Constraints of Student Ready Programme in State Agricultural Universities

Abstract

The study was conducted in state agricultural universities of Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala states during 2021-2022 to analyze the problems faced by undergraduate agricultural students undergone student READY programme. Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE), Agro-Industrial Attachment (AIA), Experiential Learning/Hands on Training, Project Reports are the components offered in the selected universities as a part of student READY programme. A total of 160 respondents (40 per university) were selected by using simple random sampling. Mailed questionnaires were used to collect data and appropriate statistical tools *i.e*. frequency and percentage were applied to analyze the data.The major constraints faced by students are lack of proper accommodation in RAWE villages, lack of transport facilities in RAWE villages, lack of farmer cooperation, inadequate stipend to meet the basic needs and lacking practical exposure during online classes. This research will helps to modify the components that offered under student READY programme.

Keywords

Constraints, Student READY programme, State agricultural universities, Students

Introduction

Indian Council of Agricultural Research had launched Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) in 2016. The aim of the programme is providing undergraduate students rural entrepreneurship awareness, practical experience in real-life rural situations, and training them on practical agricultural and allied sciences. The programme was launched to assists students in developing confidence, skills, and Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) from the locality, in order to become self- employed. It also seeks to provide students with opportunity to obtain practical experience and entrepreneurial skills. It was felt necessary to make this program a requirement for all Agricultural Universities (AUs) in order

to reorient agricultural and allied subject graduates toward ensuring and assuring employability, as well as developing entrepreneurs for emerging knowledge intensive agriculture.

The agricultural division of ICAR offered thorough information about the student READY program for all disciplines in agriculture and allied sciences in a brochure titled Student READY. This booklet was used as a primary source for the research. The fifth dean committee altered the course curricula in order to provide graduates with the skills and entrepreneurial mindset to pursue self-employment, improve rural livelihood, increase food security, sustain agricultural practices, and act as a catalyst for agricultural reform. The five components of the Student READY program are implemented over the course of a year in all Undergraduate (UG) disciplines. The five components of student READY programme are - Experiential Learning on Business Model / Hands on Training, Experiential Learning on Skill Development, Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE), Internship / In-Plant Training / Industrial attachment and Students Projects. Depending on their graduate education requirements, students are required to possess any three of the five components, but it should be implemented for a full year to ensure that their education up to the level of the III year receives the proper information and they reach the proper stage of entrepreneurship in the IV year. This study was conducted to find out whether students are facing any troubles with the components of student READY programme.

Methodology

The research was conducted in the main campus college of the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Bangalore, Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) in Thrissur, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in Coimbatore, and Professor JayashankarTelanagana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU) in Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, during 2021-2022. Respondents were agricultural students who are currently in the eighth semester of their undergraduate degree and yet to complete the Student READY program. The sample was chosen using a simple random sampling method. Data was collected from 40 students at each university. As a result, the total number of respondents for the survey was 160. For the study, the "Ex-Post-Facto" design was used. For the data collection, questionnaire was used. In case of UAS, Bangalore, the open ended questionnaire was given to the students in person, however due to the distance with the other universities, the questionnaire was provided via Google Form. The data analysis was carried by means of suitable statistical tools such as frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion

A thorough analysis of Table 1 depicts that greater majority of the agricultural students perceived that lack of proper accommodation in RAWE villages (77.50%) as major constraint faced by agricultural students during student READY programme. This was ranked first among the nine constraints faced by agricultural students during student READY programme. Similarly, lack of transport facilities in RAWE villages was felt as a constraint by nearly three-fourth (71.88%) (Rank II) followed by lack of farmer cooperation was felt as a constraint by nearly three-fourth (70.00%) (Rank III) of them, inadequate stipend to meet the basic needs was felt as a

constraint by more than half of the agricultural students (55.63%) (Rank IV), lack of cooperation from institutions was felt as a constraint by less than half of the agricultural students (48.75%) (Rank V).

Further, it was also observed from the table that lack of timely availability of demonstration/ exhibition material for students from universities was felt as a constraint by less than half of the agricultural students (41.88%) (Rank VI) followed by lack of practical exposure during online classes was felt as a constraint by more than one-third of the agricultural students (36.25%) (Rank VII), scheduling of RAWE in improper seasons/timings was felt as a constraint by less than one-fourth of the agricultural students (15.62%) (Rank VIII) and biased approach of teachers in leader identification and final grading was felt as a constraint by less than one-tenth of the agricultural students (3.75%) (Rank IX).

Mainly, students faced lack of proper accommodation in RAWE villages as a major constraint followed by lack of transport facilities in RAWE villages, lack of farmer cooperation, inadequate stipend to meet the basic needs which might made them difficult to adapt to villages. Few of them mentioned that they are lacking practical exposure during online classes which might be required to develop entrepreneurial skills. Some agricultural students expressed that scheduling of RAWE in improper seasons/timings is a constraint faced as it made them difficulty to impart diagnostic skills and remedial knowledge relevant to field situations.

Table 1: Constraints faced by students of selected SAUs during student READY programme

n=160

Sl. No.	Constraints	Agricultural Students		Rank
		*f**	%	
1.	Lack of proper accommodation in RAWE villages	124	77.50	I
2.	Lack of proper transport facilities in RAWE villages	115	71.88	II
3.	Lack of farmer cooperation	112	70.00	III
4.	Inadequate stipend to meet the basic needs	89	55.63	IV
5.	Lack of cooperation from institutions	78	48.75	V
6.	Lack of timely availability of demonstration/ exhibition material for students from universities	67	41.88	VI
7.	Lack of practical exposure during online classes	58	36.25	VII
8.	Scheduling of RAWE in improper seasons/timings	25	15.62	VIII
9.	Biased approach of teachers in leader identification and final grading	6	3.75	IX

f- Frequency, *- Multiple responses, % - Per cent

Conclusion

The Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) program was introduced by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 2016. The five components of the Student READY program are implemented over the course of a year in all Undergraduate (UG) disciplines. This study was conducted to assess the constraints faced by students of SAUs who have undergone Student READY Programme modules. It is concluded from the study that majority of students are facing lack of proper accommodation and transport facilities in RAWE programme. In order to improve Student READY, students should be provided with required facilities in RAWE villages. RAWE should be scheduled in timings coinciding with major cropping seasons. For feasibility of the students, ICAR should increase the stipend for RAWE. By collaborating the students with the activities of the institutions from the first year can increase the cooperation of institutions to students whenever there is requirement.

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