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QUEST

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PERCEPTION OF AGRO-SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS AGRICULTURE: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture sector has played a very crucial role in economic development of India. Till date half of the population is dependent on agriculture as a source of employment. With the rising level of unemployment, once again agriculture sector has opened up wide opportunities for younger generation. This study is focused on perception of agro-school students towards agriculture. The sample of 28 students was selected by using purposive sampling method. The sample includes students of Ramanath Crisna Pai Raikar School of Agriculture, Savoi Verem, Ponda- Goa. Survey method was employed to collect primary data with the help of questionnaire. The collected data is analysed using frequencies and Charts. The study found that wide opportunities with a reasonable assurance to prosper and grow motivate agro-school students towards pursuing education in agriculture. The study also found that agro-school students are more oriented towards self-employment and jobs. Further study has also revealed that agriculture is no more male dominated sector. Women are treated on par with men in the field of agriculture.

Keywords: Perception, Agro-School students, Agriculture, Non-Agriculture, Women

INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector essays a pivotal role in the economic development of India. Prior to independence, it was the only sector which provided gainful employment to the majority of workforce. But in the recent past, people were found gradually shifting

towards service and industry sector in search of jobs. Data released by agricultural statistics 2017, indicates that agriculture sector still employs 54.6% of rural population. Presently, there is a tough war for getting a job in the competitive labour market. With the increase in population, problem of unemployment is rising day by day. Taking this factor into account policy makers are found constantly encouraging youngsters towards agriculture sector through their various policy frameworks. The present NDA government has initiated various schemes like Skill India for empowering youths towards carrying out economic activity of their own. The main aim of this initiative is to reduce the rising unemployment by providing standardised and nationally acceptable skill based programmes to unemployed people of India.

Also with the rising cases of formalin, chemical adulteration, pesticides spraying etc, people are becoming more and more health conscious and environmental savvy. In turn this has opened wide market for eco-friendly and agricultural products and services at large.

In order to reap the benefit of this available opportunity efforts are being taken to promote institutions which can empower and encourage our younger generation in the field of agriculture. One such institution promoted in Goa is Ramanath Crisna Pai Raikar, School of Agriculture, Savoi Verem, Ponda- Goa. It is the premier technical-vocational school started in the State of Goa during the academic year 2013-14, with an aim to bring changes in the field of agriculture sector through the development of highly skilled manpower with positive work attitude and entrepreneurial spirit.

This paper focuses on the perception of students of Ramanath Crisna Pai Raikar School of Agriculture, towards agriculture. The Paper also throws light on motivational factors and future goal of these Agro-School students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Zakaria, Adam, Abujaja (2013) studied the perception of University for Development Studies (UDS) students in Ghana towards seeking self-employment in agribusiness sector. The study found that agribusiness has a high potential for self-employment and that there is high prospects of its success in Ghana. The study used Five point Likert Scale method to measure the performance of the students.

Smith, Park (2010) have surveyed public schools in New York regarding the perception of school students on agriculture. The data was collected with the help of closed ended questionnaire. The study revealed that students enrolled in agriculture programme had higher perception regarding the agriculture. Results showed that there is lack of understanding about agriculture as a career for the students.

Osborne, Dyer's (2000) study indicated that most of the students favour agriculture courses. Students and parents had positive attitudes towards agriculture as a

career. The study indicated that parents are not sure whether to encourage the students to pursue agriculture as a career or not. Both groups feel that there is wide scope for employment in the field of agriculture.

Cecchettini, Sommer, Leising's (1992) study on Australian students perceptions of agricultural careers, revealed that school students with agriculture programmes have more positive attitudes towards agriculture as a career. The students of Canberra felt that agriculture as a career option is more interesting, satisfying and secure. Very few students among those who have not opted for agricultural courses are positive towards the agriculture as a career in future.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the rising level of unemployment and people's preference for organic food, once again agriculture sector has opened wide opportunities for youngsters. However, the younger generation still hankers for white collared jobs. There is not therefore significant emphasis on developing skills through awareness, on field training and education. It is also expected that younger generation can bring spectacular transformation in agriculture sector with their modern approaches. Thus, this paper aims at studying perception of agriculture school students towards agriculture. Attempt has been made to collect maximum information on factors motivating students towards agriculture education and their future goals.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand factors motivating students towards pursuing education in agriculture.
2. To study future goals of agro- school students.
3. To find reasons behind rising enrolment of female students in agro-schools.

METHODOLOGY

The present study focuses on perception of Agro-School Students towards agriculture. The sample of 28 students was selected by using purposive sampling method. The sample includes students of Ramanath Crisna Pai Raikar, School of Agriculture, Savoi Verem, Ponda- Goa. Survey method was employed to collect primary data with the help of questionnaire. The collected data is analysed using frequencies and Charts.

FINDINGS

Findings of this study are divided into two parts:

Part 1 – Profile of the Respondents

Part 2 – Findings from the field data

PART 1 – PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- The sample consists of both genders. Male comprises of 54% (15) of the sample, while female consist of 46% (13).
- The respondents belong to the age group of 15-24 years, with a majority of them below 20 years (71%).
- The primary data reveals that majority students pursuing education in agriculture are from rural/village areas.
- As far as family occupational background of students is concerned, 68% of the students are from agricultural family background. While 32% are from Non-Agricultural family background.

PART 2 – FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD DATA

I] Motivation towards pursuing education in agriculture:

Interpretation: Primary Data reveals that there are multiple factors which motivate students towards seeking education in agriculture. 32% of the respondents are of the opinion that there is bright future and scope because people are becoming more environmentally savvy. Another 32% of the respondents said it is something different from normal education. 22% of the respondents are of the opinion that changing trend towards agribusiness attracted them toward this education. Rest of the respondents (i.e. 14%) said they preferred this education only due to presence of Agriculture school in Goa.

II] Future Goals of Agro- School Students:

Interpretation: An attempt to study future goals of agro-school students throws up interesting facts. The 47% of the respondents opined that they will actually practice old school agriculture with modern approaches. Among others, 25% of the respondents conveyed their willingness towards researching the future prospects of improving agriculture. Another 14% of the respondents said they will provide various agricultural services. Remaining 14% of the respondents said they will prefer working with Biotech Companies. It is also found that Agro-school students are not interested in teaching profession.

III] Rising Enrolment of Female Students In Agro-School:

Interpretation: Based on the oral interaction held with the staff of Agro-school and enrolment data received (academic year 2017-18 and 2018-19), it is found that enrolment of female students is increasing at the rate of 38% per year. Per Academic year on an average 16 female students prefer education in agriculture. The reasons for this phenomenon are many. 50% of the respondents have opined that a large job opportunity

in the field of agriculture orients more and more females towards it. 29% of the respondents are of the opinion that women are empowered to carry out agricultural activity which influences them towards agriculture education. 21% of the respondents also said that women are treated equally in par with the men in the field of agriculture.

CONCLUSION

Wide opportunities with a reasonable assurance to prosper and grow motivate agro-school students towards pursuing education in agriculture. Agro-School students are very clear about their future course of action. They are more oriented towards self-employment and jobs. Agriculture is no more a male dominated occupation. Women are also well equipped to carry out agricultural activities. They are treated on par with men in agriculture sector.

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