

SWOC analysis of student ready programme (SRP) in state Agricultural Universities of South India

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Abstract: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) recommended Student Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana (READY) programme. This program aims to equip final-year undergraduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to become successful entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. With this background, the study was to evaluate the programme effectiveness and identify areas for improvement; a SWOC analysis has been conducted. The present study was conducted in seven State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of South India and from each university one agriculture college was selected. From each agriculture college two categories of respondent's viz., students and staff were selected. 50 students who had passed out in the year of 2022 were selected randomly for the research. In case of staff, 20 from each college who monitored the programme were selected as respondents for the study. Thus, the total sample size for the study was 350 students and 140 staff. The data was collected from the respondents through Google form as well as personal interview method with structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The results revealed that major strengths of SRP were students will have practical experience (98.16) followed by strengthen the existing skills of the students (98.06). The major weaknesses of SRP were period of village attachment does not match with cropping season (87.76) followed by less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions (87.04). The major opportunities of SRP were improves the technical and management skills (96.43) followed by exposure to various enterprises (96.12). The major challenges of SRP were time & availability of farmers is difficult (84.59) followed by lack of technical guidance and prior training on enterprises (83.06).

Key words: Agriculture graduates, Internal and external factors, Effectiveness, Student READY Programme, SWOC

Introduction

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) recommended Student Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana (READY) programme and it was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri. Narendra Modi on July 25th, 2015 in the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of the country (Vaishnavi *et al.*, 2023). The programme has been introduced for one complete year in the last year of the degree programme for UG degree programme in the disciplines of agricultural engineering, biotechnology, community science, dairy technology, food technology, forestry, fisheries, horticulture and sericulture since 2016-2017 (Vaishnavi *et al.*, 2024). This program aims to equip final year under graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to become successful entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. SWOC, an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges, is a strategic tool used to assess the internal and external factors that influence a programme performance. By examining these aspects, comprehensive understanding of the programme current status and its potential for further development will be understood. With this background, the study was undertaken to evaluate the programme effectiveness and identify areas for improvement through SWOC analysis.

Material and methods

The present study was conducted in seven State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of South India and from each university one agriculture college was selected. From each

agriculture college two categories of respondent's viz., students and staff were selected. 50 students who had passed out in the year of 2022 were selected randomly for the research. In case of staff, 20 from each college who monitored the programme were selected as respondents for the study. Thus, the total sample size for the study was 350 students and 140 staff. The data were collected from the respondents through Google form as well as personal interview method with structured and pre-tested interview schedule.

Results and discussion

Data in the Table 1 represents the SWOC analysis of agriculture graduates opinion towards Student READY Programme (SRP). The major strengths of the programme were students will have practical experience ranked first with index of 97.57 followed by strengthen the existing skills of the students, and students learn to adapt to rural situations ranked second with index of 97.43. The major weaknesses of SRP were less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions and period of village attachment does not match with cropping season with respective indices of 92.14 and 91.14 scored first and second ranks, respectively. The major opportunities of SRP were attainment of entrepreneurial skills during the programme ranked first with index of 96.29 followed by improves the technical and management skills and exposure to various enterprises ranked second with index of 95.57. The major challenges of SRP were more time is consumed for report writing

Table 1. SWOC analysis of agriculture graduates opinion towards Student READY Programme (SRP) (n=350)

Items	Graduates	
	Index	Rank
Strengths		
Students will have practical experience	97.57	I
Strengthen the existing skills of the students	97.43	II
Students learn to adapt to rural situations	97.43	II
Learn to diagnose major agricultural problems and possible solutions	96.57	IV
Students get acquainted with on-going extension and rural development programmes	96.43	V
Develops project planning and analytical skills among students	95.86	VI
Students can identify and analyze the organizational and managerial problems of various institutions	95.14	VII
Weaknesses		
Less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions	92.14	I
Period of village attachment does not match with cropping season	91.14	II
Selection of ELP modules is not based on the interest of the students	88.29	III
Dependence on out dated technology	84.86	IV
Inadequate facilities for ELP in the colleges	83.71	V
Lack of interest among students	75.29	VI
Lack of guidance from staff	74.57	VII
Opportunities		
Attainment of entrepreneurial skills during the programme	96.29	I
Improves the technical and management skills	95.57	II
Exposure to various enterprises	95.57	II
Rapport building with professionals	95.43	IV
Identification of entrepreneurial support systems	95.43	IV
Generates a pathway to start agribusiness and entrepreneurship	95.14	VI
Exposure to administrative functions	93.00	VII
Challenges		
More time is consumed for report writing	88.57	I
Lack of technical guidance and prior training on enterprises	87.29	II
Time and availability of farmers is difficult	86.57	III
Poor accommodation and transport services during village attachment	85.71	IV
Concentration on one village leads to limited exposure	84.71	V
Lack of cooperation from line department officials	83.71	VI
No co-operation from agro industries during industrial attachment	78.00	VII

and lack of technical guidance and prior training on enterprises with respective indices of 88.57 and 87.29 scored first and second ranks, respectively.

The data in the Table 2 furnishes the SWOC analysis of staff opinion towards Student READY Programme (SRP). The major strengths of the programme were students will have practical experience and strengthen the existing skills of the students ranked first with index of 99.64 followed by students learn to adapt to rural situations ranked third with index of

Table 2. SWOC analysis of staff opinion towards Student READY Programme (SRP) (m=140)

Items	Staff	
	Index	Rank
Strengths		
Students will have practical experience	99.64	I
Strengthen the existing skills of the students	99.64	I
Students learn to adapt to rural situations	98.21	III
Learn to diagnose major agricultural problems and possible solutions	98.21	III
Students get acquainted with on-going extension and rural development programmes	97.14	V
Develops project planning and analytical skills among students	87.86	VII
Students can identify and analyze the organizational and managerial problems of various institutions	89.29	VI
Weaknesses		
Period of village attachment does not match with cropping season	79.29	I
Dependence on out dated technology	78.93	II
Inadequate facilities for ELP in the colleges	74.64	III
Less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions	74.29	IV
Lack of interest among students	73.93	V
Selection of ELP modules is not based on the interest of the students	71.07	VI
Lack of guidance from staff	58.57	VII
Opportunities		
Improves the technical and management skills	98.57	I
Exposure to various enterprises	97.50	II
Rapport building with professionals	96.79	III
Identification of entrepreneurial support systems	94.29	IV
Attainment of entrepreneurial skills during the programme	93.57	V
Generates a pathway to start agribusiness and entrepreneurship	91.79	VI
Exposure to administrative functions	88.57	VII
Challenges		
Time and availability of farmers is difficult	79.64	I
Concentration on one village leads to limited exposure	77.14	II
Lack of technical guidance and prior training on enterprises	72.50	III
Poor accommodation and transport services during village attachment	72.14	IV
No co-operation from agro industries during industrial attachment	72.14	IV
Lack of cooperation from line department officials	70.71	VI
More time is consumed for report writing	64.29	VII

98.21. The major weaknesses of SRP were period of village attachment does not match with cropping season and dependence on out dated technology with respective indices of 79.29 and 78.93 scored first and second ranks, respectively. The major opportunities of SRP were improves the technical and management skills ranked first with index of 98.57 followed by exposure to various enterprises ranked second with index of 97.50. The major challenges of SRP were time and availability of farmers is difficult and concentration on one village leads to

SWOC analysis of Student Ready Programme.....

Table 3. Overall SWOC analysis of Student READY Programme (SRP)
(n+m = 490)

Items	Overall	
	Index	Rank
Strengths		
Students will have practical experience	98.16	I
Strengthen the existing skills of the students	98.06	II
Students learn to adapt to rural situations	97.65	III
Learn to diagnose major agricultural problems and possible solutions	97.04	IV
Students get acquainted with on-going extension and rural development programmes	96.63	V
Develops project planning and analytical skills among students	93.57	VI
Students can identify and analyze the organizational and managerial problems of various institutions	93.47	VII
Weaknesses		
Period of village attachment does not match with cropping season	87.76	I
Less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions	87.04	II
Selection of ELP modules is not based on the interest of the students	83.37	III
Dependence on out dated technology	83.16	IV
Inadequate facilities for ELP in the colleges	81.12	V
Lack of interest among students	74.90	VI
Lack of guidance from staff	70.00	VII
Opportunities		
Improves the technical and management skills	96.43	I
Exposure to various enterprises	96.12	II
Rapport building with professionals	95.82	III
Attainment of entrepreneurial skills during the programme	95.51	IV
Identification of entrepreneurial support systems	95.10	V
Generates a pathway to start agribusiness and entrepreneurship	94.18	VI
Exposure to administrative functions	91.73	VII
Challenges		
Time and availability of farmers is difficult	84.59	I
Lack of technical guidance and prior training on enterprises	83.06	II
Concentration on one village leads to limited exposure	82.55	III
Poor accommodation and transport services during village attachment	81.84	IV
More time is consumed for report writing	81.63	V
Lack of cooperation from line department officials	80.00	VI
No co-operation from agro industries during industrial attachment	76.33	VII

limited exposure with respective indices of 79.64 and 77.14 scored first and second ranks, respectively.

In terms of overall, data in the Table 3 and Fig. 1 delineate the SWOC analysis of SRP. Based on the index, the major strengths in SRP were students will have practical experience ranked first with index of 98.16 followed by strengthen the existing skills of the students (98.06) and students learn to adapt to rural situations (97.65) were second and third ranks, respectively. The results reveal that the SRP places a strong



Fig 1. SWOC analysis of Student Ready Programme (SRP)

emphasis on providing graduates with practical experience. Practical learning opportunities allow graduates to engage directly with real-world agricultural practices and rural communities. This hands-on approach enables graduates to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations, enhancing their understanding and skill development. It is designed to strengthen and enhance the existing skills of graduates. Strengthening existing skills boosts graduates' confidence and capabilities. It aims to help graduates adapt to rural environments and challenges. Rural areas often present unique circumstances and graduates who can adapt and respond effectively to these situations become better equipped to contribute positively to rural development efforts. A similar kind of finding was reported by Shifa Dhas (2006).

The major weaknesses of SRP were period of village attachment does not match with cropping season, less amount of stipend from the ICAR / State institutions and selection of ELP modules are not based on the interest of the students with respective indices of 87.76, 87.04 and 83.37 scored first, second and third ranks, respectively. The results revealed that agriculture is highly seasonal, and different farming activities are performed at specific times of the year. If the attachment period does not coincide with these activities, graduates may miss out practical experiences related to crucial agricultural operations, limiting their learning opportunities. A low stipend amount can be weaknesses of the SRP as it may deter some graduates from participating in the SRP. Inadequate financial support may limit the number of graduates who can afford to engage in the program, potentially impacting its inclusivity and reach. Selection of ELP modules is not aligned with graduates' interests and aspirations, it can affect their motivation and engagement in the program. Graduates may not fully benefit from the SRP if they are assigned to modules that do not align with their career goals. The results are similar to the findings of Shifa Dhas (2006) and Sajeev and Gowda (2013).

The major opportunities of SRP were improves the technical and management skills ranked first with an index of 96.43 followed by exposure to various enterprises ranked second with index of 96.12. Additionally, rapport building with professionals (95.82) secured third rank, respectively. It is clearly states that practical experience exposes graduates to real-world agricultural operations, enabling them to develop and enhance

their technical skills. They learn how to use specialized equipment, apply modern farming techniques, and manage agricultural resources effectively. Additionally, they gain valuable management skills related to planning, decision-making, and resource allocation. In agricultural education with practical experience exposes graduates to a wide range of enterprises within the agriculture sector. This exposure allows them to explore different facets of agriculture, such as crop cultivation, livestock management, agribusiness, horticulture, and more. This exposure helps them make informed career choices and provides a broad perspective on potential opportunities within the industry. Building rapport with professionals is another crucial aspect of the SRP. It means that participants had the opportunity to interact and establish connections with experienced individuals in their chosen institutions/industries. Such relationships can lead to mentorship, guidance, and potential job opportunities in the future. A similar kind of finding was reported by Sajeev and Gowda (2013).

The major challenges of SRP were time & availability of farmers is difficult, lack of technical guidance & prior training on enterprises and concentration on one village leads to limited exposure with respective indices of 84.59, 83.06 and 82.55 scored first, second and third ranks, respectively. It is found that the SRP relies on interactions with farmers and rural communities for practical learning experiences. However, the availability of farmers and their time constraints can pose challenges to

conducting field visits and engagement. Limited access to farmers may hinder graduates' opportunities to learn from real-world experiences. Inadequate technical guidance and prior training on agricultural enterprises can hinder graduates' effectiveness during the SRP. Focus on a single village for the programme activities results in limited exposure for the graduates. It suggests that the programme geographical scope might be restricted, leading to less diversity in experiences and interactions with different enterprises, which could hinder graduates' holistic understanding of various business environments. The results are similar to the findings of Shifa Dhas (2006) and Sajeev and Gowda (2013).

Conclusion

The study highlighted the major weaknesses of SRP was period of village attachment does not match with cropping season. Therefore, RAWE component should be offered to students in timings coinciding with major cropping seasons. Further, the major challenges of SRP were time & availability of farmers is difficult. To address this challenge, building rapport with farmers, programme organizers might need to develop strategies to optimize the timing of field visits, engage with a wider network of farmers, and find ways to make interactions more convenient for both farmers and graduates. This could involve flexible scheduling, better communication leading to fulfill its objectives and provide graduates with valuable real-world insights.

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