

DAESI: AN INITIATIVE OF MANAGE TO STRENGTHEN EXTENSION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Agriculture is a very dynamic field of science with innovations every day. Farmers are the most important seekers of information. Agricultural extension functionaries are the key information disseminators but often there is an acute deficiency of these workforce. So, farmers often look for an alternative source of information. In India, there are about 2.82 lakh practicing agri-input dealers, who are the prime source of farm information to the farming community. The first contact point for majority of farmers is the agri-input dealer. Considering the two facts viz. lack of sufficient number of extensionists and deep reliability of the agri-input dealers by the farmers, MANAGE (National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management) developed DAESI (Diploma in Agricultural Extension Services for Input dealers) for the agri-input dealers to develop them as para-extension professionals. DAESI imparts locality based agricultural knowledge. It is launched as a Central Sector Plan scheme. MANAGE had launched DAESI program in the year 2003 and so far covered the practicing input dealers of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

Classes

This course is developed in such way that it do not hamper daily lifestyle of these input dealers. Classroom courses and work related field visits are organised either on Sunday and/or market closure days at the district level. The course contains 48 classes including 40 classroom lectures and 8 regional visits. The candidates are taken to the different institutes of agriculture, laboratories, demonstration units and fields of innovative farmers as part of practical classes.

Eligibility and fee

MANAGE is the national level working agency whereas at state level, there are nodal agencies that look after programmes of the SAMETI. Interested candidates have to register themselves either at District Agriculture department or Project Director, ATMA at district level for taking admission in the course. Every batch has 40 applicants. All applicants who possess a minimum of 10th pass standard of educational qualification and has obtained a license of atleast any one agricultural input can avail the 50 per cent sub sidised fee of Rs. 10000 for the course. Applicants willing to be an agri-input dealer can also get admission in the course by depositing the total course fee of Rs. 20000. One can avail sponsorship from Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and agri-business companies also.

Course Structure

Duration: The program is spread over a period of 48 weeks with 40 classroom sessions and 08 field visits.

Module-wise Coverage of Theory and Practical Sessions.

I. Theory (classroom sessions)

1. Agro Ecological Situations.
2. Soil Health Management.
3. Rainfed Farming.
4. Seed & Seed Production.
5. Irrigation Techniques and their Management.
6. Weed Management.
7. Farm Implements and Machinery.
8. Pest and disease Control in Agriculture.
9. Crop Production Technology of major local crops.
10. Acts, Rules and Regulations related to Agricultural Inputs.
11. Schemes related to Agricultural Sector.
12. Extension Approaches and Methods.
13. Other Optional Areas based on requirement.

II. Proposed Practical Sessions / field visits against each module

1. Agro-Ecological Situations and its acquaint with relevance to Agricultural Production Systems.
2. Soil Health Management.
3. Rainfed Farming.
4. Seeds & Seed Production.
5. Irrigation Techniques and their Management.
6. Weeds & weed Management.
7. Farm Implements and equipments.
8. Integrated Pest & Disease Management (IPDM).
9. Package of Practices on predominant crops of the district.
10. Acts, Rules and Regulations related to Agricultural Inputs.
11. Extension Approaches and Methods.

70 percent of the course material contains basic agricultural knowledge and is prepared with the help of ICAR and its agricultural institutes and 30 percent content is derived from the problems of the locality. The entire course material is composed in regional languages.

First-hand experience in taking of soil samples, methods of seed sowing, seed germination testing and identification of nutrient deficiency syndrome and insect, pest and diseases is imparted. Trainees make several records in which they note the things encountered during field visits and later they discuss on these notes in the class. They also prepare the pictorial records of damages due to insects, pests, diseases and nutrient deficiencies. They maintain a problem-solution register in which they make entries of farmers' problems and suggestions obtained during their field visits and later on discuss them in the class. Every applicant has to present their assignment of field visit in an order to enhance their communication skills.

Instructor and Examiner

An agriculture graduate having experience of 5 – 20 years in SAUs, KVKs or other ICAR institutes is made to act as facilitator. He appointed on contract basis for one year which can be renewed based on the performance. He organises this programme and looks after the examination, evaluation, results, etc. Since the input dealers are different from each

other in respect of age, experience, business, income, etc. they are provided with uniforms to bring uniformity in the batch.

Examination and Certification

Only those applicants who attain atleast 64 classes out of 80 classes and atleast 6 out of 8 field visits are eligible to appear in the final examinations. Applicants are evaluated on the basis of bimonthly quizzes, midterm, final and practical examinations. Practical examinations, viva-voce and spotting are conducted by the external examiners. DAESI certificate is awarded to all those applicants who secure 40 percent or more marks in the examination. These certificate holders can take 3 days revision course organised after three years for them.

Strengthening professionalism

With the aim of developing input dealers as para-extension professionals, MANAGE encourages every input dealers to make an “Extension Corner” in their shops where newsletters, pamphlets, leaflets, books, etc. published on the major crops of that region are placed. Further the technological information and information on government schemes published in regional languages are also kept here in order to strengthen the extension system. Now the input dealers first demonstrate the seed germination before selling quality seeds to the farmers. After being trained under DAESI programme, the input dealers now first ask for the soil health card before handing over the chemical fertilizers to the farmers. They now also teach the farmers about the different levels of toxicity symbols printed on the packages of chemical pesticides, brief about the different types of nozzles for spray, proper spraying methods and precautions during sprays.

MANAGE has developed trimonthly e-bulletins, web pages and Facebook page to inform about the different events and programmes of DAESI. Also the trained input dealers have made WhatsApp group to share their experiences.

Status of DAESI

1. A total of 380 batches of DAESI have been completed covering 14,715 candidates since inception.
2. Currently, 309 batches of DAESI programs are in progress with 12360 enrolled candidates.

Conclusion

MANAGE is the apex institution for agricultural extension in India. Through DAESI programme it has achieved success in developing agri-input sellers as para-extension professionals and further strengthening the extension system in the country. Though at present input dealers of only few states are being benefited by this programme but sooner it will be adopted and implemented by all the states which will ultimately be fruitful for the end users i.e. farmers.

References

www.manage.gov.in/daesi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EI1kCq9A6A>