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Students' perceptions towards curricular and co-curricular activities in veterinary education: A case study of Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University, Nagpur

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess students' perceptions toward the curricular and co-curricular activities organized by the Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University (MAFSU), Nagpur. A total of 50 final-year students were selected using random sampling. Data were collected through a structured, pre-tested questionnaire. Results revealed that 52 per cent of the students rated curricular activities as average, while 36 per cent rated co-curricular activities as good. A majority of the students were fully satisfied with the Rural Veterinary Work Experience (RVWE) program (58%) and study tours (56%). Satisfaction levels were moderate for sports, NSS/NCC, and cultural activities (ranging between 54% to 62%). Regarding the importance of co-curricular activities, 68 per cent of the students agreed that such activities enhance abilities, confidence, and practical knowledge, while 54 per cent considered them essential for overall personality and value development. Major constraints reported by students included accommodation and hygiene issues (78%), inadequate recreational facilities (74%) and limited career development workshops (72%). The findings suggest that although students hold a positive view toward the university's curricular efforts, improvements in co-curricular opportunities and student facilities are needed to promote holistic development.

Keywords: Students' perceptions, curricular activities, co-curricular activities, veterinary education, MAFSU Nagpur

Introduction

Education aims to promote the intellectual, social, moral, and cultural development of individuals. In professional programs such as veterinary and animal sciences, curricular and co-curricular activities together form the foundation of holistic student development. While curricular activities ensure conceptual and technical learning, co-curricular experiences promote leadership, teamwork, confidence, and practical competence (Kuh, 1995; Shamsudin *et al.*, 2014) [3, 6].

Co-curricular engagement allows students to connect theory with real-life practice through participation in field training, community services, sports, and cultural programs. Studies (Astin, 1977; Pascarella *et al.*, 2005; Ramalingam & Ilakkiya, 2021) [1, 7, 5] have established that such involvement enhances personal growth, motivation, and academic success. According to Kuh *et al.* (2011) [4], effective universities integrate classroom learning with experiential and extracurricular learning to produce well-rounded professionals.

In veterinary education, programs such as Rural Veterinary Work Experience (RVWE), experiential learning, and

clinical training play a vital role in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Similarly, activities like NSS/NCC, sports, and cultural events build character and leadership skills.

Given the importance of such activities, the present study aimed to assess the perception of veterinary students toward curricular and co-curricular activities organized at MAFSU, Nagpur, and to identify the constraints affecting students' participation and satisfaction.

Methodology

The study was carried out at the Maharashtra Animal and Fishery Sciences University (MAFSU), Nagpur, during the academic year 2016-2017 as a component of the ICAR-funded Extramural Research Project titled "Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of Agricultural Education System."

A total of 50 final-year Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc. & A.H.) students were selected using a random sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured and pre-tested questionnaire, developed with inputs from experts in veterinary education, animal

science, extension, and social sciences.

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Fully Satisfied (5) to Fully Dissatisfied (1). Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to derive meaningful insights.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented with various heads such as overall perception of the students towards various curricular and co-curricular activities, importance of curricular and co-curricular activities, constraints faced by the students during degree programme and conclusion.

1. Overall Perception of Students toward Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

As shown in Table 1, 52 per cent of students rated curricular activities as average and 34 per cent as good. Similarly, 52 per cent of students rated co-curricular activities as average, while 36 per cent found them good. This indicates that students were moderately satisfied with the university's efforts in both academic and extracurricular domains. These findings suggest that students at MAFSU recognize the importance of both academic and extracurricular engagement but expect improvements in execution and diversity of activities.

Table 1: Overall perception student about curricular and co- curricular activities (n = 50)

Sl. No		Frequency	Per cent
A	Student Perception about Curricular activities		
1.	Poor (<25.71)	07	14
2.	Average (25.71- 33.07)	26	52
3.	Good (>33.07)	17	34
		Mean = 29.39	SD = 3.68
B	Student Perception about Co- curricular activities		
1.	Poor (<5.8)	06	12
2.	Average (5.8-20.54)	26	52
3.	Good (>20.54)	18	36
		Mean = 13.17	SD = 7.37

Student perception about curricular and co- curricular activities

A. Curricular activities

As seen in Table 2, 58 per cent of students were fully satisfied with Rural Veterinary Work Experience (RVWE) and 38 per cent with study tours. These activities were valued for providing practical exposure and field-level understanding. Over 64 per cent expressed satisfaction with experiential learning programs, indicating effective implementation.

B. Co- curricular activities

Regarding co-curricular aspects, 62 per cent of students were satisfied with NSS/NCC, 56 per cent with sports, and 54 per cent with cultural events, highlighting a moderate level of engagement. Partial dissatisfaction was observed with limited organization of intercollegiate events and sports facilities.

These results align with Astin (1993)^[1] and Kuh (1995)^[3], who emphasized that balanced academic and co-curricular exposure fosters leadership and adaptability among students.

Table 2: Student Perception about curricular and co- curricular activities

Sl. No	Particulars	Degree of satisfaction									
A.	Curricular activities	FS		S		PS		D		FD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE) or field stay programme	29	58.0	16	34.0	02	04.0	02	04.0	01	02
2.	Experiential Learning	05	10.0	32	64.0	06	12.0	04	08	03	06
3.	Field Visits (Farms/Industries/Institutions)	10	20.0	27	54.0	06	12.0	02	04.0	05	10
4.	Study tour	19	38.0	16	32.0	07	14.0	08	16.0	00	00.0
5	Visiting faculty	08	16.0	28	48.0	03	06.0	08	16.0	03	06.0
6.	Special training programme	04	08.0	21	42.0	19	38.0	03	06.0	03	06.0
7.	Exposure to field days and Krishimela	12	24.0	16	32.0	20	40.0	01	02	01	02
B.	Co- curricular activities										
1.	Sports - inter collegeate, inter university	16	32.0	13	26.0	3	06.0	07	14.0	04	08.0
2	Cultural - inter collegeate, inter university	12	24.0	21	42.0	10	20.0	02	04.0	01	02
3	NSS, NCC etc	03	06.0	31	62.0	08	16.0	04	08.0	04	08.0

FS=Fully Satisfied, S= Satisfied, PS= partially Satisfied, D= Dissatisfied, FD=Fully dissatisfied.

3. Importance of Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

As depicted in Table 3, a majority (68%) of students agreed that such activities enhance self-confidence, practical knowledge, and a positive attitude. About 54 per cent agreed that these experiences are crucial for value inculcation and holistic development. Moreover, 56 per cent perceived co-

curricular participation as enhancing the university's reputation and providing greater recognition to students.

This reflects students' understanding that co-curricular engagement contributes directly to employability, social competence, and emotional intelligence—key aspects emphasized by Shamsudin *et al.* (2014)^[6] in higher education learning.

Table 3: Importance of curricular and co- curricular activities

Sl. No	Statement	Response					
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Curricular and co- curricular activities develop new abilities, positive attitude, increase self confidence and practical knowledge.	34	68.00	08	16.00	08	16.00
2.	Curricular and co- curricular activities important for value inculcation	16	32.00	27	54.00	07	14.00
3.	Curricular and co- curricular activities are important for all round development including physical health	27	54.00	22	40.00	03	06.00
4.	Curricular and co- curricular activities are a prestige symbol for college.	28	56.00	14	28.00	08	16.00
5.	Curricular and co- curricular activities gives more recognition for student.	20	40.00	21	42.00	09	18.00

F-Frequency%- Per cent

4. Constraints Faced by Students

The constraints faced by students are summarized in Table 4. The most pressing issues included inadequate hostel accommodation and poor hygiene (78%), limited recreational facilities such as internet and TV (74%) and lack of career development workshops (72%).

Students also highlighted insufficient field exposure (72%) and shortage of teaching and laboratory staff (70%) as

barriers to effective learning. Issues related to placement cell functioning (64%) and library infrastructure (56%) were also reported.

Similar concerns were documented by Govindagowda *et al.* (2012) ^[2], who emphasized the need for adequate infrastructure and faculty support to improve academic satisfaction.

Table 4: Constraints faced by students in academic performance (n=50)

Sl. No.	Constraints	Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Accommodation and hygienic conditions	39	78.0	11	22.0
2.	Recreation facilities at college campus (TV, Internet, etc.,)	37	74.0	13	26.0
3.	No regular career oriented and personality development workshops for students	36	72.0	14	28.0
4.	Exposure visits - Progressive farmers' Field and industrial visits	36	72.0	14	28.0
5.	Human resources (Teachers, Lab assistants etc)	35	70.0	15	30.0
6.	Placement cell / campus recruitment	32	64.0	18	36.0
7.	Infrastructure facilities - college library and classrooms				
8.	Refreshment or cafeteria facilities	28	56.0	12	24.0
9.	Training or special classes for competitive exams	19	38.0	35	70.0
10.	Methods of teaching adopted	18	36.0	34	68.0
11.	Books related to course and competitive exams	18	36.0	34	68.0
12.	Medical facilities (hospital, ambulance and medical shop etc.)	17	34.0	33	66.0
13.	Gender biasness by the teacher	16	32.0	34	68.0

F-Frequency%-Per cent

Conclusion

The study concludes that students of MAFSU, Nagpur, hold a generally positive perception of curricular and co-curricular activities. They expressed high satisfaction with practical components such as RVWE, study tours, and experiential learning, which effectively bridge theoretical and practical veterinary education.

However, moderate satisfaction with sports, cultural, and NSS/NCC activities suggests a need to diversify co-curricular programs. Addressing key constraints—such as hostel facilities, recreational resources, and career counseling—will significantly improve student welfare and learning experiences.

To achieve holistic education, MAFSU should strengthen the balance between academic learning and experiential participation, supported by improved infrastructure, motivated faculty, and student-centered policies.

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