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TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE EDUCATION: A NEED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND LEGISLATIVE ATTENTION

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Introduction:

Agriculture is a crucial sector for our economy, providing livelihoods to millions of people in our country. However, there has been insufficient attention given to agriculture education in our country thus far. In recent years, agriculture education has gained significant attention among young students due to increased employment opportunities and career prospects. Despite this, the standard of agricultural education is not uniform across our country, varying widely among different states. This variation affects the quality of skilled manpower and working professionals available in the industry. To address these issues, there is need to transfer the subject “agriculture education” from the state list to the concurrent list of the Constitution and establishment of a statutory professional council, the National Agriculture Commission (NAC), similar to other professional councils like NMC, BCI, AICTE, VCI, etc. These measures aim to establish unified standards, enhance employability, and promote research within the sector.

Current scenario and reforms required to standardize the agriculture education in our country.

Currently, all types of education (except agriculture education) are categorized under the Concurrent List of the Constitution, while only agriculture education falls under the State List. This provision grants exclusive authority to the states to regulate agriculture education, thereby limiting the power of Union government to make Acts, rules and regulations to improve the standard and uniformity of agriculture education across the country. Due to this



legal jurisdiction Central government not taking direct initiatives for the reforms of Agriculture Education as agriculture is in the state list and most of the States do not give priority to Agriculture Education. Due to this, the Agriculture Education is completely neglected.

- 1) **Non-uniformity in agriculture education:** Different states have their own curriculum and Standards for agriculture education, which leads to non-uniformity in education and difficulty in Comparison between students from different states.
- 2) **Need to establish national and state level statutory regulatory body:** Many states lack a statutory regulatory council to oversee agricultural education in both government and private institutions. Furthermore, these states lack regulations pertaining to the establishment of new Agricultural Universities or colleges. As a consequence, there is no defined standard for opening new agriculture colleges, and most private agriculture colleges fail to meet land requirements etc. So, there is immediate need to statutory Apex regulatory body in India to regulate agriculture education. This leads to Unified approach to agriculture education and research, eventually promote the development of the sector. The absence of a minimum standard for agriculture education further exacerbates these issues within educational institutions.
- 3) **In place of accreditation system adopt recognition/approval system:** Instead Of continuing with the accreditation system, the government could consider implementing an Approval system like National Medical Commission (NMC). The NMC's approval system ensures That only recognized institutions are permitted to offer courses, which helps eliminate the issue of Disparities between accredited and non-accredited institutions. Institutions that meet specific Standards and requirements receive approval or recognition, while those that do not are permitted to offer courses. This system provides an incentive for institutions to maintain high Standards, while also ensuring that students receive education of a certain quality.

However, implementing an approval system would require the Union government to have statutory or constitutional power. Therefore, it may be necessary to transfer of agriculture education to the Concurrent list to enable the government to establish and



enforce nationwide standards for Agricultural education. This would help ensure that students receive high-quality education and that the agricultural sector has access to a well-trained workforce, which is critical for the country's Overall economic growth and development.

- 4) **No harm to federal structure of constitution:** The transfer of agriculture education to the concurrent list would not harm the federal structure of India. This is because all types of education, including technical, non-technical, professional, medical, law, primary, and secondary education, already come under the concurrent list of the Constitution. Through the 42nd constitutional amendment, all types of education except for agriculture education and research were transferred to the concurrent list in 1976.

Main objective of transferring agriculture education from state list to concurrent list:

The main objective of transferring agriculture education to the concurrent list is to establish and maintain a minimum standard for agricultural education across the country. This would ensure that students receive a certain level of education regardless of the state in which they reside. However, states would be free to upgrade the said core curriculum in terms of felt needs as an augmentation of it and not a compromise with the same. State can add subjects or topics with in said curriculum to optimize with their need but they can't reduce or disturb the core curriculum or standards.

The Broad objectives under National Agriculture Commission (NAC) may be :

- 1) To establish State Agriculture council in all states and UT for Proper Regulation of Agriculture education and institution.
- 2) To Constitute following Autonomous Boards
 - (a) the Under-Graduate Agricultural Education Board;
 - (b) the Post-Graduate Agricultural Education Board;
 - (c) the Agricultural Assessment and Rating Board; and
 - (d) the Ethics and Agricultural Registration Board.



- 3) To Conduct a uniform All India Entrance Examination for admission (ICAR- AIEEA UG/PG/PhD) to the undergraduate and postgraduate Agricultural education in all Agricultural institutions in India including Private College/University.
- 4) To Conduct common final year undergraduate Agricultural examination, to be known as the National Exit Test shall be held for granting licence to Agriculture practitioners and for enrolment in the State Register or the National Register, as the case may be.
- 5) To advise the Central and State Governments on all regulatory matters concerning Agriculture practice and education.
- 6) To grant recognition or withdrawal of recognition of Agricultural qualifications granted to Agricultural institutions in India including private Colleges/Universities.
- 7) To prepare and maintain the Indian Agriculture Practitioners Register containing the names of all persons who possess the recognized Agricultural qualifications and who are for the time being enrolled in the Central Register and on a State Agriculture Register of the State to which National Agriculture Commission Act extends.
- 8) To lay down minimum standards of Agriculture education Required for granting recognized Agricultural qualifications by Agricultural Institutions.
- 9) To lay down the standards of professional conduct, etiquette and code of ethics to be observed by Agriculture practitioners.
- 10) To implement the provisions of the Act, and Rules and Regulations framed there under.
- 11) Issue license to Agricultural professionals.

Conclusion

To address these problems, it is necessary to transfer agriculture education from the state list to the concurrent list of the Constitution. This will enable the Union government to make Acts, rules and regulations to improve the standard and uniformity of agriculture education across the country, and ensure a level playing field for all students pursuing agriculture education in India. It will also pave the way for the establishment of a statutory apex regulatory body for agriculture education and research, which can promote the development of the sector in a unified and coordinated manner.