

## **Students' Opinion on the Existing Educational Standard – A Study of the University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni- Solan (H.P.)**

**D.D. Sharma\*, Hitesh Gupta, Abhay Bhardwaj and Amit Jharate**

### **ABSTRACT**

The study conducted on 100 students randomly selected from under -graduate and post-graduate faculty of Dr. Y.S. Parmar university of Horticulture and Forestry Nauni- Solan (H.P.) revealed that a cordial and good relationship existed between the teachers and the taught as well as male and female students in the university. Overall rating of the students on teaching standard in the university was found to be good. More emphasis on theory, taking theory classes in practical hours, inferiority complex among the students, fast delivery of the lectures by the teachers, unfriendly environment in the class, discouraging students feedback/questioning etc. were some of the main problems/difficulties faced by them. The study implies that the teachers should teach the students as per their learning capability /styles giving more emphasis on practical knowledge rather than the theoretical knowledge besides motivating them to participate in sports, games and other extra- curricular activities in order to further improve the existing education standard in the university. Sincere efforts should also be made to harness the talents of the students by organising various training programmes, workshops, seminars and orientation programmes for them.

**Keywords:** Congenial, Cordial, Extra–curricular activities, Opinion, Teacher-taught relationship

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education plays a significant role in the life of a person. The ultimate aim of education is to enable an individual to lead a quality life. Hence, one needs to be educated to become a better person, to have a richer life with integrated personality. Teaching aids and equipment's play a pivotal role in effective and efficient role in creating effective teaching learning situation for the students. The experience and knowledge gained by the students can be retained for a longer period of time by use of a variety of audio-video aids in the class. In fact, the students have multi-dimensional personality having different learning styles. Hence, it becomes the moral duty of a teacher to keep pace of his teaching with the learning styles /learning capacities of the students. But, the teachers were found to make less use of this latest education technology and

make their presentation dull and boring without taking any feedback from the students, that is, they remain ignorant about what the students think about them and the problems being faced by them. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken to determine students' opinion towards existing education standard and to identify the main problems/ difficulties faced by the students in the present education system.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted at Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni, (Solan) HP. A list of all the B.Sc. (Hons). 3<sup>rd</sup> year and final year students along with Post-graduate students of both the colleges viz; College of Horticulture and College of Forestry was obtained from the Registrar of the

university. Out of each College, 50 students each from Under-graduate and Post-graduate programme were selected randomly, thus, in all 100 students constituted the sample for the purpose of the present study. The data were collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule/questionnaire.

For the purpose of the present study, education standard in the selected University was operationalised as the students' opinion on the teachers' punctuality, preparedness for class, teaching /communication skills, seeking feedback from the students and creating congenial/friendly environment etc. in the class room. In order to measure the students' opinion towards existing education standard, a likert type scale was developed. The scale consisted of 40 statements, out of which, 27 statements were retained on the basis of "t" value i.e. the statements with "t" value 1.75 or more were retained and rest were rejected, as per the criteria given by Edwards (1948). The students' opinion was taken on five point continuum scale viz, Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided/do not know, Disagree and Strongly disagree with respective scoring of 5,4,3,2 and 1 for the positive statements. The scoring was reversed for negative statements. The respondents' frequency under each column of five point continuum scale was multiplied with their respective score to determine the total score of each respondent. The mean opinion score of the respondents was also calculated. On the basis of the total score and standard deviation, the respondents were divided into the following three opinion categories: Good: ( $> \text{Mean} + \text{SD}$ ), Fair: ( $\text{Mean} \pm \text{SD}$ ) and Poor: ( $< \text{Mean} - \text{SD}$ ).

The main problems faced by the respondents were identified and then their opinion was taken on the degree of seriousness i.e. on the three point continuum scale namely, Most serious, Serious and Not so serious with respective scoring of 3,2 and 1. The frequency under each column of continuum was multiplied with the respective score in order to find out total score of each problem. Each problem was then ranked on the basis of the total score. The percentages of respondents under each three categories of problems were also calculated. The hypotheses were tested by computing various  $\chi^2$  tests for their significance. The Data were collected with

the help of well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule / questionnaire.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-personal profile of the respondents has been given in Table 1. It is clear from the Table, a majority of the respondents' (68%) belonged to rural area, female students (59%) and were in the age group of 22 to 26 years. Therefore, the study implies that more and more students from the rural area are taking interest in Agriculture as compared to urban areas.

**Table 1: Socio-personal profile of the students (n=100)**

Socio-personal traits	F %
<b>Age (In years)</b>	
19-21	12
22-23	46
24-26	34
>26	08
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	41
Female	59
<b>Family Background</b>	
Rural	68
Urban	32
<b>Educational status</b>	
B.Sc (Hons.) III <sup>rd</sup> year	25
B.Sc (Hons.) IV <sup>th</sup> year	25
M.Sc / MBA	25
Ph.D	25

On being asked why they have sought admission in a particular programme or discipline, it is evident from the data (Table 2) that good scope and opportunity for job was the prominent reason for taking admission by the students in a particular programme/discipline (41%). There were some other reasons like the discipline or programme being of their interest or passion (37%) and on the advice of their parents, relatives or friends (27%). However, those who stated that it was a forced choice, that is, there was no other alternative left for them were 9 per cent. There were a meagre percentage of those who replied that they sought admission only on the basis of competitive environment in the university concerned.

**Table 2: Reasons for seeking admission in particular discipline/programme**

Discipline/Programme	F (%)
Good scope/Opportunity for job	41
Discipline/programme was of my interest/my passion	37
On the advice of my parents / relatives / friends	27
Forced choice (as there was no other alternative)	09
Any other (Competitive spirit/ environment)	03

\*Multiple responses

Kaur and Shukla (1989) reported that to seek a job in the State Department of Agriculture was the most preferred reason followed by those who wanted to adopt agriculture as a profession.

The respondents were asked about their opinion on the relationship between the teachers and the students. A majority of the respondents perceived Good to Very good relationship between the teachers and the taught. However, there were still 14 per cent of the students who found the relationship as Poor. The overall rating on teacher-taught relationship was found to be 2.85 which indicated that there was good relationship between the teacher and the students at (U.H.F) Nauni Solan. Hence, the study implies that sincere and concerted efforts should be made by the university authorities for improving the relationship between the teachers and the taught by frequently arranging 'get together', excursion visits, picnic etc. These findings were in consonance with those of Sharma *et al.* (2017) who reported that though a majority of students (60%) perceived the teacher-taught relationship as 'Good to very good', yet further efforts are needed to make the relationship more congenial.

Students' opinion on the relationship between male and female students was also studied and the results are

**Table 3: Relationship between teachers and taught**

Degree of Relationship	F %
Excellent	7
Very Good	18
Good	42
Fair	19
Poor	14
Overall rating (2.85)	Good

presented in Table 4 shows that about three fourth of the respondents (72%) perceived the relationship among male and female students at U.H.F Nauni as 'Cordial'. While 18 per cent perceived this relationship as Very cordial. The remaining students found it as 'Not cordial' indicating thereby the need for its further improvement. Overall rating on relationship among genders was found to be 2.08 which indicated that there was a cordial relationship among the male and female students of the University. Those findings were in agreement with those of Sehgal and Sharma (2017).

**Table 4: Relationship among genders (male and female students) in the university**

Status of relationship	F %
Very Cordial	18
Cordial	72
Not Cordial	10
Overall rating = (2.08)	Cordial

The respondents were asked what they aimed at after the degree programme i.e. their preferences for the job; the response depicted in Table 5 shows that a majority of the respondents (70%) preferred 'Government Job' as their first preference after the completion of the degree programme followed by those who wanted to make their own career in private organization (12%), while 8 per cent aimed at starting their own business/enterprise. However, those who wanted to make civil services, Indian forest services and banking as their careers were found to be 8 per cent. It implies that a majority of the students preferred white collar jobs rather than private or their own business i.e. instead of Job providers they wished to be job seekers. These findings were in conformity with those of Kaur and Shukla (1989) and Sharma *et al.* (2017).

**Table 5: Respondent's aim after the degree programme (Preference for the Job)**

Aim after the degree programme	F %
Government Job (Professional)	70
Job in any private organization	12
Job in any NGO	02
Own Business/Enterprise	08
Any other (Civil services, IFS, Banking etc.)	08

**Table 6: Status of existing education standard in the university**

Status	F %
Excellent	6
Very Good	19
Good	44
Fair	19
Poor	12
Overall perceptual rating (2.88)	Good

The opinion of the respondent students was taken on the existing education standard in their university; and the findings are presented in Table 6 and Table 7. A perusal of the data revealed that in all a majority of the

respondents (63%) perceived the existing education standard in their university as 'good' to 'very good'. Those who found education standard as 'Excellent' were only 6 per cent. However, there were still 31 per cent respondents who reported that education standard in their universities was 'poor' to 'fair'. Overall perceptual rating was found to be **2.88** indicating good opinion of the students towards the education standard in the university. Therefore, the study implies that sincere steps should be taken by the concerned university authority to further improve the education standard in the university. Khanalave *et al.* (2001) also reported that five elements viz. teacher students, subject matter, teaching aids and

**Table 7: Statement-wise opinions of the respondents**

S.No.	Statements	MPS
1	The instructors come to the class on time	4.22
2	The instructors come to the class well prepared for delivering the lectures	3.91
3	The instructors speak spontaneously while delivering the lecture (Don't dictate word by word from notes)	3.48
4	Students get notes for xeroxing from their instructors (if desired)	3.80
5	The instructors deliver their lectures in such a manner that students cannot note down them properly	2.75
6	The instructors encourage feedback/questions from the students in the class	3.58
7	The instructors explain/illustrate the concept through examples	3.89
8	The instructors use audio-visual aids like charts, posters, transparencies, LCD projectors etc. in the class	3.90
9	The presentation style of the instructors is monotonous and creates boredom	2.45
10	The instructors cover the course content as per the prescribed syllabus	3.93
11	The instructors don't prescribe any books/references for the syllabus	3.97
12	The instructors summarize the lecture at the end	3.15
13	The instructors respond to any particular point/question being raised/asked in the class at that very moment even if the actual class hour is over	3.78
14	The instructors take theory classes in practical hours to complete the course content	2.39
15	The instructors give more emphasis on the theory rather than practical knowledge in practical classes	2.45
16	The discussion on the topic taught/to be taught is encouraged in the class	3.45
17	The students don't dare to ask questions in the class	3.13
18	The instructors keep their doors open for further clarification even beyond the class hours	3.90
19	The students feel difficulty in listening to the lectures in class	3.29
20	The students prefer discussion with the instructors for any clarification	3.49
21	The students give a warm response to their instructors when they enter the classroom	3.93
22	The instructors don't respond properly to the warm response given by the students in the class	3.73
23	The instructors maintain proper eye contact with the students in the <sup>class</sup>	3.99
25	The instructors' attitude is flexible	3.17
26	The instructors create friendly/congenial environment in the class	3.44
27	The instructors have adequate knowledge of their subject	3.89
<b>Overall mean opinion score</b>		<b>3.37</b>

\*Mean Opinion Score

environment were very important for creating effective teaching learning situation in the class.

Respondents' opinion on each statement of opinion scale for education standard was also obtained which is depicted in Table 7. It was noticed from the data that the respondents were strongly agree with the statements at Sr. No. 1, 23, 11, 21 and 2 with their mean opinion score of 4.22, 3.99, 3.97, 3.93, and 3.91 respectively. This indicates that the respondents were positive in their attitude regarding the statements like "The instructors come to class on the time", "The instructors maintain proper eye contact with the students in the class", "The students give a warm response to their instructors", "The instructors cover the course content as per the prescribed syllabus", "the students give a warm response to their instructors, when they enter the class room" and that "the instructors respond to any particulars point/questions being raised/asked by the student in the class, at that very moment when if the actual class have is over". The respondents were found to have negative opinions on the statements at serial numbers 5,9,14 and 15 in which they perceived that the instructors delivered their lectures in such a manner that the students cannot note them down properly; (MPSF 2.75). The presentation style of instructors is monotonous and creates boredom (MPS=2.45), the instructors take theory classes in practical hours to complete the course content (MPS=2.39), and that instructors give more emphasis on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge in practical classes (MPS=2.45).

Therefore, it is implied from the study that the teachers should provide more practical knowledge to the students and avoid taking theory classes in practical hours. They should deliver lectures as per the pace of the students' learning by using a variety of audio-visual aids like slide projectors, smart board, power point presentation etc. to make the subject as interesting as possible so that even the common student in the class can understand it. Sharma *et al.* (2017) also reported that more emphasis on the theory rather than practical, huge class size, inferiority complex among the students inadequate knowledge and practical attitude of some of the teachers were the main problems faced by the students.

**Table 8: Overall opinions towards education standard**

Level of opinion	F %
Good (>Mean + SD)	12
Fair (Mean $\pm$ SD)	72
Poor (<Mean - SD)	16

The overall opinion of the respondents was determined on the basis of mean score and standard deviation and presented in Table 8.

It has been noticed from the data that on overall basis, a majority of the respondent students (72%) perceived the existing education standard in the University as 'Fair'. Those who had reported the existing education standard as 'Good' and Poor were found to be 12 and 16 per cent respectively. Since a majority of the students opined that existing education standard was 'Fair'. Hence, the study implies that efforts should be made by the university authorities to identify the reasons of this opinion and corrective measures should be taken accordingly. Venkata Ranga Naika and Chandra Kandan (2006) also found that Chalk Board was used by a majority of teachers while it was desirable to use a variety of audio-video aids to break the monotony and create interest among the students.

The association between the respondents' selected socio-personal traits and their opinion/opinion on existing education standard was determined and the results are presented in Table 9. It was very surprising to note that all the selected socio-personal traits were found to have positive and significant association with the existing education standard in the University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan. Therefore, it is implied that better the teacher-taught relationship better the relationship between

**Table 9: Relationship of respondents' variables Vs Opinion on education standard**

Variable	$\chi^2$
Gender	30.59*
Family Background	8.77*
Teacher-taught Relationship	59.73*
Relationship between genders	27.26*
Perceptual rating	88.98*

\*Significant at 5 per cent level

**Table 10: Respondents' opinion on severity of problems faced by them**

S.No.	Problems	Most Serious	Serious	Not Serious	TSS*
1.	The instructors don't encourage questioning/ feedback in class	10	51	39	61
2.	The instructors don't use audio-visual aids in the class	10	42	48	52
3.	Inadequate knowledge of the instructor	37	27	36	64
4.	Non-congenial/unfriendly environment in the class	29	33	38	62
5.	Faulty pronunciation of the instructor	18	37	45	55
6.	Fast or rapid delivery of lecture	22	49	29	71
7.	Biased attitude of the instructor	32	37	31	69
8.	Inferiority complex/hesitation among the students	34	37	29	71
9.	Non-availability of audio-visual facility in the classroom	20	31	49	51
10.	Huge/large class size	36	30	34	66
11.	More emphasis on theory rather than practical	46	38	16	84
12.	Taking theory class in practical class	33	43	24	76

\*TSS (Total seriousness score) = Most serious + serious

male and female students, more the perceptual rating of university by the student respondents, better was their opinion towards existing education standard in the university. Hence, concerted efforts should be made by the university authorities to improve the teacher-taught relationship in the university by frequently organizing get together in form of games, sports, picnic, cultural activities, fete etc. and taking regular feedback from the students in case of any grievance or problem faced by them. The students need to be motivated and guided for excelling in various competitive examinations.

The respondents opinion on the severity of the problems was obtained on three point continuum scale i.e. most serious, serious and not serious. The percentages of respondents under each three point continuum was also computed. On the basis of total seriousness score, the problems were ranked and the results are given in Table 10.

It can be clearly observed from the data on the basis of total seriousness score, the problems at serial numbers XI (TSS=84) (More emphasis on theory rather than practical). VIII (TSS=71) i.e. Inferiority complex/hesitation among the students, XII (TSS=76) i.e. Taking theory classes in practical classes, VII (TSS=69) i.e. Biased attitude of instructors and VI (TSS=71) i.e. Fast/rapid delivery of lectures by the teachers were the

prominent problems faced by the students in the existing education standard at Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF) Nauni, Solan. Hence, the study implies that the instructors/teachers should keep a proper pace/speed of their lectures as per the learning capacity of the students, should emphasize on practical/experienced knowledge and to avoid taking theory classes in practical hours. On the other hand, the university authority should discourage enhancing students' strength until and unless the facilities are provided for effective teaching and learning in the class. Efforts should also be made to remove the hesitation among the students by organizing practical training courses on communication skill and by motivating them to participate more in cultural/co-curricular activities.

## CONCLUSION

It has been concluded from the study that the teachers should give more emphasis on practical, theory classes should not be taken in practical hours, more use of audio-visual aids in the class and feedback from the students should be encouraged to remove the fear of hesitation among them besides motivating them to participate more in sports and extra curricular activities.

*Paper received on* : April 18, 2019

*Accepted on* : May 11, 2019

**REFERENCES**

Kaur, I.R. and Shukla, A.N. (1989). Preferences of undergraduate students for adopting agriculture as profession and as an occupation, *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, **25**(1&2), 30-33.

Khanalave, S., Sawant, G.K. and Sinde, S.B. (2001). Development of a scale to measure effective teaching, *Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education*, **20**, 15-17.

Sehgal, A. and Sharma, D.D. (2017). A study on the students' opinion on the teaching skills. *Agriculture International*, **4**(2), 19-26.

Sharma, D.D., Sehgal, A. and Chand, M. (2017). Effective teaching-learning situation: constraints and suggestions, *Agric International*, **4**(2), 6-9.

Venkata, R.N.K. and Chandra, K.K. (2006). Use of instructional technologies by teachers of agricultural universities, *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, **42**(182), 74-80.