

Agribusiness Management Education: An Overview on Employment Opportunities

S. Sinha *

Department of Agricultural Economics, Sister Nivedita University, Newtown,
Kolkata, West Bengal, INDIA

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Abstract

Agribusiness management education is a discipline mixed of economics, agriculture, business (commerce) and management principles. Agribusiness management as a subject is very recent in terms of origin and gaining rapid popularity among the students as carrier choice. The agribusiness program is planned to develop management workforce to cater agricultural Industry which serves as a good option for the students willing to perform in the corporate sector. Agribusiness management education has great opportunities of employment for Agri-graduates in private, governmental and cooperative sectors. Agribusiness students can get jobs for various posts such as sales executives, credit officers, agri experts, warehousing managers, financing officers, food managers and logistic managers in national and Multinational Corporation. Agribusiness professionals have a bright future in academic field due to new emerging discipline and lack of agribusiness faculties in the country. Agribusiness sector also helps in fighting against the Poverty, Hunger, Malnutrition and unemployment situations in the economy. This article explores the potential opportunities of agribusiness management education which helps in employment generation and entrepreneurship development. Thus, Agribusiness management sector will change more in the upcoming decades than it did in the last century.

Keywords- Agribusiness Education, Agribusiness Students, Employment opportunities and Entrepreneurship Development

Introduction

The term 'Agribusiness' was first introduced by Davis and Goldberg in 1957 in a paper presented at the Boston Conference on Distribution as "the sum total of all operations involved in the production and distribution of food and fibers, which described three interdependent sectors in a global food system. It represents a three-part system made up of (i) the agricultural input sector, (ii) the production sector and (iii) the processing-



manufacturing sector (Sonka and Hudson, 1989). Agribusiness is the business of agricultural production. It includes crop production, seed supply, agrochemicals, farm machinery, distribution, processing, marketing and retailing of agricultural produce to ultimate consumers. Agribusiness is used simply as a portmanteau of agriculture and business within the agriculture industry, referring to the range of activities and disciplines encompassed by modern food production (www.wikipedia.com). Agribusiness has evolved from agriculture and has become a vast and complex system that reaches for beyond the farm to include all those who are involved in bringing food and fiber to consumers. Agribusiness include not only those that farm the land but also the people and firms that provide the inputs (Seed, chemicals, credit), process the output (Milk, grain, meat), manufacture the food products (ice cream, bread, breakfast cereals), and transport and sell the food products to consumers (restaurants, supermarkets). Agribusiness system has undergone a rapid transformation as new industries have evolved and traditional farming operations have grown larger and more specialized (Baruah, 2008 and Bairwa et al., 2012). A company that is doing business transactions with farmers also come under the agri-business sector. These transactions may be either in the form of products or even services. Similarly, suggestions or consultancies for agriculture, seeds, pesticides, supplying agriculture equipment all come under agri-business. In the same way providing loans to agriculture, agriculture insurance, stocking agri-products, transportation, packing, processing, and distribution also come under the same sector (Sunitha, 2009). The policy of liberalization and the establishment of WTO have created more opportunities for globalizing agriculture and allied sector. The agribusiness sector encompasses the many activities of agricultural sector under one umbrella like integration of agricultural inputs, agricultural productions, agro-processing, agricultural marketing and trade which add value to the agricultural produce (Bairwa et al., 2012). Agribusiness is thus a term used for farming plus all the other industries and services that constitute the supply chain from farm through processing, wholesaling and retailing to the consumer.

Importance of Agribusiness Management

The commercial agriculture and agribusiness call for specialized production, postharvest management, expansion of processing, transportation, packaging activities and positioning of products both in the domestic as well as international markets. Agribusiness was widely recognized as an important new field during the 1980s when its unique



characteristics and needs were described by agricultural economists (Bairwa et al., 2014). Sonka (1989) highlighted five ways agribusinesses may be different from other types of firms: 1) the unique cultural, institutional and political aspects, 2) the uncertainty from production, 3) the alternative goals and forms of political intervention, 4) the public sector's contribution toward development of technology, and 5) the variety of competitive structures in the agribusiness sector (Larson, 2013). Agriculture is rapidly changing into a business opportunity and with these trends after harvesting the crop by following technical methods for processing, packaging and transportation the food is being exported to the national and international markets. However, by not taking appropriate measures in our country almost every year 20 to 30 percent of the crop produce is being wasted due to reasons like floods, pests – insects, improper handling, storage, processing, and transportation of agricultural produce and due to not using proper methods at the time of reaping the crops. In the same way vegetables and fruits are also 30 percent being wasted due to lack of processing and storage facilities. However, with changes in business policies and international business organizations entering into the food processing market of India there is an overall boost to the agriculture sector in the country. With the application of advanced technology and managerial skills, many people are investing in poultry, aqua, processing of fruits and vegetables in our country which is turning out into a profitable business. As a result, people are made investment in production, transportation, processing and marketing field. Moreover, agribusiness management is very important for developing countries like India to capitalize on the benefits of globalization and face new challenges to enhance their economy growth. Government, private and other organizations are looking forward for qualified agribusiness managers and the agricultural universities and other agricultural education institutions have taken up the responsibility of providing qualified human resources for agribusiness industry training students with the required business management skills (Sunitha, 2009). Food consumption is also leading the boom in agriculture and agribusiness sector. India is expected to overtake China as the world's largest nation. With the world's youngest population, food and Agri sector is set to triple by 2020 from US \$328 to US \$895 Billion in just six years from now (Bairwa et al., 2013). Huge opportunities in Agribusiness are attracting investments in primary production as well as on the output side in food processing and distribution. Organized retail is growing at 35% CAGR and so many input industries, all of



whom are demanding more capable people to manage growth. This growth will invariably cause major structural shifts in the management of agribusiness enterprises and also will throw up a million opportunities beginning with the agglomeration of land, most likely via lease arrangements with the intent of improving production efficiencies – resulting in expansion of the farm mechanization business, micro irrigation, reorganization of supply chains, investments in food processing, cold chains and agri-infrastructure, to name a few (Puri, 2012). There are a growing number of new companies in the Billion Dollar plus club in the area of processed foods, beverages, nutrition and the plantation sector. Inputs and farm mechanization have several such companies signalling interest in agribusiness and appetite for investment in this sector. Agriculture and allied sector have achieved satisfactory growth since last few decades, but presently due to the various factors the agricultural growth is relatively stagnated (Pandey and Tewari, 2010). The reports from various sources always reveals about the bottlenecks from the sector which put us back in terms of its growth and development. The up gradation of agriculture is needed right from harvesting of agriculture crops till it reaches at consumer fork. Majority of the farmers and small entrepreneurs are not well versed about standard practices required during pre-harvest as well as post-harvest operations, which undoubtedly plays a vital role in overall productivity. In addition to these, growing global population has resulted into disparity between market demand and supply side of agricultural produce. There is need a market and consumer-oriented education system which fulfils the objective of the growth and development of the economy through the income and employment generation. In Agriculture education system, agribusiness management discipline is recent origin and gaining rapid popularity among students and academicians. The agribusiness program is planned to develop management workforce to cater agricultural Industry which serves as a good option for the students willing to perform in corporate sector (Sunitha, 2009). A proper management of all the agribusiness activities right from planting the seed to getting the actual reward at market place is required. These issues are expected to be addressed by management education in agricultural sector which certainly has hidden potential of creating second wave of agricultural revolution.

Employment Opportunities in Agribusiness Management

In the era of privatization and globalization major structural reforms are taking place in the agricultural sector. India is on the threshold of green revolution. Commercialization of



agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries and allied sectors are taking place at a faster pace in the country. National agriculture policy, agricultural reforms like public private partnerships, market lead extension programmes and agricultural technology management programmes envisage market centred production programmes in agriculture and allied sectors to attain sustainability. This fact that food security issues are emerging over the globe, we needed standardized practices for food safety, packaging, quality control, HACCP. To achieving the above envisaged objectives, technocrats endowed with relevant management skills and experience are essential which paved the way for starting the Agribusiness Management programmes for critical management and entrepreneurial competencies to agricultural graduates for enabling them to own and manage Agribusiness enterprises of global standards. Thus, agribusiness managers have great opportunities in agriculture production, agricultural marketing, food processing, supply chain, dairying and retailing sector in national and Multinational Corporation. These MNCs are very interested to investment in industries like agrochemical, organic farming, cattle feed industry, horticultural based industries, poultry, plantation, agro forestry, and ayurvedic industry in order to exploit the potentials of market access in India. Today India's agriculture has become globalised and the idea of integrating Indian agriculture with the world economy is getting support. India has enormous potential as an exporter of agricultural commodities ranging from mushrooms to flowers, spices, cereals, oilseeds and vegetables. The spurt in government support for export of agri-products has evoked considerable interest among the large business houses which have worked out agreements for technology transfer, marketing tie-ups, and management and trading contacts with leading foreign counterparts. Horticulture with its offshoot floriculture has become a focus of export activity. India's exports of roses, carnations, gladioli, chrysanthemums, jasmine and other tropical plants and flowers are touching new heights. This situation creates employment opportunities in the economy directly and indirectly. There are varied opportunities for salaried jobs and entrepreneurship in agriculture and horticulture sector. Landscapers and horticulturists are hired by hotels, health farms, and holiday resorts to beautify their surroundings. Florists and nurseries managers are doing lucrative business especially in the metropolitan cities. Agribusiness management is one of the courses having more opportunities and potential for job within the country and abroad (Puri, 2012). Commercialization of agriculture and allied activities pave way for agribusiness experts to



acquire better jobs in industrial sector. Food business, agribusiness, retail chains, banking, agri-insurance, supply chain management and logistics management are some important career-oriented areas in agribusiness management. A logistics model can provide cost effective access for rural produce to urban markets. Moreover, public private partnerships will help to address some of the rural development issues. This further emphasizes the importance of Agri business, supply chain and logistics management.

Agribusiness is a field where economics, business, and agriculture merge, and individuals often study and gain experience in all three in order to be skilled candidates. Agribusiness management jobs are available in both the public and private sectors, such as government agencies and large corporations. The agribusiness education gives an option of joining the agricultural corporate sector as one of the good career alternatives. The corporate sectors involved in production and distribution of pesticides, fertilizers, seeds, farm equipment are some of the usual options available (Srivastava, 1989). Agribusiness students can join in the warehousing, retail, seeds companies, fertilizers and pesticides companies, banks and insurance sectors. They also can join as agribusiness experts, as management professor, as policy maker, agribusiness researcher and agribusiness consultant in any concerned institutions. They can also look for a career in agriculture consultancy, agri-banking, hi-tech farming and agriculture engineering sectors (Sunitha, 2009). Careers in agribusiness are varied from farming or ranching to commodity broker, food broker, loan officer, marketing researcher/specialist, product analyst, purchasing agent, statistician, and wholesaler. Agribusiness graduates and managers can find career openings in many areas of specialization, including positions such as grain traders, sales representatives in agri-input companies, logistics managers, finance and credit officers, food managers, agribusiness experts and analyst positions in market development organizations. There is a continuing strong demand by agribusiness firms, ranging from large multinational corporations to emerging food manufacturing firms for better trained employees in both management and the agriculture field. These firms are looking for employees who have the skills to make sense of the world around them, especially in a rapidly changing, global agriculture industry.

Recently Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh emphasized on the need for greater attention to local needs by citing an important modern management principle of 'think global and act local'. Logistics could play a key role in integrating rural and urban divide. A best



option of employment can be developed through agriprenurship development. Agribusiness professionals can change their own farming land in to profitable venture by applying the managerial skill plus knowledge and agribusiness managers can perform well in the same due to theirsuitable educational background (Puri, 2012). To shape the Indian agriculture into a commercially viable entity, there is vital need to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship, and then only agriculture can become a major contributor to the nation's gross production. Agribusiness management has wide scope in developing the trained manpower in different area of operations viz. management personnel to cater cooperatives and agriculture industry, policy makers for financial sector, trained teaching staff to cater academic field, technically sound team to serve research area in agribusiness sector (Srivastava, 1989).

Conclusion

Agribusiness is a growing discipline as well as industry sector emerging as promising career options for agribusiness students and has bright scope in both academic and industrial development. Agribusiness management education is necessary for developing trained manpower, to create business opportunities, reduce poverty through employment generation and industrial growth for the true development of Indian agriculture. Now days, the public, private and cooperative organizations are looking for professionally competent and trained agribusiness managers for maintaining growth of the organization. The managerial skills of meritorious agricultural graduates can be developed through agribusiness management education by academic institutions so that they can prove as effective agribusiness managers in the national and international corporate organizations. Thus, agribusiness management professionals have good and ample opportunities of employment or jobs in private, public and cooperative sector. They have opportunities in academic field as agribusiness faculty along with an alternative of entrepreneurship development.

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