

*Agriculture Unshackled: Strategic Opportunity for Creating Integrated Value Chains for Doubling Farm Incomes*, U.K. Srivastava and Pramila Srivastava, Goya Publishing 2021. Pp. xii+362. Rs. 499.00.

The main theme of the book is to convey the advantages of agri value chains (AVCs) to the farmers, processors, new entrepreneurs and aggregators. The AVCs for sugarcane and milk are working in India over the last 50 years but this term has become a buzzword after the signing of the World Trade Organisation Agreements including agriculture. The book. Part I of the book explains different forms of AVCs and related terms like agro processing industries, E-NAMS, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and companies, AVC Finance and contract farming which can help in increasing the income of farmers. These terminologies and their definitions are described in the Chapters of Part-I are taken by authors from the Google and Annual Reports of the Ministry of Food Processing Government of India (GOI) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The implementation status is also taken from these reports up to the year 2018-19. Part II of the book presents 10 case studies of AVCs on various products in different regions/states of the country. The printing of the book is good with flawless language. The contents in the first part are useful for first-time readers of the AVCs and the second part may be informative for researchers and help in ushering in creative ideas in new entrepreneurs.

One of the six Chapters in Part-I gives extensive information on different forms of AVCs and their advantages. The agricultural price policy is discussed in another chapter in a general way without reference to extensive studies like one by NABARD in 2020 and Kalamkar *et al.* for Rajasthan in 2013. The book lacks a discussion on the role of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) in implementing the price policy by procurement of cereals, oilseeds and pulses, respectively would have thrown light on advantages and flaws in which the ongoing agricultural price policy since the 1970s. It may be an easy alternative for farmers than joining AVCs. Readers may refer to the GOI study conducted by NABARD Consultancy Services on the impact of government procurement on farmers and increasing production. The reviewer was associated with the study as a consultant in devising methodology and drafting the report. The other chapters on the legal framework for contract farming, mega food park, and FPOs also give general information from published sources available online. Most of these chapters have reproduced the tables from the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI) and others. The contents and discussion in these chapters are overlapping too. The authors give the index of terms used and hundreds of references but these are not linked with the pages and text of the book., However, the first part is useful for first-time readers of AVCs, though this book is wanting in more serious analysis and ideas on the subject for researchers and planners.

The second Part from Chapters 7-16 contains conclusions and suggestions of 10 case studies viz ., McCain Food India Ltd, Sidhi Vinayak Agro Processing Pune, Freshpot fruits Ltd, Inl Farm Pvt. Ltd, Shree Khedut Sahkari Khand Udyog Mandal Ltd, Value Chain of ---Cashew Growers, Big Basket--Supermarket, E-Chaupal, Sumunnati Financial Intermediaries and Services and Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers

Federation. These case studies bring out the policies of GOI in promoting different types of AVCs. The authors are fully in favour of the three farm laws enacted by GOI in 2020. According to the authors, one of these laws gives freedom to farmers to sell outside APMC to any person with PAN at farm-gate, agro-processing industries, godowns, silos, etc. which are termed as 'trade areas'. The second law relating to the Farm Agreement gives specific government support to farmers to avoid any cheating by the big /bulk buyers. The third Farm law relates to the Essential Commodity Act (ECA) 1955 which allows farmers to sell their products anywhere in India. However, the arguments given by the authors are general and may not be convincing to serious researchers. Alas, these laws were repealed by GOI in December 2021 after a year-long protest by the farmers, though it was after the printing of the book.

The ten case-studies cover various types of AVCs e.g., producers driven, processors driven and cooperatives with FPO/societies as aggregators in the AVCs. The case studies reveal that most of them have succeeded in reaching a large number of farmers, adopting new technologies, mobilising capital cost and modern technologies, and providing better domestic and even global market in a few cases. The management and control of the sample AVCs were strong except for the Shree Kheda- and BAIF sponsored where it was just reasonable. All AVCs have focussed on profitability in their operations. Notwithstanding, the authors admit that as against the theoretical benefits of AVCs like a direct connection to farmers, access of farmers to quality inputs at a reasonable cost, assured higher prices through all Indian and global markets; the actual achievements were less than expected. A study on wheat in Haryana has also not found any link between farmers with flour mills and other wheat processing units (IJAE, Conference Number 2021).

It has been observed that except for SV Agro, other AVCs have not protected their members from production risk. Some of them like Big Basket have limited partnerships with farmers as it was a high-cost function for them. Moreover, the book lacks in specific discussion and narrative on technologies and policies which can double the farm incomes by 2022 as per its theme and declaration by GOI

Overall, the book may acquaint the new readers with the AVCs in part one and the case studies in part II contain information about the policies and support of the Government in promoting AVCs.

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