

Changing Contours of Welfare Programmes in India

Issues and Challenges



Editors

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Policies Towards Food Processing Industries in Karnataka to Promote Agri-Business

Prasanna B. Joshi

Introduction

The state of Karnataka is one of the largest states in India for growing a large variety of food crops, spices, fruits and vegetables. It ranks first for silk production and for the exports of floriculture produce. It is also one of the states that have a surplus coffee production in the state. This is because of suitable climate, soil fertility and usage of technology in the agricultural sector. It ranks first in terms of milk production and the Government in its sectoral objectives encourages the development of aquaculture. Karnataka has the second largest area which is under rain fed agriculture and produces nearly 55 percent of the total food grains and 74 percent in oilseed production. In other words, it wants to promote agribusiness not only towards the state's economy but also national economy. Agribusiness refers to the application of scientific practices relating to production, processing, marketing, distribution and trade of agriculture and horticultural produce. To promote agribusiness and modernize the primary sector, it is necessary that is adequate infrastructural availability like the latest technologies, use of fertilizers, use of better and high yielding variety of seeds and also to have a sustainable growth in this sector. This leads to maintaining the quality and nutrition of the processed food products through the application of latest up gradation in the field of technology. The present paper studies the importance of food processing industries in Karnataka in encouraging the growth of agribusiness in the state.

Need of the Study

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy; this sector has transformed itself in the decades due to growing technology, diversification and modernization. But still this sector lacks sufficient growth and development. The state of Karnataka produces a large variety of agricultural and horticultural crops. Therefore, the Government wants to modernize this sector as there is a significant contribution towards the economy. Due to changing demand, there is scope for the development of food processing industries which in turn results in the growth of agribusiness sector. Agribusiness of late, is recognized as one of the specialized areas where the commercialization of agricultural activities needs to be focused. It in this context, the present study is to understand how the development of food processing industries promotes agribusiness in Karnataka.

Review of Literature

Pearl Adu and Amankwa (1999) in their article on food industry emphasise the importance of quality control in the production and processing of agri food products. They stated that there has to be consistent standards of quality in processed food products. Acharya S S (2003) analyses the role of rural non-farm sector towards economic development and how agribusiness can be promoted in the changing scenario. L Venkatachalam (2003) examines the role of infrastructure in the development of agricultural sector in Karnataka. His study speaks about the districts that lack in infrastructural development and regional disparities in Karnataka. The study also relates to the advantages of infrastructure in the agricultural sector. Sector profile (2011) report states the benefits of Karnataka in promoting agricultural, horticultural and floricultural sectors in the state. It relates to the various policies stated by the Government to promote food processing industries, food parks and agribusiness in the state. Dr. B. K Baruah (2013) evaluates how agribusiness is treated as a management discipline. He relates to the different types of management tasks such as effective usage of the available resources, cost reduction methods and responsibilities that can be applied in the agribusiness sector.

Research Methodology

The study is conceptual based on secondary sources namely annual reports of the Government, articles, journals and other internet sources. Objectives of the Study are to understand the development of food processing industries in Karnataka; to understand the latest available technologies used in food processing industries to promote agribusiness in the state and to understand the policies initiated by the Government of Karnataka to promote agribusiness in the state. The study explains the role of food processing industries in Karnataka in promoting agribusiness but it fails to include how food parks help in the growth and development these industries and the implications of the policies towards agripreneurs in this sector.

Development of food processing industries in Karnataka

Karnataka grows a large variety of agricultural products, horticultural crops and plantation crops. The Government of India is encouraging the development of food processing industries in the state to achieve its twin objectives namely to promote both food processing and agribusiness sectors in the state. Food processing industry is considered as one of the upcoming and most important industries for the development of economy both at state and national levels. The Government of Karnataka encourages the development of food processing industries in the state under the guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Food Processing Industry. Food processing refers to the methods to transform and process agricultural products for human consumption with the help of using the latest up graded technology that retains the nutrition and quality of the processed food products. With the development of food processing industries in the state it will add to the exports of the state, create new business opportunities and also up of food parks in different parts of the state for the development of food processing industries through public private partnership mode.

Technologies used in food processing industries to promote agribusiness in the state.

Technology in its own way contributes to the development of an economy. In order to attain sustainable growth in food processing and agribusiness, there must be the application of technologies which helps in quality control, higher productivity and reduction of cost. Technologies in food processing industries like sorting, grading and processing of food products with better cold storage and warehousing facilities will help to maintain the quality of the processed products and better income to the farmers. The Union Ministry of Food Processing Industry has introduced various schemes and subsidies to make use of these technological facilities in the food processing industries in the state which will add value to the agribusiness sector in general and the food industry in particular. Accordingly, the Government of Karnataka has directed to set up cold storages in all the districts to regulate the quality of the produce of the agricultural sector. Government

Policies initiated by the Government of Karnataka to promote agribusiness in the state

Agribusiness includes industries which relate to food production, marketing, storage and warehousing and the usage of latest technology in improving shelf life of agri products. Karnataka was the first state to introduce a separate policy for food processing and agro industrial policy in 2003. The Government of Karnataka has introduced agribusiness policies in 2010, 2011 and 2015 to improve and develop the agribusiness sector. In its agri business policy of 2010, the Government has set up the Agri-business Development Corporation which is a special purpose vehicle (SPV). This policy also created an 'Integrated Agriculture Value Chain Park (IAVCP)' which would include the commodities produced in the different districts of Karnataka. The Integrated Agriculture Value Chain Park (IAVCP) considered the following commodities to be grown in these districts which has been shown in the below table.

Table 1

Commodity	Districts
Rice park	Koppal
Areca nut development park	Shimoga
Pulses park	Gulbarga
Potato park	Hassan
Onion park	Chitradurga
Oilseeds park	Challakere
Jowar & other millets	Bagalkot
Cotton park	Raichur
Organic park	Uttara Kannada
Cashew park	Karkala
Red Chilli park	Byadagi
Mango park	Srinivaspura
Grapes park	Bijapur
Pomegranates park	Kustagi
Flower park	Bangalore rural, Sirsi, Chikkamagalur
Jaggery Park	Mandya and Belgaum

Source: Government of Karnataka (2010). Karnataka Agribusiness Development Policy 2010. (Bengaluru: Department of Industries and Commerce).

The Government of Karnataka in its integrated agribusiness development policy in stressed on the infrastructural applications like the use of modern practices and technology in order to meet growing demand in domestic and foreign markets. This policy focused on reduction of production cost, minimizing waste, price stability, integrated nutrient management, organic farming, pest management, greenhouse technology, post-harvest management, adoption of state of the art food processing technologies and to increase value addition. The state Government in its latest policy announced in 2015 has introduced various incentives, subsidies and concessions to develop food processing industries and agribusiness sector. The Government is also supporting agripreneurs to set up their units in the food processing and agribusiness sectors. This policy also relates to opening up of agriclinics to help, educate and train the farmers so that they can increase their farm productivity, have better incomes and attain sustainable growth in both food processing and agribusiness sectors.

Findings of the Study

The agricultural sector contributes nearly 17 percent to Karnataka's state gross domestic product. Karnataka ranks second in the country in floricultural production and is one of the top most states to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). The Government organized the Global Agribusiness and Food Processing Summit 2011 which aimed to promote agribusiness and food processing industries through farmers, technology providers, input suppliers, processors, infrastructure providers, exporters, market linkage providers and investors and enter into mutually beneficial partnerships. In order to promote food processing industry, the Government is encouraging to set up a food processing special economic zone at Hassan and also food processing units in Gadag, Haveri and Belgavi.

Conclusion

The Government of Karnataka wants to promote agribusiness in the state through its policies and measures but it also consider the grievances of poor farmers in providing them rural credit and training facilities. In recent times, there are instances of farmers suicides due to drought conditions in the state, therefore the Government should think and act on strict measures to help the farmers in times of distress which is presently the need of the hour.

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