



“ Skills are the foundation of modern life. They are the driving force behind successful careers and companies, thriving industries, and economies. Skills keep the world working. Through efforts of Skill India, we are certain to achieve a better socio-economic condition for today’s youth by making them more productive and addressing underemployment and underemployment in a way”

Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey
Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Skill
Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)



“ We have seen great potential, great energy & enthusiasm in the youth of the country & how they are adapting to new age skills, transforming their lives & contributing to the new India. If the program has been able to transform lives, it is because of the passion & grit with which the youth is participating in it. We are working closely with the States, Department and Industry to ensure a robust skill ecosystem which would empower the youth and create opportunities of employment for them”

Shri. R K Singh
Hon’ble Minister of State, Ministry of Skill
Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)



Agri Skills NEWSLETTER

September, 2020

**“Sowing skills...
...Harvesting opportunities”**



Message From CEO

This issue of the ASCI newsletter is focused on economic recovery in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis and the performance of the agriculture sector. As is said, agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The role of the agriculture sector is crucial not only for the workers who are directly or indirectly dependent on this sector for their livelihood but also for the revival of overall economic growth, boosting the country’s export, and poverty alleviation. Even amid COVID related economic downturn, the agriculture sector has shown remarkable resilience, vitality, and robustness. For the current fiscal year, experts have forecast a record food grain production depending upon the normal monsoon, which certainly puts agriculture in the driver’s seat in our pursuit of post-crisis economic recovery. The recently announced much-needed market reforms in agriculture have also fuelled expectations from the sector. For many reasons, these reforms are hailed as a bold and visionary step that will lead to the realisation of higher-income by the farmers. For example, the new ordinances to facilitate barrier free interstate trading, e-trading, and higher engagement of farmers with processors, aggregators, organised retailers, and others will be beneficial in terms of access to know-how, risk mitigation, assured returns, and quality standardisation. The ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign and associated measures for strengthening of FPOs, SHGs, Cooperatives, and MFEs aiming at seizing the untapped export markets for the Indian products presents a new ray of hope for export of high-value agricultural produce. The infrastructure development fund created for building a modern and efficient supply chain infrastructure has promises to improve the operational efficiency of the food value chain. Not only traditional farming but opportunities for the new-age entrepreneurs are also rising in horticulture, fisheries, dairy, agri.-logistics, and commodity management. However, skilled labour is at the core of all successful initiatives of enterprise creation and availing benefits of any radical reforms. Hence, the country now has a greater and urgent responsibility of skill building of the youth in agriculture in order that all these initiatives become fruitful and the sector can rightfully claim its place as a lifeline of Indian economy.

Dr. Satender Arya

Post-COVID Lockdown recovery of Indian economy: The role of Agriculture and Skilling



Dr. Anupam Sarkar
Head-Research
Agriculture Skill Council of India

Amid widespread economic recession, job loss, and unemployment the only silver lining is the performance of the agricultural sector. When agencies like International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) have predicted a contraction of the overall economy by 4-4.5 percent in 2020-21, agriculture is likely to grow at 2.5 during this fiscal year. During the lockdown period, the sector has shown remarkable resilience. The supply chains and markets have bounced back to normal operations overcoming the few initial days of disruption. Harvesting and procurement operations of rabi season crops are completed as also much of the land preparation and sowing of the next crop. This year's procurement of wheat has been higher than the last year's levels.

The country also expects a bumper kharif crop based on a good monsoon and increased acreage under rice and other crops. The labour supply situation is mixed. Parts of the country like Punjab has witnessed a shortage of labour to carry out paddy transplantation. In other parts especially in Eastern India, there is an increase in the availability of family labour due to reverse migration. The unemployment situation in urban India continues to be worrisome. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the urban unemployment rate in the week ended 28th June was 10.69 percent. As per the latest available data on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), there is a decline in the IIP of 34.7 percent of industrial output in May 2020 as compared to May 2019. Some of the worst affected sectors are manufacture of motor vehicles (80.5 %), manufacture of other transport equipment (83.5%), manufacture of computer, electronic, and optical products (78.4%), manufacture of electrical equipment (70.9%), and manufacture of textiles (72.8%). As against this, agriculture has clocked a robust growth rate of 4 percent of gross value added in 2019-20.

During the period of lockdown, amidst the news of initial disruptions of harvest operations, closure of mandis, wastage of perishables there were some silver linings too, like the rapid digital transformation of agriculture which saw Indian farmers turning to tech-enabled platforms. There are also reports of State governments, farm aggregates, agritech startups, organised retail chains that are undertaking innovative means to ensure smooth operations of supply chains. There were relaxations given to farmers to sell their products anywhere and extension of the period of procurement. As a result of these, the food grain stocks are at comfortable levels, prices are stable and supply of agri-commodities to mandis has remained normal barring a few days of initial disruptions.

However, on the flip side of it is still high unemployment in rural areas. Although the rural unemployment rate which peaked at 22.89% in April 2020 has come down to 10.52% in June 2020 (CMIE) it is still higher than the pre-lockdown period 8.44 % in March 2020. It should be noted that the same database reveals rural unemployment had been on the rise in the months running up to the COVID outbreak and ultimate lockdown in March 2020. News has been flashing in media that many reverse migrants unable to secure a livelihood in rural areas are returning to cities.

In urban areas, these circular migrants constitute the most vulnerable urban population. They are mostly landless and have limited livelihood opportunities in rural areas. In urban areas also they lack access to fundamental civic rights or basic social security. The majority of them are engaged in the informal sector, construction, or self-employed in petty business; often live in the worksites or under the open sky. Srivastava (2020) estimated the number of short term circular migrants in urban areas to be 44 million. There is a need to check this unhealthy trend of distress migration by understanding the push factors behind migration and creating avenues for gainful employment in rural areas.

This calls for looking beyond the immediate relief packages and a comprehensive strategy for capacity building and job creation in rural areas. Recently the Government of India has announced Atmanirbhar Bharat Package with an aim to making India a self-reliant nation. As a country we are self-reliant and much of the food requirement is met through domestic production. The focus, hence, must be on to raise agricultural productivity, enhance farmers' income, and creation of gainful employment opportunities. Identification of sector-wise growth and employment potential, diversification of agriculture, skill mapping and capacity building of the workforce for the new or sunrise sectors within the agriculture industry is of most importance.

As part of the relief package, some drastic measures have been announced and ordinances promulgated subsequently to reform agricultural marketing and provide a range of choices to the farmers in the agribusiness marketplace. These ordinances are the Essential Commodities Act amendment ordinance, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, and the Farmers Trade and Produce (Promotion and Facilitation) ordinance. The intent of these reforms is to remove the barriers in agricultural marketing, building an efficient supply chain, ensuring price stability and better returns for the farmers, minimise market risks and protect farmers' interest in any forward-looking contract with private parties.

There are also announcements of a package to promote organic farming and cultivation of medicinal plants; encouragement of fisheries and aquaculture through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY); boosting of animal husbandry through setting up of special funds for infrastructure development, the special allocation for disease control, and extending benefits of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme to livestock farmers; assistance in the inter-State transport of horticulture produce by extending coverage of TOP (tomato, onion, and potato) scheme to TOTAL (all fruits and vegetables). Supply chain infrastructure also has got a shot in the arms with the announcement of the creation of one lakh crore fund for farmgate and aggregation point infrastructure.

The lessons learnt in the lockdown period has given us an opportunity for mending the raptures and building an efficient agricultural supply chain. The announcements of reforms, the stimulus package, increasing digital transformation, and participation of a broad range of players in the agribusiness and marketing will create more job opportunities in the supply chain, agri logistics, and commodity management.

The importance of animal husbandry, dairying, and fisheries have been over the years. Nearly one-fourth of agricultural GDP comes from the livestock sector. In the near future, there will be employment opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture based on scientifically proven methods of running water aquaculture (RAS), cage culture, mariculture, ornamental fisheries, cold water fisheries, bio floc farming, broodstock cultivation, fish waste management, etc. There is a need for special training and handholding in new methods of farming.

In agriculture also there will be a rise of farm mechanisation and demand for associated job roles of custom hiring, tractor mechanic, etc.

which are skilled occupations. Till now there has been an uneven growth of farm mechanisation. However, the demand for the use of machinery has been on the rise even in eastern and southern parts of India and we can expect viable models of machinery rental services will emerge in these areas too. Even in the western States government has been encouraging custom hiring of machiner to avoid overcapitalisation of farms.

A major component of the scheme Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation is subsidy for setting up of custom hiring centres. Hence, we can expect that will be more demand for tractor drivers and mechanics.

Diversification of agriculture especially in the regions where water and land resources are in severe stress in the need of the hour. Few examples are Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh where paddy and wheat cultivation has detrimental effects of groundwater tables. Thus, there is a need for capacity building of the farmers for diversification to horticultural crops especially fruits and vegetables which are less water consuming and fetch a higher value.



The importance of agri-information management has increased over the years and especially so after private agri input companies flooding the space of agricultural extension, and inventing new models for sales and marketing. Now extension and advisory services are sometimes a part and parcel of the sale of inputs to farmers. Thus an increasing need will be felt for skilled professionals in this field.

Last, but not the least, organic farming has a huge scope for domestic and external markets. However, the farmers are often unaware of the process of certification, knowledge of scientific methods of cultivation, marketing opportunities. Since organic products fetch a higher price and have high export potential it should be encouraged through proper training of farmers.

State Engagement

- ▲ Meeting held with Mr. Mohit Singh, Director of Semina Agro private limited on 5th Sept'2020 pertaining to NAPS, Demand Aggregation and Agriculture SSC's placement portal.
- ▲ Meeting held with Mr. Jay Nigam, DGM, NABARD (Jharkhand) on 11th Sept'2020 regarding proposal of imparting training to rural youth as a pilot project.
- ▲ Meeting held with Mr. Kripanand jha, IAS, Director, Directorate of Dairy Development Jharkhand on 14th Sept'2020 regarding the proposal of imparting training to dairy farmers across the state with the available resources.
- ▲ Meeting was held with Mr. Badal Mohanty Joint CEO, OLM, Odisha along with Livelihood and Agri Managers on capacity building of Pashu Mitra and Krushi Mitra cadets.
- ▲ Meeting held with Sri. B Nageswar Rao, GM, NABARD, Odisha Region regarding proposal of imparting training to rural youth as a pilot project.
- ▲ Meeting was held with Sri Sundaram Rout, Director JK University, Odisha on their initiation on different skill programme like Skill Training cum Self Employed/Rural Entrepreneurs, Corporate Employment, CoE for Agriculture in Eastern India, establishment of Training of Trainers centre at their campus.
- ▲ Discussion was held with Directorate of Horticulture, Govt of Bihar for developing the Centre of Excellence for fruits and Vegetables to a skill based training centre so that the high value and precision farming training can be taken there.
- ▲ Participated in meeting held by Maharashtra State Skill Mission for Agriculture Sector Skill Council of India and District Assistant Commissioner of 34 District. Orientation on Potential of Agriculture skilling and demand orientated job roles were discussed.
- ▲ Department of Maharashtra's Animal Husbandry State Level training Centre affiliated with ASCI for conducting Skill training program. The SLTC is implementing agency for World Bank Training Programs Various animal Husbandry capacity building program.
- ▲ Participation in the meeting organized by Mr. Dheerajkumar, Commissioner, Dept. of Agriculture Maharashtra with ASCI and RAMETI for collaboration and discussion on developing the unique model like RKVY program implemented through KVK.
- ▲ Meeting was held with FISS (Foundation for Integrated support and solutions), discussed process of affiliation, NAPS ,Demand Aggregation and Agriculture SSC's placement portal. FISS is authorised by AAU to use the KVK facilities as training center. They are actively planning to use CSR fund for Skill development of migrant workers, rural youth.
- ▲ Discussion was held with National Institute of Pharmaceuticals Education & Research (NIPER) regarding scope of Medicinal Plants Grower job role.

Engagement with Ministry of Agriculture

In this quarter, ASCI has successfully enrolled 15808 candidates from 424 institutes under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

During Unlock period in Covid times, as per Govt. notification, assessments have been organized wherein 1600 candidates assessed under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

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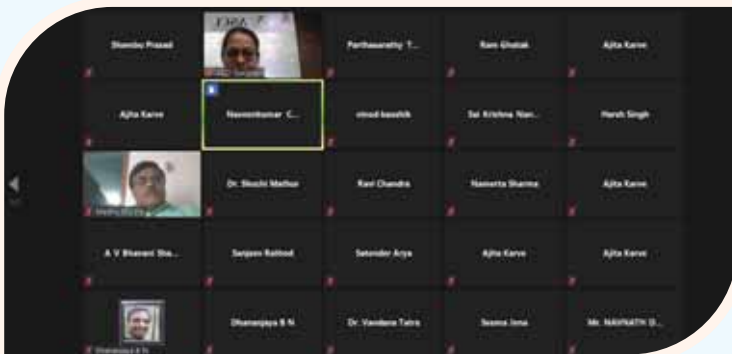
Assessment at KVK Kurukshetra

QP-NOS Development

- ▲ In this quarter, ASCI got approved 3QPs and Model Curricula in the Fisheries Segment through the NSQC. Total NSQC Approved QPs now stand at 175.

Qualification Pack Title	QP ID.	NSQF level
Coldwater Aquaculture Farmer	AGR/Q4914	4
Seaweed Cultivator	AGR/Q4915	4
Cage Culture Fish Farmer	AGR/Q4916	4

- ▲ ASCI conducted a brainstorming working session on "Skills for the Leadership Roles to Boost the Productivity & Sustainability of the FPO" on 4th Aug'2020 to identify the roles existing in a FPO setting and the skills required for the Director-FPO.



Workshop on FPO

- ▲ ASCI organized a virtual workshop on Revision & Rationalization of QPs and Model Curricula developed in Freshwater Aquaculture Segment on 6th Aug'2020, wherein experts from ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, actively participated to share their inputs. The workshop was graced by the presence of Dr Bimal Mohanty, ADG-Inland Fisheries, ICAR and Dr Saroj Kumar Swain, Director-CIFA.



Freshwater Aquaculture Workshop



Farm Mechanization Workshop

ASCI organized a virtual workshop on Revision & Rationalization of QPs and Model Curricula developed in the Farm Mechanization Segment on 28th Aug'2020, wherein officials from M&T Div, MoA&FW, ICAR, CIAE, Directorate of Agriculture, Bhopal, FMTTIs; Industry concerns viz. Mahindra, John Deere, Escort, TAFE, CNH, etc. and Industry Associations, AMMA actively participated to share their inputs. The workshop was graced by the presence of Smt Shomita Biswas, Joint Secretary-M&T Division, Ministry of Agriculture &FW.

ASCI organized a virtual workshop on Revision & Rationalization of QPs and Model Curricula developed in Brackishwater Aquaculture Segment on 4th Sept'2020, wherein experts from ICAR-Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Fisheries College, FISHCOPFED actively participated to share their inputs. The workshop was graced by the presence of Dr Pravin Puthra, ADG-Marine Fisheries, ICAR and Dr Paul Pandian, Deputy Commissioner-Fisheries.



CIBA workshop

ASCI organized a virtual workshop on Revision & Rationalization of QPs and Model Curricula developed in Marine Fisheries Segment on 18th Sept'2020, wherein experts from ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, CIFNET, Fishery Survey of India (FSI), Department of Fisheries-Tamil Nadu, FISHCOPFED, West Bengal University of Animal & Fishery Sciences actively participated to share their inputs. The workshop was graced by the presence of Dr P Pravin, ADG-Marine Fisheries, ICAR and Dr Paul Pandian, Deputy Commissioner-Fisheries.



CMFRI workshop

Centre of Excellence

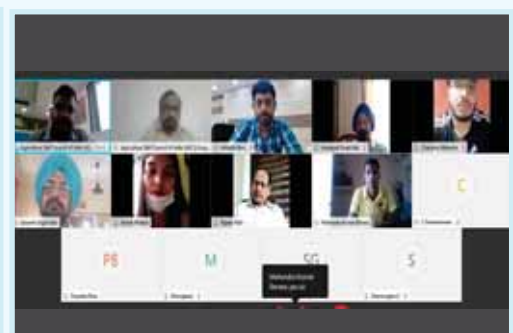
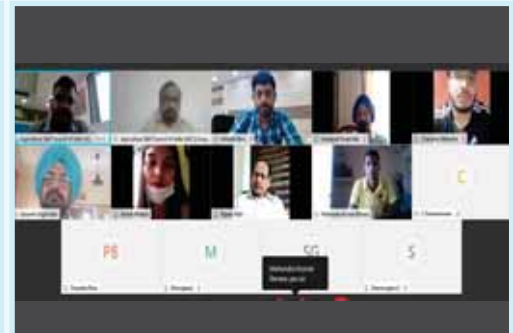
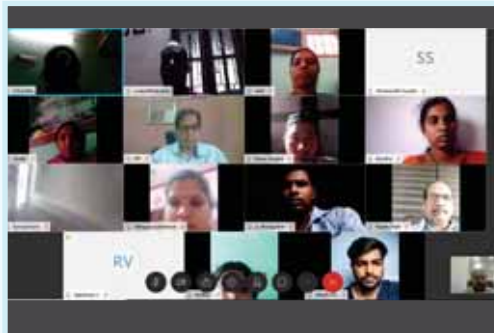
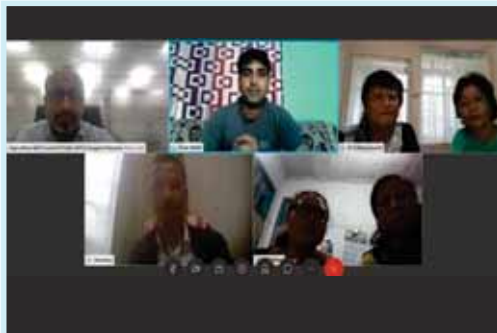
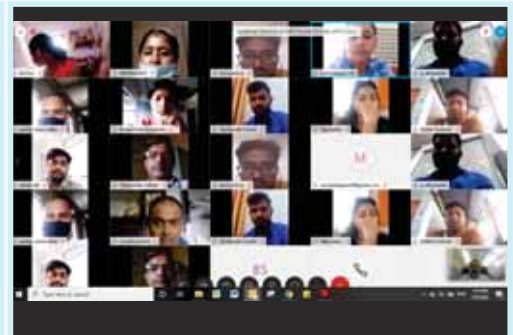
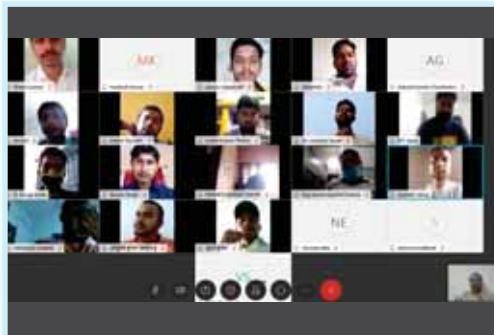
Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India established as an autonomous institution committed to dairy skill development in India is first CoE established by ASCI. Centre of excellence for Dairy Skills in India has received in-principal support from more than 30 leading dairy cooperatives, corporates & academic institution from pan India and is still counting. The strong industry support will help CEDSI to understand & capture dynamic transformation of fast changing technological advancement exchange of ideas, knowledge & workforce performance gaps which will help to tailor skilling programs according to the current and future Industry requirements.



Training of Trainer & Master Trainer

Total 119 Trainers participated in 11 online ToT/ToMT Program during July - September 2020

1. Online ToT for New Trainer on 6th Jul'2020
2. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 22nd Jul'2020
3. Online ToMT on 24th Jul'2020
4. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 23rd Jul'2020
5. Online ToT for New Trainer on 29th Jul'2020
6. Online ToT for New Trainer on 10th Aug'2020
7. Online ToMT for on 10th Aug'2020
8. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 11th Aug'2020
9. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 18th Aug'2020
10. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 25th Aug'2020
11. Online ToT for Existing trainer on 26th Sept'2020



Training Partners on Board

In this quarter, ASCI has successfully affiliated Centre of Excellence for Vegetables, Kannauj Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra Cooperative Development Corporation and Pushpa Gujral Science city.

With respect to efforts taken by Department of Animal Husbandry, ASCI is also working towards encouraging training in various animal husbandry job roles. Two government institutes Vocational Training Centre, Meghalaya and Haryana Veterinary Training Institute have been affiliated on Skill India Portal for job role of Animal Health Worker and Artificial Insemination. In addition to above two Intensive Cattle Development Project (A.I.T Institute) is affiliated as training partner for the job role of Artificial Insemination Technician on Skill India Portal.

Training of Assessor (ToA)

ASCI conducted 9 different online ToA programme for Existing Assessors (online mode) across various Agriculture sub segments viz. Total 91 assessors certified across various job roles.

We are planning for launch of online TOA for new assessors in upcoming months



ToA for Amenity Horticulture & Landscaping



ToA for Dairy & Animal Husbandry Segment



ToA for Farm Mechanization Segment



ToA for Fisheries Segment

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