

## Attitude of students towards agricultural education and their perceived organizational atmosphere

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### ABSTRACT

Most of the agricultural college students belong to poor socio-economic status, because majority is from rural areas and their parents occupation are agriculture. With all these constraints, still the agriculture graduates are excelling in their field and even few are getting into civil services every year. The study was conducted at the Agricultural College, Hassan during the academic year 2009-2010. The total sample size was 180, covering all the three degree programmes viz., B.Sc. (Agri.), B.Sc. (Agril. Biotech.) and B.Tech. (Food Science). Findings revealed that, joining to Agriculture and its related degree programme is boon to the students, this was agreed by 50 per cent of students. As students of agriculture are exposed to wide range of subjects this was agreed and strongly agreed by 44 per cent and 41 per cent of student, respectively. Three fourth of the students agreed that the practical classes, village visits, study tours were conducted to provide an opportunity to students to become closer to their real life situation. Teachers in the college used to keep the students informed about the update knowledge of the subjects and this was agreed by nearly fifty per cent of the students. Practical sessions are correlated to theory and this was agreed by 62 per cent of students, as they get opportunity to learn by doing as it is known that "practice makes perfect". Counseling is conducted in every semester, 46 per cent of responds strongly agrees and 42 per cent were agreeing to this statement. More than 70 per cent of students were comfortable in understanding the courses. 42 per cent agreed that hostel environment was conducive for their study at Agriculture College, Hassan.

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture constitutes the hub of India's economic life and social and cultural ethos. Majority of the population lives in villages and derives the livelihood from agriculture. The decade immediately after independence and partition of the country can be viewed as a waterbed in the evolution and further strengthening of the system of agricultural education in India. It is a period studied with a number of commissions, committees and study teams which reviewed critically the prevailing agricultural situation in the country in general and the structure and functioning of the related teaching, research and extension institutions in particular.

As per as education is concerned, the University Education Commission was established under the chairmanship

of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan the Philosopher and former President of the republic of India. It is this commission which made the far-reaching recommendation for establishing rural universities in India, patterned in the land grant system (LGS) of Agriculture Universities in the United States of America (USA). Thus, agricultural education received a pride and given an epoch making direction for growth. The commission made a number of concrete suggestions for the overall organizational structure, management and functioning of these universities including arrangements for strengthening agricultural experimental station and involvement of faculty members and students in extension education and demonstration programmes.

The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) has indicated the weakness that existed in the agricultural universities as follows. "Lack of suitable text books and basic

teaching materials is a serious weakness in effectively raising the standards of agricultural education at the higher level. The students mostly rely on lecture notes on text designed for students to supplement their studies” (Anonymous, 1976).

Most of the agricultural college students belong to poor socio-economic status, because majority is from rural areas and their parents occupation is agriculture. With all these constraints, still the agriculture graduates are excelling in their field and even few are getting into civil services every year. It may be due to their internal urge, dedication and effective guidance of teachers. Hence, the present study was undertaken to know the attitude of students towards agriculture education and their perceived organizational climate of the college.

## METHODS

The study was conducted in the Agricultural College, Hassan during the academic year 2009-2010. Total students population of the college was 428. Out of this, 180 students (Table A) were sampled through randomized proportionate sampling techniques, covering all the three degree programmes viz., B.Sc. (Ag.), B.Sc. (Agril. Biotech.) and B. Tech. (Food Science). The first year degree students were excluded as they were fresher to the college with limited exposure to the various agricultural courses. Hence, second, third and fourth year students were sampled. The data were collected from the students during the month of September 2009 in an informal atmosphere. A detailed questionnaire was given to the selected respondents and data were collected from them. The collected data then scored analyzed and interpreted.

**Table A : Degree wise sample size of the students (n=180)**

| Sr. No.           | Degree programme         | Year of studying     | Total number of students in a class | Number of students selected for study |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1.                | B. Sc. (Agri)            | 4th year             | 43                                  | 43                                    |
|                   |                          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year | 48                                  | 35                                    |
|                   |                          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | 56                                  | 24                                    |
| 2.                | B. Sc. (Agri. Bio-tech ) | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year | 38                                  | 24                                    |
|                   |                          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | 39                                  | 18                                    |
| 3.                | B. Tech (Food Science)   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> year | 34                                  | 18                                    |
|                   |                          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> year | 38                                  | 18                                    |
| Total sample size |                          |                      | 296                                 | 180                                   |

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

### Attitude of students towards agriculture education:

It is observed from Table 1 that, joining to Agriculture

and its related degree programme is boon to the students, this is agreed by 50 per cent of students, this is mainly due to the fact that Agricultural degree programmes expose the students to sociology, psychology, constitution and economics along with the core agricultural subjects, which help them to understand the world broadly and give way to prepare for the competitive examinations and these degrees are also considered as low cost degree programmes which fetch good jobs.

As students of agriculture and its related degree programme they are exposed to wide range of subjects this is agreed and strongly agreed by 44 per cent and 41 per cent of students, respectively. Agriculture degree students study, wide variety of subjects such as sociology, psychology, constitution, economics and other agriculture related subjects which help them to prepare for the competitive examinations.

Teachers of Agricultural College, Hassan are highly qualified, specialized, experienced and skill oriented. This was agreed by 54 per cent of students and majority of teachers were doctorate holders having experience of working in other scientific and research and extension departments. Agriculture is more suited for students from rural areas and this was agreed by the 48 per cent of respondents, as agriculture is a way of life for the rural people and students from rural areas, who join agriculture, have a pre-practical exposure in agriculture practice and hence it will help them to learn more practically and excel in their field.

Just completing agriculture and its related degree programmes is not sufficient unless the graduates go back to their village and do practical agriculture on scientific lines. This was agreed by 38 per cent and strongly agrees by 35 per cent as it is very much helpful for them to do farming in scientific way on the learning by doing principle the students will get knowledge and learn skills while studying in agriculture degree programme.

Practical classes, village visits, study tours are conducted to provide an opportunity to students to become closer to the real life situation. This statement was agreed by majority (73 per cent) of respondents. This was mainly because agriculture is a practical and skill oriented course, village visits, tours etc. will help the students to understand the village dynamics clearly and become perfect in their professional field, the above results are same in line with Pradhan (2002).

### Perceived organizational climate of the college:

According to the study, about 54 per cent of students (Table 2) of Agricultural College, Hassan were helpful to each other and this was because of their helping nature which is inherited and the affable environment at college and hostel which encourage group living among student community.

About 51 per cent of students agreed to the statement that the teachers in the college encourage the healthy competition among the students by which students can improve

**Table 1 : Attitude of students towards agriculture education (n=180)**

| Sr. No. | Statements  | SA  |    | A   |    | DA  |    | SDA |    | Total |     |
|---------|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-------|-----|
|         |   | No. | %  | No. | %  | No. | %  | No. | %  | No.   | %   |
| 1.      | Joining to these degree programme is boon to students.  | 76  | 42 | 90  | 50 | 11  | 06 | 03  | 02 | 180   | 100 |
| 2.      | Students in these degree programmes are exposed to wide range of the subjects   | 79  | 44 | 74  | 41 | 24  | 13 | 03  | 02 | 180   | 100 |
| 3.      | Teachers in our college are highly qualified, specialized, experienced and skill oriented   | 49  | 27 | 97  | 54 | 27  | 15 | 07  | 04 | 180   | 100 |
| 4.      | This agriculture education is more suited to students from rural than urban areas   | 86  | 48 | 65  | 36 | 28  | 15 | 01  | 01 | 180   | 100 |
| 5.      | Just completing these degree programmes is not sufficient unless they practice farming in their villages on scientific lines              | 63  | 35 | 68  | 38 | 47  | 26 | 02  | 01 | 180   | 100 |
| 6.      | Field practical class, village visit etc. are conducted to provide an opportunity to students and learn more in their real life situation | 132 | 73 | 41  | 23 | 07  | 04 | 00  | 00 | 180   | 100 |

their academic performance and help them to achieve their goals. Teachers in the college keep the students informed about the updated knowledge of the subjects and this was agreed by 48 per cent of the students. This agreement is highly correlated with the previous statement that teachers are highly specialized, qualified and skill oriented and situate their efforts in giving updated knowledge to students. 64 per cent of students in the college agreed that teaching was audible to all the students in classroom as the college is situated away from the city disturbances and the class rooms are well constructed with good light and ventilation. 53 per cent agreed that chalk board writing was visible as the class rooms were provided with good black boards with good light and ventilation. Teaching aids used by the teachers were satisfied by about 44 per cent of students. This was because, majority of the teachers were

computer literates, updated in their knowledge and using power point presentations and internet as they were highly qualified and experienced.

About 44 per cent of students agreed that library was having sufficient collection of books as the library possessed wide range of books of specific subject and nearly twenty thousand volumes of books were available and helpful for the students in gaining sufficient knowledge about the subjects, apart from these, the variety of magazines and newspapers and journals help the students in improving their overall personality. About 51 per cent agreed that library authorities were co-operative with students by issuing books to students whenever needed. Practical sessions were correlated to theory; this was agreed by 62 per cent of students, as they get opportunity to learning by doing as it is known that “practice

**Table 2 : Perceived organizational atmosphere of the college (n=180)**

| Sr. No. | Statements  | SA  |    | A   |    | UD  |    | DA  |    | SDA |    | Total |     |
|---------|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-------|-----|
|         |   | No. | %  | No. | %  | No. | %  | No. | %  | No. | %  | No.   | %   |
| 1.      | Students are helpful to each other  | 37  | 20 | 97  | 54 | 09  | 05 | 23  | 13 | 14  | 08 | 180   | 100 |
| 2.      | Teachers encourage healthy competition among students                               | 40  | 22 | 92  | 51 | 25  | 14 | 15  | 08 | 08  | 05 | 180   | 100 |
| 3.      | Teachers are having the updated knowledge of the subjects                           | 31  | 17 | 86  | 48 | 23  | 13 | 15  | 08 | 09  | 05 | 180   | 100 |
| 4.      | Teaching in class room is audible to all students                                   | 42  | 23 | 116 | 64 | 09  | 05 | 10  | 06 | 03  | 02 | 180   | 100 |
| 5.      | Chalk board is visible in class room  | 53  | 29 | 96  | 53 | 08  | 04 | 21  | 13 | 02  | 01 | 180   | 100 |
| 6.      | Teaching aids are equipped in class room for teaching                               | 39  | 22 | 79  | 44 | 30  | 17 | 23  | 12 | 09  | 05 | 180   | 100 |
| 7.      | Laboratories are adequate and are in good conditions                                | 46  | 25 | 50  | 28 | 16  | 09 | 49  | 27 | 19  | 11 | 180   | 100 |
| 8.      | Library is having sufficient collection of books, journals etc.                     | 29  | 16 | 80  | 44 | 20  | 11 | 42  | 24 | 09  | 05 | 180   | 100 |
| 9.      | Library authorities are co-operative with students                                  | 30  | 17 | 91  | 51 | 26  | 14 | 29  | 16 | 04  | 02 | 180   | 100 |
| 10.     | Practical sessions are correlated to theory   | 54  | 30 | 111 | 30 | 09  | 05 | 04  | 02 | 02  | 01 | 180   | 100 |
| 11.     | As part of practical class, teachers arrange field visits                           | 69  | 38 | 85  | 47 | 11  | 06 | 10  | 06 | 05  | 03 | 180   | 100 |
| 12.     | Practical field visits are helpful to us to understand and analyze the field visits | 98  | 54 | 71  | 39 | 03  | 02 | 04  | 02 | 04  | 02 | 180   | 100 |
| 13.     | Counseling is conducted in every semester   | 83  | 46 | 76  | 42 | 06  | 03 | 08  | 04 | 07  | 04 | 180   | 100 |
| 14.     | Counselors give useful advice to their counselees                                   | 74  | 41 | 77  | 43 | 07  | 04 | 13  | 07 | 09  | 05 | 180   | 100 |
| 15.     | Hostel environment is conducive for our study                                       | 16  | 09 | 76  | 42 | 30  | 17 | 33  | 18 | 25  | 14 | 180   | 100 |
| 16.     | Food provided in our hostel is very good  | 39  | 22 | 32  | 18 | 19  | 11 | 32  | 19 | 55  | 31 | 180   | 100 |

makes man perfect”.

As a part of the course work, teachers arrange field visits this was agreed by 39 per cent of students as the students are exposed to practical life which helps them to improve their communication skills. Practical field visits are helpful to understand and analyze the field situation and this was agreed by 54 per cent.

Counseling is conducted in every semester, 46 per cent of responds strongly agreed and 42 per cent agreed to this statement. In the college, each batch of 5 to 6 students are attached to one teacher-counselor, who will conduct regular meetings, review the progress of the students and help them to solve their academic as well as personal problems.

Forty two per cent of students agreed that hostel environment was conducive for study as the hostels consisted of all the facilities required and were well equipped with sports and games facilities. Nutritious food was provided, and rooms were well equipped with light and ventilation. Generators are provided for the regular supply of power and hence facilitate the for studies. The findings are confirmed with those reported by Powar *et al.* (1995).

#### Technical problems faced by the students:

Table 3 reveals that, about 30 per cent of students noticed the technical problems in understanding the courses of their degree programme and this may be due to the fact that some of the teachers may fail to give good lecture during their class, few teacher's pronunciation is not clearly understandable and audible and some of the irrelevant subjects are not able to hold the interest of the students and some teachers being very strict they can't freely interact with them. There were only some problems in availability of books in library, lack of lab facilities, lack of permanent teachers (faculty), lack of enough practical exposure to some of the specialized subjects in the field of Food Science and Biotechnology and language problems of the teachers as well as students. Further, about 70 per cent students were comfortable in understanding the courses.

| Sr. No. | Technical problem | Number | Per cent |
|---------|-------------------|--------|----------|
| 1.      | Yes               | 55     | 30       |
| 2.      | No                | 125    | 70       |
|         | Total             | 180    | 100      |

#### Conclusion:

Degree programmes in Agricultural Sciences are considered as low cost and highly specialized in nature and doing agriculture and its related degree programmes is boon to the students, as these degree programmes expose the students to wider category of subjects like sociology, psychology, constitution of India and economics along with the core Agricultural subjects, which help them to shape their overall personality and give way to prepare for the competitive examinations. The students were having a positive attitude towards teachers, course curriculum and literature available in the library. Student's perceived the organizational climate of the college was excellent as they get opportunity to learning by doing as it is known that "practice makes man perfect". Some of the technical problems of the students which they faced were need to be addressed by the college administration and faculty by arranging subject specific teachers training programmes, time to time review of curriculum and providing sufficient number of teachers (faculty).

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