

Factors affecting the agripreneurial behaviour of rural youth involved in mushroom production as an enterprise

Abstract

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched ARYA project in the year 2016. The project's main objectives are to entice rural youth to participate in India's agricultural sector and to create employment opportunities in the agricultural and related sectors. It is recognized that there is greater potential for mushroom cultivation as an enterprise as there is increasing consumers' preferences in nearby cities towards mushroom. The KVK promoted mushroom cultivation through demonstrations, capacity building and by providing critical inputs under the project. As a result, rural youth are motivated and engaged in spawn production, mushroom cultivation, marketing and mushroom processing. The result of the present study reveals that majority of the rural youth of successful enterprises as well as discontinued enterprise exhibited a medium level of agripreneurial behavior. The agripreneurial behaviour of rural youth of successful mushroom enterprises correlated positively and significantly with factors like age, education, gender, agri-enterprise experience, occupation, training, social participation, family size, land holding, annual income, source of credit, attitude toward agri-enterprise, extension contact, and mass media exposure. In case of the agripreneurial behaviour of rural youth of discontinued enterprises the variable gender, agri-enterprise experience, occupation, training, social participation, family size, land holding, annual income, attitude toward agri-enterprise, extension contact, and mass media exposure showed positive and significant correlations with agri-entrepreneurial behavior.

Key words: rural youth, mushroom enterprise, agripreneurial behavior, positively and significantly related.

Introduction

Agricultural enterprise encompasses activities related to agricultural production, processing, marketing, and distribution of agricultural products. The challenges of dwindling populations and limited employment opportunities in rural areas can lead to decreased sustainability of local businesses and reduced tax bases, impacting essential services like healthcare and education. Entrepreneurs drive innovation and speed up structural changes in the economy thereby making an indirect contribution to productivity (Herrington et al., 2008). Agri entrepreneurship is nowadays a major opportunity for the people who live in rural areas. Rural entrepreneurs often play a significant role in community development, addressing their needs, and contributing to social well-being can enhance the reputation and sustainability of agri-ventures. (Ngatse-Ipangui and Dassah, 2019). Youth entrepreneurship is recognized globally as a

promising solution to economic difficulties in rural and developing areas, tackling issues such as unemployment and declining economic viability (Kimmit et al., 2020). In India, the government has implemented various schemes and initiatives to support agri-entrepreneurship, enhance infrastructure, and improve the agricultural value chain. The ARYA project, a technology-driven agri-platform, aimed to empower farmers by providing access to services related to agricultural marketing, finance, and technology. This initiative has successfully created profitable livelihood opportunities for rural youth, positioning them as role models for others. The orientation of youth groups toward agri-based enterprises has not only demonstrated the potential of such ventures but also increased the social prestige and acceptability of rural youth. The "Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA)" initiative was initiated by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) during the 2015–16 period, acknowledging the crucial role of rural youth in agricultural development, with a special emphasis on the nation's food security and the empowerment of rural young individuals. The primary aim of this project is to provide viable income-generating opportunities for rural youth under 35 years of age and actively involve them in agricultures highlighted by (Pal et al., 2021). The initiative is dedicated to fostering engagement and participation of the younger population in agricultural activities. The present study was carried out to find out the agripreneurialbehaviour of rural youth trained under ARYA for establishing mushroom enterprise and the factors affecting their agripreneurialbehaviour. The KVK promoted mushroom cultivation through demonstrations, capacity building, and by providing critical inputs under the project. As a result, rural youth are motivated and engaged in spawn production, mushroom cultivation, marketing, and mushroom processing. Because the cost of mushroom cultivation is low, rural youth are getting attracted to mushroom cultivation.

Materials and Methods:

The study was carried out using primary data gathered from the rural youth trained under ARYA by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gwalior During the year 2016–2017 and 2017–18, total 40 numbers of rural youths were trained under the scheme to start mushroom enterprise.

The agripreneurial behavior of mushroom growers was measured with the help of scale developed for the purpose which consist of seven components (48 statement), namely opportunity identification, risk taking, resource mobilization, innovativeness, marketing, adaptability and networking.

Scoring and categorization: To determine the entrepreneurial behaviour among the agripreneurs, the scores obtained by the members for the above seven components were summed up there are 48 statements in seven components, and the score of 48 statements was done in 5 quantum in which the lowest score was 1 and the highest score was 5. An individual member could obtain a minimum of 48 and a maximum of 240 scores, the total score obtained by the members indicated the degree of entrepreneurial behavior. The obtained range of scores on the scale was 48 to 240. The respondents were grouped into three categories based on the exclusive class interval technique.

Category	Score
Low	48-112
Medium	113-175
High	176-240

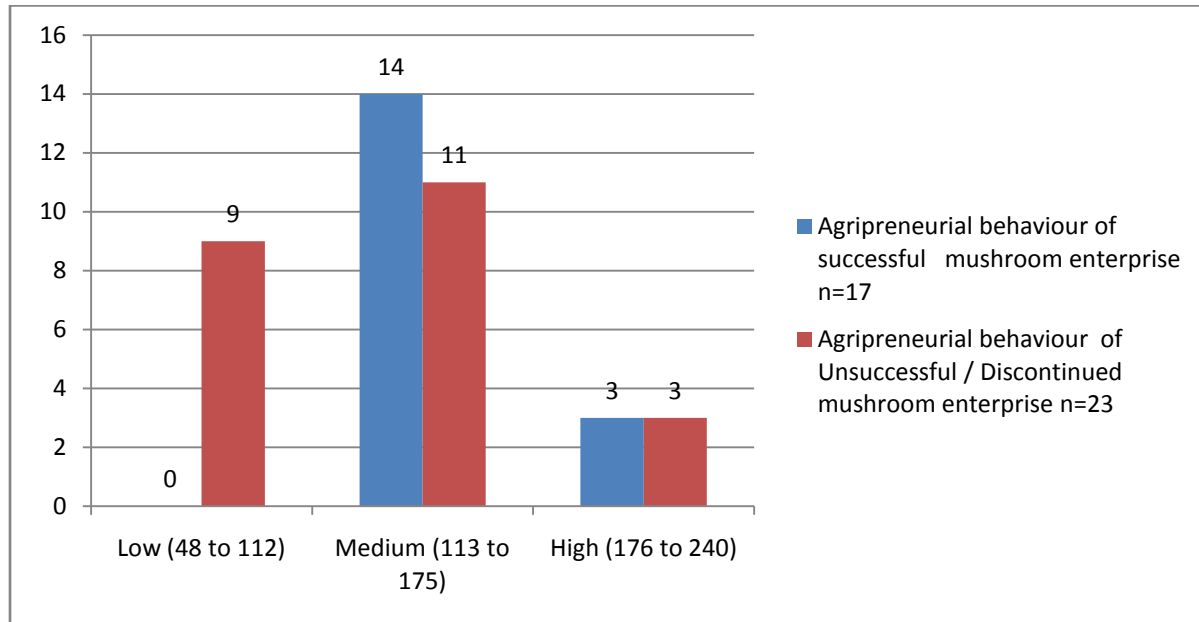
Result and discussion:

1. Agripreneurial behaviour of rural youths of mushroom enterprise

The analysis of overall agripreneurial behaviour reveals a situation where a large majority of mushroom enterprises were moderate in their entrepreneurial ability. The data given in Figure 1 reveals that, of the rural youth who are effectively running their mushroom enterprise, 82.35 percent of the respondents exhibited medium level of agripreneurial behaviour, while 17.65 percent, exhibited high agripreneurial behaviour.

With respect to the agripreneurial behaviour of rural youth who had discontinued mushroom enterprise, 47.82 percent of the respondents exhibited medium level of agripreneurial behaviour followed by 39.14 percent had low agripreneurial behaviour, whereas only 13.04 percent of rural youth had a high level of agripreneurial behaviour. The finding is in line with the findings of Shivacharan *et al.*, (2015) and Baidha *et al.*, (2019).

FIG. 1: AGRIPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF RURAL YOUTH OF MUSHROOM ENTERPRISE (N=40)



2. Relational analysis between Agripreneurialbehaviour and profile of the respondents

Considering the importance to understand the nature and degree of relationship between agripreneurialbehaviour and profile of the respondents, the correlation analysis was done. The correlation between Agripreneurialbehaviour and the profile of the respondents is shown in Table1.

Table 1: Correlation between Agripreneurialbehaviour and the profile of the respondents

Independent variable	'r' value	
	Successful enterprise	Discontinued enterprise
Age	.238**	0.404 ^{NS}
Education	.256**	0.255 ^{NS}
Gender	.172**	0.430*
Agri-enterprise experience	.603**	0.467*

Occupation	.041**	0.222*
Training	.157**	0.119*
Social participation	.367**	0.232**
Family size	.363**	0.404*
land holding	.241**	0.572**
Annual income	.513**	0.435*
Source of credit	.309**	.234 ^{NS}
Attitude of rural towards agri-enterprise,	.603**	0.598**
Extension contact	.239**	0.390*
Mass media exposure	.023**	0.664**

* 0.05 significant level and ** 0.01 significant level, NS= non-significant,

The data in table 1 reveals that age, education, gender, agri- enterprise experience, occupation, training undergone, occupation social participation, family size, land holding, annual income, source of credit, attitude of rural towards agri-enterprise, extension contact and mass media exposure were positively and significantly related with agripreneurial behaviour of rural youth who are effectively running their mushroom enterprise. The above finding is in accordance with the finding of Shivacharan et al. (2015), Shirur et al. (2017), Baidha et al. (2019).

The table further shows the correlation between agripreneurial behaviour and the profile of rural youth who had discontinued mushroom enterprise. As per the findings in Table 1, the variables gender, agri- enterprise experience, occupation, training undergone, occupation social participation, family size, land holding, annual income, attitude of rural towards agri-enterprise, extension contact and mass media exposure were shows positively and significant relationship with the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth who had discontinued mushroom enterprise. The above finding is in accordance with the findings of Shivacharan et al. (2015), Shirur et al. (2017), Baidha et al. (2019).

Table 1 revealed there were non-significant correlation or relationship found between, age, education, and source of credit, and the agripreneurial behavior of the rural youth who had stopped their mushroom enterprises. Age shows a non-significant relationship with the entrepreneurial behaviour of mushrooms. It means that the age factor did not influence the entrepreneurial behaviour of the mushroom. The level of education also does not appear to be significantly related to the agripreneurial behavior of the rural youth who discontinued their mushroom enterprises. The source of credit, whether it's loans, grants, or other financial support, is not found to be significantly related to their agripreneurial behavior after discontinuing mushroom enterprises. The above finding is in accordance with the findings of Chikane (2018).

Conclusion:

The prevalence of moderate agripreneurial behavior among rural youth with successful mushroom enterprise underscores a balanced approach in managing these enterprises. For those who discontinued their ventures, the distribution between medium and low agripreneurial behavior indicates varied reasons for discontinuation, possibly including challenges in sustaining entrepreneurial efforts. The positive and significant relationships observed between various profile attributes and agripreneurial behavior underscore the multidimensional nature of entrepreneurship in the context of mushroom cultivation.

Understanding the nuances of agripreneurial behavior is crucial for designing targeted interventions and support systems that can enhance the sustainability and success of mushroom enterprises among rural youth. This analysis provides a foundation for further research and the development of strategies to bolster entrepreneurial capabilities in the context of mushroom cultivation.

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