GAU Res. J. 1985. 11 (1): 62-63

Evaluation of Rural Agricultural Work Experience Programme at GAU, Navsari

Ashok A. Patel and S. K. Waghmare

Department of Extension Education, N. M. College of Agriculture, Navsari

Every year, a programme for rural agricultural work experience popularly known as field training, is conducted for the final year students of under-graduate programme. It is the requirement for the partial fulfilment of the degree course. The objectives of the programme are:

1. To provide an opportunity to students to live in rural areas and develop right perspective of rural life.
2. To gain first hand experience in the application of agricultural technology on the farmers' fields and also to promote community activities in order to create assets and amenities in rural areas.
3. To understand and appreciate the constraints in the application of latest farm technology on the farmers' fields.
4. To develop right attitude towards farming and farming community.
5. To develop communication skills in students to do better agricultural extension work.

The evaluation of field training of the students is generally carried out every year by the institute on the basis of the attendance of the students and an overall opinion of the teachers in-charge about the working of the students during the programme conducted at the selected villages.

It is well known that the success of any programme largely rests on the fact that those involved should have a positive attitude towards it. With this view in mind it was thought to evaluate the programme for a period of two weeks carried out in January, 1984 in terms of attitude of participants towards it. In the study, the students as well as host farmers were considered as participants. Efforts were made to cover all the students and host farmers under the study. However, out of a group of 88 host farmers and an equal number of students, only 59 host farmers and 56 students responded properly. Thus, the sample consisted of 115 respondents. The respondents were interviewed with the help of specially constructed schedules. A scale with five point continuum was prepared and administered to know their attitudes towards the programme.

The results of the study are presented in the following paragraphs:

1. Attendance:

The regularity of the students was judged on the basis of the opinion of the concerned group leader. All the students were found to be absolutely regular during the field training.

2. Regularity of work:

As per the opinion of the teachers concerned, all the students were visiting the farms of respective host farmers regularly. They were learning through the first hand experience about the application of agricultural technology on the farmers' fields. Their behaviour was quite good. They were found to be very much anxious to know all those aspects which were of practical utility in improving the farming. Moreover, while discussing with the farmers, the students were found to be very much eager to know the extent to which the knowledge gained by them during the course of their study, was applicable to the actual farming situations.

3. Attitude of students:

So far as the attitude of students towards the need of the field training was concerned, the mean attitude score (M.A.S.) was 2.39. This led to conclude that it was negative one. The majority of the students were of the opinion that the present field training was not beneficial to the students and that it was wastage of time, energy and resources of students as well as of the institute.

4. Suggestions of students:

A majority of the students expressed their unwillingness to participate in such training again (76.71 per cent). When they were asked for the suitability of time schedule of the training, about 91 per cent were of the opinion that the present time was not congenial to conduct such training. They believed that either June-July or October-November would be the most suitable months for arranging it. Regarding the duration of training, it was viewed to be appropriate only by a few (19.64 per cent) students. Whereas rest of them were of the opinion that it should be shortened to 5 to 8 days.

5. Attitude of farmers:

When the attitude of the host farmers was measured to know the usefulness of the training, the results were identical to that of the students' attitude (2.39 MAS). The farmers believed that the University is wasting public funds by conducting such training.

6. Suggestions of farmers:

Majority of the farmers (72.88 per cent) were of the opinion that they could not spare time to associate themselves with the students in the teaching as they were busy with their own work. About 85 per cent of them considered the time of the field training to be unsuitable for learning as no operations were on hand at that time. They suggested that the time links the harvesting of *kharif* crops and sowing of *rabi* crops would be the best suitable time for students to learn something. A group of about 73 per cent were of the opinion that this training was quite lengthy. They suggested that the same should be shortened to about seven days.

The students as well as the host farmers were unanimous about their opinion that there was no need of such training. This may be due to unsuitability of the time of training for the students to learn about field operations. The respondents suggested October-November to be the most suitable time for training with a short duration of seven days. The authorities of the University concerned with the programme should seriously consider these aspects in order to implement, the field training programme so as to achieve the objectives envisaged.

(Received on 20th June, 1984)