

The Hindu

Consider agri-engg. students for posts in Agriculture Department

Hundreds of agricultural engineering students staged a demonstration at Tipu Sultan Gardens near the office of Deputy Commissioner here on Wednesday condemning the government decision to drop agricultural engineering degree holders from the list of candidates eligible for applying for various posts in the Agriculture Department. Holding placards and banners and raising slogans against the government, the students studying at the Agricultural Engineering College run by University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur (UAS-R), took out a protest march from the university campus to the Deputy Commissioner's office.

“Earlier, B.Tech, M.Tech (Agriculture Engineering) holders were eligible for various posts including Assistant Director (AD), Agricultural Officer (AO) and Assistant Agricultural Officer (AAO) in the Department of Agriculture. The government notification issued on September 15, 2016, however, made these degree holders ineligible for AD, AO and AAO posts. We condemn the government decision and demand its withdrawal,” a student said during the protest.

“As per the data available in the public domain, 70 per cent of the funds in the Agriculture Department is spent on various programmes and projects that are directly related to agricultural engineering. This makes agricultural engineers an ideal choice for key posts in the department. However, their presence is being drastically reduced with this order,” another student said.

Of the 2,370 posts of Agricultural Officers/ Assistant Agricultural Officer (Agricultural Engineering and Water Management), 1963 posts have so far been filled and only 36 of them are occupied by agricultural engineers, he added.

‘Better suited’

The students argued that agricultural engineers have better answers to most of the questions that farmers commonly encountered in their daily activities, such as water management, utilisation of limited resources, climate change and fluctuating weather conditions and post-harvest losses.

“Keeping the larger interests of farm sector, farming community and agricultural engineering field, the government should reserve at least 40 per cent of the key posts in the Department of Agriculture for agricultural engineering degree holders,” they demanded.

They collectively registered their objection to the government decision by submitting a memorandum through the office of Deputy Commissioner.