculture and industry and the growth of one is dependent upon the growth of the other. Hence, both are equally important for the economic development of the country. All round development of agriculture is possible only with effective exploitation of entrepreneurial behaviour skills as well as material resources. To create and maintain an environment that encourages profitable, market-oriented farm businesses, CSR fund can be utilized for creating the required infrastructure, enhance entrepreneurial skills, provide access to credit and finance, create training facilities, linking them to the market *etc.*

Livestock Development: Though Livestock is considered as a sunrise sector, the potential of this sector has not been fully explored due to limited public expenditure. Though India possesses huge livestock resources, the production and productivity is very less. The future growth of Indian agriculture lies in paying more attention to the livestock sector as returns on investment are higher in this sector. The contribution of the livestock sector to the overall agricultural sector is rising over the years. The sector shows high potential for contribution to GDP. Yet, the allocation of funds to this sector is incommensurate with its contribution to agricultural GDP. The potential interventions in Livestock would be breed improvement, nutritional support, health management, establishment of cattle development center, milk collection center, chilling center, milk processing center, promotion of Goat / Sheep and backyard poultry as an enterprise *etc.*

Market Development: Markets are core to economic growth. Working the whole agricultural value chain is needed for profitable and viable agriculture as an enterprise. This not only enables farmers to have access to required inputs but also bring their products to the market in an efficient and effective way. Building entrepreneurial skills and agribusiness are a key part of developing value chains. Untapped opportunities exist for creating the value chains for agri produce. There is a lot of scope for investment on market development and reducing the level of intermediaries.

Effective Farm Advisory Services: The potential investment areas for CSR activities in extension delivery are as follows:

- Development of competency of field extension functionaries of agriculture and allied sectors (over 1.25 lakhs) on various emerging areas is a huge task and requires adequate budget.
- Irrespective of any interventions in agriculture, capacity building component has to be inbuilt into the program design and behavioral change has to be brought about among farmers. Hence, capacity building of farmers through training, demonstration, exposure visits, technical back stopping/ hand holding is required on a large scale.
- CSR agencies may adopt villages which are agriculturally backward and develop as model villages by adopting good agricultural practices. The model villages can be used for demonstration and replication across the country. Area specific long term agriculture plan may be prepared and implemented under CSR project for addressing agriculture related problems.
- There is a lot of scope for investment on rural youth for promotion of agri-preneurship for self-employment as well as enhancing their employable skills for creating an opportunity for better employment through skill oriented training programs.
- So far, a total of 53,544 agripreneurs have been trained by MANAGE under ACABC scheme. Of these, 23,470 have established their ventures. One of the reasons for less establishment is inadequate financial support and credit from banks. Hence, there is a huge potential for investment for promotion of agri-start ups; in-turn the young agripreneurs will provide need based multiple services to the farmers.
- Formation and nurturing of Farmers groups / Community based organizations/ Cooperatives. Providing Working capital / Revolving fund for CIGs/

farmers groups to undertake activities like collective procurement of farm inputs, group processing, value addition, collective marketing and any other innovative activities.

- Investment for creating infrastructure for customized/personalized mobile and other ICT based integrated agro-advisory services to the farmers.
- For every two villages one Farmer Friend is working for extension under ATMA. Capacity building of about 3 lakh Farmer Friends at grass root level is a crucial link in extension and it requires huge investment.
- Establishment of a single point resource center for agriculture and allied sectors at village level similar to Raitha Samparka Kendra (RSK) in Karnataka state and routing all the activities through RSK. RSKs can also be used as training centers for the farmers.
- Production of Videos on improved and innovative agricultural technologies and dissemination of technologies through video to the farmers.
- Creating awareness about flagship programs of center and state government to involve the local community for better impact of such programs.
- Activities such as custom hiring centers, milk chilling units, fish fingerling production, etc can be taken up on PPP mode with the help of agripreneurs and rural youth to provide production support services to the farmers.
- MANAGE is implementing a one-year diploma course titled 'Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input Dealers (DAESI)', spread over a period of 48 weeks, with 40 classroom sessions and 8 Field visits on Market holidays, which imparts relevant and location-specific agricultural education to equip the input dealers with sufficient knowledge to transform them into para-extension professionals so as to enable them to address the day-to-day problems being faced by the farmers at the field level. The course fee is Rs 20,000/- of which, 50% (*i.e.*, Rs 10,000/- per input dealer) is subsidized by DAC, GoI. Agribusiness companies can also sponsor the candidates / input dealers for the program. Agribusiness companies' sponsorship can be considered for tax benefit under 35 CCC, subject to other conditions laid in the notification. So far, a total of 5246 candidates have been trained under DAESI. A large number of input dealers (about 2.82 lakh) are yet to be trained. CSR fund could be used to provide free health insurance to farmers and also cover crop insurance.

- A Group of companies can come together to address agriculture related issues through CSR project at block / district level.

Suggested Implementation Mechanism of CSR activities

- A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for promoting CSR activities in agriculture and extension may be initiated at the national level with the support of an organization like the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), GoI, Hyderabad.
- The CSR fund for agriculture and allied sectors may be channelized through SPV in a Consortium approach with the involvement of various partners.
- Consortium approach may be supported and guided by the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee shall have a broad based representation and participation of various stakeholders such as representatives of donor agencies, agricultural and allied department officials, representatives of implementing partners and farmer representatives.
- The Steering committee shall evolve a Vision, Annual agenda and reach out to Business and Industry Associations and share experiences of existing projects.
- The Steering Committee shall receive the proposals from the implementing agencies across the country, scrutinize the proposals and approve the suitable proposal based on the relevance, importance and technical soundness of the proposal and release the fund accordingly.
- Funds from Donor agencies/companies/departments shall be received by Consortium.
- A proper Monitoring system shall be put in place at national, state and project level for effective monitoring of implementation of the project including the delivery of input and other services.
- The steering committee shall meet periodically to evolve and pursue the mandate of CSR for agricultural development, scrutinize and approve new proposals, review the progress of implementation of the sanctioned projects.
- A knowledge bank may be created to share experiments, learnings, best practices that will add value to the future CSR spend.
- Sharing of best CSR practices among various stakeholders by organising workshops and seminars at regular intervals.
- Identification of a common geographical area to undertake CSR projects in agriculture.

- All the members of the consortium shall provide their technical, financial and other inputs based on individual expertise and initiate a few high impact projects.
- An online platform (csrforagri) may be created, gaps in the field and potential needs of the farmers may be posted and updated regularly for the attention of corporates to facilitate CSR spent.

Good Practices for Effective Implementation of CSR Activities

- The projects should be in line with the company objectives and also address the issues of farmers.
- Awareness about the issues in the agriculture sector have to be created among corporates intensively on a mission mode.
- Engaging in regular consultation with the community and understanding of local needs by the implementation team.
- Implementation of the projects have to be preferably on the PPP mode to harness each other's strengths. Partners have to be selected based on strengths.
- Involvement of farmers has to be ensured and community mobilization has to be strengthened from planning till the completion of the project.
- Convergence of various flagship programs of both state and central government is essential to attain synergy.
- Transparency has to be ensured in utilization of funds.
- Mechanism for Documentation and Reporting has to be established.
- CSR activities should boost the confidence of the villagers through mutual cooperation and trust.

Conclusion

In order to achieve inclusive growth in agriculture, a huge investment for creation of infrastructure on production, processing, marketing, farm advisory services, developing social capital are essential. It is not possible to achieve inclusive growth by the public sector alone. There are a good number of success stories / models which benefit the farmers. These success stories are scalable and replicable with adequate funding support from CSR component of various players. Hence, it is high time for both public and private sectors to come together and join hands in the developmental process to double the farmer's income and make farming sustainable.

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