

Training Needs of Rural Youth: An Analysis in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

India's population is predominantly rural, with approximately 68.9% residing in villages. Therefore, rural India truly represents the essence of our country. It is crucial to empower the rural youth by offering them opportunities for growth and well-being that align with their aspirations. However, the modern world demands skilled workers, and industries are increasingly reliant on technological advancements, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT). This rapid pace of technological change necessitates individuals to possess diverse cognitive skills. Consequently, it is imperative to address these challenges and equip India's rural youth with the appropriate education and skills they need to navigate the demanding global landscape. While the government has implemented various programs for rural development, their effectiveness relies heavily on proper execution and implementation. Considering the above facts the present study was conducted with the objective to study the training needs of Rural youth and Suggestions of rural youth to promote their participation in agricultural activities. The study was conducted in the year 2020-2021 for which Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh of India was selected. Exploratory Research Design was used for the study. There are four Tehsils in Lucknow namely Bakshi Ka Talab, Lucknow, Malihabad and Mohanlalganj. Out of these four Tehsils Mohanlalganj Block was selected for the study. For present study 5 villages were selected namely Atrauli, Daudnagar, Bhadesuwa, Hasanpur Kaneri and Barvaliya. From each villages 21 respondents were selected for the study and information were collected regarding their agricultural activities. A total number of 105 respondents were selected through random sampling from eight sample village panchayats. Data was collected through personal interview with a semi-structured schedule from farming and non-farming youth. Percentage, cumulative frequency and rank were used for calculation and drawing the inferences. The results revealed that majority (62.86 per cent) of rural youth need training in cashew and mango production, followed by identification of pest and diseases (58.09 per cent) and post harvest technology (56.19 per cent). Also majority (60.95 per cent) of the respondents suggested local market yard facility should be provided to promote participation of youth in agricultural activities

Keywords: Rural, Youth, Education, Skill Development, Challenges.

Introduction

According to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Azad “Youth below the age of 25 are the most powerful resources on the earth, under the earth and above the earth. We have to empower them through value-based education and leadership.” Agriculture, along with its allied sectors, is the largest source of livelihood in India, particularly in rural areas. It also contributes significantly to the country's GDP. Sustainable agriculture, which includes ensuring food security, rural

employment, and environmentally friendly practices such as soil conservation and biodiversity protection, is crucial for holistic rural development. India has witnessed revolutions in agriculture, dairy, poultry, and fisheries, indicating the importance of these sectors. This section provides detailed information on agricultural products, machinery, research, government policies, schemes, loans, market prices, animal husbandry, fisheries, horticulture, sericulture, and more. Although agriculture remains the primary occupation for over half of India's population, the involvement of youth in this sector is declining. As the youngest nation in the world, India has a massive youth resource that could contribute significantly to the agriculture sector. However, the sector is facing emerging challenges such as land fragmentation, labor shortage, depleting natural resources, climate change, low profitability, market competition, and nutrition and gender issues. To address these challenges, the agriculture sector needs new ideas, innovations, rebranding, and revitalization, which can be provided by the energy and vitality of the youth. However, there is a decreasing trend in youth participation in agriculture.

Given the current scenario and the changing dynamics of agriculture in India, it is essential to leverage the potential of youth to bring prosperity to the sector and improve the lives of young people. This raises the question of whether there is enough scope to involve youth in the agriculture sector and harness their innovative mindset, energy, and enthusiasm to uplift the sector. (Rajarshi Roy Burman et al., 2019).

It is observed that India has the relative advantage at present over other countries in terms of distribution of youth population. India's advantage in young population is also evident when it is compared with other Asian countries. In Comparison to China and Indonesia, the two major countries which determine the demographic features of Asia, India is seen to remain younger longer than the other two. These three countries together accounted for 68 per cent of the population of Asia in the year 2010 and the share of Asia itself is about 60 per cent in world population.

The proportion of females in the youth age bracket is generally lower due to the fact that females tend to live longer than males. (UNESCO,2017). This gender difference is more pronounced in developed regions, but in India, the gender differentials are less significant compared to other countries. As the population ages and shifts to higher age groups, the share of the 15-34 age group decreases, indicating increased longevity. This widening gender difference reflects the aging population and the fact that females typically live longer, resulting in a lower proportion of youth among females. Interestingly, in India, the similar share of youth among males and females suggests a healthy fertility rate and population growth. Education plays a crucial role in addressing development challenges in rural areas, as it provides a direct link between food security and the education of rural children. Basic numeracy and literacy skills have been shown to improve farmers' livelihoods. Access to knowledge and information is essential for rural youth to address the challenges they face in agriculture and to influence agricultural policies that affect them, such as access to markets, finances, green jobs, and land. However, in both developed and developing countries, rural youth often lack access to even the most basic formal education,

especially in developing countries where educational institutions are underdeveloped.

Formal primary and secondary education can equip young people with basic skills in numeracy, literacy, and business management, as well as introduce them to agriculture. Non-formal education, including vocational training and extension services, and tertiary agricultural education can provide more specific knowledge related to agriculture. Unfortunately, access to information and education is often worse in rural areas of developing countries compared to urban areas, and this disparity is evident as early as primary school. Many rural children in developing countries face hunger and lack the energy to attend school or absorb information. During peak agricultural seasons, labor shortages may lead parents to prioritize their children's involvement in household and agricultural activities over attending school. Additionally, rural schools often have poor infrastructure and lack classroom materials, while accessibility can be a challenge as schools are located far away from rural communities.(FAO.2009).Overall, improving access to education and information is crucial, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, in order to empower rural youth, address agricultural challenges, and promote sustainable development.

Social media offers a unique opportunity for farmers and ranchers to connect with a diverse audience and share their stories. It allows them to build relationships, share information, and address any concerns or misconceptions about modern farming practices. In India, the agricultural sector is facing challenges, such as a decline in the number of farmers and a growing need for food security. Encouraging young farmers to get involved and addressing the challenges they face can play a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable future for Indian agriculture. India is losing more than 2,000 farmers every single day and since 1991, the overall number of farmers has dropped by 15 million (Sainath, 2013) Globally, there is a growing interest in finding ways to engage youth in agriculture, and social media can be a powerful tool in achieving this goal. (IFAD, 2012; Paisley, 2013).

Considering the above facts the present study was conducted with the objective -

- To study the training needs of Rural youth.
- Suggestions of rural youth to promote their participation in agricultural activities.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the year 2020-2021 in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh of India selected. Exploratory Research Design was used for the study. There are four Tehsils in Lucknow namely Bakshi Ka Talab, Lucknow, Malihabad and Mohanlalganj. Out of these four Tehsils Mohanlalganj Block was selected for the study. For present study 5 villages were selected namely Atrauli, Daudnagar, Bhadesuwa, Hasanpur Kaneri and Barvaliya. From each village 21 respondents were selected for the study and information was collected regarding their

agricultural activities. A total number of 105 respondents were selected through random sampling from eight sample village panchayats. Data was collected through personal interview with a semi-structured schedule from farming and non-farming youth. **The reliability and validity of the schedule was checked.** Percentage, cumulative frequency and rank were used for calculation and drawing the inferences.

Results and Discussion

It is noticed from the Table-1 that, majority (62.86 per cent) of rural youth need training in cashew and mango production, followed by identification of pest and diseases (58.09 per cent) and post harvest technology (56.19 per cent). Further they need training in vermicompost/compost making (54.28 per cent), integrated nutrients management (52.38 per cent), organic vegetable production (51.42 per cent) and mixed farming (50.47 per cent), while less than half of them need training in spices and medicinal plant (49.52 per cent), intercropping (47.68 per cent), mechanization in agriculture (46.66 per cent), poultry/dairy (44.77 per cent), goat farming (42.86 per cent), mushroom production (40.95 per cent) and Nursery management (40.00 per cent). This indicates that rural Youth are fascinated towards mango and cashew production. The probable reason could be that as Lucknow district is Mango belt so if they get training in mango production they can earn more income. Also as cashewnut is plantation crop if they get proper training for cashewnut production and processing they can sell it at better rate and earn better income and can raise their standard of living.

Table-1: Broad agricultural areas in which rural youth needs training.

Sl. No.	Training needs areas	Respondents (N=105)	
		Number	Percentage
1	Organic vegetable production	54	51.42
2	Vermicompost / compost making	57	54.28
3	Nursery management	42	40.00
4	Poultry / dairy	47	44.77
5	Goat farming	45	42.86
6	Identification of pest and diseases and their management	61	58.09
7	Post harvest technology	59	56.19

8	Mixed farming	53	50.47
9	Mechanization in agriculture	49	46.66
10	Integrated nutrients management	55	52.38
11	Cashew and mango production	66	62.86
12	Fodder production	44	41.90
13	Mushroom production	43	40.95
14	Intercropping	50	47.68
15	Spices and medicinal plant	52	49.52

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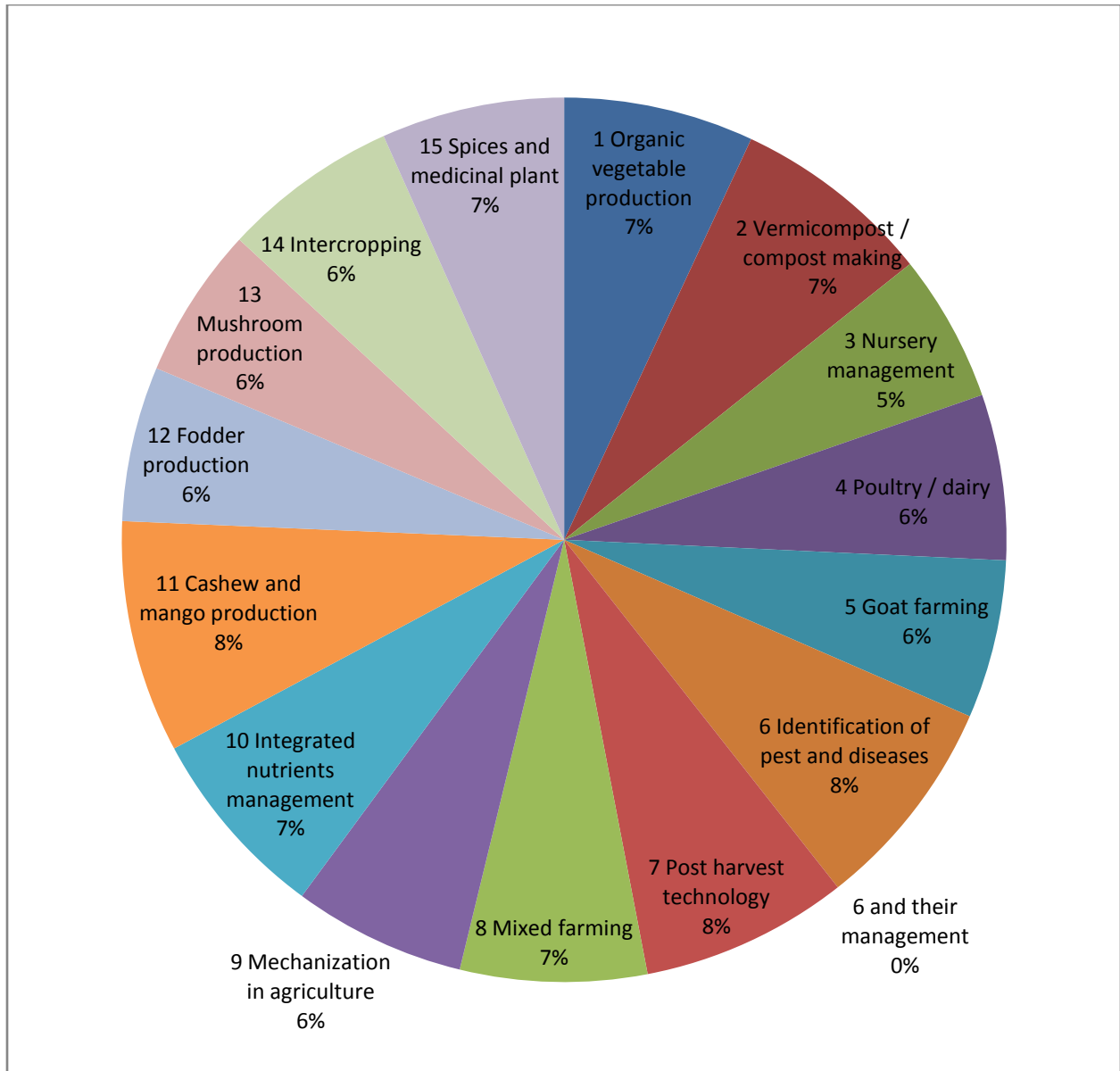


Figure -1: Broad agricultural areas in which rural youth needs training.

It was observed from Table-2 that, majority (60.95 per cent) of the respondents suggested local market yard facility should be provided to promote participation of youth in agricultural activities followed by 58.09 per cent of the respondents suggested provision of credit facility. Whereas; 55.23 per cent each of them suggested for availability of inputs in time and awareness about subsidy and schemes. Further, more than half of the respondents suggested government should promote organic as well as group farming (51.42 per cent) and proper rate to farm produce (50.47 per cent) to promote participation of youth in agricultural activities.

Table 2: Suggestions of rural youth to promote their participation in agricultural activities.

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Respondents (N=105)	
		Number	Percentage
1	Availability of inputs in time	58	55.23
2	Provision of credit facility	61	58.09
3	Awareness about subsidy and schemes	58	55.23
4	Local market yard facility should be provided	64	60.95
5	Government should promote organicas well as group farming	54	51.42
6	Proper rate to farm produce	53	50.47

Conclusions

Study found that a significant issue among the farming youth is their lack of awareness about new technologies, schemes, and policies. This lack of exposure to innovative production techniques indirectly affects the productivity of crops. Additionally, the farming youth are generally uninformed about government policies aimed at attracting and retaining them in the agricultural sector, and the benefits associated with these policies. To address this issue, awareness programs, camps, and demonstrations should be organized by KVKs, SAUs, and NGOs to make the farming youth aware of these initiatives. Furthermore, many farming and non-farming youth have limited education when it comes to handling smartphones. Therefore, the government should promote adult education specifically through platforms established by KVKs. It is crucial to strengthen agricultural policies to retain the youth's interest and involvement in farming.

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