



Contributing Factors for the Agricultural Graduates Converted as Successful Agripreneurs

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural education has now to evolve in tune with fast changing national and international scenario. The agricultural graduates are required to possess professional capabilities to deal with the concerns of sustainable development. Agri-business comprises of organizations and enterprises which in some way contribute for value and supply chain elements such as production, processing, marketing, packaging, transportation and wholesale and retail trade. Bringing as many agricultural graduates in the field of entrepreneurship as agripreneurs is the challenging task of the policy makers in the present situation. Entrepreneurship in Agriculture is a strategic development intervention that has the potential to accelerate the development process. Agripreneurship is greatly influenced mainly by the economic situation, education and culture. Integration of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum is imperative so as to produce graduates who would be self-employed in the face of biting economic quagmire where the government cannot provide employment for every graduate. A total of ten (10) agripreneurs who are the alumni of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states completed their under graduation or post graduation and converted as successful agripreneurs in different agriculture and allied activities were selected as sample. Exploratory research design was adopted in the study to obtain pertinent and information of the respondents. The case study method used for the documentation of agriculture graduates as successful agripreneurs. Semi-structured interview

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schedule was designed for data collection. The factors were broadly divided into three categories viz., personal factors, financial factors, and environmental factors. The respondents were asked to rank the factors for each category separately. By using the Garrett's ranking technique, the important factors which lead to become successful agripreneurs were determined. Among personal factors work experience, passion, Communication and Marketing Skills; among financial factors Capital, Financial Resource; among environmental factors Market Demand, Man Power were found to be more significant factors influencing the establishment and for further growth of business. Hence there is a need to orient the agricultural graduates towards those factors and inculcate such paradigms in their academic environment for converting agricultural graduates as successful agripreneurs.

Keywords: Agricultural graduates; successful agripreneurs; factors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economy and it is one of the most important input in the economic development of a country. The entrepreneur acts as a trigger head to give spark to economic activities by his entrepreneurial decisions. He plays a pivotal role not only in the development of industrial sector of a country but also in the development of farm and service sector. Entrepreneurial development today has become very significant; in view of its being a key to economic development. The objectives of industrial development, regional growth and employment generation depend upon entrepreneurial development.

Entrepreneurship in the field of agriculture has paramount importance to bring glory to agricultural education. In the recent past lot of initiatives been launched in agricultural education to develop entrepreneurial culture among the agricultural graduates. All such efforts one way or other motivate the agriculture graduates to seek for agri-premiership than employment. As the concept is an innovative and not popularized much among the agricultural graduates, an attempt has been made to explore and logically document the process of transforming agriculture graduates as successful agripreneurs. On the other side, mere dependence on employment not produced desired results for the agriculture graduates. This condition also pushes the agriculture graduates towards entrepreneurship. There is no much research carried out in this area, the present study proposed to design an appropriate curriculum and to bring a modest approach to the agriculture graduates to venture in to agri-preneurship. The project also aims at more realistic and exhaustive inquiry on the process and factors involved in transformation of agriculture graduates as agripreneurs.

Agricultural education has now to evolve in tune with fast changing national and international scenario. Future agriculture is dominated by looming dangers of food insecurity originating from an unholy alliance of existing and emerging issues such as stagnating/declining productivity and profitability; degradation and depletion of natural resources; increased risks in the face of changing climate; globalization of trade and commerce; etc. The agricultural graduates are required to possess professional capabilities to deal with the concerns of sustainable development (productive, profitable and stable) of agriculture in all its aspects. Also, the education should address the stakeholders' expectations especially for utilitarian mode [1]. Undergraduate agricultural students' has difficulties in getting startup capital and difficulty in obtaining legal license as well as the existing insufficient subsidies by the government are the key challenges that affects entrepreneurial career [2].

Bringing as many agricultural graduates in the field of entrepreneurship as agripreneurs is the challenging task of the policy makers in the present situation. This entry not only encourages entrepreneurship but also enhances the success rate of agri-business due to their technical competency. Hence there is every need to provide entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Using this framework, students will have: progressively more challenging educational activities; experiences that will enable them to develop the insight needed to discover and create entrepreneurial opportunities; and the expertise to successfully start and manage their own businesses to take advantage of these opportunities. Attitudes, acceptance, and knowledge were the main factors that influence youth to become an

entrepreneur [3]. Attitude towards entrepreneurship was a determining factor for choosing entrepreneurship career [4]. Entrepreneurs demonstrate a need to achieve, a willingness to exploit a challenge, to persevere, to work hard and driven by self-belief, but tempered with the ability to be flexible and to delegate to others when necessary as well as willingness to listen to advice and to recognize that they are not experts in every aspect of their business [5].

An entrepreneurial agricultural education occupies a very vital position in the development of manpower and technological skills and abilities to meet the demand of socioeconomic development of individual and the nation, for self-reliance sustainability, productivity and affordability in human endeavor [6]. Most barrier factors for students to pursue entrepreneurial career were shortage of initial capital and fear of the risk involved in private higher education students in Ethiopia. However, the study does not include the public university but rather involves various students in the study from various programs [7].

Entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the best economic development strategies to develop country's economic growth and sustain the country's competitiveness in facing globalization. Policy makers, researchers, farmers' unions and advisory services are all working on the development of entrepreneurship in agriculture [8]. Students' attitudes towards agricultural entrepreneurship can be encouraged by students' ease in obtaining various information about agricultural entrepreneurship, both through the learning process at schools, reading various print media, watching television programmes, utilizing the Internet, and exchanging information through social media. Government should also provide business financing support, technology and innovation to increase product selling value and also facilitate the establishment of efficient marketing network [9].

With 60 per cent of India's population still engaged in agriculture and allied activities, economists and policy makers often talk about the need for creating new work avenues and industries to shift a major segment of this population out of agriculture. However, this is not the only solution to the economic woes of India's agri-graduates. Not only in developing alternative sources of employment, entrepreneurship can also help radicalize farming techniques and bring innovation to improve yields per hectare. The

effort drawn by the government to revolve more youngsters to become more self-reliance and eventually establish themselves as agriculture entrepreneurs is the outcome yet to be seen and proven [10]. Entrepreneurship education improves motivation towards entrepreneurial by inspiring students' personal attraction towards entrepreneurship and perceived behavioral control [11].

Encouraging entrepreneurship in agricultural education is an innovative concept introduced as per the fourth dean's committee recommendations in India. Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University initiated appropriate steps to bring as many agricultural graduates in the field of entrepreneurship. Few of the successful cases already been evident to reflect the efforts of the university. This research paper explored the factors responsible for converting agricultural graduates as successful agripreneurs. The application of the findings of the research will promote the encouraging entrepreneurial culture among the agricultural graduates.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted under ICAR extramural research project of Education Division of ICAR, New Delhi and the field investigation was carried out during 2017 and 2018. A total of ten (10) agripreneurs who are the alumni of state agricultural university (SAUs) of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana completed their under graduation or post-graduation and converted as successful agripreneurs in different agriculture and allied activities were documented through different entrepreneurial dimensions. Exploratory research design was adopted in the study to obtain pertinent and information of the respondents. The respondents were selected purposively having experience and expertise in the field of agri-business for more than ten years. The case study method used for the documentation of agriculture graduates transformed as successful agripreneurs. Semi-structured interview schedule was designed for data collection.

The contemporary study recognized the factors that influence success in entrepreneurial endeavor. The factors were broadly divided into three categories viz., personal factors, financial factors, and environmental factors. Personal factors include eight items viz., work experiences, passion, leadership, family support, risk bearing ability, communication & marketing

skills, innovativeness and strategic management. The financial factors include four items viz., capital, financial resources, financial management and available subsidies & other benefits. The environmental factors include five items viz., market demand, Government assistance, man power, social network and institution linkage. The respondents were asked to rank the factors for each category separately. By using the Garrett's ranking technique, the important factors which lead to become successful agri-preneurs were determined.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The factors under personal, financial and environmental were ranked separately for each category by following Garrett's ranking technique. The rank wise factors were depicted in Tables 1, 2 & 3.

3.1 Personal Factors

The personal factors were ranked and prioritized by using Garrett's ranking technique. It was observed from the given Table 1 that, the major personal factor for their success was their work experience (12.4) before establishing their business followed by passion (11.40). Every entrepreneur is having the work experience range from four to thirteen years. They all established their business with a lot of work experience and technical knowledge which made them confident to take risk to start their own business. They felt that, being the first generation entrepreneurs the experience in private organizations as employees is an inevitable step to handle the business effectively. Almost all of them had this experience and directed their vision towards job provider rather than job seeker.

They highlighted one important opinion that, sparing their efforts for the success of other individual has to be shifted towards their self success. They also projected the role of their

passion of becoming agri-preneur to serve the farming community motivated a lot for getting in to business. They are perceiving that, they can reach to the farmers through their quality products.

Other factors were Communication & Marketing skills (9.30), Strategic Management (9.00), Risk bearing ability (8.20), Leadership (8.20), Innovativeness (7.40) and Family support (7.30).

Any business requires effective dissemination of their strengths, policies and organizational issues among the stakeholders of the company. Accordingly it is also important to impress or attract the customers through their product qualities so as to have better market share. To have that, they might be focusing on effectively utilizing all the management principles to suit to a particular situation by adopting need based strategic approaches. However, They are perceiving that they are handling the business with lot of uncertainty by having the skills of risk taking. Further, they also felt that, having good leadership qualities are highly essential in achieving entrepreneurial growth.

They expressed that as good leader, the entrepreneur can have the edge of better promotion of their product range. They also mentioned the role of innovativeness in their progress. Finally they mentioned the role played by their family because business requires lot of sacrifice of family life. However, it may not have much impact on business growth.

3.2 Financial Factors

The financial factors were ranked and prioritized by using Garrett's ranking technique. It was observed from the given Table 2 and that, the major financial factor for their success was availability of capital (115) which is the vital factor to start the business followed by the attitude and support of the financial resources (110) who are providing the capital for the business.

Table 1. Personal factors contributed for the success in their entrepreneurial endeavor

S. No.	Personal factors	Garrett mean score	Rank
1	Work Experience	12.4	I
2	Passion	11.4	II
3	Communication and Marketing Skills	9.3	III
4	Strategic Management	9.0	IV
5	Leadership	8.3	V
6	Innovativeness	8.2	VI
7	Risk bearing ability	7.4	VII
8	Family support	7.3	VIII

Table 2. Financial factors contributed for the success in their entrepreneurial endeavor

S. No	Financial factors	Garrett mean score	Rank
1	Capital	115	I
2	Financial Resource	110	II
3	Financial Management	74.5	III
4	Available subsidies & other benefits	73	IV

Capital is the life blood of business. Accordingly, most of them expressed that own capital is the strong pillar in establishing a business. Whatever may be the scale of enterprise, all of them stressed that own capital is significant motivating factor for any entrepreneur. They wish to invest their own capital as much as possible. Further, they opined that, external financial resources are highly essential to bridge their current situation and the vision to be realized. As they don't have sufficient capital to start a business, they have to depend on banks, money lenders or relatives as major financial resources.

Other factors were financial management (74.5) and available subsidies & other benefits (73), they should know how better they can allocate the capital to run the business profitably.

They also stated the role of effective financial management for progressive growth of business. Meticulous planning of finance is a crucial part of business and suggested for engaging right management personnel apart from their own decision making. They expressed that subsidies and other benefits may not be that much important but they are expecting congenial entrepreneurial culture in the society. Government also can promote entrepreneurship by providing opportunities for marketing of their products.

3.3 Environmental Factors

The environmental factors were ranked and prioritized by using Garrett's ranking technique. It was observed from the given Table 3 that, the major environmental factor for their success was market demand (50) followed by man power (28). As they have chosen the agriculture sector in which the demand is never ending and developing the product lines based on the market demand.

Keeping in view of the competition as well as the availability of alternate products/ methods creating demand for their products. Convincing different categories of people involved in business

transactions including scientists, extension personnel, dealers, policy makers and ultimate farming community requires lot of efforts to get their products branded in the market. They felt that basic challenge in the business is competition. As there are more number of competitors in the business they have chosen, they are struggling for market share and during the process they confronted with tricky situations for which there were no optimistic ways to deal the problem. Recurrent monitoring of the strategies and preparing their own techniques to overcome their acts should be the key success factor in the business.

Well trained & experienced manpower contribute a lot in the company business growth. They perceived that, success of the enterprise depends on engaging right people at right place. This requires both choice and chance on part of the entrepreneur. They made very clear that always business is in the shoulders of the employees. Hence needed care to be taken with meticulous planning in maintaining satisfaction and happiness among the employees. Other factors were maintaining the social network (27.4), Government assistance (27) and Institutional linkage (22.1) contributed for the success in their entrepreneurial endeavor.

Table 3. Environmental factors contributed for the success in their entrepreneurial endeavor

S. No.	Environmental factors	Garrett mean score	Rank
1	Market Demand	50	I
2	Man Power	28	II
3	Social Network	27.4	III
4	Government Assistance	27	IV
5	Institutional Linkage	22.1	V

They also felt that the present trend shifting towards social network, which is the real boom in business as it is having tremendous impact on masses. Formation of a opinion is a simple process but it is having great influence on the system. In this digital world, the social network interweave the entire society leading to communication explosion followed by optimistic decisional process in the society. Hence, expanding their operational transactions as wide as possible with emotional networking will yield desirable output for the business. They are also expecting from the Government that, there should entrepreneurial back-up by streamlining the appropriate procedures and policies for

encouraging entrepreneurs particularly in agriculture. Establishing incubation centers and encouraging agri-graduates to be in business will produce good number of agri-preneurs. Even though institutional linkage is one of the important factor for business growth in terms of its building empire, the role of remaining factors are very crucial and accelerate the pace of business. Linking the educational institutions with agri-business organizations and entrepreneurship Development Institutions will prosper the scope of agri-preneurs.

4. CONCLUSION

Finally findings of the study strongly testify that, transformation of the agricultural graduates in to agri-preneurs are strongly influenced by the factors like their work experience as employee, passion towards business, communication, capital, market demand, manpower followed by the other factors. Hence there is a need to orient the agricultural graduates towards those factors and inculcate such paradigms in their academic environment for converting agricultural graduates as successful agri-preneurs.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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