

Youth participation in rural development in the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

This study elicits and understands rural youth's participation in different rural development activities that are being conducted in the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Data was collected by using a pre-tested and structured schedule. The demographic composition of youth revealed that majority of them were educated up to higher secondary school, belonged to Other Backward Class (OBC) and had a nuclear family. Majority of them were unmarried and opted farming as their major occupation, had low level of annual income, medium level of use of source of information, achievement motivation, social participation, extension contact and had moderately favorable attitude towards rural development activities. Results revealed that majority (50.00%) of the youth had a medium level of participation in rural development activities. Through NYKS many activities were listed out which were undertaken in respect to rural development. Based on the responses activities were arranged in sequence using the Garrett ranking technique to identify and rank which of the following activity is performed regularly and at high extent and vice-versa by the youths. Activities like sanitising village surroundings (Garrett score= 65.36), agricultural activities (Garrett score=62.51) and plantation (Garrett score=61.88) were found to be the major activities performed by the youths.

Key words- Youth, Rural development, Sanitization, Participation.

INTRODUCTION

Youth are considered as the pillars that provide support and strength to a country (Kapur, R. 2019). "The future of a country is determined to a large extent by what the youth learn in their formative years and their attitude and participation in the social system. This is because every civilized country should pay adequate attention to the needs, training, education and general upbringing of the youth. The quality of a nation can be judged by the extent of the attention it pays to its youth" (Butt et al., 2011). The youths are called to be as "Nation Builders" and they should have prepared themselves for a really constructive citizenship. Youth power, value, vision and mission are the important to development of any nation. Their behavioral pattern, thinking process, value and perception can be utilized for constructive purpose in rural development (Kirmse, S. B., 2022)

Conventionally, period from adolescence to middle age is termed as youth. The National Youth Policy, 2003 formulated by the Government of India covers all the youth in the country in the age group of 13-35 years. However, National Youth Policy, 2014 modified it and defined 'youth' as persons in the age group of 15-29 years. In the present report, we have adopted 15-34 years as youth. Conventionally, period from adolescence to middle age is termed as youth.

Youth in a country is the most viable and potential human resources not only in population structure but also in social structure. The need of youth development where almost one-half of SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly with a focus on empowerment, participation and well-being. According to report of "Youth in India (2022) Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation", Youth are a major force for sustainable development and key agents for social change, economic growth and technology innovation. From calling for urgent climatic action to tackling inequalities and gender biases, young people are driving the Decade of

Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) forward. As per the Report of Technical Group on Population Projections, constituted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.2% of the population for year 2021.

“The base of India’s development is the rural community and it has been said about the role of the youths as agents of change in rural developing society committed to growth with social justice, this was now being put in practical shape by setting up the Nehru Yuva Kendra” (Verma et al, 2012). Over the years, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan has established a network of youth clubs in villages, where Nehru Yuva Kendra have been set up. NYKS has targeted to identify areas of harnessing youth power for development by forming Youth Clubs, which are village level voluntary action groups of youth at the grassroots level to involve them in nation building activities. The core strength of NYKS lies in its network of youth clubs. Youth Clubs are village based organizations working for rural development and youth empowerment. Youth Clubs are composed of youth members ranging between the age group of 13-35 years. The basic objective for creation of youth clubs is to render community support through developmental initiatives involving activities with particular focus on youth empowerment. The implementation of programmes and activities of youth clubs is based on local needs and requirements by mobilizing resources from various government departments and other agencies, which include both national, State level and multilateral institutions. The youth clubs and its member volunteers form the base of the NYKS's vast national rural network.

Participation of youth in Rural development- The term ‘participation’ has several meanings; contribution, inputs, involvement, sharing, membership and partaking. There have been four main areas of participation of rural youth in development. The first is information-sharing, in this case, individuals are informed in order to facilitate collective and individual action, second is consultation, individuals are consulted, they provide ideas and suggestions, they interact with an organization and takes account of their feedback. Third is Decision Making, youth participate and get involved in decision making, which may be individual or joint with others, decision making may be on specific issues of a policy or a project and the last is initiating action, youth are involved in the commencement of any kind of accomplishment. In addition to it rural development is a dynamic process as it has several dimensions of growth. It focuses upon the upliftment and development of the rural people and their living standard. It also emphasizes the need to address various pressing issues of village that hinders the growth and improvement of these areas. Some activities viz. public health and sanitization, literacy, female empowerment, infrastructural development, agriculture, social welfare, youth clubs, and infrastructural development like irrigation and electricity are need to be planned and organized through different agencies involving youths to be take effective participation will definitely work in favor of the well-being of the rural areas. In view this “**Youth participation in rural development in the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, India**” was undertaken as a part of research work.

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, India. The district comprises of seven blocks i.e. Jabalpur, Kundam, Majholi, Panagar, Patan, Shahpura and Sihora. Majholi was purposively selected due to the highest number of active youth clubs among the others. Out of the total 197 villages in Majholi block, based on number of youth registered

under NYKS seven villages were selected based on maximum number of youth registered under NYKS. From each selected village, 10% of registered youth were selected by using proportionate random sampling to make the sample proportionate to the population size. Thus, selected sample comprised of 120 respondents. Ex-post facto research design was used for the purpose of the study. Primary data were collected with the help of a semi-structured schedule. A schedule was prepared by enlisting the various activities being conducted by NYKS and youth participation in those activities was measured on three-continuum scale. Further, a score of two for 'regular participation, while one and zero score for occasional' and 'never/no' participation, respectively. Thus, the cumulative score is obtained for each respondent and finally, they can be grouped in three categories namely low', 'medium' and high' considering the mean and standard deviation. To find out the which activity was majorly performed by the respondents, Henry Garrett's (1969) ranking technique was used. As per this method, respondents were asked to respond their extent of participation in different activities and converted into score value with the help of the following formula –

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Respond given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents.

N_j = Number of variable ranked by j^{th} respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographic composition revealed that the majority (44.33%) of youth were educated up to higher secondary school. A clear majority of the respondents i.e. 92.50 per cent were Hindu, 46.67 per cent of them belonged to other backward classes and 56.67 per cent were having a nuclear family. More than half (65.00%) of the respondents were unmarried and 43.33 per cent had farming as their major occupation. Majority (49.67%) of youth had low level of annual income, 47.50 per cent had medium level of use of source of information, 55.33 per cent of the youth had medium level of achievement motivation and 44.17 per cent of the youth had medium level of social participation. It could be noted that 54.17% of youths had medium level of extension contact and 55.83 per cent of them had moderately favorable attitude towards rural development activities. These findings are supported by the findings of Girei et al. (2016), Kitturmath et al. (2014), Bhanu (2006).

Table.1. Socio-economic profile of the respondents.			
S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education			
1.	Primary	9	7.50

2.	Middle	26	21.67
3.	Higher Secondary	52	43.33
4.	Undergraduate or more	33	27.50
Religion			
1.	Hindu	111	92.50
2.	Muslim	5	4.17
3.	Jain	4	3.33
Caste			
1.	General	21	17.50
2.	OBC	56	46.67
3.	SC	26	21.67
4.	ST	17	14.67
Family type			
1.	Nuclear family	68	56.67
2.	Joint family	52	43.33
Marital status			
1.	Unmarried	78	65
2.	Married	42	35
Occupation			
1.	Labour	7	5.83
2.	Caste Occupation	0	0
3.	Business	17	14.17
4.	Independent profession	0	0
5.	Cultivation	52	43.33
6.	Service	0	0
7.	Unemployed	44	36.67
Annual income			
1.	Low (up to 80000)	59	49.67
2.	Medium (Rs.80,001-1,60,000)	42	35.00
3.	High (Rs.1,60,001- 2,40,001)	19	15.33
Use of source of information			
1.	Low	28	23.33
2.	Medium	57	47.50
3.	High	35	29.67
Achievement motivation			
1.	Low	17	14.67
2.	Medium	67	55.33
3.	High	36	30.00
Social participation			

1.	Low	64	53.33
2.	Medium	53	44.17
3.	High	3	2.50
Extension contact			
1.	Low	49	40.83
2.	Medium	65	54.17
3.	High	6	5.00
Attitude towards Rural Development Activities			
1.	Less favorable attitude	24	20.00
2.	Favorable attitude	67	55.83
3.	Highly favorable attitude	29	24.17

Participation of youths in different rural development activities-

The study further reported that village sanitization activities under “Clean Village-Green village” initiative was found as predominant activity in which youth were engaged in spreading awareness and motivate people about the need and importance of cleanliness and to keep village dirt, filth and plastic free in Majholi Block. Furthermore, in Majholi block, agricultural production enhancement activities were practiced by youth at greater level. Youths are helping farmers to take up the alternate and innovative methods of farming to increase production. A success story written by Mercy Sellate, district youth coordinator Lunglei district of Mizoram reported that, youth helps farmers to take up alternate farming practices and demonstrating the possibilities of conserving environment and improving profitability in the agriculture sector.

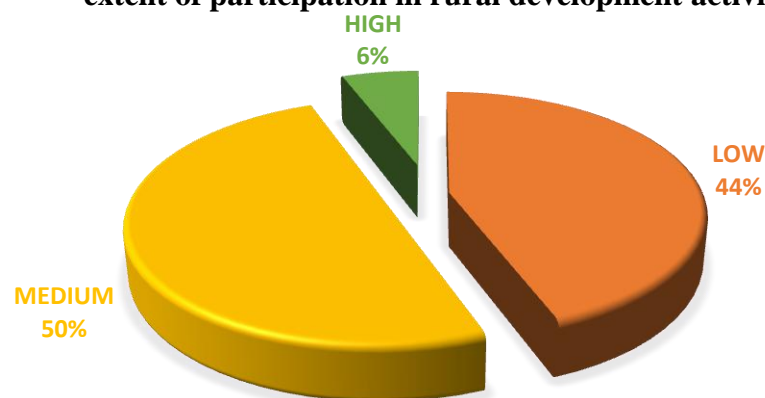
Results further revealed that activities like plantation, health and wellness, personality development programmes, educational, co-operatives, awareness creation, water and food related, infrastructural and recreational, skill development and ethical and welfare were also majorly practiced by the youth. Similar study by Roy (2021) revealed that “many regular programmes have been done under National Service Scheme and more needs to be done. The NSS volunteers host blood donation camps, tree plantation programme, pulse polio immunization campaign, rainwater harvesting work, preservation and cleaning of historical monuments. The dedicated volunteers engage in the formation and renovation of playground, construction of water tank, parks, new drain ways, low-cost toilet, digging up sock pits, repeating of kuccha road, house, cleaning of hospital premises, drain, road, water body, park, temples etc. The volunteers also arrange different health camps, environmental awareness camps, women sensitization programme, stop women trafficking campaign and digester rescue operation. Besides that, other camps such as national integration, youth motivational, save girl child, child labour protection, digital India also organized under NSS. Even, NSS volunteers have done well amid the covid-19 situation. They sent food and medicine to the doorstep of people even in full lockdown period”. Adetiya et al. (2020) also concluded that “there is a role of youth as agents of change. Youth as agents of change provide agricultural education to farmers with the aim of increasing knowledge, forming attitudes and skills. In addition, youth also provide training to farmers on how to manage agricultural waste into compost. Youth become the activator by showing the pioneering attitude standing in front of the farmers in

building a better farming spirit”.An another study conducted by Ayinde and Torimiro (2014)revealed that Community based youth organizations were found to be involved in agricultural and ruraldevelopment activities, in area of digging of well forprovision of water for household’s domestic usage and forirrigation and procurement and installation of cassavaprocessing machine, which may be a reflection of involvement of youth in agricultural development activities(Torimiro et al., 2008).

Table 2. : List of rural development activities			
S.no	Activities	Mean Garrett ranking	Rank
1.	Village Sanitization	65.36	I
2.	Health and wellness	59.18	IV
3.	Plantation	61.88	III
4.	Educational	57.76	VI
5.	Awareness	54.12	VIII
6.	Farming/ agricultural	62.51	II
7.	Water and food related	50.79	IX
8.	Personality development	58.28	V
9.	Skill development programmes	45.73	XI
10.	Co-operative	57.60	VII
11.	Ethical and welfare	44.93	XII
12.	Infrastructural and recreational	46.68	X

The data presented in figure 1 shows the distribution of the rural youth according to their participation in rural development activities. It is observed that out of the total respondents, 50.00 per cent of the respondents had medium level of participation, 44.17 per cent had low level and 5.83 per cent had high level of participation in rural development activities. The findings were in line with the findings of Verma and Khan (2012) who concluded that majority of rural youth were found in medium extent of involvement in NYK activities. Furthermore, majority of them participated in awareness campaign programmes and in youth club development programmes under Nehru Yuva Kendra activities.

Figure 1. Distribution of youths according to their extent of participation in rural development activities



CONCLUSION

Above finding of the study concluded that 50.00 per cent rural youths were found in medium level of participation in rural development activities. It is also found that majority of the rural youth participated in rural sanitising, agricultural and plantation activities. In the present study it could be clearly seen that majority of the youth had actively participated in different activities. The socio-economic development and living status of people in village depends on the type of youth living in rural areas, because they have abilities and can orient themselves to prevail developmental process. The emphasis should be laid more on youth development because they have been playing significant role in almost every sector and possess zeal and vigour, which is necessary to create more opportunities for self and community development.

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