

A Study on – Participation of Educated Youths In Agro-Based Industries with Special Reference To The Kamrup District of Assam

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INTRODUCTION

The Oxford English Dictionary defines entrepreneur as one who undertakes an enterprise specially contractor acting as intermediary between capital and labour. The classical economists did not attach much importance to the term entrepreneur, since under perfect competition the role of entrepreneur would change into a General Manager. Adam Smith, for instance, accorded little importance to entrepreneurship. Thus, right from Adam Smith to Marshall the role and importance of entrepreneurship was not accorded due importance. According to Schumpeter, an entrepreneur maximizes his profits by innovations. Innovation may refer to the introduction of improved methods of production, entering new markets, locating alternative sources for raw materials and organization of an industrial enterprise. Entrepreneurship is synonymous with entrepreneurial role.

Entrepreneur bears risk and uncertainty. He is not merely an innovator but also develops new areas, recruit and trains labour, accumulate capital reduce costs through new technology and develop new markets. The qualities of entrepreneur include initiative, innovation, decision making, capacity of hard work and ability to lead people. The entrepreneur promotes to vision with enthusiastic passion. They assess cost market or customer needs and persuade others to join and help.

Keeping all the above aspects of Entrepreneurship in an Agro- entrepreneur he is merely confined to the field of agriculture, making and producing the agricultural products with the characteristics of an entrepreneur who functions as one. Examples of areas where agricultural entrepreneurs associate themselves includes raise and sell fishing bait, custom crop harvesting, operating a roadside marketing selling produce etc. In Assam they are mostly engaged in Grain-Mill products industry (rice, oil and flour mills), food processing industry, jute products, bee industry, textile industry, tea industry etc. Among these food processing industry shows a rising trend in Assam where a good number of women are engaged in production of indigenous sweets and snacks of Assam. Traditional food items like pitha, laru, various types of rice powders are commercially produced in the state. Some entrepreneurs exported these local delicious items through online market system. There is also an emerging trend in the field of food preservation industries in micro and medium enterprise sectors. Handloom and handicraft products of the state also attract the interest of most of the foreign countries. Government provided training facilities, marketing facilities and also financial help to such type of micro small medium enterprise to boost their product.

OBJECTIVES

- To observe the willingness of the young generation towards Agro-Entrepreneurship.
- To study the entrepreneurial skill among the young generation.
- To highlight the problems and prospects of agro based industry in the field of entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is done in the Kamrup District of Assam which is situated in Lower Assam of North-Eastern Region of India. The study area covers the various Post-Graduate students from the institutions/Universities/Colleges located in the study area.

RESEARCH TYPE

The research study has been conducted to fulfil the objectives of the study. It involves application of various techniques such as survey method, preparation of Questionnaire, etc. of research methodology. The research type is both Descriptive and Analytical in nature.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH-

The main purpose of the descriptive research is to describe, explain or validate some sort of hypothesis or objective when it comes to a specific group of people.

ANALYTICAL RESEARCH-

The main objective of analytical research is to analyse the collected data to fulfil the objectives of the present research.

SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

Both Primary and Secondary sources were used to collect the data required for the study.

Primary data are collected from the PG students with the help of a questionnaire in order to observe the willingness of the young generation towards agro-based industry and to study the entrepreneurial skill among young generation.

Secondary data were collected from the government portals, journals, newspapers, articles and other published reports of the agricultural department of Assam in order to ascertain the various problems and prospects of the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The field study was done by collecting primary data through a closed-ended Questionnaire where the respondents were to select from multiple given options.

METHODS OF SAMPLING

The research has been conducted on the basis of Probability Sampling and the sample is drawn using simple random sampling method. The field work of the study is restricted to PG students of Kamrup Metro District of Assam only.

The sample size taken for the study is 200 which have been randomly selected from college/university/institutions. Analysis has been done using graphical diagrams, tabulation, percentage analysis, and charts.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : There is no relationship between willingness and skill of Agro-Entrepreneurship among the educated youth.

H_1 : There is relationship between willingness and skill of Agro-Entrepreneurship among the educated youth.

Now, showing the relation between willingness to be agripreneurs and entrepreneurial skill among the educated youths towards Agro based entrepreneurship with the help of a Hypothesis.

Where,

H_0 = There is no relation between willingness and skill of agri-entrepreneurship among the educated youths.

H_1 = There is relation between willingness and skill of agri-entrepreneurship among the educated youths.

To solve the same the variables taken are X and Y

X= willingness to be agripreneurs

Y= entrepreneurial skill among the educated youths

Using Arithmetic mean the formula of which is

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{n}$$

\bar{X} = Arithmetic mean

$\sum x$ = Sum of the numbers

n= Total sample size

So, taking the above formula the arithmetic mean for X is,

$$\sum x = 128$$

$$n = 200$$

$$x = 128/200$$

$$= 0.65$$

Now, the arithmetic mean for Y is,

$$\sum y = 32$$

$$n = 200$$

$$y = 32/200$$

$$= 0.32$$

Since, $X \neq Y$, we can drop to a conclusion that the null hypothesis is true and there is indeed no relation between WILLINGNESS AND SKILL of Agro based Entrepreneurship.

Hence, we accept the null hypothesis.

ADAPTABILITY OF AGRIPRENEURSHIP AS A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT IN ASSAM

In a country, like India, where unemployment is the root cause behind its slow growth rate, Entrepreneurship has been considered as the only way to develop in a greater pace. Agriculture being a primary sector of Indian Economy shares 17-18 per cent in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as per Indian Economic Survey 2018. And also employs more than 50% of the total workforce of the country.

Assam, the state of agriculture, is an agriculture based economy with 69% of total population engaged in it. Agriculture accounts for more than a third of Assam's income and employs 69% of total workforce. Assam's biggest contribution to the world is its tea. It produces some of the finest and most expensive teas in the world. However, though it contributes fair share of rice, wheat, jute, potato, sweet potato, etc. in the country's production, it is much lower in comparison to the national average. These weaknesses, however, could now be converted into opportunities by capitalizing on the hidden strengths in the form of maximizing production through input optimization, especially when green revolution belt has experienced fatigue. Moreover, Role of an Agripreneur has immense importance in the state. Availability of resources and opportunities has demanded for taking up Entrepreneurship as a source of income generation in the field of Agriculture.

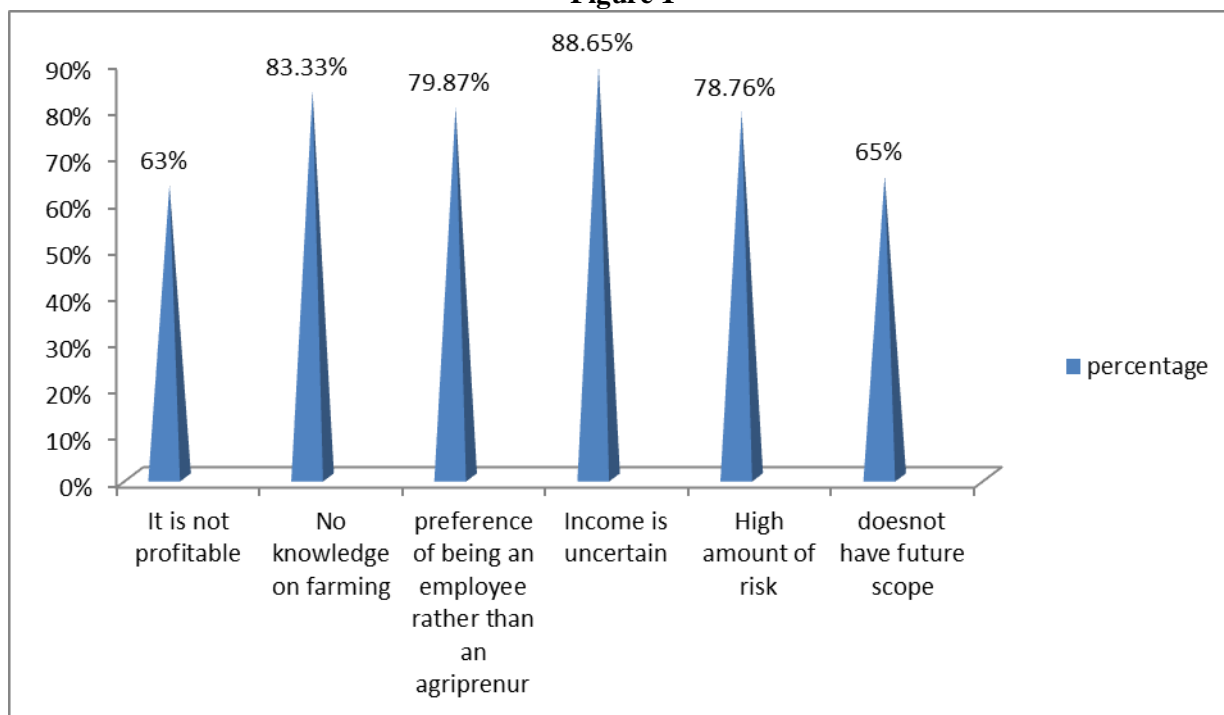
Agriculture based Entrepreneurship would help the farmers in developing their production, turnover and also would create employment opportunities in the state. Assam being endowed with ample of natural resources, it is a fruitful opportunities for the young generation to adapt Agripreneurship as their career. Entrepreneurship in fishery and poultry sector has also been developing in today's date. Making aware of various scopes and dimensions, one can opt for Agripreneurship. But, from the study, it is found that majority from the young generation are not at all interested in Agripreneurship as some of them are not aware of it and majority does not find it profitable. Lack of knowledge on farming has also demotivated today's generation to go for Agricultural sector.

Perception on Agripreneurship among the PG students of Kamrup Metropolitan District of Assam:-

Table - 1

Attribute	Students of Agricultural University	Students of other university	Percentage of Male	Percentage of Female	Total
It is not Profitable	40%	23%	45%	18%	63%
No Knowledge on farming or cultivation	12.67%	70.66%	53%	30.33%	83.33%
Preference of being an employee rather than an Agripreneur	55%	24.87%	26.62%	53.25%	79.87%
Income is uncertain	45.53%	43.12%	35.46%	53.19%	88.65%
High amount of risk	49.33%	29.43%	48.51%	30.25%	78.76%
Does not have future scope	50%	25%	40%	25%	65%

Figure 1



Interpretation

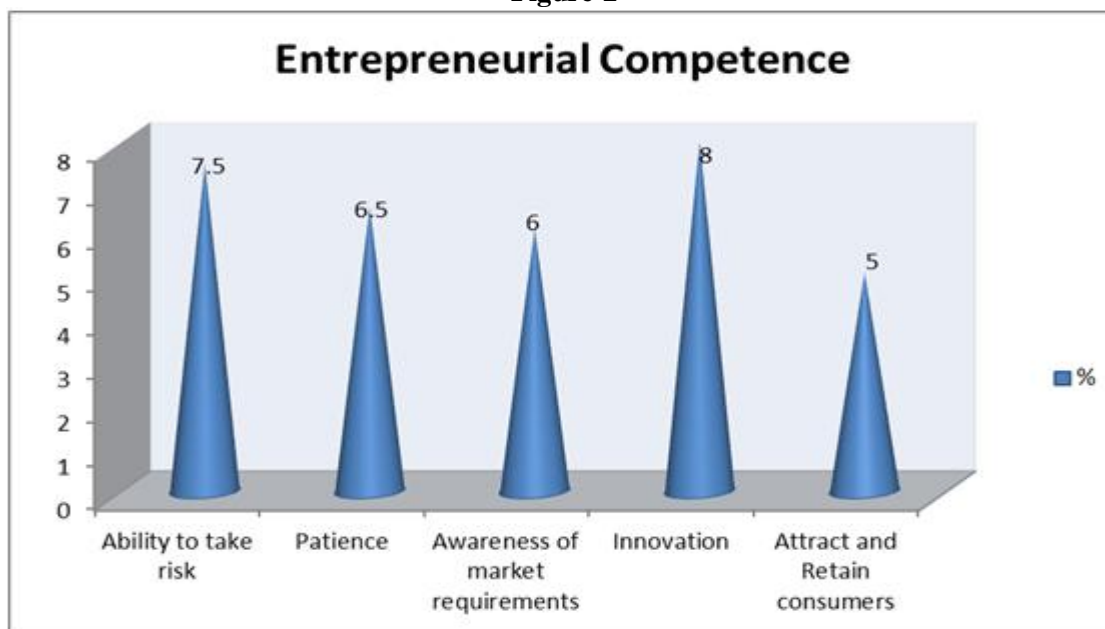
Despite of being in an agro based state, majority of the Post Graduate students are reluctant for taking up Agripreneurship as their career option. It is found that, 63% of the students do not find it profitable at all. They are of the opinion that agriculture has less scope or no scope for future growth. 79.87% of the students would prefer being an employee rather than to be an Agripreneur. 88.65% of the students have the perception of low income in this field and majority of them are having no knowledge on the agricultural sector. They are also of the opinion that it involves high amount of risk in comparison to other sector. However, some of the students were interested in Agripreneurship if they are provided with the required resources and opportunities. Also, from the table it is clear that the most of the students of Agricultural University though they are pursuing education in this sector are not willing for agripreneur. It is found that despite of having sufficient knowledge on farming and cultivation, most of the students takes a back step for Agro based Entrpreneurship.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AMONG THE EDUCATED YOUTH OF THE STATE

India being an Agro based economy where “agriculture” is the backbone of the country sure paves a path for agri-entrepreneurs but the production and productivity of Indian agriculture gives us a dismal picture. The Indian planners in the very beginning of the (first five year) plan stressed on agriculture but still the sector has made no remarkable progress in the recent years hence making the picture vague for agri-entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs who come forward to set up agro-based industries always face lots of problems still there are some prospects for these agro entrepreneurs in setting up micro, small and medium enterprises. With a population of 3.09 crores (Assam) and being the largest city picked as the study area (Guwahati) the unemployment problem not just in this region but all of India is major. Though Assam has a better employment scenario than the national average but its cities still have more jobless educated youths compared to the rest of the country. More than 15 lakh educated youth are unemployed. One of the most attractive way to solve this problem of unemployment is by venturing into the less travelled routes i.e the agro based industries through modernization and commercialization of agricultural sector.

Figure-2



The diagram shows a clear picture about entrepreneurial competence under the heads of ability to take risk, level of patience, awareness of market requirements, innovation and ability to attract and retain consumers. The study shows that the innovative capacity of the respondents is the highest with 80 percent. Second is the risk taking ability with 75 per cent. One of the important characteristics of an entrepreneur is patience during the business ups and downs which is 65 per cent. Awareness regarding agripreneurship is 60 per cent whereas ability to attract and retain consumers is as low as 50% being the most dynamic factor amidst all.

The above diagram depicts a positive scope towards agripreneurship in the our study area. It is the right time to provide the required facilities and immense support to the educated youths for Agripreneurship. Innovation being the most important characteristic of an entrepreneur that ranks the highest among the respondents as well as the risk taking ability is a positive side. While on the other end the very need to attract and retain consumers, just where a business revolves around i.e its customers is found to be 50 percent. Thus, this business skill needs to be moulded.

PROSPECTS OF AGRO BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Assam being a state in which 70% of the total population lives in agricultural land and also dependent on farming for their livelihood, Agro based entrepreneurship is the only way to development. Educated youth of today must be encouraged to come up for taking Agripreneurship as their career growth. With the

advancement of technologies, farming has also become a profitable field. There is a scope for Agripreneurial growth which include the activities like, Dairying, Sericulture, Goat rearing, Rabbit rearing, Fisheries, Shrimp Farming, Sheep rearing, vegetable cultivation, nursery farming, farm forestry, etc. People may also grab the advantage of the state being endowed with glorified flora and fauna. They may opt for entrepreneurship in floriculture which calls for developing various plants and flowers such as medicinal plants, unique flowers, etc. Medicinal plant of the state has further scope as it attracted foreign countries to set up hospitals and invest in a larger scale in it. Government has introduced ample of schemes for the betterment of the farmers in the state which includes Rashtriya Kishan Vikas Yojana and also have announced that the Government will provide 60,000 diesel pump sets, 30,000 electrical centrifugal pump sets and 11,000 solar photovoltaic pumping systems at subsidised rates to farmers under the Rural Infrastructure Development Project, with support from NABARD (National Board for Agricultural Rural Development). The agricultural department is also planning to set up go downs with a capacity of 100 metric tonnes in 150 agriculture development blocks for which Rs 20.79 crore has been announced under the National Agricultural Development Program.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF AGRO BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING

- **Processing units of agricultural products:-** Rice Mill, wheat Mill, Dal Mill, etc. has the capability to capture larger market in different geographical areas. Entrepreneur can evolve new and advanced factories of such processing units.
- **Marketing:-** New generation Entrepreneur can come up with creative and innovative way to market the farm products in and outside the state or country. This may include dealership, distributors, units or branches spreading all over the state or country.
- **Online Portal:-** Online Portal for agricultural products can be opened up providing more convenient and easy delivery process. It will help in increase of customer market.
- **Cluster Farming:-** It involves merging of several small farm holders that are willing to share burden and benefits jointly. It helps in growth and development as it involves sharing of abilities, professionalism, market and customers.
- **Manufacturing units:-** These units produce entirely new products based on the agricultural products used as the main raw material. E.g.-Sugar factories, Bakery, Straw board units etc.

SOME OF THE AGRO-ENTREPRENEURS OF ASSAM ARE AS FOLLOWS

- **Utpal Bora :-** He is a young farmer and entrepreneur from Jorhat, Assam. He is the main supplier of fish seeds like Major Crab, Katla, and Rou to various parts of the state and neighbouring states.
- **Leela Charan Dutta:-** The young man from Jorhat, Assam has been doing some impressive work in the bee keeping industry. At a yearly turnover of around 70 lakhs and a work force of twenty people, Dutta has achieved the status of the most successful honey producer and bee keeper in the NE province of India.

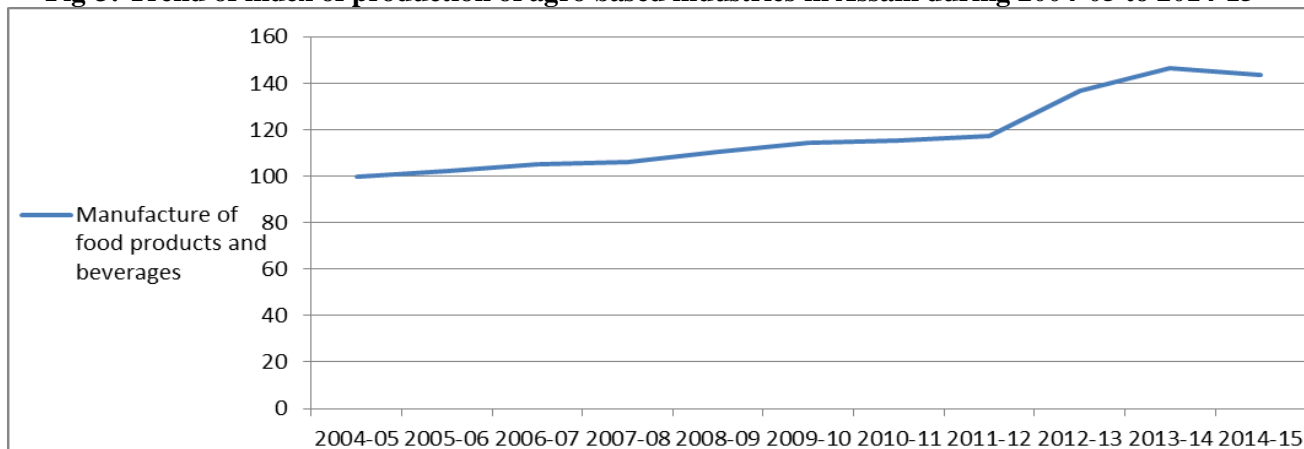
The following table shows a slow rising trend of food manufacturing product in Assam

Table-2: Index of production of agro based industries in Assam during 2004-05 to 2014-15 Base
2004-05= 100

Industry division	weight	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-2015
Manufacture of food products and beverages	61.20	100	102.23	105.27	106.13	110.68	114.18	115.47	117.47	136.70	146.37	143.76

Source: Director of Economic and Statistic, Assam

Fig-3: Trend of index of production of agro based industries in Assam during 2004-05 to 2014-15



PROBLEMS/ BARRIERS TO AGRIPRENEURSHIP

In a developing country like India agriculture is considered as its primary occupation. Although more than 50% of the working population are engaged in agriculture but the sector is not yet organised in a rational manner. This trend has resulted in a poor show in Agripreneurship practices.

In spite of much dominance among all the sectors agricultural sector in India has been subjected to a number of problems.

The following are some of the problems for this poor state of agripreneurs

- 1. Non commercialisation of agricultural sector:** Agricultural practices followed by most of the peasants are not managed on commercial lines. Rather it is still maintained at the level of subsistence farming so as to meet the requirement of food for the entire family throughout the year. Large section of the farmer produces for consumption purpose. No attention is paid on the market demand and they traditionally produce the same crops. Across the country very few group of farmers come forward for commercial cultivation - esp. the cultivators of Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, U.P and Andhra Pradesh adopted commercial cultivation technique. But in Assam the focus is still on the one time crop done for their own consumption. This leaves the agripreneurs with less or no resource to bring in innovation or mass production. Insufficient raw material is a great hindrance in diverting agripreneurship in different products rather than merely streamlining it towards potato farming owing to its considerable production.
- 2. Defective agricultural marketing system-** The price variations in the agricultural produce is yet another factor which results in the insufficient money receipt by the ultimate cultivators . The middlemen avoids gradation of the quality produce with that of the other for the which the ultimate end product will not be of a superior quality hence making it farther difficult for an agripreneur to sustain in a competitive environment with marginal earnings.
- 3. Lack of proper storage-** The only period where the farmers sell their products in abundance is after the harvesting period. Being a seasonal produce with lack of proper storage is an added trouble on the agripreneurs. As they serve the small or medium enterprises and hence it is not possible for them to invest in storage.
- 4. Lack of proper infrastructure-** Though the roads are well developed and has reached in the remote areas highlighting the prospects of agro entrepreneurs but the erratic power supply in the region is the major issue in the inability of running an enterprise since the agripreneurs generally are set up in the rural areas where the problem is more grave.
- 5. Climatic condition-** Assam being a flood affected area each year are the worst sufferers in those months of the years. For an agripreneur their ultimate dependence shall be on the poor workers and the agricultural produce which during the months of flood yields zero productivity. The fluctuation in

weather and gamble of monsoon has created the element of instability in the agricultural operation of the region. Resulting in continuous deficiency of good quality raw materials and have to temporarily stop their production due to lack of workforce.

6. **Lack of skilled and managerial man power-** Most of the working units are still maintained at the household or the family level instead of a commercially viable organised farming unit. Rural areas suffer from rural-urban migration. This results in migration of educated and skilled man power from rural area to urban areas. It happens only because of non-availability of suitable educational institutions in rural areas and the people belonging to rural areas originally are now settled in urban areas resulting in deficiency of skilled man power in rural areas.
7. **Lack of awareness-** The awareness about 'agriprenurship' is the biggest barrier for the expansion of agro based industries in the state. Not finding it a lucrative carrier option the study reveals that not many are willing to venture into this field due to low earnings as assumed. Lack of information and knowledge about opportunities are major obstacles.

Though agriprenurship has shown slow growth in the study area, yet, it has not enough success stories to encourage the educated youth. Despite of high prospects till the time the above stated problems persists this sector shall not be able to ever touch the zenith.

EPILOGUE

Agriprenurship is the only way to economic development of the state. It must be accepted by the new generation entrepreneur as their career option. Government must try the best to spread awareness and also to provide initiatives to the prospective Agriprenur of the state. Moreover, Students of agricultural university should prefer to be in the agricultural field in the most active way since they possess the capability to be an Agriprenur. Assam being mostly dominated by the agricultural sector, there is a great scope for entrepreneurship in agriculture and this potentiality can be grabbed only by effective and tactful management of agricultural elements such as – soil, seed, water and market needs. The agriculture sector has a large potential to contribute to the economic condition of the state and also it will open up doors for numerous unemployed. Eventually, the standard of living, literacy rates, income, etc. will continue to increase in a greater pace. Agriprenurship is not only an opportunity but also a necessity for improving the production and profitability in agriculture and allied sector.

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