

Perception of Students Toward RAWE Programme

Arpita Sharma

Department of Agricultural Communication, College of Agriculture, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, India

Corresponding author: sharmaarpita35@gmail.com

Abstract

Rural Agricultural Work Experience Programme (RAWE) is offered in final year of the B.Sc. (Agri) degree programme which includes training, demonstration, observation, practice and participation in purposeful activities and to orient agricultural graduates for participation in various rural developmental programme. This experiential system in agricultural education has a strong potential to prepare a better agricultural technocrats with high level of skill in combination with the modern outlook and management capacity. This study was conducted with the objectives to know the students perception on RAWE Programme of GBPUA&T, Pantnagar; find out the profile of students and its relationship with their perception and to seek suggestions from students for effective implementation. The data was collected from 40 students of College of Agriculture, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar by using pre structured interview schedule. The findings revealed that majority of the students belonged to Urban background. More than half per cent of students had parents with Intermediate level followed by Graduate level and Post Graduate level. Some of the students belong to families with annual income of over 2 lakh/annum (high category). At GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, majority had medium OGPA. Cent Per cent students were using mobile phone followed by television. The Perception of the students regarding extent of achievement of RAWE is to understand rural institutions, socio economic conditions of farmers, adoption patterns and adoption gaps, farmers' problems, farming systems and farming, improvement in diagnostic skills, provided practical training in crop production, improved communication skills, improved leadership qualities, provided opportunity to work with various Agri based institutions, developed confidence and professional competence to solve field problems. The suggestions for improvement of RAWE by students are the Time for each module in RAWE to be increased, stipend should be increased, and University should increase its credibility and accessibility among farmers.

Keywords: Agriculture, Competency, RAWE Module

Rural Awareness Work Experience Programme (RAWE) is an opportunity to the students to live in rural areas and develop right perspective of rural life (Kapri, *et al.* 2016). RAWE is one of the best means to produce well trained agricultural graduates with broad based knowledge and techniques to meet the emerging challenges. In India, Randhawa Committee of ICAR (1992) recommended the Rural Agriculture Work Experience (RAWE) Programme for imparting quality, practical and productive oriented education for the agriculture degree programme. RAWE is basic to develop graduate competence as a teacher,

researcher and extension specialist (Sharma and Shamsul, 2012). The learning process essentially provides a direction to the students to think and act and eventually creates self-confidence in performing activities. Students develop their competence, capability, capacity building, skills, expertise, in short a holistic development (Mahadik *et al.* 2011). Experiential learning process is portrayed as an idealized learning cycle where the learner "touches all the bases" experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned (Sajeev

and Narayana, 2013). According to (Sharma, 2018), RAWE approach is a learner-centred approach and allows an individual student to be responsible for his own learning minimizing the role of his teachers and hosts. Effective work experience and training approaches incorporating rural agricultural experiential learning advance provide opportunities to students to experience the fieldwork activity and to review and analyze critically his own work experience so that they show to be useful in their real-life context (Rathore and Sharma, 2012).

Under the Agricultural Extension module of RAWE, different aspects of agricultural extension, especially field extension, were studied by the students during their attachments to different villages, which included agro-ecosystem analysis through participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques, constraints analysis, study of communication/information sources use pattern, role and importance of village level institutions, documentation during rural agricultural fair through photo features and news writing, etc. Agro-ecosystem analysis was done by the students during their village attachment, which included analyses of space (transect walk, mapping), time (time line, time trend, seasonality diagram, etc), flow (mobility map, venn diagram, etc) and decision (wealth ranking, constraints analysis). Different methods followed were transect/biodiversity walk, resource profile of the village, time line, seasonality diagram of crops, farming activity scheduling of crops, mobility diagram, venn diagram, etc. Problem tree and solution tree were worked out for the major problem/ constraint faced by the farmers i.e. water scarcity. This exercise has helped the students to formulate suitable extension approach for improving the farming. With the overall objective of RAWE GBPUA&T, Pantnagar has started the programme as per Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) curriculum to provide an opportunity to the students to live in rural areas and develop right perspective of rural life. In order to know the effectiveness of RAWE programme among students the present study was undertaken with the objectives of i) to study the perception of RAWE programme by the students, ii) to identify the leadership qualities and self confidence by the RAWE students and iii) to know the constraints of students for effective conduct of RAWE.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in GBPUA&T, Pantnagar. A total of 40 students (from College of Agriculture) were selected from the batch 2016. Pre-structured interview schedule was used to collect the data covering the objectives of the study. Collected data were analyzed by using frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of students and its relationship with their perception

The majority (90 per cent) of the students belonged to urban background while the remaining 10 per cent were from rural background. Even the students coming from rural background had limited knowledge of rural settings. This demands the necessity of the programme to provide better rural orientation in general and live situations of agriculture in particular. Nearly 62.5 per cent of students had parents with Intermediate level, 50 per cent with Graduate level and 5 per cent with Post Graduate level. It was also noted that thirty per cent of students had their parents doing agriculture, 37.5 per cent of them were Government employees and 17.5 per cent were in private enterprises, fifteen per cent in business. It was also interesting to note that total 10 per cent of the students belong to families with annual income of over 2 lakh/annum (high category) followed by 85 per cent belonged to families with 1-2 lakh/annum (medium category) and 10 per cent belonged to families with annual income of less than 1 lakh/annum (low category). The distribution of OGPA of the students were 12.5 per cent had high OGPA, majority (82.5 per cent) had medium OGPA and 5 per cent had low OGPA. It was also very interesting to note that Cent Per cent students were using mobile phone followed by television. A great majority of students (85 per cent) read newspaper followed by magazine (Table 1).

Table 1: General Information of the students (n = 40)

| Profile | Categories | f | Per cent |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----|----------|
| Background | Rural | 36 | 90 |
| | Urban | 4 | 10 |
| Education level of Parents | Upto Intermediate | 25 | 62.5 |
| | Graduate | 20 | 50 |
| | Post Graduate | 5 | 12.5 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|------|
| Occupation of Parents | Agriculture | 12 | 30 |
| | Govt. Employee | 15 | 37.5 |
| | Private | 7 | 17.5 |
| | Business | 6 | 15 |
| Annual income of family | Low: < 1 lakh | 2 | 5 |
| | Medium: b/w 1 –2 lakh | 34 | 85 |
| | High: >2 lakh | 4 | 10 |
| OGPA | Low: <8.08 | 2 | 5 |
| | Medium: b/w 8.08 – 8.36 | 33 | 82.5 |
| | High: >8.36 | 5 | 12.5 |
| Mass media use | Mobile phone | 40 | 100 |
| | Newspaper | 34 | 85 |
| | Television | 40 | 100 |
| | Magazine | 20 | 50 |

understand village situations (87.5 per cent). Total 97.5 per cent students were fully agree that RAWE has helped to understand the socio economic conditions of farmers followed by RAWE has helped to understand rural institutions (62.5 per cent). Total 92.5 per cent students were agree that RAWE provided opportunity to meet role models in agriculture and increase in confidence followed by RAWE developed confidence and professional competence to solve field problems (90 per cent) whereas 50 per cent of the students had fully agreed that RAWE had helped to get acquainted with ongoing TOT programmes in agriculture/homestead. A great majority fully agreed that RAWE has given competency to prepare farm plans for individual farm families (95 per cent). Almost all of the students fully agreed that RAWE has improved their communication skills (97.5 per cent).

It can be clearly noted from the above findings that improvement in communication skills was rated as the most achieved objective followed by Practically understand the rural life situation. The possible reason is that extension faculty both on the campus

Perception of students on extent of achievement of RAWE objectives

The perusal of table 2 revealed that 80 per cent of the students were fully agreed that RAWE programme had helped to get familiar with rural people followed by RAWE had helped to

Table 2: Perception regarding extent of achievement of RAWE objectives

| Sl. No. | Activities | Fully Agree | Some What Agree | Not Agree |
|---------|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | RAWE has helped me to get familiar with rural life | 32 (80%) | 8 (20%) | — |
| 2 | RAWE has helped me to understand village situations | 35 (87.5%) | 5 (12.5%) | — |
| 3 | RAWE has helped me to understand rural institutions | 25 (62.5%) | 15 (37.5%) | — |
| 4 | RAWE has helped me to understand the socio economic conditions of farmers. | 39 (97.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | — |
| 5 | RAWE has helped me to understand adoption patterns and adoption gaps | 20 (50%) | 15 (37.5%) | 2 (12.5%) |
| 6 | RAWE has helped me to understand farmers’ problems | 37 (92.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | — |
| 7 | RAWE has helped me to understand farming systems and farming | 27 (67.5%) | 13 (32.5%) | — |
| 8 | RAWE has helped to improve my diagnostic skills | 15 (37.5%) | 20 (50%) | 2 (12.5%) |
| 9 | RAWE provided me practical training in crop production | 39 (97.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | — |
| 10 | RAWE has improved my communication skills | 39 (97.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | — |
| 11 | RAWE has improved my leadership qualities | 36 (90%) | 4 (10%) | — |
| 12 | RAWE provided me opportunity to work with various Agri based institutions | 32 (80%) | 8 (20%) | — |
| 13 | RAWE has given me competency to prepare farm plans for individual farm families | 38 (95%) | 2 (5%) | — |
| 14 | RAWE provided opportunity for me to meet role models in agriculture and increase my confidence | 37 (92.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | — |
| 15 | RAWE helped me to get acquainted with ongoing TOT programmes in agriculture | 20 (50%) | 15 (37.5%) | 2 (12.5%) |
| 16 | RAWE developed confidence and professional competence in me to solve field problems | 36 (90%) | 4 (10%) | — |

(Figure in the () indicate per cent).

Table 3: Suggestions for improvement of RAWE Programme

| Sl. No. | Suggestions for improvement of RAWE programme | f | % | Rank |
|---------|--|----|-------|------|
| 1 | Time for each module in RAWE to be increased. | 32 | 80 | I |
| 2 | Stipend should be increased. | 31 | 77.50 | II |
| 3 | Should be for one entire cropping season rather than for one semester. | 30 | 75 | III |
| 4 | University should increase its credibility and accessibility among farmers. This will change farmers' attitude towards GBPUA&T and its students. | 29 | 72.50 | IV |
| 5 | Convenience and time availability of farmers to be taken care of. | 28 | 70 | V |
| 6 | Choose areas where majority of people are engaged in agriculture. | 27 | 67.50 | VI |
| 7 | A mini RAWE of 1 –2 weeks to be done before actual RAWE to understand farmers' problems and plan for the original RAWE. | 26 | 65 | VII |
| 8 | Adequate publicity to be given prior to each programme | 24 | 60 | VIII |
| 9 | Students should be allowed to take up individual projects in their areas of interest in RAWE. | 23 | 57.50 | IX |
| 10 | Activities on practical problem solving in field to be encouraged | 22 | 55 | X |
| 11 | More exposure to transfer of technology programmes is required | 21 | 52.50 | XI |
| 12 | Time of programme should be such that it will cover all the operations of all. | 20 | 50 | XII |
| 13 | Teachers should always act as role models. | 19 | 47.50 | XIII |

and off the campus shoulders major part of the RAWE work. There will be continuous guidance by the extension teachers particularly at the village level, but it needs based as far as other disciplines are concerned. Since the major share of activities in RAWE is of extension only, it is natural to find high rating by students for gain in communication skills.

Suggestions for improvement of RAWE Programme as given by students

Majority of students (80 per cent) suggested that time for each module in RAWE is to be increased followed by suggestion for stipend (77.5 per cent). Most of the students (72.5 per cent) wanted to increase its credibility and accessibility among farmers while 70 per cent respondents wanted that convenience and time availability of farmers to be taken care of. Total 67.5 per cent students wanted that choose areas where majority of people are engaged in agriculture. More than half per cent of the respondents (65 per cent) wanted that a mini RAWE of 1 –2 weeks to be done before actual RAWE to understand farmers' problems and plan for the original RAWE. More than one-fourth of them wanted that students should be allowed to take up individual projects in their areas of interest in RAWE (57.5 per cent) and activities on practical problem solving in field to be encouraged (55 per cent). Other suggestions included more exposure to transfer of technology programmes is required (52.50 per cent),

and Time of programme should be such that it will cover all the operations of all (50 per cent) (Table 3).

CONCLUSION

RAWE Programme is an exposure to the principles of “learning by doing” and “seeing is believing”, which provides a direction to the students to think and act on their own. It offers a direction to the students to develop their knowledge, attitude and skill to graduate out as an expert and contribute in holistic development of agriculture. From the study it can be concluded that most of the students agreed that RAWE programme has given competency to prepare farm plans for individual farm families and improved their communication skills. Majority of student suggested that time for each module in RAWE programme should be increased and stipend should be increased also.

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