Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC), Visva-Bharati

The Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC) at Visva-Bharati University plays a pivotal role in connecting academic research with practical policy formulation for Indian agriculture. Situated in Santiniketan, with its deep historical ties to rural development, the Centre is well-positioned to deliver meaningful insights into agricultural and rural economics.

Core Focus Areas

The AERC's work is guided by four interconnected pillars that directly impact India's agricultural policy and practice:

1. Policy Framing & Evaluation

• Function: Acts as a think tank that not only undertakes research but also designs and evaluates agricultural policies using evidence-based analysis.

• Impact: Ensures that policies are grounded in empirical data, leading to sustainable outcomes for farming communities.

2. Scheme Evaluations

• Function: Conducts impartial assessments of government schemes (e.g., PM-KISAN, KCC, Aspirational District Programme) through field studies and data analysis.

• Impact: Provides feedback to policymakers, highlights achievements, identifies bottlenecks, and suggests improvements.

3. Continuous Village Surveys

• Function: Maintains longitudinal surveys in selected villages to track socio-economic changes in income, cropping patterns, debt, migration, and employment.

• Impact: Creates a dynamic, authentic database that powers policy evaluation and research with real-time rural insights.

4. Contributions to NITI Aayog

• Function: Provides quarterly reports and agricultural performance data to NITI Aayog for national-level planning and monitoring.

• Impact: Supplies reliable, updated information for informed decision-making and timely policy interventions.

Integrated Model

The strength of AERC lies in the synergy between its activities. Village Surveys generate grassroots data, which supports Scheme Evaluations and Policy Framing. The consolidated insights are then shared with NITI Aayog, creating a continuous feedback loop from local realities to national policy.