

Measuring the Constraints Perceived by Rural Youth in Farming: An Exploratory Study of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to measure the constraints perceived by rural youth in farming. The study was conducted in Haryana and sample constituted 270 rural youths. They represented randomly selected 270 households from 18 villages and 9 blocks of Hisar district. Data has been collected through personal interview schedule with the objective to know the constraints perceived by rural youths farming, compelling them for urban migration. A list of 22 constraints was prepared and data were gathered on each one. K - Means clustering was used to group the list of constraints revealed by respondents. The major constraints in farming perceived by the respondents were; lack of institutional and extension support that ranked 1st under technical and input related category followed by profit is not in harmony with efforts (Rank II) under socio-economic constraints category. Mechanization inaccessibility in agriculture sector secured IIIrd rank under infrastructure and resource related category. This revealed technical and input related factors followed by socio-economic factors need to be addressed first to bring the youth in the farming activities.

Key words: Farming, perceived constraints, rural youth.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of youth and their role in the future of farming is burning issue discussion in almost all agricultural global fora. This includes the global happening trend of youth exodus from agricultural work in rural areas (FAC 2010). India comprises largest youth population in the world- 66 per cent of the total population under the age of 35. Roughly 75 per cent of them live in rural areas; disenchantment attributed to poor dispersion in agriculture is worrisome. The share of workforce employed in agriculture has been declined from 65 per cent in 1993-94 to about 50 per cent in 2011-12 (Nawab Ali, 2018). India is also losing more than 2,000 farmers every single day and since 1991, the overall number of farmers has dropped by 15 million (Sainath, 2013). Large-scale migration of rural youth from farming to urban areas has caused concern among the country's agricultural policy makers as such a trend, if not checked, is likely to affect agricultural activities in the future. Migration from rural to urban areas is up from 27.8 to 31.1

per cent since 2001 and if this alarming rate of migration continues, this is serious threat apprehending several implications for the future of Indian agriculture and India's food security. Tripathi *et al* (2018) revealed that about eighty per cent of rural youth in Hisar district of Haryana wished to be migrated from rural to urban areas due to one or the another reasons. About 19 per cent still showed their desire to remain in their villages and continue to be as farmer with more scientific farming. 34.44 per cent youth preferred inter-district migration followed by intra-state. About 17 per cent youth showed their desire to be migrated within the district only for more homophilous environment.

This enormous migration of youth from rural to urban areas presents a complex challenge before the academicians, researchers and policy makers and call immediate attention. Encouraging rural youth and involving them in farming is a big challenge that needs to be addressed. In a bid to address this trend, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) initiated one

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scheme named Attracting and Retention of Youth in Agriculture (ARYA) to encourage youth to take up farming. Keeping in view, a survey has been undertaken through personal interview schedule in state of Haryana with the objective to find out the constraints perceived by of rural youth in farming leading to their willingness compelling them for urban migration.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out by following *ex-post facto and exploratory research design* in the Hisar district of Haryana, 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.

Fifteen rural youth (15-29 yrs) having education upto 12th standard, engaged in farming activities and also having a live father were selected randomly from each of the selected village, making a total of 270 rural youth. From these 270 households, the eldest male youth available at the time of data collection was interviewed. One youth from one family was considered as unit of data collection. Primary data was collected using a well structured interview schedule to elicit the information wherein respondents were asked to reveal the type of the constraints on a three point continuum based on the intensity of constraint; they felt in farming for choosing as a career.

Rural youth in the present study has been defined as a person (male) living in the village within the age group of 15-29 years as per the guidelines of "National Youth Policy, 2014" Government of India. Here farming was operationalized as interalia farming crop, dairy, fruit, poultry, fisheries and other agro based enterprises.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A list of 22 constraints was prepared and data were gathered on each one through personal interview. Response of each of the respondent was taken on three point continuum as most important, important and least important with respective score of 3, 2 and 1. Ranks of each constraint were calculated based on the mean scores. K-Means clustering was used to group the list of constraints revealed by respondents.

Constraints were grouped in 05 major categories, viz; Socio-economic, Psychological, Environmental, Technical and input related, infrastructure and resource related constraints.

Table1: Constraints revealed by rural youth in farming

Constraints	Degree of constraints						Mean Score	Rank
	Most Important		Important		Least Important			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Socio-economic								
Profit is not in harmony with the efforts	145	53.70	84	31.11	41	15.19	2.39	II
Archaic inheritance pattern of land	106	39.26	112	41.48	52	19.26	2.20	XIX
Girls not interested in marrying	69	25.56	102	37.78	99	36.67	1.89	XXIII
Psychological								
Lack of role model	96	35.56	109	40.37	65	24.07	2.11	XXI
Poor stereotyped vision associated with farming	107	39.63	112	41.48	51	18.89	2.21	XVII
Lack of knowledge and skills	132	48.89	98	36.30	40	14.81	2.34	V
Poor chances of meeting livelihood	106	39.26	117	43.33	47	17.41	2.22	XV
Lack of leadership and confidence	122	45.19	110	40.74	38	14.07	2.31	VIII
Technical and input related								
Lack of information access	137	50.74	92	34.07	41	15.19	2.36	IV
Controlled price by Government	119	44.07	105	38.89	46	17.04	2.27	XIII
Lack of institutional and extension support	136	50.37	112	41.48	22	8.15	2.42	I
High input cost	111	41.11	124	45.93	35	12.96	2.28	XI
Lot of involvement of intermediaries	122	45.19	106	39.26	42	15.56	2.30	X
Expensive credit	124	45.93	88	32.59	58	21.48	2.24	XIV
Low coverage under crop insurance	100	37.04	97	35.93	73	27.04	2.10	XXII
Environmental								
Weather risk	114	42.22	126	46.67	30	11.11	2.31	VII
Depleted soils	125	46.30	75	27.78	70	25.93	2.20	XVIII
Infrastructure and resource related								
Degradation of land	129	47.78	95	35.19	46	17.04	2.31	IX
Mechanization lacunae in agriculture sector	140	51.85	88	32.59	42	15.56	2.36	III
Poor /Unregulated rural market	110	40.74	124	45.93	36	13.33	2.27	XII
Falling water levels	125	46.30	79	29.26	66	24.44	2.22	XVI
Inadequate irrigation facilities	110	40.74	84	31.11	76	28.15	2.13	XX
Lack of availability of labour due to MNERGA	70	25.93	91	33.70	109	40.37	1.86	XXIV
Poor infrastructure	131	48.52	98	36.30	41	15.19	2.33	VI

Table showed that the major constraints in farming perceived by the respondents were; lack of institutional and extension support that ranked Ist under technical and input related category followed by profit is not in harmony with efforts (Rank II) under socio-economic constraints category. Mechanization lacunae in agriculture sector secured IIIrd rank under infrastructure and resource related category. These were the major factors besides the several other push and pull factors mentioned in Table that is decreasing the interests of rural youth in farming as a occupational venture. Declining interest of rural youth in agriculture is directly related to existing poor physical amenities, socio economic conditions and lack of enabling environment. Haryana is rich in agriculture and adding to the national pool of grain basket lavishly. Hisar in particular is the hub of agricultural activities where Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Lala Lajpat Rai University of veterinary and Animal Husbandry Central institute for research on Buffaloes and Equines, Central Sheep Breeding Farm with Haryana Government livestock farms is catering to the needs of farmers.

Haryana government Scheme for Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture – Strategic Initiatives, scheme for National Project on Management of soil health and fertility, Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana *etc* are a few to name for favouring farmers in continuing the farming by covering the risk in agriculture. During personal interactions with rural youth in other than sampled area in Haryana, found that they invariably are not keen to take up agriculture as a profession, due to low income opportunities, poor physical infrastructure, medical facilities and lack of enabling environment. Although minimum support price and the crops covered under it has been increased to mitigate the low price and marketing problem. Although government is working on increase the man days but formal employment opportunities in the form of government jobs are shrinking everywhere due to increase in population, decline in handicraft, stagnant agricultural economy and absence of industrial growth which resulted into large scale seasonal migration were some of the causes revealed by Narain (2012) in Bihar. Paroda while inaugurating seminar on “Opportunity for Youth in Agriculture” on 21 December, 2013 focussed on the need of assessing various options for attracting youth in agriculture and mentioned that reducing farm profitability, degradation of natural resources, reduced size of holdings and lack of interest of youth in traditional agriculture are currently the major challenges for which youth is not keen to practice agriculture. Small size of holdings and degradation of natural resources, the return on investment is gradually declining and farm employment options are also weakening. Kokate (2013) while speaking on emerging opportunities for farm youth on the occasion also endorsed that youth do not want to do the traditional type of agriculture; therefore, it is the duty of planners and the scientists to develop programs which can enhance their skill so as to adopt advanced technologies. Nawab Ali (2018) emphasized that the ageing population of farmers and declining interest of rural youth to take up agriculture as a profession are the challenges for agriculture sustainability not in India but also in other countries of the world. The declining interests of rural youth in farming are directly related to existing poor physical amenities, socio economic conditions and lack of enabling environment. Economic factors such as low paid employment, inadequate credit facilities, low profit margins and lack of insurance against crop failure are discouraging them to take farming as

profession. All these factors revealed by various studies support the findings of the present study.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed the need of addressing technical and input related factors followed by socio economic to bring the youth in the farming activities. Also need for direct interaction with rural youth to find out possible solutions to attract them in agriculture and then responsibility of planners and scientists to create an attractive environment and opportunities for youth to be retained in agriculture. The incentives for involving youth in agricultural education, research and extension and linking them with market opportunities will help considerably in building much needed confidence to take up agriculture as a profession.

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