CAREER PREFERENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE VETERINARY STUDENTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: A study was undertaken to ascertain the career preferences of undergraduate veterinary students in Andhra Pradesh. The sample size of 150 students was selected through random sampling from three veterinary colleges (50 from each) under Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University. The pretested questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, the data was tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20. Ex-post-facto research design was followed in the study. Majority of the respondent's hailed from nuclear families, urban background and possessed medium sized family. Most of the respondents' fathers were educated up to bachelor degree, settled in government sector with high income while mothers were illiterate and settled themselves as homemakers. Majority of the respondents had possessed an OGPA of 7.00-7.99 and regarding the career preferences Government veterinary doctor was ranked first by the respondents from among the career preferences followed by research centres attached to veterinary colleges and research institutes, research scientists in ICAR, assistant professors in state veterinary/agriculture universities (SVUs/SAUs), while political career and extension officers in NGOs were the least preferred careers.
Keywords: Veterinary-Students-Career preferences.

Introduction

Career selection is one of the vital components for one's professional life which will settle on

their potential work plans and it will have an impact throughout their lives. In veterinary

profession, there are numerous career options and the selection of right option would help the

veterinarian to deliver maximum with true spirit. Lack of clear perception of the realities of a

career in veterinary profession could adversely affect young graduate's satisfaction and their

long term commitment to it (Tomlin *et al.* 2010).Veterinary graduates of the country are

expected to render a great service to the community. Veterinary graduates with a high degree

of confidence in practical, scientific farming could take up leadership role in transformation

from primitive level to subsistence level and to scientific and commercial proposition. At the

advent of globalization, the career opportunities of veterinary graduates have increased and demand for professionals has increased to meet the need for development in the context of WTO. In veterinary profession, students after completion of their graduation opt to join different professional jobs which depend on their preferences.

Career preferences of veterinary students need to be studied due to increasing employment opportunities and economic motivation. Veterinary graduates have a wide variety of career options to choose and each one has their own liking and disliking regarding these careers. The significance of profession, increasing employment opportunities, economic motivation and the demand has drawn attention towards the career preferences of veterinary graduates.

Methodology

Ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. A total sample size of 150 students was selected by using random sampling from three veterinary colleges under Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University. The pretested questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, the data was tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20. The pretested questionnaire consisting of 2 sections viz. Socio economic profile and career preferences was administered to collect the data. Twenty one careers aptly having relevance to veterinary students were considered and the respondents were asked to rank them according to their order of preference. Based on the choice of preference for each career the total scores were arrived. Depending on the scores the rank order was assigned to each career that has been expressed by the students.

Results and discussion

Socio-personal and economic profile of students

Students studying B.V.Sc and A.H from three different colleges under Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University were equally distributed among themselves, considering gender as the parameter.

A large majority of the students i.e. 86 per cent were residing in nuclear family system while 88% per cent of the respondents families were observed who had 4 to 6 members followed by 8 per cent families having up to 3 members and only 4 percent respondents families were found having 7 and above members in their families. Most of the respondents fathers (36%) were educated up to bachelor degree, followed by illiterate (30%), post graduation and above (18%), high school (12%), primary school (4%) and their occupation (39%) was government service, followed by farming (33%), business (26%) and self employed (2%) respectively while majority of the respondents mother's (23%) were found to be educated up to high

school, followed by post graduation and above (8%), bachelor degree (9%) and primary school (4%). While, most were illiterates (56%) and their occupation (88%) were house wives, followed by (10%) working in government service and farming (2%) respectively. 56 per cent of the respondents were from those families, whose annual income was high, followed by other categories medium (36%), low (8%) and majority of the respondents families (61%) hailed from urban and remaining (39%) from rural respectively. Pertaining to the OGPA secured by the students majority (70%) had an OGPA of 7.00-7.99, followed by 6.00-6.99 (20%) and 8.00 and above (10%) respectively.

Career preferences of under graduate veterinary students

From the Table 2 it was reported that Government veterinary doctor was ranked first by the respondents from among the career preferences followed by research centres attached to veterinary colleges and research institutes, scientists in ICAR and other central research organizations, assistant professors in state veterinary/agriculture universities (SVUs/SAUs), wild life ecologist or conservation scientist, zoo veterinarian of state and central level, central government farms, quarantine units, military service [RVC ITPB, SSB], research in private and multinational companies, banking sector, administrative services, doctors in milk plants, private practice-small animal clinics, abroad farm consultant, meat inspection officers, private practice-large animal clinics, private sector jobs, consultancy officer in food processing industry, insurance sector, extension officers in NGOs and political career (MLA/MP). It was also clearly evident that majority of the respondents preferred government sector careers followed by semi government and private sector careers respectively.

This may be due to the fact that Veterinary Assistant Surgeon posts vacancies in the state and security in the government job might have influenced the government veterinary doctor career as first career choice and prefer the most. Further possibility of working in place of their choice, chance to serve the farming community directly and attractive pay/allowances might be the other reasons that would have influenced their preferences towards these careers. In the present scenario, Assistant professor and Research scientist opportunities are more flourished due to less number of candidates preferring them and more opportunities available both at the central and state level which might be the reason to choose by most of the respondents. Wildlife ecologist was the career preferred fourth as respondents find it as passion to work in zoo's under central government with high salaries and consider it as a prestige job, while RVC was preferred at seventh position because students might have found risky to work in army. Bank/Technical officer opportunities are more available to

veterinarians now days because more number of banks are present in the country, government also finds to establish various branches in several places. So there might be bright opportunities to get themselves settle in banking sector. Administrative services, semi government and private sector careers were preferred least because these careers involve lot of risk and hard work. Political career was preferred last as many of the students hailed from middle class families only and their parents do not have any previous political background to be elected as MLA or MP and those who preferred minimum might had hailed from political background. These results are in accordance with the findings reported by Thilakar *et al.* (2014), Balan (2003) and Ashwar *et al.* (2000).

Summary

Majority of the respondent's hailed from nuclear families, urban back ground, possessed medium sized family and most of the respondents' fathers were educated up to bachelor degree, settled in government sector with high income while mothers were illiterate and settled themselves as homemakers. Majority of the respondents had possessed an OGPA of 7.00-7.99. Government veterinary doctor was ranked first by the respondents from among the career preferences followed by research centres attached to veterinary colleges and research institutes, research scientists in ICAR, assistant professors in state veterinary/agriculture universities (SVUs/SAUs), while political career and extension officers in NGOs were the least preferred careers.

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Table 1: Socio-personal and economic profile of students (N=150)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
1.Gender	Male	75	50.00
	Female	75	50.00
2. Family type	Joint	22	14.00
	Nuclear	128	86.00
3.Family size	Small	10	06.66
	Medium	132	88.00
	Large	08	05.33
4. Education of father	Post graduation and above	26	18.00
	Bachelor degree	55	36.00
	High school	19	12.00
	Primary school	6	04.00
	Illiterate	44	30.00
5. Education of mother	Post graduation and above	13	08.00
	Bachelor degree	14	09.00
	High school	33	23.00
	Primary school	6	04.00
	Illiterate	84	56.00
6.Occupation of father	Government service	59	39.00
	Business	38	26.00
	Farming	49	33.00
	Self employed	4	02.00
7.Occupation of mother	Government service	15	10.00
	Farming	3	02.00
	Self employed/ House wife	132	88.00
8.Parents income	Low	12	08.00
	Medium	55	36.00
	High	83	56.00
9.Rural urban back ground	Rural	59	39.00
	Urban	91	61.00
10.Overall grade point average **(N=120)**	8.00 and above	12	10.00
	7.00-7.99	84	70.00
	6.00-6.99	24	20.00

Table 2: Career preferences of undergraduate veterinary students (N=150)

SL. No.	Career	Highly preferred		Preferred		Least preferred		Not preferred		Total score	Rank
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1.	Govt veterinary doctors	82	54.66	47	31.33	18	12.00	03	02.00	358	I
2.	Meat inspection Officers (slaughter houses in municipalities and corporations of state govt)	34	23.00	57	38.00	32	21.00	27	18.00	248	XIV
3.	Administrative services	54	36.00	47	31.00	16	10.00	33	23.00	272	X
4.	Education-Assistant professor in State Veterinary/Agriculture Universities (SVUs/SAUs)	69	46.00	49	33.00	24	16.00	08	05.00	329	III
5.	Research centres attached to veterinary colleges and research institutes	76	51.00	41	27.00	20	13.00	13	09.00	330	II
6.	Research-Scientists in ICAR and other central research organizations	75	50.00	42	28.00	21	14.00	12	08.00	330	II
7.	Military service [RVC in Indian army, Indo Tibetan border posts (ITPB)	54	36.00	50	33.00	34	23.00	12	08.00	296	VII
8.	Eco jobs-wild life ecologist or conservation scientist, Zoo Veterinarian- State/Central government	63	42.00	57	38.00	23	15.00	07	05.00	326	IV
9.	Quarantine units-central government	54	36.00	55	37.00	32	21.00	09	06.00	304	VI
10.	Central government farms	63	42.00	51	34.00	27	18.00	09	06.00	318	V
11.	Managers/Doctors in milk plants (co-operative)	30	20.00	74	49.00	28	19.00	18	12.00	266	XI
12.	Insurance companies-Technical officers	18	12.00	63	42.00	52	35.00	17	11.00	232	XVIII
13.	Bank- technical / Field officers	36	24.00	65	43.00	41	28.00	08	05.00	279	IX
14.	Private practice- Small animal clinics	28	19.00	68	45.00	43	29.00	11	07.00	263	XII
15.	Private practice- Large animal clinics	24	16.00	59	39.33	55	36.66	12	08.00	245	XV
16.	Private sector jobs	18	12.00	65	44.00	52	34.00	15	10.00	236	XVI
17.	Extension agents/Technical officers in NGOs	19	13.00	56	37.00	56	37.00	19	13.00	225	XIX
18.	Researchers in private and Multinational companies	41	27.00	46	31.00	48	32.00	15	10.00	283	VIII
19.	Food Systems Management /Consulting service officers in food processing and food retail companies.	28	19.00	45	30.00	60	40.00	17	11.00	234	XVII
20.	Abroad-farm consultants/Scientists	49	33.00	33	22.00	45	30.00	23	15.00	258	XIII
21.	Political career (MLA/MP)	19	13.00	26	17.00	37	25.00	68	45.00	146	XX