



PROJECT ARYA: ATTRACTING AND RETAINING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

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Introduction

Project ARYA (Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture) is an initiative launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 2015-16 to empower rural youth and involve them in entrepreneurial activities in the agriculture and allied sectors. This project aims to generate employment opportunities, provide sustainable income and promote agricultural development in rural areas. Implemented through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in 25 states, the project identifies 200-300 rural youths per district and provides them with training in areas such as seed processing, apiculture, mushroom cultivation, dairy farming and vermicomposting. By facilitating network groups, enterprise setup and stakeholder linkages, Project ARYA addresses key challenges such as unemployment, rural migration and food security. It aspires to make agriculture a more attractive and viable career option, thereby fostering sustainable rural development and economic progress. The project's structured implementation and continuous monitoring aim to ensure long-term impact on rural livelihoods and national food security.

Keywords: ARYA, KVK, training and youth etc.

OVERVIEW

Objective: Empower and involve rural youth in agriculture and allied sector enterprises to generate employment, ensure sustainable income and develop rural areas.

Launch Year: 2015-16

Implementing Body: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT ARYA

- 1. Attract Rural Youth:** Encourage youth involvement in agricultural development.
- 2. Generate Employment:** Provide steady income streams through agriculture-based enterprises.
- 3. Support Enterprise Setup:** Facilitate network groups for capital-intensive activities like value addition, processing and marketing.
- 4. Build Linkages:** Establish partnerships with stakeholders to converge available opportunities for sustainable rural youth development.

KEY FACTS ABOUT PROJECT ARYA

- ❖ **Coverage:** Operational in 25 states, with one selected district per state.
- ❖ **Partners:** ICAR Institutes and Agricultural Universities serve as technical partners.
- ❖ **Youth Engagement:** 200-300 rural youths per district receive entrepreneurial and skill development training.
- ❖ **Enterprise Units:** KVKs set up 1-2 enterprise units per district to serve as training hubs for farmers.

TRAINING FOCUS AREAS

Skill Development: Training provided in areas such as:

- ✦ Apiary (beekeeping)
- ✦ Mushroom cultivation
- ✦ Seed processing
- ✦ Dairy and goat rearing
- ✦ Poultry farming
- ✦ Carp hatchery
- ✦ Vermicomposting

Support for Entrepreneurship: Assistance with business plan preparation and bank loan applications for aspiring entrepreneurs.

BENEFITS OF PROJECT ARYA

1. **Income Generation:** Establishes a regular income source for rural youth.
2. **Employment Creation:** Absorbs underemployed/unemployed rural youth in agriculture and allied services.
3. **Agricultural Development:** Encourages youth to view farming as a viable profession.
4. **Rural Stability:** Reduces migration by creating sufficient local employment opportunities.
5. **Food Security:** Contributes to solving food security issues through efficient use of small landholdings.

SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION

- ❖ **District-Level Execution:** Implemented by KVKs in each selected district across 28 Indian states.
- ❖ **Youth Identification:** 200-300 rural youths per district are trained to establish micro-enterprises.
- ❖ **Enterprise Units:** Each KVK has 1-2 units serving as entrepreneurial training facilities.

- ❖ **Stakeholder Collaboration:** ICAR Institutes and agricultural universities act as technology partners.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- ✦ **Economic Growth:** Improves the economic status of rural areas through youth-driven agricultural initiatives.
- ✦ **Career Aspiration in Farming:** Positions farming as a rewarding profession, boosting youth interest.
- ✦ **Nationwide Agricultural Advancement:** Promotes a Green Revolution by supporting youth in agriculture across all states.
- ✦ **Enhanced Food Security:** Improves agricultural productivity and planning, aiding in national food security.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- ❖ **Continuous Oversight:** Includes concurrent monitoring, mid-term corrections and ongoing evaluation to ensure project success.
- ❖ **Skill Development and Confidence Building:** Training aims to increase rural youth confidence and drive interest in agriculture as a career, ultimately supporting sustainable rural development.

CONCLUSION

Project ARYA represents a significant step towards revitalizing rural areas by empowering youth through skill development and entrepreneurship in agriculture. By focusing on capacity building and linking various stakeholders, the initiative addresses unemployment and reduces migration from villages to urban centers. It provides a sustainable income source for rural households while promoting agricultural productivity and innovation. The project's success lies in its ability

to create employment opportunities, foster economic growth and position agriculture as a respected profession for the younger generation. With its inclusive approach and strategic partnerships, Project ARYA contributes to sustainable rural development, food security and national agricultural progress.

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