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AGRIPRENEURS – HERALDING NEW AREAS OF GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

In India, agriculture and entrepreneurship are slowly merging, creating a new segment that speaks of profitability. The new technological developments taking place in the agriculture sector together with supporting schemes from the government have opened up immense possibilities for entrepreneurs to flourish.

The past few years have seen sweeping changes in India's rural area. The digital divide is reducing and digital technologies are penetrating into the hinterlands. Smart phones and the services that are now available at lower costs have changed the rural landscape. This has led to the development of agritech startups. Funding in the agritech sector is seeing a phenomenal rise. Government support is further buoying up the sector.

Apart from the Start up India Programme, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has initiated a programme for agripreneurs to bring about a revolution in agriculture exports and use it as a key driving force for Aatmanirbhar Bharat. It aims to boost agriculture exports by promoting budding startup agri-preneurs. This in turn contributes to the growth of the very basic unit of agriculture, the farmers, by facilitating the startups to source the products directly from agricultural areas.

Agripreneurs today have made their presence felt in input segment, farming segment, value chain, output processing, marketing stage and related services. Globalization and interconnected markets have widened the scope and potential of agripreneurial opportunities. An emerging sector is organic farming. There is a lot of scope for research and development in this area.

Agripreneurs can play vital role in the growth and development of the national economy through entrepreneurship development. This shall increase income levels and employment opportunities in rural as well as urban areas. Agripreneurs can effectively address problem of smallholder farmers and help

in integrating them into local, national and international markets. Their interventions can be crucial at some junctures in reducing food costs, addressing supply uncertainties and improving the diets of the rural and urban poor in the country.

Agripreneurship is not only an opportunity but also a necessity for India. It can address many gaps in the production programmes, technology dissemination and marketing. It is heartening to find many young minds leaving their white collar jobs and turning into crusaders of agribusiness. Their modern outlook, enthusiasm, innovation and most importantly passion are heralding new areas of growth and prosperity for Indian agriculture.

