

## Institutional Convergence of Synergistic Strengths for Developing Women Agripreneurs

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### ABSTRACT

A paradigm shift from agriculture being as a way of life for managing farm commercially on lines of an agribusiness is an essential pathway to revitalize Indian agriculture and to make farming a more attractive and profitable venture. Agripreneurship have the potential to contribute to a range of social and economic development. Agripreneurship has potential to generate growth, diversifying income, providing widespread employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas, though is an intricate process of mobilizing, stimulating needs, inculcating entrepreneurial competencies, facilitating linkages with other agencies, mentoring and hand holding. The study was conducted in *Hapur* district of Uttar Pradesh where three villages *Lalpur, Shyampur and Kania-kalianpur* were selected purposively being predominantly engaged in agriculture and having scope of agripreneurship development due to their proximity to National capital of Delhi. Ninety farm women, 30 each from three villages and 20 officials from institutions engaged in agripreneurship development in the area (three from all seven agencies) formed the sample size of the study. Farmers taking up entrepreneurial activities generally faced the problems in marketing of their products. Well developed effective linkages among all the stakeholders resulted in higher profits for producers and consolidated production sites for marketing and supply chain agencies. Several institutions engaged in agripreneurship development with respective strengths were found effective in synergizing actions and impacts by organizing interaction meets and focus group discussions to arrive at common programmes and activities in a collaborative manner.

**Key words:** Agripreneurship, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial competencies.

### INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important sector of Indian economy as it contributes significantly to GDP and provides employment to more than 60 per cent of its population. The food grain production has increased from 51 million tons in 1950-51 to 260 million tons during 2013-14. On 2.4 percent of world land India is managing 17.5 percent of world population. Agriculture and allied sectors are important sources of raw materials for industries and it consumes many industrial products particularly fertilizers, pesticides, agriculture implements and other consumer goods. But the sector is plagued by many challenges and problems. There is continuous fragmentation of land due to ownership multiplication and division of joint families into smaller nuclear families, resulting in low per capita availability of land. Due to low land man ratio, more and more farmers and their children are finding themselves out of work. In view of shrinking land base and rampant unemployment, there is need to commercialize and diversify Indian Agriculture in such a way that one can generate more income per unit of area and time and create agro-based employment opportunities (Sharma and Singh, 2006). For this to happen we need to convert agriculture into agribusiness.

agriculture has to move from subsistence culture to Agripreneurship for higher profits. Agri based enterprises are the need of the hour. Agri-based micro enterprises can help in poverty reduction, employment generation, empowerment and enterprise development as an end in itself. Dissemination of information regarding income and employment opportunities need to be stressed in agriculture, horticulture and related issue (Gondkar *et.al.* 2012, Nain *et al* 2013). A paradigm shift to commercial farm management and agribusiness orientation is needed at present. Also secondary agriculture and its derivatives inter-alia food processing and value addition has not been addressed adequately. Under traditional system, the post harvest losses are quite high *i.e.* 25-30 per cent is lost before reaching ultimate consumers (Anonymous,2014). Women play a significant role in agriculture, the world over. About 70 per cent of the agricultural workers, 80% of food producers, and 10 per cent of those who process basic foodstuffs are women and they also undertake 60 to 90% of the rural marketing; thus making up more than two-third of the workforce in agricultural production (FAO,1985). Thus if women are mobilized to take up agripreneurship, desired rural and agricultural transformation is possible. The present study was undertaken to examine the process of agripreneurship

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development among farm women and how various agencies can be linked to perform collaboratively developing a convergence strategy. For this study the two terms were conceptualized as:

**Agripreneurs** farmers who are innovators, progressive, opportunity seeker, persistent and moderate risk takers. An agripreneur (Agri+ Entrepreneur) undertakes a variety of activities in agriculture sector in order to earn maximum profits from his/her farm.

**Agripreneurship** Process of developing a profitable venture based on agriculture and it refers to agribusiness establishment in agriculture and allied sector.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the entrepreneurship development process among farm women, an action research study was conducted in the district *Hapur* of Uttar Pradesh where three villages *Lalpur, Shyampur and Kania-Kalianpur* were selected purposively being predominantly engaged in agriculture and having scope of agripreneurship development due to their proximity to National capital of Delhi. The area is endowed with good infrastructure for crop production, value addition and marketing along with active facilitating agripreneurship agencies functioning in the area. Besides IARI, NABARD, RUDSETI, Agribusiness Systems International, Bharati Walmart, State Development Department and NGO *Laxmi Jan Kalyan Sewa Sansthan* were working for enhancing farm incomes in the area. Each institution had respective strengths which was synergized by organizing interaction meets and focus group discussions to arrive at common programmes and activities in a collaborative manner. Already established entrepreneurs were also engaged in action interventions which were helpful in giving them the practical tips to run their businesses and also helped in linking them with market. Farm women of the above mentioned three villages were mobilized to form Self Help Groups which further got organized under SHG Federation *Mahila Kisan Vikas Sanstha* by NABARD intervention. SHG federation is having about 1000 members which comprised of women from study villages and other villages of Hapur, Baghpat and Muradnagar areas. Identification along with microscreening was conducted to prioritise agrienterprises in these villages. A total of 90 women were provided training as per the training needs assessment. Pre training and post training data were collected by personal interviews using semi structured interview schedule. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was administered to examine their achievement motivation. Risk orientation and the analysis was done as

developed by Mishra (1979). Aspirations were studied using scale by Muthayya (1971). The data collected were scored, tabulated and categorized. Data were also collected from 20 officials of the above seven agencies by a semi structured interview schedule constructed for the purpose of exploring their roles and kind of collaboration extended for developing farm women as agripreneurs. These were subject to appropriate methods of analyses, viz, empirical, content and logical as per the overall objective of the study.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Process of Agripreneurship Development

The study revealed that it is possible to build entrepreneurial competencies of our farm women through appropriate training interventions, mentoring and linking them with other agencies. As per the action interventions undertaken training course were organized, follow up and mentoring of the trained women were done and linkages initiated with supportive institutions and agencies. After training interventions, farm women have launched their pickle making, *dalia* making, wheat flour mill and grinding of spices enterprise named "*Sunhara Lalpur*" and "*Neelraj*". Handholding and mentoring activities were undertaken to establish their enterprises on a strong footing. Linkages with other agencies were established for finance requirements, marketing and certification purposes.

Under collaborative training course by IARI and RUDSETI Institute, 90 women from three villages of Hapur were trained in baby corn cultivation and its processing, post-harvest processing of soyabean, bajra puffs, crackers *etc.*, value addition of vegetables/fruits and floriculture and dry flower technology for enterprise uptake. Convergence of Synergistic efforts of all stakeholders for farmer based agri enterprise development was taken up. Farm women entrepreneurs of Hapur villages were linked with all stakeholders in the process- IARI for mobilizing and mentoring, RUDSETI for training, Agricultural Systems India Ltd( ASI) and Bharati Walmart for marketing, NGO *Laxmi Jan Kalyan Sewa Sansthan* for grassroots mobilization and logistics and NABARD for financial support.

The process of Agripreneurship development was found to be a dynamic interplay of self sphere of the individual farm women and environmental sphere resulting in the profit making venture marked by higher profits, yields, innovative behaviour and brand establishment. As given in the fig.1, it was found that possessing entrepreneurial competencies like opportunity recognition, innovativeness, quality concern & need for

achievement in tandem with adequate technical knowledge gear up an entrepreneur to take advantage of available resources into a profitable venture. The findings are in agreement with earlier researches (Singh,2006 and Singh, 2011). Those, who bogged down by inhibitive factors present in environment, experienced failure whereas the others who capitalized the promotional factors available in environment and dodged the inhibitive factors accomplished their targets and achieved

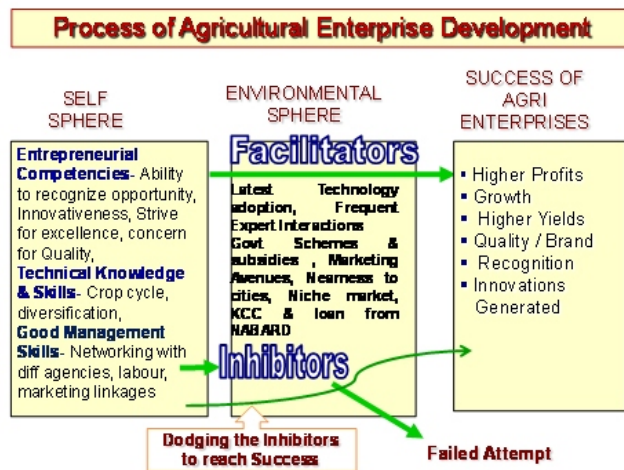


Fig.1. Agriprenurship Development Process among Farm Women

**Goals and Motives**

Majority of the sample (31%) had economics as their main concern i.e. earning more from farming. This when further probed revealed three different kinds of concerns. As many as 38.8 per cent of potential women entrepreneurs specified the goal as earning more money for family so as to supplement family income and make available those facilities or objects which would not have been possible with existing income.

Thus, these women basically wanted to take up entrepreneurship to improve the quality of life of their family and children. Only 4.5 per cent women entrepreneurs stated economic independence for self as the major goal. They wanted to prepare themselves against any exigencies of life where they might be required to fend for themselves. For 12.2 per cent of women entrepreneurs, converting available resources into profitable ventures was the major goal for venturing into entrepreneurship.

**Table 1: Motivation for pursuing Agriprenurship**

Motives	f	%
Earning more from farming	28	31.11
Do something new	14	15.55
Help the local farming community	10	11.11
Work for self	4	4.45
Attaching value to farming	4	4.45
Possessed skills & resources	10	11.11
Market demand	9	10.00
Converting abundant local resources into profitable ventures	11	12.22
Total	90	100.00

**Need for Achievement**

It was measured by subjecting the respondents to semi projective Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Respondents were shown three pictures as cues to write imaginative stories, which were scored for achievement motive. The stories so written contained motivational cues if it indicated (1) Desire for excellence in life, (2) Unique accomplishment, (3) Competition with self and others, and (4) Long term involvement in pursuit of a set goal. Some of the respondents wrote stories which did not contain any of the above, thus they were termed as Unrelated Imagery (UI). The stories containing one or more of the above components were termed as Achievement Imagery (AI). Scoring of these stories was done as per the method standardized by Mehta (1989). Social achievement motivation was predominant followed by personal achievement motivation indicating their belief in social cooperation.

**Motivational Status**

About 13 per cent respondents wrote all the three stories with unrelated imageries, thus scoring 0. The remaining respondents were categorized into four quartiles based on the scores obtained by them.

**Table 3: Motivational Status of the Respondents Need For Achievement**

Quartiles	Scores	Total	
		Freq.	%
I	1 to 5	29	32.2
II	6 to 8	18	20.0
III	9 to 12	12	13.3
IV	13 to 27	05	0.55
	0	26	12.6
		90	100.0
Range	0 to 27		
Mean	8.44		
IQR	7.0		
t value	-2.42187		

The total obtainable score for each respondent could range from 0 to 27 with a mid value of 14. The actual scores obtained ranged from 0 to 24 with a mean value of 8.44. Thus the group's mean was much below the obtainable scores. In general, women entrepreneurs' motivational status was found to be on the lower side. Village wise, the need for achievement was highest for *Lalpur* (87.4 %) followed by *Shyampur* (75 %) and *Kania kalianpur* (66.6%). Data was collected and analysed for both pre training stage and post training stage. Table 4 reveals that there was an increase in their overall motivation levels after the training interventions. A narrow shift from 72.4 per cent to 73.2 per cent was recorded after the training.

**Table 4: Shift in Need for Achievement after Training Interventions**

Total number of TAT Stories		Unrelated Imagery		Achievement Imagery		N Ach (%)	
Pre Training	Post Training	Pre Training	Post Training	Pre Training	Post Training	Pre Training	Post Training
123	116	34	30	89	85	72.4	73.2

**Aspirations:** Aspirations are part of the motivational force driving entrepreneurs towards their goal. In a way these are goal statements concerning the future. Aspirations were voiced in terms of education to children, income enhancement, better living standard, economic surplus and percentage increase in their respective enterprises. Table 5 shows that majority of the potential entrepreneurs were having moderate to low level of aspiration, however, only few were with very high level of aspirations. Nearly a quarter were with low level of aspirations. It could be due to their environmental factors which may be hindering their viewpoints.

**Table: 5. Aspiration level of the farm women**

Villages	Lalpur		Shyampur		Kania-Kalianpura	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Upto 45 (Low)	15	50.0	13	43.3	1	8.3
45 to 49 ( Moderate)	12	40.0	14	46.6	7	58.4
50-54 (High)	2	06.0	3	10.0	3	25.0
> 54(Very High)	1	03.0	1	03.0	1	8.3
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	12	100.0

**Risk Taking Behaviour:** Risk taking behaviour was studied and assessed using scale of Mishra (1979). Table 6 shows that the concept of moderate calculated risk taking was inculcated with help of simulation exercises during the training programmes. There was a shift to categories of 20 per cent-50 per cent risk in their behaviour as examined with the scale after the conduction of training session on ring toss exercise.

**Table 6: Risk taking behaviour of respondents**

Probability of Risk	Pre Training		Post Training	
	f	Percentage	f	Percentage
No risk	15	16.7	4	4.4
20% risk	21	23.3	38	42.3
50% risk	39	43.3	42	46.6
80 % risk	15	16.7	6	6.6
100% risk	0	0.0	0	00.00
	90	100.0	90	100.0

### Nature and Extent of Societal Support: Facilitators of the Process

Content analysis of literature collected from various organizations, and browsing of websites revealed that many programmes and schemes have been launched by various government and non-government organizations. The nature of support given to potential and established women entrepreneurs which acted as facilitators were : financial support in terms of loans, subsidy, sales tax waiver or special rates of interest on loans for women entrepreneurs; motivational support in terms of awareness generation programmes and entrepreneurial motivation programmes, special process and product EDPs for skill enhancement; special marketing avenues; infrastructural support in terms of priority industrial sheds and providing import licenses on priority ; mentorship and handholding and recognition / awards giving positive boost to their efforts.

### Convergence for synergistic efforts of seven institutions for Agripreneurship Development

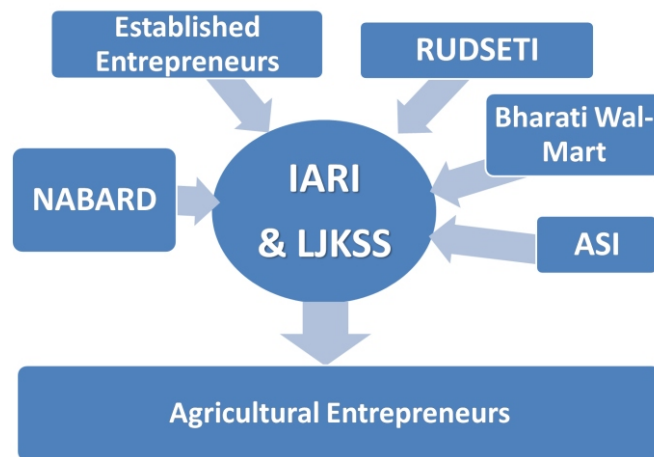
Besides IARI, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development ( NABARD), Rural Development & Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI), Agribusiness Systems International, Bharati Wallmart, State Development Department and NGO *Laxmi Jan Kalyan Sewa Sansthan* were working for enhancing farm incomes in the area. Each institution had respective strengths ( Table 7) which were synergized by organizing interaction meets and focus group discussions to arrive at common programmes and activities in a collaborative manner. Already established entrepreneurs were also engaged in action interventions which were helpful in giving them the practical tips to run their businesses and also helped in linking with market. Farm women of the three project villages were mobilized to form Self Help Groups which further got organized under SHG Federation named *Mahila Kisan Vikas Sanstha* by NABARD intervention. SHG federation is having about 1000 members which comprised of women from study villages and other villages of Hapur, Baghpat and Muradnagar areas.

**Table 7: Roles and responsibilities of various Institutions involved**

IARI	Technological know-how and inputs	Motivational Interventions for taking up Agribusiness ventures	Training Interventions for capacity building	Hand holding & Mentoring	Facilitation of Linkages with various agencies & coordination
RUDSETI	Developing Skills for Entrepreneurship and Creating a mindset for entrepreneurship		Training – on site & at their campus	Helping to develop a project report for enterprises	Helping the nascent entrepreneurs to avail small loans
NABARD	Financial help at launching stage	Mobilizing for Farmers' Club formation	Financial Support to NGO	Finance for Video-conference facility (Intel)	Finance for stall at Kumbh Mela & Travel expenses
ASI	Product Marketing Shops (3 outlets)	– Best Price	Multinational Supply Chain company providing huge marketing opportunities		
Bharati Wall mart	Providing outlet for sale	Collection Center at villages itself reducing post production losses & transportation costs	Bulk purchase from single production site		Multinational Supply Chain company providing huge marketing opportunities
Established Entrepreneurs	Experience Sharing, boosting morale	Providing prior established marketing channels	Product Refinement based on marketing demand of quality		Enlargement of network of producers for the benefit of established entrepreneurs
Laxmi Jan Kalyan Sewa Sansthaan	Mobilising farm women and youth	Day to day liaisoning with various agencies and farm women	Logistics of organisation of training and other intervention based programmes		Grassroots initiatives for activities of all agencies.

interest groups, farmers' societies/ cooperative societies, self- help groups etc. should be encouraged to capitalize the optimum resource utilization and maximization of food processing and value addition to address the multi faced issues underlying socio-economic development of farm households. The analysis revealed that besides impacts in terms of income enhancement and economic empowerment, there were also visible impact in form of social assets development and process of value addition ventures. Social assets are taken to be the social resources that people can use to pursue their livelihood objectives: networks and connections, membership of formalized groups, relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchange. The concept of livelihoods defined as the “capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living” (Chambers and Conway 1992: 7) provides the desired viewpoint for this research: that of the individual as an actor, in these cases: the entrepreneur. Livelihoods in this sense are holistic, encompassing not only income, the narrow meaning of the term often used in economic research and also in common speech, but all assets that can form the means to making a living, and assets that give a person the capability to act and to use resources.

Convergence literally refers to the alignment of issues, interests and therefore solutions across all institutions engaged in development of Agripreneurship. Thus convergence is not just collectivization, it is not referring to cooperation only but definitely more than collaboration. In fact, rather than just being episodic and event-driven, convergence actually implies constant shared commitment with recognized “wins” for all partners involved. Internationally, organizations such as Barclays, Care and Plan are working together on a large-scale local community finance project which aims to reach 300,000 to 500,000 people across Africa, Asia and South America in development sector. Similar mechanisms can be emulated nationally for Agripreneurship Development. The emergence of multistakeholder alliances between profit oriented companies, social enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government institutions collaborating in totality is an important solution to many of our problems plaguing agriculture sector. These trends are still at a relatively early stage. This structure calls for new ways of thinking crossing traditional organizational, functional and sectoral boundaries of various institutions. Also the most important thing being able to develop mechanisms for increased dialogues, shared learning and joint monitoring of outcomes as well as processes. Sociologically also, it is a new pragmatic trend toward shared value in capitalism as a whole. The convergent development models will resemble conventional social



**Fig. 2 : Diagrammatic representation of linkages developed for developing Agricultural Entrepreneurs**

The case illustrates well established partnerships of women manufacturers of these value added products with established dealers and up-market channels. Farmers who have taken up entrepreneurial activities are often found facing problems in marketing of their products. Well developed effective linkages among all the stakeholders usually results in higher profits for producers and consolidated production sites for marketing and supply chain agencies. The group approach involving common

enterprises but they may or may not be profit-making; however, they are very likely to be profit-maximizing. Social businesses launched by Muhammad Yunus's Grameen organization in conjunction with multinationals "Grameen Danone Foods" are the best examples of convergence business models. Its dairy product aimed at combating infant malnutrition in Bangladesh was launched in 2006.

### CONCLUSION

The food processing and value addition is an integral component of agriculture and contributes significantly to economic and social development of the country. However, its potential has largely been underutilized, leaving a huge opportunity and scope to develop and promote the sector. Farm women individually or in group can tap this immense opportunity and potential. There is a pertinent need for developing an effective and efficient strategy incorporating the issues like development of appropriate, location specific and need based production and processing technologies; strengthening infrastructural facilities; dissemination of technologies to the farmers; implementing capacity building and entrepreneurial interventions; developing effective and meaningful marketing linkages for serving the interest of the consumers to tackle the multi-dimensional problems of rural poverty, lower farmers' share in profit, unemployment and lesser income generation opportunities. Building entrepreneurial competencies of farm women and mobilizing women for group action to take up food processing and value addition agri-ventures for maximising farm profits. Experiences of institutional convergence of synergistic strengths in *Hapur* by the author herself and examples of international agencies quoted in the paper have illustrated that there is need for all working together in spirit and action for translating maximum benefits and sustainable growth. Agripreneurship development may be visualized as a process whereby individual's motivations and aspirations trigger it and their entrepreneurial competencies, adoption of best practices and facilitative socio-economic factors play sequential role in reaching agripreneurial success. It is the farmers' ability to effectively manage the inhibitive factors present in the rural environment which proves critical for achieving success. For developing agripreneurs, its essential that an effective network is built consisting of various stakeholders like input suppliers, mentors, technical experts, marketing and supply chain agencies.

Lessons from the cases of successful agri-entrepreneurs documented may be used to train other farmers to become entrepreneurial.

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