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Constraints faced by the rural youth in accepting agriculture as a source of livelihood

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Abstract

The research paper spotlights the constraints of rural youth towards agriculture as a source of livelihood. Agriculture forms the crux of the socio-economic development of the country and source of livelihood to majority of the rural life. Rural areas are the economic backbone of the country and contribute to the economic growth for development of other sectors. Major portion of the rural population depends on agriculture for their income. In recent years the participation of rural youth in agriculture is declining. This is due to the constraints faced by them and migration to urban areas. Despite this, migration of rural youth to other sectors in search of other lucrative jobs has resulted in decreasing participation of rural youth in agriculture. This has several implications for the future of Indian agriculture and India's food security. It is imperative to find out the reasons for growing disinterest of youth to be involved in agriculture. The present study was carried out in 300 rural youth respondents in Jaipur and Alwar districts of Rajasthan. Results revealed that economic constraints were of most serious concern as raised by rural youth, hence was ranked first among overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 16.55.

Keywords: Constraints, rural youth, livelihood

Introduction

Youth are expected to play a vital role in the much-anticipated transformation of agriculture in India. There are challenges in empowering the youth to improve their skills and to remain in the agriculture as a source of livelihood in rural situation. Creation of successful economic models in the villages is crucial to catalyze and energize youth to become entrepreneurs in rural areas and guide others in their vicinity. Creating interest and building confidence among rural youth in agriculture, is difficult but not impossible, as the available evidences of profitable agriculture have proved under varied situations. Retaining youth in agriculture, is therefore strongly linked to agriculture. There is a noticeable increase in the migration of rural youth to urban areas, in search of better livelihood opportunities due to the apparent differences in basic amenities, communication, health and education facilities between rural and urban areas.

At present there is insufficient youth participation in the agricultural sector in India even though this class of people is the most productive of any society as it contains people in the prime of their lives physically and mentally (Mangal, 2009) [2]. The survey of 5,000 farm households across 18 states conducted by Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) (Sood, 2014) [3] claims that 76 per cent farmers would prefer to do some work other than farming. Sixty-one per cent of these farmers would prefer to be employed in cities because of better education, health and employment avenues there. Furthermore, shifting out of

farming is high among farmers below 30 years of age and research in other countries also showed that occupational mobility is higher among younger farmers and they were found to be more sensitive to income differentials between farm and non-farm occupations (Sharma and Bhaduri, 2009) [4]. Youth are disinterested in agriculture because of better opportunities in cities like better employment, better pay, or a more desirable job (Foster, 2014) [1]. Under these circumstances youth cannot be blamed completely for leaving agriculture. In certain situations, their decision to shift out of farming and rural areas is righteous. Some researchers justified the migration of rural youth to urban areas and also suggested that parents need to acknowledge and recognize the perceived changed trends of needs of the youth dictated by globalization (Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013) [5].

There are evidences from several sources for growing youth disinterest in farming. With careful alteration in the present mechanism of this sector, it can have the potential to engross the massive youth workforce presently available in the country. This would automatically contribute to resolving the crisis of youth unemployment and migration as well. In order to attract and retain youth in agriculture a respectable brand image is to be formed so that people's view on this sector is altered.

Methodology

Rajasthan has been divided into 10 Agricultural regions viz.

Jaipur region, Sikar region, Bharatpur region, Bikaner region, Sri Ganganagar region, Jodhpur region, Jalore region, Kota region, Udaipur region and Bhilwara region. Out of the 10 agricultural regions, Jaipur and Bharatpur regions were selected purposely based on the highest rural youth population in 2019-20. Out of these, one district from each agricultural region *i.e.* Jaipur district from Jaipur agricultural region and Alwar from Bharatpur region were selected purposely for the study because of highest rural youth population among all districts of these agricultural regions. Three tehsils each were purposely selected from Jaipur and Alwar districts based on highest rural youth population. Out of 13 tehsils in Jaipur district, Jaipur, Sanganer and Amber tehsils were selected based on highest rural youth population. Similarly, Alwar, Tijara and Rajgarh tehsils were selected from 18 tehsils of Alwar district based on highest rural youth population in 2019-20. Two gram panchayats were purposely selected from each tehsil based on the highest rural youth population. Thus, 12 gram panchayats were purposely selected from 6 selected tehsils of Jaipur and Alwar. Thus, 25 rural youth from each gram panchayats were selected randomly by using random number table method. Hence, 300 rural youth respondents were selected randomly for the present study.

Constraints are the difficulties or forcible restrictions faced by rural youth in accepting agriculture as a source of livelihood. To ascertain the constraints, the procedure followed by Neelima (2010) [6] was followed with slight modifications. Different dimensions of constraints *viz.* psychological constraints, social constraints, technical constraints, economical constraints, extension related constraints and other constraints were measured on a three point continuum-“low, medium and high.” Overall 37 constraints were considered after consultation with experts and discussion with advisory committee. Total score was calculated to obtain mean score for all levels of constraints. On the basis of mean score, individual ranking and overall rank of all the constraints were obtained. The maximum and minimum rank was ‘37’ and ‘1,’ respectively. Minimum rank signifies the most important constraint as perceived by the respondents.

Results and Discussions

Constraints are the difficulties or forcible restrictions faced by rural youth in accepting agriculture as a source of livelihood. Different dimensions of constraints *viz.* psychological constraints, social constraints, technical constraints, economical constraints, extension related constraints and other constraints were measured. On the basis of mean score, individual ranking and overall rank of all the constraints were obtained. The results depicting all the constraints is illustrated in table 1.

Psychological Constraints

Table 1 revealed that under psychological constraints, lack of enthusiasm with mean score (2.31) was primary constraint followed by lack of patience (2.00), fear of drudgery involved in agriculture (2.07), lack of decision making ability (2.00) and lack of agricultural management experience (1.98). These were succeeded by lack of cooperation from peers (1.43) and lack of basic farming knowledge (1.07). Psychological constraints were ranked

fifth in overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 13.

Social Constraints

It is apparent from table 1 that under social constraints, early marriages was a primary constraint with mean score (2.19) followed by lack of rural youth organizations (2.14), lack of faith by seniors of family (1.95), participation in other social activities (1.91), lack of inclination to traditional job (1.85), social stigma associated with farming (1.62) and decreased land holding due to division of family (1.40). Social constraints were ranked fourth in overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 13.06.

Technical Constraints

A perusal of table 1 makes it clear that under technical constraints, lack of awareness about value-addition technology with mean score (2.81), followed by high cost of new technology (2.75), lack of appropriate technology and its use (2.45), lack of knowledge about package of practices (1.93), non-availability of improved farm inputs (1.88) and lack of improved varieties suitable to local conditions (1.75). Technical constraints were ranked second in overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 13.57.

Economic Constraints

It is evident from table 1 that under economic constraints, price fluctuation was the prime concern with mean score (2.94) followed by high labour cost (2.85), high cost of input (2.74), persistence of old debt (2.65) and lack of agricultural insurance (2.63). Also, economic constraints were of most serious concern as raised by rural youth, hence was ranked first among overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 16.55.

Extension Related Constraints

Table 1 revealed that under extension related constraints, officials only contact large and reputed farmers was ranked first with mean score of 2.81, followed by irregular visit of officials (2.61), irregular trainings (2.27), non availability of inputs for demonstration at right time (2.05), unavailability of technical literature (1.77) and untimely reaching of message (1.60). Extension related constraints were ranked third with cumulative mean score of 13.11.

Other Constraints

It is clear from table 1 that migration of youth was ranked first with mean score (2.28), interest in pursuing higher education (2.20), exploitation by middlemen, input dealers, fertilizer traders etc. (2.09), lack of support of family members (1.95) and lack of support from government and other organizations (1.39). Other constraints were ranked sixth among overall constraints with cumulative mean score of 9.91.

Discussion

It is evident from table 1 that economic constraints was the most serious concern followed by technical constraints, extension related constraints, social constraints, psychological constraints and other constraints. In a country like India, where poverty and unemployment are burning issues, Rajasthan stands out in low income state despite

being seventh populous state in country. Inelastic demand and supply of agricultural commodities, lacuna of financial assistance and support during distress, post-covid dip in economy all these have made farmers in distress of which rural youth is not an exception. All the technical and social

parameters have further boosted up psychological constraints which have resulted in shying of rural youth from agriculture. The results are in conformity with findings of Mubeena (2017) [7].

Table 1: Constraints faced by the rural youth in accepting agriculture as a source of livelihood

Sl. No.	Nature of Constraints	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank	Cumulative mean score	Overall Rank
A	Psychological Constraints					
1	Lack of decision making ability	601	2.00	IV	13.00	
2	Lack of basic farming knowledge	322	1.07	VII		
3	Lack of enthusiasm	692	2.31	I		
4	Lack of patience	641	2.14	II		
5	Lack of cooperation from peers	428	1.43	VI		
6	Lack of agricultural management experience	594	1.98	V		
7	Fear of drudgery involved in agriculture	622	2.07	III		
B	Social Constraints					
1	Participation in other social activities	573	1.91	IV	13.06	
2	Lack of inclination to traditional job	556	1.85	V		
3	Lack of faith by seniors of the family	586	1.95	III		
4	Decreased land holding size due to division of family	420	1.40	VII		
5	Lack of rural youth organization	641	2.14	II		
6	Early marriages	656	2.19	I		
7	Social stigma associated with farming	486	1.62	VI		
C	Technical Constraints					
1	Lack of appropriate technology and its use	736	2.45	III	13.57	
2	Non availability of improved farm inputs	564	1.88	V		
3	High cost of new technology	825	2.75	II		
4	Lack of knowledge about package of practices	579	1.93	IV		
5	Lack of awareness about value addition technology	844	2.81	I		
6	Lack of improved varieties suitable to local conditions	524	1.75	VI		
D	Economic Constraints					
1	High cost of input	823	2.74	III	16.55	
2	Price fluctuation	881	2.94	I		
3	Persistence of old debt	795	2.65	IV		
4	High labour cost	856	2.85	II		
5	Lack of agricultural insurance	790	2.63	V		
6	Poor return of investment	821	2.74	III		
E	Extension Related Constraints					
1	Untimely reaching of message	480	1.60	VI	13.11	III
2	Irregular visit of officials	782	2.61	II		
3	Irregular trainings	680	2.27	III		
4	Non availability of inputs for demonstration at right time	614	2.05	IV		
5	Unavailability of technical literature	532	1.77	V		
6	Officials only contact large and reputed farmers	842	2.81	I		
F	Other Constraints					
1	Migration of youth	684	2.28	I	9.91	VI
2	Lack of support from government and other organizations	416	1.39	V		
3	Lack of support of family members	586	1.95	IV		
4	Interest in pursuing higher education	661	2.20	II		
5	Exploitation by middlemen, input dealers, fertilizer traders etc	626	2.09	III		

Conclusion

Rural youth in India face various socio-economic challenges. The rural areas and agriculture suffer from crises, undeveloped processes, and poor social and cultural conditions, making it difficult for rural youth to participate in social and economic life. Unemployment, poverty, and lack of institutions and infrastructure further contribute to the social exclusion of rural youth. Additionally, the quality of employment available to youth, especially those belonging to marginalized groups, is a major concern. Gender and social belonging also play significant roles in determining youth's participation in the labor force and

education. The difficulties faced by the agrarian population, social and gender discrimination, and poverty are prevalent in rural India. These challenges highlight the need for measures and strategies to motivate rural youth, develop their interest in agriculture and rural life, and integrate them into social and economic processes.

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