



Research Article

Differences in UG students perception on usefulness of curriculum in a State Agriculture University

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SUMMARY : The important pre-requisite for achieving qualitative improvement in education is curriculum. Curriculum is the sum total of learning experiences provided by college/ university. Therefore, it is mandatory for the Agricultural Universities to take up curriculum development to build strong human resource in colleges in general or universities in particular. Hence an attempt was made to know the perception of students on usefulness of curriculum in a state agriculture university (SAU). The study was conducted at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), GKVK, Bangalore during 2010-11 and the sample consisted of all the final year students (95) of College of Agriculture, Bangalore. A well structured, pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the data and the data was analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The results revealed that majority of the students (%) were of the opinion that the Under-Graduate curriculum was useful, whereas 35.18 per cent and 25.26 per cent expressed that the Under-Graduate curriculum was more useful and less useful, respectively and 70.53 per cent of students had opined that Social Science discipline was more useful in acquisition of knowledge, 63.16 per cent of students had expressed Plant Science discipline was useful in developing skills and 26.32 per cent of students reported that Plant Protection discipline was less useful in overall personality development of students. This shows that the curriculum offered is catering the needs of students in providing overall knowledge about agriculture at undergraduate level.

KEY WORDS :

Curriculum,
Perception of
students, Under-
Graduate, Overall
knowledge, Skills and
Overall personality
development

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The important pre-requisite for achieving qualitative improvement in education is curriculum, which is considered as core of Agricultural Education. Curriculum is the sum total of learning experiences provided by college/ university. It is observed that one of the main reasons of the world is the fact that curriculum reforms has not been continuous and neither to what extent the student brings to it, nor to what the students expects from it. Besides, the students in colleges or universities to-day are different from the students of yester generations (Naika, 1999).

The present, fourth Deans' Committee (Anonymous, 2007) is in the series which unlike earlier committees, has given wide terms of reference, so that a holistic approach emerges for quality assurance in Agriculture Education while

addressing the contemporary challenges for employability of passing out graduates. The recommendations have been made with a view to reorient course curricula to develop much needed skills and entrepreneurial mind set among the under-graduates to take up self employment, contribute to rural livelihood and food security, sustainability of Agriculture and be propeller for Agricultural transformation. Therefore, reforms in curriculum from time to time are very crucial to achieve quality in education and should be relevant to the changing needs of present and in the future. In this context, the present study was attempted to address the following issues whether, the UG students perceived curriculum as useful or not; with an objective to know the perception of under-graduate students towards overall usefulness of curriculum., what extent and how the curriculum was used to them? With an

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objective to assess the usefulness of curriculum discipline wise in acquisition of knowledge, developing skills and overall personality development as perceived by students.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was conducted at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), GKVK, Bangalore during 2010-2011. The sample consisted of all the final year students (95) of College of Agriculture, Bangalore who were in the final semester, excluding dropouts and repeaters (2007-08 batch). Totally 95 students were treated as sample and complete enumeration method was employed for the study of perception on the UG students in usefulness of curriculum. A well structured, pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the data. The responses were scored, quantified, categorized and tabulated using statistical methods like percentage, mean and standard deviation, frequencies, Chi-square and correlation.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results in this regard are presented in Table 1. The findings clearly indicate that, nearly one-third of students opined that B.Sc. (Ag.) curriculum was more useful, more than 2/5 per cent and one fourth of students were reported curriculum as useful and less useful, respectively and all together 68.42 per cent of students were of the opinion that the curriculum was useful. The possible reason might be some of the courses in curriculum may be more interesting and some not. This reason might have influenced the students in place of less useful courses (Fig.1). This finding is in line with that of Palaniswamy (1994), Naika (1999) and Ashok (2004).

Overall usefulness of curriculum discipline wise in acquisition of knowledge, developing skills and overall personality development as perceived by students is presented in Table 2. It was found that 70.53 per cent of students had reported that Social Science discipline was more useful in acquisition of knowledge. 44.21 per cent of students expressed that Plant Science discipline was useful and 14.74 per cent of students had perceived that Agricultural Engineering discipline was less useful in acquisition of knowledge. Probably these disciplines might have helped the students to get an exposure to various settings. Whereas, 46.32 per cent of students had perceived that Crop Production

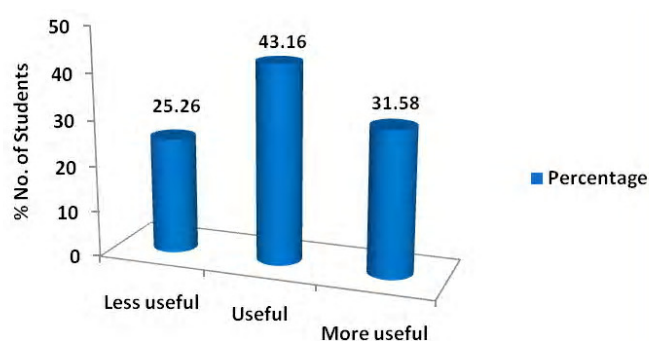


Fig. 1 : Usefulness of curriculum as perceived by students

discipline was more useful in developing skills. 61.05 per cent of students reported that Agricultural Engineering and Plant Science discipline was useful and 13.69 per cent of students had expressed that Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry discipline was less useful in developing skills. The possible reason might be students have learnt the agronomic aspects, handling of equipments, pest and disease diagnostic skills more in these disciplines. 43.12 per cent of students had perceived that Crop Production discipline was more useful in overall personality development of students. 62.10 per cent of students opined that Horticulture discipline was useful and 26.32 per cent of students had expressed that Plant Protection discipline was less useful in overall personality development of students. Possibly, these disciplines might have increased their responsibility of the profession in the field situation. These findings are in conformity to that of Naika (1999) and Ashok (2004). As alluded more emphasis in the present fourth deans' recommendation was on more practical. This was found to be true with these findings. Also the objective of exposing the students to the field situation where they suppose to work as professionals in future is seems to be achieved with this nature of curriculum.

Conclusion:

The important pre-requisite for achieving qualitative improvement in education is curriculum. Curriculum is the central part of agricultural education in offering qualitative education in this country. The curriculum offered for undergraduates at UAS, Bangalore was found to be useful by students and a well trained graduate is supposed to have

Table 1 : Distribution of students with respect to perceived usefulness of (overall) curriculum

(n=95)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less useful: < 358.61	24	25.26
Useful: 358.62-406.64	41	43.16
More useful: >406.64	30	31.58
Total	95	100.00
Mean 382.63	SD 48.03	

Table 2: Overall Mean score of curriculum discipline wise in acquisition of knowledge, developing skills and overall personality development as perceived by students (n= 95)

Sl. No.	Disciplines	Acquisition of knowledge			Developing skills			Overall personality development											
		Mean score	Useful Per cent	Less useful Per cent	Mean score	Useful Per cent	Less useful Per cent	Mean score	Useful Per cent	Less useful Per cent									
1.	Crop Production	49	51.54	36	37.89	10	10.53	44	46.32	44	46.32	6	6.31	41	43.16	41	43.16	13	13.68
2.	Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry	44	46.32	40	42.10	11	11.58	31	32.63	51	53.68	13	13.69	30	31.58	51	53.68	14	14.74
3.	Agricultural Engineering	45	47.37	36	37.89	14	14.74	26	27.37	60	63.16	9	9.47	23	24.21	58	61.05	14	14.74
4.	Floriculture	56	58.95	36	37.89	3	3.16	33	34.74	55	57.89	7	7.37	23	24.21	59	62.10	13	13.78
5.	Plant Science	45	47.37	42	44.21	8	8.42	29	30.52	60	63.16	6	6.32	31	32.63	52	54.74	12	12.63
6.	Plant Production	61	64.21	28	29.47	6	6.32	31	32.63	58	61.05	6	6.32	25	26.32	45	47.37	25	26.31
7.	Soil Science	67	70.53	19	20.00	9	9.47	33	34.74	57	60.00	5	5.26	32	33.68	47	49.47	16	16.85
8.	Allied Courses	44	46.32	43	45.26	8	8.42	33	34.74	52	54.73	10	10.53	30	31.58	48	50.53	17	17.89

imbibed the basic knowledge of all the discipline of Agricultural Sciences. Therefore, it is mandatory for colleges or agricultural universities to take up curriculum development to build strong human resource and overall personality development of graduates in this country in the years to come.

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