

Print ISSN 2230 – 9047

Online ISSN 2231 – 6736

Vol. 14, No. 2, May-August, 2019

February, 2019, Revised on June 2019

February, 2019, Revised on
May 2019

Journal of Community Mobilization and Sustainable Development



Society for Community Mobilization for Sustainable Development
New Delhi - 110 012

What the Parents Think About the Future of their Young Sons in Farming: A Case of Haryana

Hema Tripathi^{1*}, Vishwa Bharati Dixit², Sajjan Singh¹, Rekha Yadav³ and Ramesh Nukala³

¹Principal Scientist, ²Principal Scientists & Incharge, Transfer of Technology and Entrepreneurship Unit, ICAR-Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes, Hisar-125001, Haryana

³Doctoral Student, Veterinary Extension, ICAR-IVRI, Izatnagar

ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out by using exploratory research design in the Hisar district of Haryana comprising nine blocks. Two villages from each block (18 villages) and from each village, five households were selected purposively having living father and his own young son between age of 15-29 yrs engaged in farming making a total of 180 respondents (90 son and 90 parents from 90 households). They were personally interviewed through two different interview schedules. The study revealed that majority of the parents as respondents belonged to low socioeconomic status. Respondents (parents and son) were classified as per their educational, occupational, economic, social and career aspiration for their children. Post graduation was the highest aspirations of 61.1 per cent parents followed by professional degree revealed by 21.1 per cent parents. On the contrary 48.89 per cent youth aspired for graduation as highest qualification followed by post graduation. Parents and sons had high aspirations for getting high income jobs and did not vary in their economic aspirations. Social aspirations were also found almost same of parents towards their children and sons towards themselves, both wished to be respectable as their major social aspiration. For sons, economic aspirations were at the top followed by educational and social aspirations whereas parents wished that their children should complete the highest education first and then should go for earn money. 52.20 per cent respondents (parents) did not desire to continue to remain their children in farming activities and more than 80 per cent sons wanted to be migrated from the village first to fulfil their aspirations by living in the urban areas. High and significant correlation was found between the attitude of parents towards their children in farming and attitude of sons towards farming and revealed moderately favourable attitude towards farming.

Keywords: Parents, Youth, Aspirations, Rural farming, Haryana

INTRODUCTION

Parents are the first teacher of a child. He/she is influenced from infancy to teens to adults by the parents and later by teacher and peer. The role of parents is the single biggest influence on social, psychological, emotional and intellectual development that shapes the child's attitude, aspirations and overall behaviour. Parents play a key role in modifying the childhood aspiration and also in the attitude formation (Berk, 2000). The same is true for the perception of parents to continue their children in farming as an occupation in spite of the fact that parents themselves losing confidence in farming and developing less favourable attitude towards farming. So, they wanted their child out of it, they also look for better return from non-farming occupation and support their children in such endeavours. On the other

side of the coin, ample evidence shows that rural youth are also losing their interests in farming due to number of reasons right from reduce in farm profitability, degradation of natural resources, reduced size of holdings and lack of interest of youth in traditional agriculture. There are evidences from several sources for growing youth disinterest in farming that justifies their moving out of agriculture. What is needed immediately to resolve this conflict is to rebrand and reform agriculture by making a composite plan of action to model agriculture as per the need and demands of youth (Som *et al.*, 2018).

Researches carried out even in other countries emphasize that young people increasingly getting less interested in staying in the countryside (White, 2012), this leaves rural areas with less people to work the land because

*Corresponding author email id: hematripathi1@gmail.com

working age group consisting of the youth would have migrated to the urban areas or elsewhere (Juma, 2007). Some scholars have attributed the absence of the youth in the rural areas as the main reason behind lower production yields in smallholder farming (Lipton, 1980). Relatively little research has been done to capture attitude, aspirations and views of the parents toward farming in India and life in rural areas for their children despite worrying accounts about youth's lack of interest in rural and agrarian futures. The study attempted to explore and unfolding vital information on aspirations and attitude between parents' attitude towards farming for their sons and thinking about the future of their children in farming.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out by following exploratory research design in the Hisar district of Haryana. Hisar falls in the Agro Climatic Zone-VI, which is called "Trans-Gangetic Plains Region". Hisar, one of the important cities of North India, is located at 29°53' north latitude and 75°45'55" east longitudes. It is situated one hundred sixty four kilometres west to Delhi on the National Highway number ten. The district is under control of Hisar division and administratively divided into nine community development blocks and all were covered under study by randomly selected two villages from each block. Thus study carried out in 18 villages. From each village, five households were selected purposively with the condition that these households should have living father having his own son between age of 15-29 years with education up to 12th standard and both should have engaged in farming activities. Thus five parents and five rural youth (son) were personally interviewed through two different interview schedule from each of the selected village, making a total of 180 respondents (90 rural youth and 90 parents from 90 households). One young son and his father from one family were considered as unit of data collection.

Aspirations were measured under five sub heads including the educational, occupational, economic, and social and career related with various parameters. Each parent respondent was asked to mention their response in one of the parameters under each aspiration group that they feel most significant for the lives of their children. Young sons as respondent also responded on each aspiration most suiting to them for themselves. Attitude of parents towards farming for their children comprising 11 statements and attitude of rural youth towards farming for themselves comprising 21 statements both developed

by Hari (2014) were used to measure their attitude. Each respondent was asked to mention his opinion against each statement on 5 point continuum. For each positive statement, the scores ranged from 1 to 5 with scores assigned as 1 for least agreeing, 2 for less agreeing, 3 for moderately agreeing, 4 for highly agreeing and 5 for most

Table 1: Classification of respondents (parents) as per their socio economic characteristics

Socio-personal characteristics	Percentage
Age categories (years)	
44 -50	35.6
51 - 57	46.7
58 -64	17.8
Education status	
Illiterate	25.5
Primary	13.3
Middle	11.1
High School	16.7
Intermediate	17.8
Graduation	6.7
Post Graduation	8.9
Family main occupation	
Agriculture	63.3
Animal Husbandry	6.7
Agriculture + Animal Husbandry	14.4
Government	5.6
Private	2.2
Self employed	3.3
Labour	4.4
Land Holding	
Landless	4.4
<1 ha	20.0
1-2 ha	41.1
>2 ha	34.4
Livestock holding (Bovine) (average herd size 4.8)	
<= 4.00	50.0
5.00 - 8.00	38.9
9.00+	11.1
Gross family income/ Monthly	
<= 30000.00	81.1
30001.00 - 60000.00	16.7
> 60001.00	2.2
Parents in any leadership position	
Yes	16.7
No	83.3

agreeing, attitude. Scoring was reversed for negative statements. The attitude scores of each respondent were calculated by adding the scores of all statements. Based on the scores, the respondents' attitude was categorized into 3 classes, viz. less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favourable attitude based on the score achieved by them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic characteristics: Table 1 shows that majority of the parents (46.7%) as respondents belonged between 51-57 years age category with majority had poor education status including 25 per cent illiterate. Only 8.9 per cent were post graduated. Rest was almost equally distributed under high school and intermediate category. About 63per cent respondents (parents) had Agriculture as their main occupation followed by Agriculture and animal husbandry (14.4%). About 41 per cent respondents fell under 1-2 ha land category (Small farmers) followed by 34.4 per cent owned more than 2 ha of land. Average herd size mainly bovines was 4.8 animal heads. More than 80per cent of the families had less than Rs.30000 as Gross family income in a month. About 83 per cent of the respondents (parents) had no leadership position and the rest were mainly the member of the dairy cooperatives and associations.

As far as information source utilization was concerned, veterinary doctor and veterinary field assistants were the major sources for receiving animal husbandry information and got highest mean score followed by bank personnel and village extension officer. Television was the major mass media source being utilized by majority of the parents based on their mean score (2.60) followed by newspaper

and radio. Internet use came on 4th position according to the use (Table 2). Nain *et al.* (2015) also reported television as major source of information of the farmers.

Aspirations of parents about the future of their children in farming and of sons for themselves: Respondents (parents and son) were classified as per their educational, occupational, economic, social and career aspiration for their children (Table 3). Post graduation was the highest aspirations of 61.1 per cent parents followed by professional degree revealed by 21.1 per cent parents. On the contrary 48.89 per cent youth aspired for graduation as highest qualification followed by post graduation. Aspirations of parents and their son did not differ significantly for their occupational aspirations as both aspired for Government Job followed by own business. Parents and sons had high aspirations for getting high income jobs and did not vary in their economic aspirations. Social aspirations were also found almost same of parents towards their children and youth towards themselves, both wished to be respectable as their major social aspiration. Career aspirations revealed by parents towards their children were different than their children for themselves. 26.6 per cent youth wanted to be an entrepreneur followed to be a soldier in army and then teacher whereas parents wished that their son should go in teaching line followed by soldier in army as a career. About 14 per cent parents wanted that their children should opt for entrepreneur as a career.

According to Hari (2014) parental perception was one of the most important factors influencing the occupation aspirations of the respondents. About 69.25 per cent respondents perceived parental perception of the job as very highly influencing factor. Income and prestige too

Table 2: Classification of respondents (parents) as per their formal and mass media sources of information utilization

Formal sources of information utilization	Mean Score	Rank	Mass media utilization	Mean Score	Rank
Village extension official	1.41	III	Radio	1.90	III
Veterinary doctor	1.91	I	Television	2.60	I
Veterinary field assistant	1.91	I	Poster	1.67	V
Bank personnel	1.42	II	Educational films	1.53	VII
NGO	1.04	VI	Exhibition	1.60	VI
BDO	1.36	V	Demonstration	1.50	IX
Scientist	1.39	IV	Farm publication	1.51	VIII
-			News paper	2.30	II
-			Internet	1.69	IV

Table 3 : Classification of respondents (parents) as per the their educational, occupational, economic, social and career aspiration for their children and of sons for themselves

Types of Aspirations	% Youth (N=90)	% Parents (N=90)
Educational aspiration		
Intermediate	6.67	4.5
Graduation	48.89 (I)	13.3
Post graduation	34.81 (II)	61.1 (I)
Professional	9.63	21.1 (II)
Occupational aspiration		
Farming /Agriculture	18.52 (III)	14.4
Animal husbandry	17.78	16.7(III)
Fisheries	6.30	2.2
Horticulture	7.78	6.7
Government Job	24.07(I)	27.8 (I)
Private Job	4.81	7.8
Casual labour	0.00	0.00
Own business	20.74 (II)	24.4 (II)
Economic aspiration		
High income jobs	67.03 (I)	74.4 0(I)
High standard of living	17.41	16.70
High material possession	15.56	8.90
Social aspirations		
Socially recognized by all	30.00	31.1
Known in the society by few	25.93	21.1
Respectable	35.19(I)	35.6 (I)
Leader	8.89	12.2
Career aspiration		
Teacher	17.04 (III)	32.2 (I)
Soldier in army	25.19 (II)	24.4 (II)
Veterinarians	9.63	3.3
Doctor	4.81	6.7
Engineer	6.30	10.0
Police officer	3.33	8.9
Motor mechanic	0.74	0.0
Architect	2.22	0.0
Carpenter	0.00	0.0
Accountant	2.22	0.0
Plumber	0.00	0.0
Contractor	1.85	0.0
Entrepreneur	26.67(I)	14.4(III)

were highly influencing factors with 54.75 per cent and 48.5 per cent of the respondents respectively, agreeing that these factors had very high influence on their occupational aspirations. Peer group had very high influence with 45.75 per cent respondents agreeing for occupational aspirations. Only 16.25 per cent respondents agreed that easiness to do the job had very high influence on their occupational aspirations. (Benhenke *et al.*, 2004) through a qualitative case study with 10 rural families showed that both children and parents aspired for jobs better than the parents do. A study done by Tafere and Woldehanna (2012) found that, less than one percent of the parents want their children to inherit farming. Parents had strong desire for their children to have higher aspiration. Similar studies had also been reported from Greece; where in Greek mothers engaged in agriculture in the country side didn't want their children to do farming activities, since they do not view their role as satisfactory (Gidarakou *et al.*, 1997).

The results of comparison with respect to parental aspirations towards their children and of sons towards themselves (Table 4) showed difference in terms of the ranks assigned by them based on mean score. For sons, economic aspirations were at the top followed by educational and social aspirations whereas parents wished that their children should complete the highest education first and then should go to earn money. Youths whose

Table 4: Comparison between parental aspirations towards their sons and of son's towards themselves

Group of aspirations	Rank revealed by sons	Rank revealed by parents
Educational aspirations	II	I
Occupational aspirations	V	IV
Economic aspirations	I	II
Social aspirations	III	V
Career aspirations	IV	III

Table 5: Classification of respondents (parents) as per their desire to continue to remain their children in farming activities and liking of son for migration from rural areas

Do you wish that your children should continue to assist you in farming	Percentage
No	52.20
Yes	47.80
Liking of migration of sons	
No	19.26
Yes	80.7

Table 6: Attitude of parents towards their young children in farming and attitude of sons towards farming for themselves

Sons		Parents	
Levels of attitude	Percentage	Levels of attitude	Percentage
Less favourable (21.00- 49.00)	7.0	Less favourable (11.00- 25.66)	12.2
Moderately favourable (50.00 - 77.00)	77.0	Moderately Favourable (25.67 -40.32)	75.6
Highly favourable (78.00-105.00)	15.9	Highly favourable (40.33-55.00)	12.2

Correlation coefficient between parents attitude towards their children for farming and youth attitude towards farming: 0.42** denotes high degree of correlation between parents and child’s attitude towards farming

**significant at 1% level of significance

parents have an intrinsic interest in crop farming and on whom they depend for their production needs, shelter, clothing, schooling and feeding may be influenced to participate more in crop farming than those youths whose parents had no interest in farming (Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006). When the parents are from well to do and are primarily farmers, the attitude of the child to farming increases significantly (Houghton, 1995). Similarly, studies from Iceland have found that parents who work in the fishing industry in Iceland emphasized the importance of fisheries in national economy, but discouraged the children from getting involved in it. Parental education was found associated with increased migration intention of the child, but it played along with many other factors (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006).

Table 5 reveals that 52.20 per cent respondents (parents) did not desire to continue to remain their children in farming activities and rest still desired that their son should go for farming as an occupation. In contrast, more than 80 per cent youth wanted to be migrated from the village first to fulfil their aspirations by living in the urban areas. In India, Hari (2014) projected the resentment of the educated youth from UP, Rajasthan, Kerala and Assam to participate in farming and considered farming as a profession which denigrated their status. Tripathi *et al.* (2017) found that better job availability in urban areas (Rank I), better educational opportunities (Rank II) and better opportunities for more income (Rank III) were the major pull reasons for migration revealed by 91.74 per cent and 87.61 per cent by youth from Haryana respectively not only youth but parents also had the same feelings and many were reluctant to continue to keep their children in farming.

Table 6 shows the high and significant correlation between the attitude of parents towards their children in

farming and attitude of youth towards farming. Both had moderately favourable attitude as majority of the parents as well as their young son’s fell under this category. Bora *et al.* (2018) also found that majority of farmers had moderately favourable attitude towards farming)

CONCLUSION

The study interestingly found moderately favourable attitude and almost similar aspirations of the parents and sons towards farming. Parents had strong desire for their children to have higher educational followed by economic aspiration. Thus profitable agriculture is crucial for attracting and retaining youth in agriculture only after receiving higher education. After that, there is a need to generate entrepreneurship models that would help to retain youth in rural areas to get them involved in agriculture and to improve the overall rural situation. Young sons having an aptitude for agriculture can be encouraged to undertake commercial farming on their own or leased land and/or to establish animal based units, agro processing units, small scale industries and agri-services from which they can earn for higher income than in private salaried employment. Here the role of the parents is important to retain their sons in farming by shaping their attitude and aspirations, improving/promoting their confidence levels and encouraging them to pursue farming as profession.

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