

Original Research Article

CONSTRAINTS FACED BY AGRICULTURE GRADUATES IN ADOPTING FARMING AS A PROFESSION

ABSTRACT

Agriculture is an age-old Profession in our Indian system and is considered just a way of living rather than a Profession or an occupation to earn money. Since India has a massive power as more than half of its population is below 35 years of age and several agricultural students are being graduated from several universities, it is the need of the hour to orient the graduates to go along the mainstream of the development process of the country by making persuade into the farm sector by making it lucrative. Taking this into consideration a research study was conducted to know the constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a profession. The study was conducted at S.V Agricultural College, Tirupati of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University with its headquarters at Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. A sample size of 120 agricultural graduates were randomly selected for the study. It was revealed that the constraint, "Need for financial security" was ranked at first position followed by the constraints like instability in market prices, non-agriculture background, lack of initial investment, lack of family support, and lack of cultivable land. Also, when suggestions were asked from respondents: More exposure and field trips, Internships in new start-ups, and more practical work than theory are the top three followed by guidance from professors.

Keywords: Agricultural Graduates, farming, occupation, constraints.

INTRODUCTION

"Unless farming becomes both intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding, it will be difficult to attract or retain rural youth in farming"- Dr. M.S. Swaminathan.

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. 54.6% of the total workforce is engaged in agricultural and allied sector activities (Census 2011) and accounts for 17.8% of the country's Gross Value Added (GVA) for the year 2019-20 (at current prices). The current state of Indian agriculture is the result of several revolutions involving the application of science and technology by skilled manpower in the field of agriculture, which has been made possible by agriculture education in the

form of generating trained professionals to serve in agriculture. A profession means taking up active fulltime occupation after undergoing proper training. Agriculture is not an exception. A lot of youth are diverting their paths from agriculture, which will affect our economy, food security in many possible ways. Besides, the country is adding 2 million young people to the ranks of the unemployed every year. To address these issues, the Government has started agriculture universities in the early 1960's only, which specifically train the students in scientific orientation so that they can take up agriculture in a modern way and on a commercial scale. Increased literacy in rural regions (71%) provides a ray of hope for bringing reforms to all aspects of village life, including agriculture. Agriculture's mantle is in the hands of the country's educated rural young. But it is not the current scenario. The uncertainty in agriculture is increasing day by day, which is making it difficult to even think of taking up agriculture by the youth of India. Job security in various sectors like banking, government organizations, are lucrative factors instead of taking agriculture as a profession. Despite the fact that agriculture offers several job prospects after graduation, there is a perception that farming is a non-professional, less prestigious, and less profitable industry for students to pursue after graduation. Harnessing the potential of the youth, particularly agri-graduates, and retaining them in agriculture can be a solution to unemployment, poverty, and environmental challenges.

Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Guntur was established in 1963 in order to cater the needs for education, research and extension needs in agriculture in the Andhra Pradesh state of India. The university has 11 well-established constituent colleges and recently 6 new colleges were affiliated with the university. S.V Agriculture College, Tirupati is one out of 11 constituent colleges. General observation shows that, like in other parts of the country, the majority of university graduates are employed in well-established governmental or private sector jobs. There has never been a systematic study done on alumni's career choices. Thus the main objectives of the study were

1. To measure the willingness of the agricultural graduates in adopting farming as an occupation
2. To rank the constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a Profession
3. To elicit suggestions given by the agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a Profession

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the year 2022 with an ex-post facto research design. S.V. Agricultural College, Tirupati of ANGRAU of Andhra Pradesh which is offering B.Sc. (Agriculture) was selected purposively as the researcher hails from it. A sample size of 120 Final year B.Sc. Agriculture students were selected randomly from S.V. Agricultural College, Tirupati. Final-year students are

chosen because they are nearing the completion of their first degree and are in the process of determining their professional career path. For ranking the constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a profession, a mean weighted score was used. Data was collected using an online survey method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the respondents

From Table 1, it was found that the students were aged between 21 to 24 years. 52.50 per cent of them were male. Around 75.83 per cent of the respondents were from urban domiciles. With respect to the occupational status of respondent's fathers, 42.50 per cent of them were in private jobs whereas 61.66 per cent of the respondents' mothers were homemakers.

About 33.33 percent of the respondents' parents did not possess agricultural land holding. Among those who possessed land holding, the majority possessed (35.50%) less than 5 acres of land. Majority of the parents (60.83%) had an annual income of less than one lakh.

Table 1 Demographic details of respondents

Variables	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	63	52.50
	Female	57	47.50
Domicile	Rural	29	24.16
	Urban	91	75.83
Size of Land Holding	0 Acres	40	33.33
	< 5 Acres	42	35.50
	5-20 Acres	33	27.50
	> 20 Acres	5	4.16
Annual Family income	<1lakh	73	60.83
	1-3 lakh	39	32.50
	> 3 lakh	8	6.66
Father Occupation status	Govt.	29	24.16
	Private	51	42.50
	Entrepreneur	5	4.16
	Farming	20	16.66
	Others	15	12.5
Mother Occupation status	Govt.	10	8.33
	Private	15	12.50
	Homemaker	74	61.66
	Others	7	5.84

Students' willingness in adopting farming as a profession:

From the Table 2, it was evident that the majority of the agri-graduates (92.50%) are not willing to

adopt farming as their profession and only 7.50 per cent are willing to take farming as a profession out of which majority i.e., 44.44 percent are willing to do crop production followed by livestock production, Beekeeping and aquaculture. The graduates who are not interested in the farming profession were interested in government jobs mostly, followed by private jobs, NGOs, and want to become entrepreneurs.

Table 2 Students' willingness in adopting farming as a profession (n = 120)

Question	willing	Not willing
Are you willing in adopting farming as a profession?	9 (7.50%)	111 (92.50%)
Agriculture enterprise of interest (n=9)		
Crop production	4 (44.44%)	
Livestock production	2 (22.22%)	
Beekeeping	2 (22.22%)	
Aquaculture	1 (11.11%)	
If not willing, what is your dream job? (n=111)		
Government sector		56 (50.45%)
Private sector		37 (33.33%)
NGO		12 (10.81%)
Entrepreneurs		6 (5.41%)

Constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a profession:

Through pilot survey on the students of S.V Agricultural which is one of the constituent colleges of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Guntur as well as thorough review of literature, eight constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a profession were identified. The constraints were presented to the final responders, who were then asked to rank them in order of their perceived relevance and importance. The total rating for each constraint statement was calculated using a mean weighted score. The restrictions and their rankings are as follows: presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Constraints faced by agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a Profession (n=120)

Constraints	Score	Rank
Need for financial security	95	1
Instability in regular income and increased CoC	89	2
Non-agriculture background	85	3
Lack of initial investment	79	4
Lack of family support and encouragement	70	5
Less practical oriented curriculum structure	66	6
Not a recognized and respected profession	52	7
Lack of cultivable land	40	8

From the Table 3, it is noticed that the Need for financial security in agriculture was the major constraint that keeps away the agriculture graduates from adopting farming as a profession which is contradicting with the Dayalan *et al.* (2018) who mentioned that fluctuating income and uncertain regular income nature of agriculture was the major constraint that keeps away the agriculture collegian from opting farming as a profession. Other important constraints were Instability in regular income and increased cost of cultivation, Non-agriculture background, Lack of initial investment, lack of family support and encouragement, less practical oriented curriculum structure for B. Sc. (Ag.), Not recognized and respected when compared to white-collar jobs, and lack of cultivable land.

Table 4: Suggestions to increase agriculture graduates in adopting farming as a profession (n=120):

Suggestions	Score	Rank
More exposure and field trips	95	1
Internships in new start-ups	93	2
More practical work than theory	88	3
Guidance from professors	84	4
Special credit loan facility for agricultural graduates	78	5
Improvement of infrastructural facilities	75	6

Special policy for small and marginal farmers	74	7
Knowledge of farming should be compulsory from the school level	68	8

There are many constraints for agriculture graduates to adopt farming as a profession but overcoming these constraints by following suggestions can attract agriculture graduates to take farming as a profession.

1. Access to the right information can help overcome young farmers who lack experience and agriculture background by conducting more exposure and field trips.
2. Internships in new start-ups are required for students so that they may respond to the needs of a modern agricultural sector.
3. Curriculum of the B. Sc. (Ag.) course should be more practical oriented than theory and should effectively implement RAWEP in the final year. Professors should motivate and guide students to take farming as a profession.
4. Banks should provide special credit facilities like loans and crop insurance to the agriculture graduates so that they can get easy initial investment and feel financially secure. A parallel financial management training programme can ensure that youth gain the necessary skills to pay back the installments in time.

CONCLUSION

It is high time to bring considerable changes in the agriculture education system to retain the students in farming like-

- 1) Giving the students hand-in experience of the field level issues.
- 2) Major exposure to the practical aspects than conceptual theories which will interest students (youth) towards agriculture.
- 3) Orientation towards technology-enhanced agriculture, motivating students to realize farming as a prospective career.
- 4) Implementing many other schemes and programs like MAYA (Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture), that act as a road for the youth to travel further towards farming.
- 5) Developing a sense of passion towards farming from a young age starting from family and school level will be a long-term solution for this issue.

If this case continues, shortly, there will be a severe shortage in production, which takes us 70 years back to a similar situation of food insufficiency soon after post-independence.

REFERENCES:

- Adedapo, A. & Sawant, Pramod & Kobba, Frederick & Bhise, R.. (2014). Determinants of Career Choice of Agricultural Profession among the Students of College of Agriculture in Maharashtra state, India. *IOSR Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Science*. 7. 12-18. 10
- Dayalan, S. K., Devarani, L., Singh, R. J., & Feroze, S. M. (2018). Attitude of Agriculture Collegian towards Opting Farming as a Profession. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 54(3), 42-47. Evans, Jr. G. H. (1942). A theory of entrepreneurship. *J. Econ. Hist.*, 2: 142-146
- Onima, V.T., Timbadia, C.K., Gulkari, K.D and Bhuva, R.M. (2017). Attitude of farmers towards Farming as an Occupation. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Biosciences J*. 5(5): 833-837 (2017).
- Singh, R. and Gupta, K. (2014). Attitude of Male Adolescents towards Family Occupation of Farming. *Management Perspective for Indian Policy makers*. Purushartha, SMS Varanasi, 4(2): 106-119
- Uday Bhaskar, M., Harisha, N and Sreenivasareddy.K (2021). Strategies for attracting rural youth towards agriculture sector. In: *Third International Conference on Food, Agriculture and Innovations*, at Jharkhand from December 24-26, 2021, pp. 320