

## CONSTRAINTS PERCEIVED BY THE AGRICULTURAL GRADUATES IN TAKING UP AGRICULTURE AS A PROFESSION

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### ABSTRACT

*The issue of 'farm readiness', i.e., the interest among agricultural graduates in taking up farming as an occupation after their graduation, is very prominent because most people still regard agriculture as a non-professional and less profitable career option for a young graduate and returning to farming after university would be regarded as a failure. Therefore, to know the constraints perceived by them in taking up agriculture as a profession and to corrective measures accordingly, a study was conducted by collecting data from 120 freshly graduated students belonging to all the four State Agricultural Universities of Gujarat using multistage random sampling technique. The quantification of data was done using Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) technique. The study revealed that high cost of cultivation and low returns, high cost of agricultural inputs and farm machinery fluctuations in market price, unpredictable climate changes, risk of crop failure, high cost of labour, inadequate supply of electricity, lack of proper irrigation facilities, lack of proper storage facilities, lack of proper agricultural infrastructure, lack of financial support, discouragement from the family and friends, lack of proper transportation facilities, inadequate practical knowledge and lack of incentives from the government were the major constraints faced by them.*

**Keywords:** *constraints, agricultural graduates, agriculture, profession, farming*

### INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been the main occupation since the beginning of human civilization. It is the main economic activity in the rural areas of India. Therefore, agriculture is the engine of growth for most developing countries and agricultural development is one of the most effective ways to alleviate hunger and poverty (Amungwa and Baye, 2014). But, at present due to urbanization, it has become the matter of concern. Many agricultural universities were established to train the students and impart knowledge on various aspects of agriculture, so that they could engage in the agricultural sector. But, even after pursuing degree in agriculture, most of the agricultural graduates get into public and private sector jobs instead of taking up agriculture as a profession. This is largely because most people still regard agriculture as non-professional and less profitable career option for a young graduate and returning to farming after university would be regarded as failure (Okiror and Otabong, 2015). Instead of getting self-employed through farming, they are just becoming job seekers. To attract the young graduates, there is a need to make agriculture more dynamic and interesting than its current form, and the young graduates need to be convinced to view the agricultural sector more positively than they do at present. For this, we need to understand the problems perceived by them in taking up agriculture as a

profession. Therefore, agricultural graduates were selected as respondents in the present study and this study involves about certain aspects that are constraining them from adopting agriculture as their profession. This study also allowed the graduates to give their suggestions for solving the problems perceived by them.

### OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the constraints faced by the agricultural graduates in adopting agriculture as a profession
- (2) To document the suggestions given by the agricultural graduates to overcome the constraints in taking up agriculture as a profession

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Gujarat state using multistage random sampling technique for drawing the sample for the study. The study was conducted in all the four State Agricultural Universities of Gujarat state *viz.*, Anand Agricultural University (AAU), Navsari Agricultural University (NAU), Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU) and Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University (SDAU). One agricultural college under each State Agricultural University was selected randomly for the

study. Thus, the four agricultural colleges that were selected randomly were College of Agriculture, Vaso, AAU; College of Agriculture, Waghai, NAU; College of Agriculture, Junagadh, JAU and C. P. College of Agriculture, Dantiwada, SDAU. A total of 120 fresh graduates, *i.e.*, only those who have graduated in the past two years from their respective colleges, were selected randomly for the study. Thirty respondents were selected randomly from each agricultural college. Thus, a total of 120 respondents were selected for the study. The data was collected using a pre-structured interview schedule in the form of a google form. Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) technique was used to quantify the constraints encountered by agricultural graduates in taking up agriculture as a profession. To identify the constraints, the respondents were asked to state the difficulties perceived by them in adopting agriculture as a profession and these constraints were ranked by the respondents in order of their preference. Then, the Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) of the constraints was calculated based on the ranking done by the respondents. To trace the relative importance of the constraints, overall ranks were assigned based on the Rank Based Quotients obtained. For calculating RBQ, the following formula was used.

$$RBQ = \frac{\sum F_i [(n+1)-i]}{N \times n} \times 100$$

**Table 1: Constraints perceived by the agricultural graduates in adopting agriculture as a profession**

(n=120)

Sr. No.	Constraints	Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) (Percentage)	Rank
1	High cost of cultivation and low returns	92.11	I
2	High cost of agricultural inputs and farm machinery	91.56	II
3	Fluctuations in market price	90.61	III
4	Unpredictable climate changes	89.00	IV
5	Risk of crop failure	88.17	V
6	High cost of labour	87.83	VI
7	Inadequate supply of electricity	87.67	VII
8	Lack of proper irrigation facilities	87.50	VIII
9	Lack of proper storage facilities	87.39	IX
10	Lack of proper agricultural infrastructure	86.72	X
11	Lack of financial support	85.61	XI
12	Discouragement from the family and friends	82.50	XII
13	Lack of proper transportation facilities	71.06	XIII
14	Inadequate practical knowledge	70.11	XIV
15	Lack of incentives from the government	65.94	XV

Where,

$F_i$  = Frequency of the students giving the  $i^{\text{th}}$  rank of the constraint

$N$  = Number of students who responded

$n$  = Number of constraints identified

$i$  = Rank of the constraint

The statistical measures such as frequency and percentage were used to rank the suggestions given by the agricultural graduates in the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Constraints perceived by the agricultural graduates in adopting agriculture as a profession

The agricultural graduates are regarded as useful human resources for the overall progress of many agrarian countries like India. The gain from such human resources is resulting only when they take up agriculture as a profession. But, to adopt agriculture as a profession, many problems were perceived by the agricultural graduates. For understanding such problems and in order to take up necessary corrective measures, the respondents were requested to express their constraints in adopting agriculture as a profession. The data regarding these constraints is presented in Table 1.

The data presented in Table 1 revealed the major constraints faced by the agricultural graduates which included high cost of cultivation and low returns, high cost of agricultural inputs and farm machinery, fluctuations in market price, unpredictable climate changes, risk of crop failure, high cost of labour, inadequate supply of electricity, lack of proper irrigation facilities, lack of proper storage facilities, lack of proper agricultural infrastructure, lack of financial support, discouragement from the family and friends, lack of proper transportation facilities, inadequate practical knowledge and lack of incentives from the government. Some of these constraints were similar to the findings of Pakhmode (2015),

Preethi (2015) and Agumagu *et al.* (2018) in their respective studies.

**Suggestions given by the agricultural graduates to overcome the constraints in taking up agriculture as a profession**

An attempt was also made to ascertain suggestions from the agricultural graduates to overcome various constraints faced by them in taking up agriculture as a profession. The suggestions given by the respondents were collected, summarized and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Suggestions given by the agricultural graduates to overcome the constraints in taking up agriculture as a profession (n=120)**

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Fixation of remunerative prices for agricultural produce by the government	112	93.33	I
2	Agricultural inputs and farm machinery must be provided at subsidized rates by the government	105	87.50	II
3	Timely provision of crop loan by the government	92	76.67	III
4	Proper marketing facilities should be established	90	75.00	IV
5	Strengthening of storage facilities at taluka level and cluster of village level	88	73.33	V
6	Regular power supply must be provided	86	71.67	VI
7	Creation of many of water harvesting structures at village level to enhance irrigation facilities	82	68.33	VII
8	Motivation from family to take up agriculture	77	64.17	VIII
9	Provision of timely weather forecast	54	45.00	IX
10	Development of adoptable and low-cost technologies related to agriculture	48	40.00	X

It is evident from Table 2 that the majority of the agricultural graduates suggested fixation of remunerative prices for agricultural produce by the government, agricultural inputs and farm machinery must be provided at subsidized rates by the government, timely provision of crop loan by the government, proper marketing facilities should be established, strengthening of storage facilities at taluka level and cluster of village level, regular power supply must be provided, creation of many water harvesting structures at village level to enhance irrigation facilities, motivation from family to take up agriculture, provision of timely weather forecast and development of adoptable and low-cost technologies related to agriculture. Some of the suggestions given by the respondents were similar to the findings of Bodake (2016) and Vihari (2018) in their respective studies.

**CONCLUSION**

Thus, the present study allowed the agricultural graduates to mention their difficulties in taking up agriculture as a profession. Efforts should be made to lessen the enormity

of such problems. More practical knowledge should be imparted in the students than that of theoretical knowledge by the agriculture universities in order to improve their confidence levels. The suggestions given by the agricultural graduates in the present study should be considered by the agricultural universities, government and policy makers while planning and developing strategies in order to attract the graduates to get self-employed by taking up agriculture as their profession.

**POLICY IMPLICATION**

The research shows that the graduates lack confidence in taking up agriculture as a profession. If they are provided with good training and method demonstrations related to modern agricultural technology along with regular field visits, then there is a chance of improving their participation in agriculture. Imparting knowledge of farming from school level helps in attracting the youth towards agriculture.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict between author.

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