

Agricultural Education in Andhra Pradesh

by

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During the World War II, acute shortage of food was felt and even though there were many potentialities in the country, no definite action could be taken to start another Agricultural College to take up various schemes to step up food production. After the end of the war, many schemes were formulated under the post-war reconstruction scheme and the major project was to produce more trained personnel in agriculture to man the several departmental schemes and to achieve the food production targets aimed by the then Government. As a result, the Government of Madras drafted a scheme to establish a second Agricultural College in Andhra area especially in Delta districts where ample irrigation facilities are available. So the first Agricultural College in Andhra area namely the Agricultural College, Bapatla was established in July 1945 by the then Madras Government and was affiliated to the Andhra University. Never the less the Courses, Curriculums and other features to run the College were based entirely on the model of the Coimbatore college. In other words, it can be stated that the Bapatla Agricultural College is an off-shoot of the Agricultural College, Coimbatore.

After the formation of Andhra State in the year 1953, this college came under the direct control of Andhra Government. The Government of Andhra Pradesh have subsequently increased the admission strength of Bapatla College to 144 from 96, when there was need for more graduates. Again the admission strength was increased to 180 by the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University to man the various schemes and Projects of the State Government.

At present, there are 13 departments in the Agricultural College, Bapatla viz., Agronomy, Botany, Chemistry, Plant Pathology, Entomology, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Horticulture, Animal Hygiene, Agricultural Economics, Extension, English and Physics imparting instruction in their respective fields.

The Andhra Pradesh Government felt the dearth of agricultural graduates when they planned several schemes and to man these various schemes and also to meet the needs of the various growing concerns like plantations, fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides organisations, the second Agricultural College viz., Sri Venkateswara Agricultural College was started at Tirupati in October 1961 with an admission strength of 80 students. Here also the syllabus of the Agricultural College, Bapatla is being followed and the courses are integrated as per the model of Madras and Andhra Universities. The then Government of Nizam established an Agricultural College under the Osmania University in the same year as at

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Bapatla which was subsequently shifted to Rajendranagar which is about 12 miles sway from Hyderabad in the rural surroundings. The admission strength of this College is also 96 and the strength has been increased to 120 from this academic year.

At the Agricultural College, Rajendranagar M. Sc. (Ag). course is offered in all the disciplines of the agricultural faculty. In addition, M. Sc. course in Extension Education is being run for the past two years. At Bapatla college, M. Sc. (Ag.) degree by research work was introduced in the year 1949 and it is still being continued.

In addition to the teaching sections, various research wings are attached to the institution, where all the staff members are doing research work in their respective fields. Some of the results obtained are of great economic value and they are being adopted by the local farmers.

In addition to teaching extension as a subject to the final year students, the students and staff visit the villages of the Block frequently and advise the farmers to raise the crops in their fields on scientific basis. The students take active part in agricultural operations including Poultry and Animal Husbandry. This has given a great impetus to the rural life of the surrounding villages where these colleges are situated. So agricultural education in Andhra Pradesh is now streamlined on the pattern of American Land Grant Colleges where Teaching, Research and Extension are organically knitted just like a tripod stand.

Agricultural education in Andhra Pradesh entered a new era after the enactment of the Agricultural University Bill in December 1963 by the State legislature and the new Agricultural University based on the pattern of Land Grant Colleges of U. S. A. came into existence from 13th July 1964 with six colleges under its control. (Three Agriculture, Two Veterinary and One Home Science).

Apart from the internal assessment system as in the U. S. A., another important change brought about by the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University is the division of subjects into various courses and these courses are numbered and certain number of credit hours are fixed depending upon the quantum of subject matter to be taught in a fixed period of time. The academic year is divided into three trimesters equal to the existing terms. Every student has to register for all the courses and take weekly examinations, slip tests announced and unannounced, monthly examinations and terminal examination at the end of each trimester. The students are given grades and they have to complete all the courses as determined by the faculty concerned and must be able to take the required grade point average as fixed by the University to earn a degree.

Another object of the Agricultural University is to integrate teaching, research and extension with a view to take the results of research to the door steps of the farmers of rural areas as in the U. S. A.
