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STUDENT'S ATTITUDE ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the factors influence the students towards agricultural education by using purposive sampling method. The study is mainly focused on the personal profile of the students, their attitude towards agricultural education, their perception towards institutional issues at college and constraints faced during their degree programme. The study revealed that the majority (58.44%) of the students had a rural background with 54.55 percent of students are pursuing a bachelor's degree in horticulture and 45.45 percent of students are pursuing a bachelor degree in agriculture. The majority (77.92 %) of the parents (Fathers) of the students are working in Govt. Sector and it was also noticed that the annual income of the parents (51.95%) is less than 5 lakhs. It was observed from students' attitude towards that ''Teachers of our college are highly qualified specialized, experienced and skill-oriented' was agreed by 71,43 percent of the students followed by 'Agriculture is scientific principles and advanced practices' was strongly agreed by almost 65 percent (64.94%) of the students. Regarding 'Joining to these professional degrees is beneficial for students' was also agreed by 61.04 percent of the students. The attitude on 'Only students with farm background should pursue a career in agriculture' was disagreed and strongly disagree by 67.43 percent of the students which implies that agriculture and allied sciences education can be pursued by anyone to their rural/urban background. Regarding institutional issues such as 'Counselling is conducted in every semester', 27.27 percent of the students' in disagreement with the statement as perceived by them. The institutional issues which are more concern for the students are 'Teachers have the updated knowledge of the subject', 'Practical sessions are correlated to theory', 'Students are helpful to each other', 'Teachers encourage healthy competition among students' and 'Chalkboard is visible in the classroom' as agreed by them. The major constraints faced by the students which are technical lack of lab facilities, lack of books in the library, lack of field / industrial visits and shortage of teachers.

Keywords: *Personal profile, Attitude, Agricultural education, Institutional issues, Constraints.*

Introduction

India is an agrarian country and the majority of the population lives in villages. The agriculture sector remains a major factor in contributing to the Indian economy. In India, agriculture plays an important role in national income (28%), source of food security, the supply of raw material for many agro-based industries, provides employment of 62 percent of rural people, a great source of foreign exchange and also provides opportunities for rural welfare. Overall we can say that the agriculture sector contributes towards the overall development of the nation. The country came out with several achievements such as the green revolution, white revolution, yellow revolution, blue revolution and many more. Apart from these agricultural developments, the agricultural education has been given prime importance in India and several agricultural universities were established to cater the educational needs in agricultural and allied sectors, accordingly, several agricultural colleges were also established to provide the agricultural education in various subjects such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, biotechnology, veterinary, animal sciences, soil science, etc. the degrees offered by these colleges are now professional degrees in India.

Most of the agricultural colleges were established based on the agro-ecological zones, mostly in rural areas to attract rural and poor youth in agricultural education to cater to the needs of rural poor farmers. Despite several achievements and goals with self-sufficiency in food grains, agriculture not yet treated as a commercial business. Despite these constraints, agricultural graduates are doing well in their area of specialization and coming out in taking part in competitive examinations such as the topmost civil services. It might be due to their courage, timely guidance of faculty members. Therefore, the present investigation was planned to study the personal and socio-economic profile of the students, to assess their attitude towards agricultural education, institutional atmosphere at college and to study the constraints faced by the students during their degree programme.

Methodology

The students from two colleges of third-year B. Sc. Agriculture and B. Sc. Horticulture were selected purposively. A total of 77 students have formed the sample of the study consisting of 35 students from Biswanath College of Agriculture, Assam Agricultural University (AAU) and 42 students Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan District of Himachal Pradesh) respectively. the students were selected by using a purposive sampling method as the students visited the ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (ICAR-NAARM), Hyderabad during the year 2019 to fulfill the mandated requirement to visit the National Institutions during their all India study tour.

The data was collected from the students by using the well-constructed questionnaire during their visit to ICAR-NAARM in November 2019. The data tabulated and results were presented by using the descriptive analysis. The personal profile and socioeconomic status of the students, analyzed by using frequency and percentages to get a meaningful understanding. Whereas, students' attitude towards agricultural education, perceived institutional issues in college were studied by using the Likert type scale in which the responses of students were calculated on a five-point quantum scale as Strongly Agree, Agree, Un-Decided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with the weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Accordingly, results were presented in Tables 2 and 3. Regarding constraints faced by the students as multiple responses, calculated by using simple statistical tools such as frequency and percentage and results were presented in Table 4.

Results and Discussion:

The results are presented with various heads such as Profile of the students, Students attitude towards agricultural education, institutional issues perceived by the students, Technical problems faced by the students and Conclusion.

Profile of the students

Personal and socio-economical profiles of the students such as gender, education, age, rural/urban background, parents' occupation, and annual income were studied and results were depicted in Table 1.

Table 1.Personal and socio-economical profile of the students

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (n=77)	Percentage
1	**Gender**		
	Male	31	40.26
	Female	46	59.74
2	**Educational Background**		
	B. Sc. (Ag.)	35	45.45
	B. Sc. (Horti.)	42	54.55
3	**Average Age**	**21 Years**	
4	**Rural / Urban background**		
	Rural	45	58.44
	Urban	32	41.56
5	**Parents Occupation**		
	Mother		
	Home Maker	45	58.44
	Govt. Service	23	29.87
	Business	09	11.69
	Father		
	Govt. Service	60	77.92
	Business	13	16.88
	Pvt. Jobs	02	2.60
	Farming	02	2.60
6	**Annual Income**		
	< than 5 lakh	40	51.95
	5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	31	40.26
	>than 10 lakhs	06	7.79

The results depicted in Table1, indicated that around 60 percent (59.74%) of the respondents were female and it implies that agricultural education is getting popular among girl students. According to Behara B. S and Behara A. C. (2013), 60-80 per woman are involved in agricultural occupations in low-income Asian countries. Educational background of the students based on the one batch of B. Sc. Agriculture with 35 students representing the 45.45 percent and the other batch of B. Sc. Horticulture with 42 students with 54.55 percent of third year in their respective degree programme. It was observed from the rural/urban background of the respondents that the majority (58.44%) represented rural areas followed by 41.56 percent of the respondents represented urban background. Regarding parents' occupation majority (77.92%) of the fathers of respondents are in jobs in government sector followed by 16.88 percentage of fathers of the respondents are in business whereas, the majority (58.44%) of mothers of respondents are homemakers followed by 29.87 percentage of mothers are working in the government sector. Around 52 percent (51.95%) of parents had an annual income of less than 5.00 lakhs and it was also observed that 40.26 percentage of parents had 5-10 lakhs of annual income (as both-mother & fathers are working). As the majority of the parents of the respondents are working that might be one of the reasons that the respondents enrolled themselves into professional degree programmes of (Bachelors in Agriculture and Horticulture) which are quite expensive courses of 4 years.

Students attitude towards agricultural education

The attitude of students was assessed based on 11 various aspects and responses were tabulated and results were depicted in Table 2.

It was depicted in Table 2, that 'Agriculture is scientific principles and advanced practices', was agreed by 64.94 percent of the students, this is mainly because the degree programmes of agriculture and horticulture are theory as well as practical oriented. The students will have exposure to various components of agricultural and horticultural sciences with advanced scientific cultivation practices, processes and production.

Regarding the statement, 'Joining to these professional degrees is beneficial for students 'was agreed by 61.04 percent of the students. It might because the students with professional degrees have added advantage to fetch good job opportunities as well as excess in higher education.

'Students in these degree programmes are come across the broad range of subjects' was strongly agreed by almost half (49.35%) of the students as they were taught a broad range of subjects such as rural sociology, psychology, economics, extension and communication along with the basic subjects of agriculture and horticulture which will be additional help for the students to prepare for the various competitive examinations for better job opportunities and overall personality development.

The statement regarding 'Teachers of our college are highly qualified specialized, experienced and skill-oriented' was agreed by 71.43 percent of the students. Well qualified and experienced teachers are also good at teaching, research and other scientific activities might be one of the reasons for students behind the majority of the students were agreed on this opinion.

'This programme is suitable for students with rural background' was agreed by around 45 (44.16%) percent of students, as they will have pre-exposure of agriculture before joining the degree programme which will be helpful to acquire the additional scientific and practical knowledge in the subject to excel.

Just completing these degree programmes is not sufficient to practice farming in their village on the scientific line was agreed by 42.86 percent of the students, as students might be in the opinion that they will get the good job opportunities in the Govt. Sector.

'Field / practical classes and village visits are conducted to provide an opportunity to students and learn more in their real-life situation' was strongly agreed by 42.86 percent of the students and interestingly it was also found that 41.56 percent of students were also agreed for the same. This was mainly due to the focus of giving during the degree programme on agricultural education based on practical knowledge, skills acquired and village visits are helpful as seeing is believing and understand the culture of villagers, social norms and farming experiences. These findings are similar to that of Pradhan (2002) and Govindagowda, V. *et al*. (2012).

'The image of agriculture is improving' was agreed by 55.84 percent of the students, as these degrees in agriculture and allied sciences are considered as professional and agri-professionals in more demand as 70 percent of the population depends on agriculture directly or indirectly.

Interestingly 'Only students with farm background should pursue a career in agriculture' was disagree and strongly disagree by almost 72 percent (37.66 and 33.77% respectively) of the respondents and this is true that any field of education can be pursued by anyone and there should not be any restriction to acquire.

The majority (59.74%) of the students agreed with the statement 'personal like of the profession' it might be due to self-motivation that they want to pursue these degrees as a profession in their respective subject of specialization as these degrees are highly skill-oriented with multiple opportunities in the field. Similar findings are also reported by Mohammed, S. S. (2013) in his study entitled Attitudes of students at College of Food and Agricultural Sciences toward agriculture. Oiutosin, A. and Oluwaseun, A. (2020) reported in their study that 93.3 percent of the students are fascinated about the agricultural education.

The poor societal value of farmers was agreed by the 41.56 percent of the students, might be due to the non-profitable sector and only poor people will come forward to do agriculture. as reported by Adejoh, S.O *et al.* (2016) in his study that farmers have low societal value with low income from agriculture-related activities.

Table 2. Students attitude towards agricultural education

Sl. No.	The attitude of students towards agriculture education	*SA* *F (%)	*Agree* F (%)	*UD* F(%)	*DA* F(%)	*SDA* F(%)
1	Agriculture is scientific principles and advanced practices	50 (64.94)	27 (35.06)	- (00)	- (00)	- (00)
2	Joining to these professional degrees is beneficial for students	28 (36.36)	47 (61.04)	2 (2.60)	- (00)	- (00)
3	Students in these degree programmes are come across the broad range of subjects	38 (49.35)	33 (42.86)	4 (5.19)	2 (2.60)	- (00)
4	Teachers of our college are highly qualified specialized, experienced and skill-oriented	7 (9.09)	55 (71.43)	13 (16.88)	2 (2.60)	- (00)
5	This programme is suitable for students with a rural background	16 (20.78)	34 (44.16)	17 (22.08)	10 (12.99)	- (00)
6	Just completing these degree programmes is not sufficient to practice farming in their village on scientific line	24 (31.17)	33 (42.86)	17 (22.08)	1 (1.30)	2 (2.60)
7	Field / practical classes and village visits are conducted to provide an opportunity for students & learn more in their real-life situation	33 (42.86)	32 (41.56)	8 (10.39)	4 (5.19)	- (00)
8	The image of agriculture is improving	17 (22.08)	43 (55.84)	8 (10.39)	8 (10.39)	1 (1.30)
9	Only students with farm background should pursue a career in agriculture	2 (2.60)	11 (14.29)	9 (11.69)	29 (37.66)	26 (33.77)
10	Personal like of the profession	11 (14.29)	46 (59.74)	12 (15.58)	6 (7.79)	2 (2.60)
11	Poor societal value of farmers	16 (20.78)	32 (41.56)	16 (20.78)	7 (11.69)	4 (5.19)

F= Frequency, figures in perentheses are percentages

Institutional issues perceived by the students

The institutional climate perceived by the students during their degree programme on various 15 aspects related to the atmosphere in the college and results were presented in Table 3.

It was evident from Table 3, that 'Students are helpful to each other' and 'Teachers encourage healthy competition among students' was agreed by almost 60 percent (59.74%) of the students. It indicates that the healthy sign among the students as well as teachers is playing an important role to motivate students to take part innovatively in all kinds of educational activities which will help the students to excel in their career. 'Teaching in classrooms is audible to all students, was agreed by 63.64 percentage of the students whereas the 'Chalkboard is visible in the classroom' was agreed by around 58.44 percent of the students and 55.84 percent of the students were agreed that the 'Teaching aids are equipped in classrooms'. It implies that the teaching facilities in classrooms are good as required in the modern days.

Table 3: Institutional issues perceived by the students

Sl. No.	Institutional climate perceived by the students	*SA* *F (%)	*Agree* F (%)	*UD* F (%)	*DA* F (%)	*SDA* F (%)
1	Students are helpful to each other	19 (24.68)	46 (59.74)	10 (12.99)	2 (2.60)	- (00)

2	Teachers encourage healthy competition among students	16 (20.78)	46 (59.74)	6 (7.79)	9 (11.69)	- (00)
3	Teachers have the updated knowledge of the subject	12 (15.58)	50 (64.94)	11 (14.29)	3 (3.90)	1 (1.30)
4	Teaching in classrooms is audible to all students	14 (18.18)	49 (63.64)	7 (9.09)	6 (7.79)	1 (1.30)
5	Chalkboard is visible in the classroom	13 (16.88)	45 (58.44)	9 (11.69)	8 (10.39)	2 (2.60)
6	Teaching aids are equipped in classrooms	11 (14.29)	43 (55.84)	10 (12.99)	12 (15.58)	1 (1.30)
7	Laboratories are updated and are in good conditions	7 (9.09)	18 (23.38)	21 (27.27)	27 (35.06)	4 (5.19)
8	Library is having sufficient books & journals	15 (19.48)	27 (35.06)	8 (10.39)	24 (31.17)	3 (3.90)
9	Library authorities are co-operative with students	16 (20.78)	43 (55.84)	12 (15.58)	5 (6.49)	1 (1.30)
10	Practical sessions are correlated to theory	12 (15.58)	50 (64.94)	10 (12.99)	3 (3.90)	2 (2.60)
11	As part of a practical class, teachers arrange field visits	23 (29.87)	42 (54.55)	8 (10.39)	4 (5.19)	0 (00)
12	Practical field visits are helpful to us to understand and analyze the field visits	32 (41.56)	34 (44.16)	5 (6.49)	2 (2.60)	4 (5.19)
13	Counseling is conducted in every semester	11 (14.29)	18 (23.38)	13 (16.88)	21 (27.27)	14 (18.18)
14	Counselors give useful advice to their students	10 (12.99)	12 (15.58)	27 (35.06)	19 (24.68)	9 (11.69)
15	Lodging facilities at the hostel are good for students	14 (18.18)	32 (41.56)	11 (14.29)	13 (16.88)	7 (9.09)

F= Frequency, figures in perentheses are percentages

Regarding the perception of the students on 'Laboratories are updated and are in good conditions' was disagreed by 35.06 percent of the students which is a major concern for the colleges to update the lab facilities with all instruments so, that students will spend time on various experiments related to their studies. 'Library is having sufficient books & journals' was agreed by 35.06 percent of the students and strongly agreed by almost 20 percent (19.48%) of the students.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the library facilities need to be improved by the respective colleges by having sufficient books and journals for reading and references.

Students are happy with the 'Library authorities are co-operative with students' as it was agreed by more than 55 percent (55.84%) of the students.

'Practical sessions are correlated to theory' was agreed by almost 65 percent (64.94%) of the students and 'As part of a practical class, teachers arrange field visits' was agreed by around 55 percent (54.55%) of the students. Regarding 'Practical field visits are helpful to us to understand and analyze the field visits' was agreed and strongly agreed by almost 80 percent (44.16 and 41.56% respectively) of the students. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the students were happy with the practical visits arranged by the teachers to gain practical knowledge and acquire the desired skills.

Students are in disagreement with 'Counselling is conducted in every semester' as it was perceived by 27.27 percent of the students which is a major concern that needs to be taken in the count by the college authorities so the students can be guided time to time-based on their educational needs. Regarding 'Counsellors give useful advice to their students' was undecided or disagree or strongly disagree by 70 percent of the students which is very very important for the colleges to appoint the counselors for the students who are not doing well in their studies.

'Lodging facilities at the hostel are good for students' was agreed by 41.56 percent of the students followed by 18.18 percent of the students are strongly agree with it.

The technical problem faced by the students

Table 4 indicates the technical problems faced by the students. The responses are multiple which are sorted out into 9 different types of problems as listed below.

Table 4: Technical problem faced by the students during their degree programme

Sl. No.	Technical problems faced by the students	F (n=77)*	Percentage
1	Lack of laboratory facilities	37	48.05
2	Lack of field visits or industrial visits	25	32.47
3	Teaching skills of teachers needs to be updated	12	15.58
4	Audio visual facilities in classrooms	12	15.58
5	Shortage of Teachers	13	16.88
6	GYM facilities not proper	12	15.58
7	Infrastructural facilities need to be improved in a hostel	10	12.99
8	Lack of books in the library	32	41.56
9	Lack of qualified teachers	8	10.39

Multiple responses

It was depicted from Table 4, that majority (48.08) percent of the students opined that 'lack of laboratory facilities' is one of the major problems in colleges followed by 'lack of books' in the library was also expressed by 41.56 percent of the students as a technical problem. It was also observed that 'lack of field visits or industrial visits' is one of the technical problems faced by 32.47 percent of the respondents. This might be due to the non-availability of transport facilities at the college level or non-availability funds for the purpose. 'Shortage of teachers' in colleges was expressed by 16.88 percent of the students which needs to be taken care of by the university and college authorities by recruiting sufficient teachers in colleges. The other problems faced such as 'teaching skills of teachers need to be updated', 'audiovisual facilities in classrooms' and 'GYM facilities not proper' by the equal percentage (15.58%) of students. These problems need to be taken in to account by training the teachers in their field of teaching, by improving audio-visual facilities in classrooms and by creating GYM related infrastructure at hostels up to the satisfaction of the students. 'The infrastructural facilities need to be improved at hostel' is another technical problem faced by the 12.99 percent of the students which needs to be taken care of by the colleges and 'Lack of qualified teachers' in colleges is another problem faced by the 10.39 percent of the students. This problem can be solved by the colleges by recruiting qualified teachers by observing recruitment norms so that students will perform better in their subjects of interest.

Conclusion

The Student's attitude on agricultural education & perception towards institutional issues concluded with several findings that the girl students move forward to enter in the agricultural and allied sector education. The majority of the students enrolling themselves enrolled in agricultural education had a rural background. The average age of the students is around 21 years as they are in their third year of a degree programme and the majority of their parents (Fathers) occupation is a job as they are serving in Govt. Sector. The attitude of students towards agricultural education indicated that the teachers in colleges are well qualified with specialization in their subject and got sufficient experience which is a good sign for the institutions to contribute effectively in education for the benefit of students. It is also good for the students to get trained under the able guidance expert teachers. Whereas the majority of students are in agreement with that joining these professional degrees is good to excel in their subject of expertise.

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