



ISSN (E): 2277-7695  
ISSN (P): 2349-8242  
NAAS Rating: 5.23  
TPI 2023; SP-12(8): 1470-1475  
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[www.thepharmajournal.com](http://www.thepharmajournal.com)

Received: 18-06-2023

Accepted: 26-07-2023

#### P Vaishnavi

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

#### DA Nithya Shree

Professor, Department of Extension and Communication Management, College of Community Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

#### Sunil V Halakatti

Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, Directorate of Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

#### Vilas S Kulkarni

Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Agriculture, Hanumanamatti, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

#### Ashalatha KV

Professor, Department of Agricultural Statistics, College of Agriculture, Vijayapura, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

#### Corresponding Author:

##### P Vaishnavi

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

## Profile characteristics of agriculture graduates from south Indian universities

P Vaishnavi, DA Nithya Shree, Sunil V Halakatti, Vilas S Kulkarni and Ashalatha KV

#### Abstract

The present investigation was to examine the profile characteristics of agriculture graduates from seven agricultural universities in South India. One agriculture college was selected from each university, and 50 students were randomly chosen from each college, resulting in a total sample size of 350 agriculture graduates. The data were collected through an online survey using Google Forms with multiple-choice questions. Analysis of the data involved the use of frequency, percentage, mean score, and indices. The findings revealed that more than half of the agriculture graduates (55.71%) were female and greater percentage of graduates (58.29%) was found to be in the semi urban. Majority of the agriculture graduate's fathers (64.00%) were farmers and majority of the agriculture graduate's mothers (64.86%) were home makers. Further, majority of the agriculture graduates (60.86%) belonged to other backward classes and more than four-fifths of the agriculture graduates (82.58%) had low level of entrepreneurship Background. Additionally, more than two-fourths (51.00%) of the agriculture graduates had low level of participation in co-curricular activities and majority of the agriculture graduates (67.72%) had low level of awards and recognition. Regarding ICT utilization, a little less than half of the agriculture graduates (48.00%) belonged to high level of ICT utilization and the overall index for ICT utilization was 74.40.

**Keywords:** Agriculture graduates, education, profile characteristics and south India

#### Introduction

After India gained independence, agricultural education and research gained more prominence. The Government of India formed the University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radha Krishnan. This commission recommended the establishment of rural universities in India on American land-grant model for the overall development of agriculture and rural life in the country. In 1954, Uttar Pradesh (UP) initiated the establishment of first agricultural university by inviting an Indo-American team led by Dr. K. R. Damle, Vice-President of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). This led to the formation of the first state agricultural university in India, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 17 November 1960. The establishment of Pantnagar University marked a significant milestone in the establishment of state government supported universities for agricultural education in India. These universities are known as State Agricultural Universities (SAUs). The Second National Education Commission (1964-66), led by Dr. D. S. Kothari, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission, emphasized the crucial need of establishing at least one Agricultural University in every state of India. As a direct outcome of these recommendations, the agricultural universities were established in all states.

As the number of students enrolling in universities increases, it becomes crucial to understand their individual needs and tailor education to match those needs. By understanding the graduate profiles enable educational institutions to offer individualized support, identify potential challenges, and create a learning environment that caters to the diverse needs and prepare each graduate effectively for careers in the agriculture sector. With this background, the present study is to explore the profile characteristics of agriculture graduates from South Indian Universities. In this context, the selected profile characteristics of agriculture graduates were gender, rural/urban background, family annual income, father's occupation, mother's occupation, caste, entrepreneurship background, OGPA, participation in co-curricular activities, awards & recognition and ICT utilization.

## Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in seven agricultural universities of South India, viz., University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru (UASB); University of Agricultural Sciences Dharwad, (UASD); University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur (UASR); Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU), Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) were purposively selected as these universities have implemented Student READY Programme (SRP). Each university one agriculture college was selected. From each agriculture college 50 students were randomly selected for the study. Thus the total sample size constitutes of 350 agriculture students. The research design adopted for this study was *Ex-Post-facto* research. The study was conducted through online survey mode with the help of Google Forms in pattern of multiple choice questions. The collected data were analyzed by using frequency, percentage, mean score, and indices.

## Results and Discussion

### Gender

The results from the Table 1 indicated that more than half of the agriculture graduates (55.71%) were female, while 44.29 percent of the agriculture graduates were male. The data clearly shows a trend in gender representation within agricultural education. It is evident that an increasing number of girls are choosing agriculture as their preferred career paths. This observation highlights the growing interest and enthusiasm among female students to pursue agricultural studies. The finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Sajeev and Gowda (2013)<sup>[7]</sup>, Dilip Kumar (2017)<sup>[4]</sup> and Arundhathi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup>.

### Rural/Urban background

Rural/Urban background of the selected respondents (Table 2) revealed that greater percentage of graduates (58.29%) was found to be in the semi urban followed by urban (40.28%) and rural (1.43%) background. It is found that semi-urban areas often have better access to educational facilities and resources compared to rural regions, making it more conducive for graduates to pursue higher education.

### Family annual income

It was observed from the Table 3 that, most of the agriculture graduates (50.57%) belonged to high annual income (> Rs.1,20,000) followed by 26.86 percent of the agriculture graduates belonged to medium (Rs.60,000 to Rs.1,20,000) and 22.57 percent of the agriculture graduates belonged to low income (< Rs.60,000) categories, respectively. This suggests that graduates from high-income families may have better access to quality education, including agricultural courses, due to their ability to afford tuition fees and other expenses associated with higher education.

### Father's occupation

The results from the Table 4 showed that majority of the agriculture graduate's fathers (64.00%) were farmers followed by private (11.71%), corporate (10.86%), others (7.14%), business (3.43%) and government (2.86%). The result clearly reveals that graduates come from agricultural backgrounds and their fathers are actively involved in agricultural activities, reflects a strong agricultural heritage

and possibly a family tradition of farming. This could motivate graduates to pursue agricultural education and carry forward their family's legacy. The results are similar to the findings of Dilip Kumar (2017)<sup>[4]</sup>, Lakhamwad (2019)<sup>[6]</sup>, Sonawane (2020)<sup>[8]</sup>, Arundhathi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup> and Khatri *et al.* (2023)<sup>[5]</sup>.

### Mother's occupation

The results from the Table 5 showed that majority of the agriculture graduate's mothers (64.86%) were home makers followed by farmers (20.29%), government (11.43%), private (1.71%), business (1.14%) and corporate (0.57%). It is found that most of the mothers are primarily engaged in the role of homemakers, most likely driven by the desire to provide crucial support to the family. By assuming this responsibility, they play a vital role in managing household duties and caring for the well-being of the family members. These results were supported by Dilip Kumar (2017)<sup>[4]</sup>, Aysha Adhina (2020) and Arundhathi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup>.

### Caste

Table 6 depicts the caste of the respondents. Majority of the agriculture graduates (60.86%) belonged to other backward classes followed by general (27.14%), scheduled caste (7.43%) and scheduled tribe (4.57%) category. The reason behind the results could be the presence of reservation policies in educational institutions enables graduates from other backward classes to access higher education and pursue careers in agriculture, contributing to greater representation and inclusivity in the field. These policies play a vital role in promoting social equity and empowering graduates from marginalized communities to fulfill their educational aspirations and contribute to the agricultural sector. The finding of the study was similar to the findings reported by Dilip Kumar (2017)<sup>[4]</sup> and Arundhathi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup>.

### Entrepreneurship background

It was noticed that more than four-fifths of the agriculture graduates (82.58%) had low level of entrepreneurship background. Nearly one-fourths of the agriculture graduates (15.71%) had medium level and 1.71 percent of them had high level of entrepreneurship background (Table 7). This indicates that number of graduates might have limited exposure or experience in entrepreneurship related activities. Graduates' exposure to entrepreneurial environments during their academic journey and family background might play a role in shaping their entrepreneurship background.

### OGPA

It is evident from the Table 8 that, majority of the agriculture graduates (55.14%) secured 8.00 to 8.99 OGPA followed by 34.57, 10.00 and 0.29 percent of the agriculture graduates secured 7.00 to 7.99 OGPA, 9.0 and above OGPA and 6.00 to 6.99 OGPA respectively. The most likely reason for this could be their hard work, keenness to learn, and dedication to gaining knowledge. These graduates' commitment to their studies, passion for learning, and persistent efforts have led to their remarkable academic achievements, as reflected by their diverse OGPA scores. The results are similar to the findings of Sajeev and Gowda (2013)<sup>[7]</sup>, Arulmanikandan (2022)<sup>[1]</sup> and Arundhathi (2022)<sup>[2]</sup>.

### Participation in co-curricular activities

The data on participation in co-curricular activities (Table 9)

clearly indicates that, more than two-fourths (51.00%) of the agriculture graduates had low level of participation in co-curricular activities followed by medium level (48.00%). The agriculture graduates having high level of participation in co-curricular activities was very meager *i.e.* to the extent of 1.00 percent. This clearly indicates that the majority of agriculture graduates may prioritize their academic performance and focus on their studies, leading to a lower level of participation in co-curricular activities. A similar kind of finding was reported by Arundhathi (2022) [2].

**Awards and recognition**

It can be seen from the Table 10 that majority of the agriculture graduates (67.72%) had low level of awards and recognition whereas, 25.71 percent of the agriculture graduates had medium level and 6.57 percent of the agriculture graduates had high level of awards and recognition. The reason may be all the graduates cannot win awards and recognition and also their participation on co-

curricular activities was low which hinders the opportunities to win awards.

**ICT utilization:** Table 11 delineates the ICT utilization of agriculture graduates. The overall index for ICT utilization was 74.40. Based on the index mobile phones ranked first with index of 97.21. The reason behind these mobile phones is highly accessible and widely used by individuals. The capability to connect to the internet through mobile phones allows graduates to access a wealth of information, agricultural resources, and online platforms for learning and communication.

Table 12 depicts that a little less than half of the agriculture graduates (48.00%) belonged to high level of ICT utilization followed by 47.00 and 5.00 percent, who belonged to medium and low level of ICT utilization, respectively. It is found that agriculture graduates might be using ICT tools extensively for educational purposes to keep themselves updated with available information.

**Table 1:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to gender n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							Overall (n=350)
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	
		f (%)							
1.	Male	29 (58.00)	29 (58.00)	23 (46.00)	12 (24.00)	24 (48.00)	21 (42.00)	17 (34.00)	155 (44.29)
2.	Female	21 (42.00)	21 (42.00)	27 (54.00)	38 (76.00)	26 (52.00)	29 (58.00)	33 (66.00)	195 (55.71)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 2:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to rural / urban background n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							Overall (n=350)
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	
		f (%)							
1.	Rural (<6)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	5 (1.43)
2.	Semi Urban (6-12)	32 (64.00)	26 (52.00)	31 (62.00)	31 (62.00)	28 (56.00)	23 (46.00)	33 (66.00)	204 (58.29)
3.	Urban (>12)	18 (36.00)	23 (46.00)	19 (38.00)	19 (38.00)	22 (44.00)	27 (54.00)	13 (26.00)	141 (40.28)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 3:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to family annual income n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							Overall (n=350)
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	
		f (%)							
1.	Low (<60000 Rs/annum)	16 (32.00)	24 (48.00)	27 (54.00)	7 (14.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (10.00)	79 (22.57)
2.	Medium (60000 to 120000 Rs/annum)	9 (18.00)	6 (12.00)	6 (12.00)	23 (46.00)	22 (44.00)	15 (30.00)	13 (26.00)	94 (26.86)
3.	High (>120000 Rs/annum)	25 (50.00)	20 (40.00)	17 (34.00)	20 (40.00)	28 (56.00)	35 (70.00)	32 (64.00)	177 (50.57)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 4:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to father's occupation n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							Overall (n=350)
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	
		f (%)							
1.	Government	2 (4.00)	3 (6.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	0 (0.00)	10 (2.86)
2.	Private	3 (6.00)	9 (18.00)	2 (4.00)	5 (10.00)	2 (4.00)	9 (18.00)	11 (22.00)	41 (11.71)

		(6.00)	(18.00)	(4.00)	(10.00)	(4.00)	(18.00)	(22.00)	(11.71)
3.	Corporate	8 (16.00)	10 (20.00)	2 (4.00)	6 (12.00)	4 (8.00)	5 (10.00)	3 (6.00)	38 (10.86)
4.	Farmer	31 (62.00)	26 (52.00)	43 (86.00)	28 (56.00)	38 (76.00)	29 (58.00)	29 (58.00)	224 (64.00)
5.	Business	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	4 (8.00)	4 (8.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	12 (3.43)
6.	Others	5 (10.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (4.00)	6 (12.00)	2 (4.00)	3 (6.00)	6 (12.00)	25 (7.14)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 5:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to mother’s occupation n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Government	8 (16.00)	5 (10.00)	1 (2.00)	4 (8.00)	2 (4.00)	6 (12.00)	14 (28.00)	40 (11.43)
2.	Private	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	2 (4.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (1.71)
3.	Corporate	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	2 (0.57)
4.	Farmer	10 (20.00)	10 (20.00)	14 (28.00)	7 (14.00)	22 (44.00)	6 (12.00)	2 (4.00)	71 (20.29)
5.	Business	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (4.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	4 (1.14)
6.	Home makers	31 (62.00)	34 (68.00)	34 (68.00)	37 (74.00)	24 (48.00)	36 (72.00)	31 (62.00)	227 (64.86)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 6:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to caste n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	6 (12.00)	4 (8.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (4.00)	16 (4.57)
2.	Scheduled Caste (SC)	4 (8.00)	5 (10.00)	5 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	7 (14.00)	1 (2.00)	26 (7.43)
3.	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	30 (60.00)	31 (62.00)	31 (62.00)	24 (48.00)	29 (58.00)	32 (64.00)	36 (72.00)	213 (60.86)
4.	General	15 (30.00)	14 (28.00)	12 (24.00)	20 (40.00)	13 (26.00)	10 (20.00)	11 (22.00)	95 (27.14)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 7:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to entrepreneurship background n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Low (0-2)	43 (86.00)	43 (86.00)	41 (82.00)	44 (88.00)	44 (88.00)	42 (84.00)	32 (64.00)	289 (82.58)
2.	Medium (3-4)	7 (14.00)	5 (10.00)	7 (14.00)	6 (12.00)	6 (12.00)	7 (14.00)	17 (34.00)	55 (15.71)
3.	High (5-7)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	2 (4.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	6 (1.71)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 8:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to OGPA n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	6.00 to 6.99	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.29)
2.	7.00 to 7.99	15 (30.00)	19 (38.00)	14 (28.00)	20 (40.00)	19 (38.00)	23 (46.00)	11 (22.00)	121 (34.57)

3.	8.00 to 8.99	28 (56.00)	27 (54.00)	27 (54.00)	26 (52.00)	27 (54.00)	24 (48.00)	34 (68.00)	193 (55.14)
4.	9.0 and above	7 (14.00)	3 (6.00)	9 (18.00)	4 (8.00)	4 (8.00)	3 (6.00)	5 (10.00)	35 (10.00)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 9:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to participation in co-curricular activities n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Low (0-8)	24 (48.00)	30 (60.00)	19 (38.00)	21 (42.00)	31 (62.00)	35 (70.00)	18 (36.00)	178 (51.00)
2.	Medium (8-16)	26 (52.00)	20 (40.00)	29 (58.00)	29 (58.00)	19 (38.00)	15 (30.00)	31 (62.00)	169 (48.00)
3.	High (16-24)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	3 (1.00)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 10:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to awards and recognition n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Low (0-5)	34 (68.00)	32 (64.00)	28 (56.00)	37 (74.00)	41 (82.00)	36 (72.00)	29 (58.00)	237 (67.72)
2.	Medium (6-11)	16 (32.00)	17 (34.00)	16 (32.00)	12 (24.00)	9 (18.00)	9 (18.00)	11 (22.00)	90 (25.71)
3.	High (12-16)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	6 (12.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (10.00)	10 (20.00)	23 (6.57)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

**Table 11:** ICT utilization of agriculture graduates n = 350

Sl. No.	ICT Tools	ICT utilization		
		Mean Score	Index	Rank
1.	Mobile phones	3.89	97.21	I
2.	WhatsApp	3.87	96.79	II
3.	Google	3.79	94.86	III
4.	YouTube	3.59	89.64	IV
5.	E-mail	3.43	85.71	V
6.	Instagram	3.37	84.21	VI
7.	SMS	3.27	81.64	VII
8.	Telegram	3.23	80.64	VIII
9.	e-Newspapers	2.98	74.43	IX
10.	Television	2.70	67.43	X
11.	Computer	2.61	65.29	XI
12.	Multimedia	2.54	63.57	XII
13.	Facebook	2.02	50.43	XIII
14.	Twitter	1.89	47.36	XIV
15.	Radio	1.47	36.71	XV
	Overall	2.98	74.40	-

**Table 12:** Distribution of agriculture graduates according to ICT utilization n = 350

Sl. No.	Category	Universities							
		UASB (n <sub>1</sub> = 50)	UASD (n <sub>2</sub> = 50)	UASR (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	ANGRAU (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	PJTSAU (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	TNAU (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)	KAU (n <sub>7</sub> = 50)	Overall (n=350)
		f (%)							
1.	Low (15-30)	1 (2.00)	3 (6.00)	2 (4.00)	2 (4.00)	4 (8.00)	3 (6.00)	1 (2.00)	16 (5.00)
2.	Medium (30-45)	16 (32.00)	19 (38.00)	28 (56.00)	34 (68.00)	18 (36.00)	22 (44.00)	28 (56.00)	165 (47.00)
3.	High (45-60)	33 (66.00)	28 (56.00)	20 (40.00)	14 (28.00)	28 (56.00)	25 (50.00)	21 (42.00)	169 (48.00)

f = Frequency, % = Percentage

## Conclusion

The study highlighted that, an increasing number of girls are choosing agriculture as their preferred career paths. This observation shows the growing interest and enthusiasm among female students to pursue agricultural studies. Further, number of graduates has low level of entrepreneurship background. Therefore, given more exposure to graduates towards entrepreneurial environments during their academic journey in shaping their entrepreneurship skills. The study clearly indicates that the majority of agricultural graduates may prioritize their academic performance and focus on their studies, leading to a lower level of participation in co-curricular activities and receiving low awards and recognition. Therefore, the universities must focus on these factors to inspire and make co-curricular activities compulsory for the students. By studying these profile characteristics educational institutions can offer individualized support, identify potential challenges and create a learning environment that caters to the diverse needs and preferences of each graduate.

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