

## **Proceedings of Review Workshop on Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture Project in Virtual mode on 5 July, 2022**

Agricultural Extension Division, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi organized the Annual Review Workshop of “Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture Project” in Virtual mode on 05 July, 2022.

Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary (DARE) & Director General (ICAR), in the inaugural session of the Workshop during the Chairman’s remarks appreciated the KVKs for the successful implementation of ARYA project. ARYA has been the flagship project of ICAR and the same was flagged on various platforms. Because attracting youth to agriculture is very important. Dr. R.S. Paroda conducted a similar kind of workshop on Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture. So, motivation attraction, and retention all are important. Therefore, motivation, proper handholding, and proper support are essential for attracting youth and making their enterprise truly beneficial. He congratulated all the ARYA implementing KVKs. To tell the success story about ARYA from 2015-16, we need to have analysis on how gainful engagement in the enterprise is continued for 3 to 4 years; how many youths are enabled; how many have continued in that enterprise. Cases on those discontinued enterprises are also to be analyzed. Lessons learnt from successful and unsuccessful will be quite useful in taking forward the ARYA program. Therefore, we should analyze it very critically. Where we succeeded and why as much with regard to continuation, with regards to expected benefits and with regard to having a kind of change in the project, how others in the same area have been motivated to engage in similar kind of enterprises. Thus, starting similar kind of enterprise after learning from the experience of form youth who have become entrepreneurs is equally important so that multiplier effect happens. If it is not happening, then we have to see why, and therefore we need to have analysis. And if required third party can be involved to do such analysis.

As a process to highlight the success, KVKs are bringing out videos, publications, press coverage etc. which need to be further encouraged. We would have at least 20 to 50 entrepreneurs per KVK very successfully running their enterprise. So, for 100 KVK, if we say 50 from each, then it would be 5,000 youth who can be our brand ambassadors. KVKs cannot reach nook and corner of the country, but we can plan how we can actually engage with these brand ambassadors to be successful. They can act as promoters of ARYA project and help us to attract more and more youth in agriculture. Of course, we can take up some enterprises which are quite proven like backyard poultry, finger ling production, processing and value addition, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation etc. These enterprises have potential and have been demonstrated after implementation we have also observed they yielded quite satisfactory results. It would be worthwhile to consider some other enterprises where skill development is involved. For instance, we can include farm mechanization.

Whatever capacity building we can do, we are on the right path, but, addition of new aspects which may appear challenging to youth is equally important. Because, in that process, we can attract more talented youth to agriculture. For instance, by including drone and farm machineries, we can attract some of the talents of youth. Also, agriculture graduates can be attracted to establishing agri clinics, soil test analysis and advisory etc., We need to explore using analysis like PRA about what are all the new ideas, what aspect have opportunity, in which area, which region, what is attractive, what would be most desirable to be implemented. Based on that,

capacity building and handholding need to be done. For agriculture infrastructure fund, we can guide the youth through KVKs to write proposals on high-tech horticulture, floriculture, processing, and value addition so as to get more funds. So, there is an opportunity for the youth to take up projects and the scale of the operation could be higher level. Group enterprise, and individual enterprise are also to be encouraged. We have to be careful while forming the group to avoid conflicts. Individuals are also should be motivated to start enterprise. How can we give information about government schemes and program? capitalize and how best KVK are also be adequately informed about the schemes so that they can better support youth and making them entrepreneurs. There is plenty to talk about. ARYA program is running very successfully and therefore it is a satisfying moment for us.

How do expand and replicate? Very good documents to access CSR funding. Documents with pieces of evidence, and excellent economic analysis. Try to get additional funding so that youth is attracted. We need funds from various Government schemes. We should use this opportunity. We have to continue this ARYA project. We know that youth can be attracted and retained and therefore important. Youth including women. Analysis of how women are involved. How women can be mainstreaming. Women are running successful enterprises. we can build a very good document with very good analysis it can be taken to a higher level for appreciation and taking ARYA project to a higher level. We can reward KVKs, even government awards, KVKs scientists are to be rewarded at the ICAR level. I congratulate all KVKs who have put in a lot of effort. Continuing, newer enterprises, continue to interface who are already implementing, they are torch bearers, spreading the messages across the country. How can make ARYA project be successful? This is a successful program and we have to highlight it properly.

Dr.A.K.Singh, Deputy Director General (Agricultural Extension) remarked that a lot of work have been done in the field. Most importantly giving a large number of training to youth is important, but what is more important is how to transform them into successful entrepreneurs. That is why this ARYA project was brought into. ATARIs can get additional funding from various sources by submitting proposals to State Governments and thus it can be upscaled to all KVKs. The source of funds may be the infrastructure development fund or any other funding. Preparing good proposals and bringing out good documents will help convince stakeholders and bring more funds.

Dr. Randhir Singh, ADG (Agricultural Extension), during his welcome address briefed about the ARYA project. He said that ARYA project was started in 2015-16 initially in 25 KVKs, later on in 2018-19 in 96 KVKs, and 100 KVKs in 2019-20 across the country. Depending upon agro-climatic conditions, more than 25 enterprises are being covered and 4 enterprises are chosen per KVK. He also said that horticulture nursery units are established, livestock units are providing more employment opportunities, and beekeeping which is a seasonal enterprise is providing comparatively less employment to the farmers. Livestock-based enterprises had a higher operational duration in a year than that season-bound enterprises. Group units had higher gross turnover than individual units, but individual units had higher net income. Functional enterprises were owned by younger, more educated, and women entrepreneurs than non-functional enterprises. The number of non-functional units is declining now compared to functional units. There is more asset creation under the ARYA project and increased number of units are

becoming more profitable, as a result, the enterprises are giving more reasonable income to farmers.

Dr. G.Trivedi, Former Vice-Chancellor, RAU, Pusa, Bihar, appreciated the ARYA Project as the youth trained in the project and established micro entrepreneurial units could earn a reasonable income from those enterprises. Based on past experiences and results, the implementation of ARYA project can be further improved. Both men and women may be engaged in enterprises in food processing, value addition, packaging, and branding of farm products and youth can be easily attracted and the younger generation will be interested also. Youth may be encouraged to start enterprises for providing custom hiring services, and tissue culture products on banana, bamboo, and papaya. Young *Divyangs* needs support and therefore, they may be associated ARYA project in one way or other. Further expansion of the ARYA project is to be done in a more systematic way based on experience. Wherever the project is to be implemented, initially let there be wider publicity among young people men and women girls, and young *divyang*. Based on the discussion from those people, enterprises are to be selected for the project. ARYA project achievements of KVKs are appreciated by stakeholders at different levels. This project can be improved by expanding in new areas, the inclusion of new enterprises, and inclusion of new target groups. In new projects, we need to have at Agricultural colleges and Veterinary colleges so that students of Extension can be involved in the field work and thus they will get good practical training.

Prof. K. Narayana Gowda, Former Vice-Chancellor, UASB, Bengaluru, remarked that KVKs have taken up innovatively the implementation of ARYA project across the country creating considerable entrepreneurs. Our concern at this point of time is there are some interventions that have really made a big impact across the country which have been taken up as part of the ARYA project. Some of them have been taken up on a cluster basis and had a considerable impact due to intervention under ARYA. During the last two years, due to the impact of COVID, reversal migration has taken place and many people have gone back to the villages and they are looking for potential opportunities. Most of them do not want to go back to urban areas, rather want to have the best part of their lives in rural areas. How to encourage and support them is one area that requires attention under the ARYA project. The country as a whole is looking for a solution for this kind of issue. ARYA can provide the best possible options to these kinds of people. Only ICAR alone cannot provide the required support for these people. It needs to be joint efforts of the contemporary organizations which are there in the rural areas in the respective districts. They also should come forward to see how this sort of sustainable development of these migrant youth who are keen to have their life in rural areas. Of course, the ARYA also can play a very important role at this point in time based on the experience. Some interventions for example vermicompost which does not require much investment. Even in the case of mushrooms, there are so many opportunities that can be exploited for income generation for youth. The only thing is they cannot be taken up as an individual but as a cluster or group. Even apiary can not be taken up by individual because processing, value addition and branding are to be done and only the group can do it with the support from the project.

ARYA has made good beginning and good experience we have and success stories have been generated. Based on the experience, we need to identify good interventions that can be taken up across the country at a large scale, and also, we need to identify those enterprises which can be

taken up in respective agro-ecological regions. He appreciated the achievement of KVKs and the continued support provided by ATARIs to KVKs. Strengthening marketing for various ARYA-based interventions needs some more attention by the KVKs. For example, if the youth has taken up horticulture nursery, then concerned KVK can link up with Horticulture Department and Panchayats so that it would be easy for the youth. Similarly, depending upon the intervention or output the linkage to marketing may vary. Some of the KVKs have already done, however, such activities may be further strengthened. Because, if the marketing is satisfactory, then the youth will be more comfortable in successfully implementing the enterprise.

Further interventions are to be linked with FPOs in the concerned area so that it will help in two ways. Firstly, the youth can get critical inputs from FPOs and their products can be sold through these FPOs, and this approach will lessen the burden on KVKs in the area of marketing. The future of agriculture lies in mechanization and some of the youngsters who are skilled in engineering aspects can be encouraged to start custom hiring services so that it will not only serve the farmers but also provide employment to youth. Successful case documentation needs to be done uniformly across the country so that the visibility of the ARYA project would go up and it would inspire more youth to take up similar activities. Every KVK needs to share success stories in local newspapers and other social media.

The workshop concluded with a formal Vote of Thanks to the Chair and all participants by Dr. P. Adhiguru, Principal Scientist, Agricultural Extension Division, ICAR.

*Salient Recommendations are given below:*

1. The ARYA centers need to hand-hold the rural youth at all levels including skill training, providing critical inputs, the establishment of the enterprise units, and provision of digital market linkages.
2. The enterprises established under ARYA project should generate reasonable per month/ household.
3. Effective functional linkages to be forged with State Government line departments, stakeholders, ICAR institutes, and Agricultural Universities for achieving better outcomes and wider coverage of the youth in the district.
4. Funds must be fully utilized by KVKs as per the approved plan of activities. Also, host organizations may be advised to release funds in time to KVKs for the ARYA project.
5. The publicity must be given to successful ARYA cases/successful entrepreneurs by the concerned KVKs and success stories are to be documented in the form of a publications, videos, press coverage and shared widely.
6. Case studies on ARYA need to be based on an analysis on how gainful engagement in the enterprise is continued for 3 to 4 years; how many youths are enabled; how many have continued in that enterprise and also should capture multiplier effects.
7. Successful entrepreneurs who can serve as ambassadors of ARYA project need to be identified and encouraged to promote successful and well-proven enterprises among other farmers.

8. All the existing government schemes in the district to be explored and utilized for wider coverage of rural youth. Preparing good proposals and bringing out good documents will help convince stakeholders and bring more funds. Such documents can be used to attract CSR funding, and ICAR awards to KVKs and Scientists involved in the ARYA project.
9. Contemporary organizations which are there in the rural areas in the respective districts can facilitate upscaling of successful enterprises identified in the ARYA project.
10. Those KVKs implementing the ARYA project can share their experiences with other KVKs so that they can take up similar activities with funding support from other sources.