

# Harnessing farmers with technology vital for shift to agribusiness, says expert

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The harnessing of farmers with technology is vital in the course of shifting of Agriculture to Agribusiness, for making the sector sustainable, opined Dr P Chandrasekhara, the Director (Agriculture extension) of National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, under Ministry of Agriculture.

"More than hundred Agricultural institutions are there in the country which come up with latest technologies. But only 30 per cent of those technologies are reaching farmers. While contemplating on the switch over from agriculture to agribusiness, the need to strengthen the transfer of technologies is paramount," observed Chandrasekhara while delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of the three-day international conference on 'Agribusiness management-opportunities and challenges,' organised by department of Business Administration at Sahyadri College of Engineering and Management (SCEM) here on Thursday.

For the smooth transfer of technology, he laid stress on several key areas to be focused for the much needed switch over in order to make agriculture a profitable venture. "Farmers' group coming into action will facilitate the harnessing of technology.

Market led extension, Information Technology led extension, extension of public-private partnership, quality led extension, extension of entrepreneurship, involving the participation of techno managers etc are the right steps towards achieving the goal," he pointed. Promoting cluster like approach in agriculture, like what China is doing will also help materialise the shift.

'Agri with horticulture'

Delivering the inaugural address, Central Plantation Crop Research Institute (CPCRI) (Kasargod) Director Dr P Chowdappa said that instead of doing agriculture alone, coupling the cultivation with horticulture crops would make wonders. "In CPCRI, we have developed several value added products out of coconut such as coconut chips, Neera drink, Virgin coconut oil, snowball tender coconut. These are much in demand and these types of innovation will convert agriculture into an agribusiness venture," he said.

He asserted that the novel initiatives had proven that agriculture could be a profitable one in terms of sustenance, production and profit. Even increasing number of software engineers are today taking a plunge into agriculture field putting in innovative concepts, making use of the opportunity, he reasoned. Chowdappa added that to woo the young generation to agriculture, these out-of-the-box initiatives are the need of the hour.

Bhandary foundation Chairman Dr Manjunath Bhandary presided. College Principal Dr Umesh M Bhushi, Department of Business Administration Director Dr A P Achar, Prof Lokesh spoke.

Around 80 delegates, including 30 from African countries are attending the seminar.