

CONSTRAINT ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract: A study was conducted in Kerala to analyse the constraints experienced by the students and teachers of Vocational Higher Secondary Education in Agriculture (VHSEA) and to draw some suggestions for improving future VHSEA. The results revealed that low standard of pupil, lack of library, building and laboratory facilities were the most important constraints. Permanent teachers may be employed, proper scholarship and grants may be provided and provision for higher education and more employment opportunities for the VHSEA pass-outs were the important suggestions put forward for improvement of VHSEA.

Key words: Constraint analysis, perception, rank ordering, self/wage employment, vocational higher secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has the greatest potential to generate gainful employment for the rural youth. Efforts to attract the educated unemployed rural youth to agricultural avocations are, therefore, inevitable. It is in this perspective Vocational Higher Secondary Education in Agriculture (VHSEA) assumes added significance. The very aim of VHSE course is to provide gainful self/wage employment opportunities to the pass-outs in VHSE courses (Anon., 1986). In this study, an attempt is made to analyse the constraints faced by the students and teachers in effectively implementing VHSEA programme and to draw suggestion for improving future VHSEA programme.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was undertaken in nine VHSEA schools where the scheme was first introduced in 1983-84 and in these schools VHSEA courses are still being offered. The schools are situated in Trivandrum, Idukki, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Malappuram, Palakkad, Wynad and Kannur districts. There were four categories of respondents for the study, viz., 150 respondents who have passed VHSEA from these nine schools during the academic year 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89 and 50 each of VHSEA students studying in Plant

Protection (PP), Fruits and Vegetables (F&V) and Nursery Management and Ornamental Gardening (NM & OG) courses at the tune of the investigation, selected using probability proportion to size random sampling technique. In addition, all the available teachers of VHSEA numbering 36 were also included as the respondents for the study.

Based on review of literature and discussion with students, teachers and experts of VHSEA, eight important constraints in the case of VHSEA students and nine important constraints in the case of teachers were identified.

The procedure used for ranking the constraints was as follows:

The response to each constraint was obtained on a four point continuum, viz., Most Important, More Important, Less Important and Least Important with weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. For each constraint, the frequency of the response under each category was multiplied with the respective weightage and added up to get the total score for that particular constraint. Then the mean scores were worked out and the constraints were ranked based on the mean scores in the descending order of importance.

Fifteen suggestions for improving VHSEA by students and eight suggestions by teachers were identified using the same procedure as above.

Table 1. Constraints experienced by the student respondents of VHSEA

Constraints	PP (n - 50)		F&V (n - 50)		NM & OG (n=50)		Certificate holders (n=150)	
	Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank
1 Lack of library facilities	3.20	1	3.00	4	2.62	3	3.11	3
2 Lack of building facilities	3.04	2.5	3.46	1	2.38	7	2.82	5
3 Lack of equipped laboratory facilities	3.04	2.5	3.18	2	2.92	1	3.17	2
4 Lack of facilities for doing practicals	2.90	4	3.12	3	2.68	2	3.19	1
5 The syllabus is overloaded	2.56	5	2.72	6	2.50	6	3.02	4
6 Difficulty in meeting travel expenses for outside practicals	2.34	7	1.92	8	2.34	8	2.69	8
7 Difficulty in doing practicals at home	2.46	6	2.52	7	2.54	4	2.77	6
8 Since the medium of instruction is English it is very difficult to follow	2.24	8	2.77	5	2.52	5	2.69	8

W - 0.752; χ^2 - 21.063**

** Significant at 1% level; PP = Plant protection; F & V = Fruits and vegetables; NM & OG - Nursery management and ornamental gardening

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints experienced by the students of VHSEA

It is revealed that lack of library facilities, building facilities, equipped laboratory facilities and facilities for doing practicals were the most important constraints faced by all the categories of student-respondents (Table 1). The coefficient of concordance (W) was significant indicating that there was agreement among the four categories of student-respondents (Siegel, 1956).

Constraints experienced by the teachers of VHSEA

It is observed that low standard of pupil, lack of facilities for practicals in the school and non-availability of materials and equipment were ranked high in the order of importance as

Table 2. Constraints experienced by the teachers of VHSEA (n=36)

Constraints	Perception	
	Mean score	Rank
1 Low standard of pupil	3.58	1
2 Lack of practical facilities in the school	3.25	2
3 Non-availability of materials and equipment	3.19	3
4 Lack of teaching aids	2.92	4
5 Fields are located away from school	2.75	5
6 Lack of teaching staff	2.58	6
7 Lack of reference books	2.42	7
8 Lack of time	1.56	8
9 Lack of co-operation from students	1.50	9

Table 3. Suggestions for improving VHSE courses in agriculture by students

Sl. No	Suggestions	PP (n - 50)		F & V (n = 50)		NM&OG (n = 50)		VHSEA CH (n - 150)	
		Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank	Mean scores	Rank
1	Proper scholarship and grants should be provided	3.96	1	3.82	3	3.88	3	3.44	8
2	Public should be made aware about the relevance of the agrl. course	3.92	2	3.72	7	3.84	5	3.31	11
3	Facilities for doing practicals should be improved	3.90	3	3.74	6	3.70	11	3.57	2
4	Provision for higher education in the vocational courses	3.88	4	3.86	2	3.94	1	3.48	6
5	Well equipped laboratory should be provided	3.84	5	3.80	4	3.72	10	3.56	3.5
6	Class room facilities should be improved	3.82	6.5	3.62	10	3.76	7	3.24	13
7	Well equipped library should be provided	3.82	6.5	3.76	5	3.74	9	3.46	7
8	Financial assistance should be allotted for conducting study tours	3.80	8	3.60	12	3.80	6	3.32	10
9	Vocational guidance programmes should be started at school	3.78	9	3.62	10	3.50	12	3.35	9
10	More employment opportunities should be provided for passed out students	3.76	10	3.68	8	3.92	2	3.52	5
11	KPSC should recognise the course	3.72	11	3.62	10	3.74	8	3.56	3.5
12	Permanent teachers should be employed	3.66	12	3.90	1	3.86	4	3.65	1
13	Syllabus should be reduced	3.32	13	3.30	14	3.02	13	2.80	14
14	Course curriculum should be modified	3.30	14	3.34	13	3.00	14	3.29	12
15	Internal assessment should be abolished	3.16	15	2.92	15	2.36	15	2.65	15

W - 0.662; χ^2 - 37.06**

** Significant at 1 per cent level of probability;

CH = Certificate holders

constraints perceived by the teachers of VHSEA (Table 2) while lack of co-operation from students, lack of time and lack of reference books were assigned lower ranks in the constraints ladder.

It is to be remembered that VHSEA programme in Kerala is still in its infancy. Many

schools where the VHSEA programme was started simply jumped into the fray without developing the required infra-structural such as library, classroom, laboratories and land for work experience. Since vocational education in agriculture is more a skill oriented training programme these facilities are *sine-quo-non* for the efficient conduct of these courses.

Suggestions for improving VHSE courses in agriculture by students

The suggestion of the student respondents for improving VHSEA are presented in Table 3. The suggestions were ranked based on the importance as perceived by them. A scrutiny of the results evinced that appointment of permanent teachers, providing scholarships and grants, provision for higher education and more employment opportunities for the VHSEA pass-outs and better facilities for doing practicals were the important suggestions having significant agreement among the four categories of student-respondents.

Suggestions of the teachers of VHSEA for improving the VHSEA

The suggestions of the teachers for improving the VHSEA (Table 4) revealed that increased job opportunities for pass-outs, appointment of permanent teachers and awareness building among public about the relevance of the agricultural courses were their important suggestions for improvement of VHSEA.

The suggestions of both VHSEA students and teachers need to be considered in the context of efforts to improve the VHSEA. Even now there are virtually no permanent teachers for VHSEA courses in the schools offering these courses. Most of the teachers are appointed on an *ad-hoc* basis and that too only fresh agricultural graduates opt for this job since they are left with no other option. All these resulted in the *ad-hocism* now rampant in VHSEA programme. Similarly, no recognition is given to these courses by the parents since these courses are reckoned only as the last resort of the pupils passing SSLC. The preponderance of unemployment among the VHSEA certificate holders might also have prompted the respondents to seek creation of employment and vertical mobility opportunities. All these suggestions deserve careful consideration of the planners and policy

makers in order to make the VHSEA courses more meaningful and effective in future.

Table 4. Suggestions of the teachers for improvement of VHSEA

Sl. No	Suggestions	Mean score	Rank
1	Job opportunities for passed out students should be increased	3.89	1
2	Permanent staff should be appointed	3.83	2
3	Public should be made aware of the relevance of the agrl. course	3.56	3
4	Practical facilities should be improved	3.47	4
5	Class room facilities should be unproved	3.42	5
6	Reserve some seats for VHSEA students for higher studies	3.39	6
7	Well equipped library and lab. facilities should be provided	3.36	7
8	Financial assistance should be given for conducting study tours	3.22	8
9	The syllabus should be revised	2.97	9

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