

Attitude of Rural Youth towards Agriculture as a Source of Livelihood in Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

The research paper spotlights the attitude of rural youth towards agriculture as a source of livelihood. Agriculture forms the crux of the socio-economic development of the country and source of livelihood to majority of the rural life. The youth are the ideal catalyst to change the status of persons involved in farming, especially in the rural communities given their greater possibility to adapt new ideas, concept and technology which are important to change the way farming is practiced and perceived. Despite this, migration of rural youth to other sectors in search of other lucrative jobs has resulted in decreasing participation of rural youth in agriculture. This has several implications for the future of Indian agriculture and India's food security. It is imperative to find out the reasons for growing disinterest of youth to be involved in agriculture. The present study was carried out in 300 rural youth respondents in Jaipur and Alwar districts of Rajasthan using purposive sampling method. The data were collected by using a well-structured interview schedule. Results revealed that majority of rural youth had neutral attitude (66.67%) followed by 17.67 per cent had highly unfavourable attitude and 15.67 per cent had highly favourable attitude towards agriculture. This, in turn, to attract and retain young people in rural areas, positive attitude toward agriculture among rural youth needs to be developed.

Keywords: attitude, rural youth, livelihood

INTRODUCTION

Youth power has been a buzz word that has captivated the minds of the intelligentsia since a long time. The Government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years and it also varies depending on the programme. It is imperative for the nation to produce food not only to feed its one billion plus human population but also for an equal number of livestock. At this juncture young minds with creativity and achievement motivation seemingly can handle impossible tasks such as climate change adaptation & mitigation and enduring malnutrition. According to UNDESA (2021), the global population is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050 and the number of young people (aged 15 to 24 years) is also expected to increase to 1.3 billion by 2050, accounting for almost 14% of the projected global population. Generally, youth are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies and therefore they can easily transform the present status of farming. However, Govt. of India has launched a number of youth-oriented programmes recently, like Skill India, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Vikas Yojana, Start-up India, Stand-up India to promote youth empowerment and entrepreneurship (Singh et al., 2016). The ARYA (Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture) programme taking into account the issue of declining youth interest is yet another example of ICAR initiative in agriculture to attract rural youth.

At present there is insufficient youth participation in the agricultural sector in India even though this class of people is the most productive of any society as it contains people in the prime of their lives physically and mentally (*Mangal, 2009*). The data shows that, the maximum number of operational land holders(33.7%), belonged to the age group of 41-50 years, followed by 33.2 per cent in the agegroup of 51-60 years out of 100 million farmers in India. While this generation is reaching the age of retirement, the next one does not want to farm (*Mahapatra,2020*). Similar results were also reported by Kumar et al. (2019) in Gujarat who also found that many farm families expressed that they would like to offer high social status to youth by providing higher education. Lack of family support to continue farming and lack of encouragement from family members also leads to youth avoiding farming as a occupation. Lack of recognition was also an important factor. Widiyanti et al. (2019) revealed that the majority of the youth agreed that farming had low social status and some youth with neutral attitudes stated that they would like to continue to work with their parents and manage the land inherited from the parents. Onima et al. (2017) in their study on attitude of farmers towards farming as an occupation in Gujarat found that majority (74.28%) of farmers agreed that farmers were least privileged category in the modern society. Bhuva et al. (2017) concluded that more than half (52.38%) farmers felt farming stands at lowest ladder as occupation in the society, but at the same time revealed that 53.33 per cent of the farmers were strongly agreed that farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. Similarly, The survey of 5,000 farm households across 18 states conducted by Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) (*Sood, 2014*) claims that 76 per cent farmers would prefer to do some work other than farming. Sixty-one per cent of these farmers would prefer to be employed in cities because of better education, health and employment avenues . Furthermore, shifting out of farming is high among farmers below 30 years of age and research in other countries also showed that occupational mobility is higher among younger farmers and they were found to be more sensitive to income differentials between farm and non-farm occupations (*Sharma and Bhaduri, 2009*). India is losing more than 2,000 farmers every single day and that since 1991 and the overall number of farmers has dropped by 15 million (*Sainath, 2013*). The migration of rural youth to cities is around 45 per cent in the country, which is quite alarming. Questions required to be answered are whether the agriculture sector has enough prospects to provide decent livelihoods to youth, how youth are motivated to take up farming and farm-related businesses, and most importantly, whether leveraging youth for agriculture is an instrument for modernization and future growth of Indian agriculture. (*Sukanya Som, et.al., 2018*).

Hence, it is also essential to know about the attitude of rural youth towards agriculture as a source of livelihood. An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols." (*Hogg and Vaughan, 2005*). There are evidences from several sources for growing youth disinterest in farming. With careful alteration in the present mechanism of this sector, it can have the potential to engross the massive youth workforce presently available in the country. This would automatically contribute to resolving the crisis of youth unemployment and migration as well. In

order to attract and retain youth in agriculture a respectable brand image is to be formed so that people's view on this sector is altered.

METHODOLOGY

Rajasthan has been divided into 10 Agricultural regions viz. Jaipur region, Sikar region, Bharatpur region, Bikaner region, Sri Ganganagar region, Jodhpur region, Jalore region, Kota region, Udaipur region and Bhilwara region. Out of the 10 agricultural regions, Jaipur and Bharatpur regions were selected purposely based on the highest rural youth population in 2019-20. Out of these, one district from each agricultural region i.e. Jaipur district (9,56,603) from Jaipur agricultural region and Alwar (10,42,030) from Bharatpur region were selected purposely for the study because of highest rural youth population among all districts of these agricultural regions. Three tehsils each were purposely selected from Jaipur and Alwar districts based on highest rural youth population. Out of 13 tehsils in Jaipur district, Jaipur (2,84,620), Sanganer (1,47,310) and Amber (89,401) tehsils were selected based on highest rural youth population. Similarly, Alwar (1,75,872), Tijara (1,18,159) and Rajgarh (89,332) tehsils were selected from 18 tehsils of Alwar district based on highest rural youth population in 2019-20. Two gram panchayats were purposely selected from each tehsil based on the highest rural youth population. Thus, 12 gram panchayats were purposely selected from 6 selected tehsils of Jaipur and Alwar. Thus, 25 rural youth from each gram panchayats were selected randomly by using random number table method. Hence, 300 rural youth respondents were selected randomly for the present study. The population stated are collected from Regional Census Office, Jangana Bhawan, Jaipur, during 2019-20.

For this study attitude scale was developed by the investigator which had eighteen statements. It was administered to the rural youth for studying the attitude towards agriculture as a source of livelihood in Rajasthan. Out of eighteen statements nine were negative and positive each. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement for each statement on a five-point continuum namely strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The scores given to these responses were 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively for positive statements and 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to negative statements. The possible maximum and minimum scores of each respondent were 90 and 18, respectively. The data were collected by using a well-structured interview schedule prepared for the purpose. A draft interview schedule was prepared which was pre-tested by conducting a pilot study in non-sample area and suitable modifications were made in the final interview schedule which was then directly administered to the rural young farmers by the investigator and responses recorded at the time of interview. The data were analyzed using mean, percentage analysis and frequency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Table 1 depicts the item-wise analysis of each statement pertaining to attitude. Here, the responses were indicated on a five -point continuum namely strongly agree, agree, undecided,

disagree and strongly disagree. Table 2 indicates the distribution of respondents based on ranking of attitude statements based on total score and mean score. Ranking of each statement based on mean score was done to understand the relevancy of all statements in attitude scale constructed.

AS1. Agriculture leads to overall development of rural youth's family

Table 1 clearly indicate that 30.33 per cent of rural youth were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 27.33 per cent strongly disagree, 17.33 per cent disagree, 15.67 per cent neutral and 9.33 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 16 based on mean score (2.97).

AS2. Agriculture is generally considered as a laborious profession

Table 1 clearly indicate that 30 per cent of rural youth were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 21.67 per cent strongly agree, 18.33 per cent disagree, 15.67 per cent strongly disagree and 14.33 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 10 based on mean score (3.08).

AS3. With farming a person can be his own master

Table 1 clearly indicate that 36.33 per cent of rural youth were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 24.67 per cent neutral, 21.67 per cent agree and 8.67 per cent under both disagree and strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 2 based on mean score (3.68).

AS4. Educated youth should come to farming sector

Table 1 clearly indicate that 30 per cent of rural youth were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 29 per cent neutral, 26.33 per cent agree, 10 per cent disagree and 4.67 per cent strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 3 based on mean score (3.67).

AS5. I feel that agriculture is not a remunerative profession

Table 1 clearly indicate that 28 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 23.67 per cent strongly agree, 21.67 per cent disagree, 14.67 per cent strongly disagree and 12 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 10 based on mean score (3.08).

AS6. I do not want my children to take up agriculture as their vocation

Table 1 clearly indicate that 25.33 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 23.33 per cent strongly agree, 18.67 per cent strongly disagree, 17.33 per cent agree and 15.33 per cent disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 9 based on mean score (3.11).

AS7. I am very keen to migrate to urban area for other lucrative jobs and higher standard of living

Table :1 Item-wise analysis of attitude of rural youth towards agriculture as a source of livelihood

S.No.	Statements	SA		A		N		DA		SDA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
AS1	Agriculture leads to overall development of rural youth's family (+)	91	30.33	28	09.33	47	15.67	52	17.33	82	27.33
AS2	Agriculture is generally considered as a laborious profession (-)	65	21.67	43	14.33	90	30.00	55	18.33	47	15.67
AS3	With farming a person can be his own master (+)	109	36.33	65	21.67	74	24.67	26	8.67	26	08.67
AS4	Educated youth should come to farming sector (+)	90	30.00	79	26.33	87	29.00	30	10.00	14	04.67
AS5	I feel that agriculture is not a remunerative profession (-)	71	23.67	36	12.00	84	28.00	65	21.67	44	14.67
AS6	I do not want my children to take up agriculture as their vocation (-)	70	23.33	52	17.33	76	25.33	46	15.33	56	18.67
AS7	I am very keen to migrate to urban area for other lucrative jobs and higher standard of living(-)	68	22.67	40	13.33	79	26.33	61	20.33	52	17.33
AS8	I carry self- esteem that I am a proud farmer (+)	74	24.67	76	25.33	60	20.00	53	17.67	37	12.33
AS9	Farming is highly risky and challenging (-)	62	20.67	35	11.67	89	29.67	65	21.67	49	16.33

AS10	I enjoy farming because it only sustains my livelihood as well as national development (+)	64	21.33	94	31.33	90	30.00	39	13.00	13	04.33
AS11	Low price for agricultural produce and higher production costs has made agriculture less feasible profession (-)	89	29.67	42	14.00	66	22.00	53	17.67	50	16.67
AS12	Agriculture should be taught as a subject right from school to develop interest in the young minds (+)	83	27.67	64	21.33	91	30.33	31	10.33	31	10.33
AS13	I fear that agriculture do not increase my intellectual growth(-)	39	13.00	53	17.67	85	28.33	74	24.67	49	16.33
AS14	I prefer to take up farming only as a part time activity(-)	47	15.67	50	16.67	77	25.67	74	24.67	52	17.33
AS15	I am curious to adopt new methods and update latest technology in my farm (+)	60	20.00	76	25.33	59	19.67	54	18.00	51	17.00
AS16	I shall take up farming and motivate my peer ones to do the same (+)	93	31.00	76	25.33	81	27.00	28	09.33	22	07.33
AS17	Scientific farming is always profitable (+)	139	46.33	50	16.67	60	20.00	13	04.33	38	12.67
AS18	I feel that agriculture does not require any specialized knowledge (-)	54	18.00	44	14.67	92	30.67	63	21.00	47	15.67

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D- Disagree, SDA- Strongly Disagree and AS-Attitude Statement

Table:2 Distribution of respondents based on ranking of attitude statements

S.No.	Statements	TS	MS	R
AS1	Agriculture leads to overall development of rural youth's family (+)	894	2.97	13
AS2	Agriculture is generally considered as a laborious profession (-)	924	3.08	10
AS3	With farming a person can be his own master (+)	1105	3.68	2
AS4	Educated youth should come to farming sector (+)	1101	3.67	3
AS5	I feel that agriculture is not a remunerative profession (-)	925	3.08	10
AS6	I do not want my children to take up agriculture as their vocation (-)	934	3.11	9
AS7	I am very keen to migrate to urban area for other lucrative jobs and higher standard of living(-)	911	3.03	11
AS8	I carry self- esteem that I am a proud farmer (+)	997	3.32	7
AS9	Farming is highly risky and challenging (-)	896	2.98	12
AS10	I enjoy farming because it only sustains my livelihood as well as national development (+)	1057	3.52	5
AS11	Low price for agricultural produce and higher production costs has made agriculture less feasible profession (-)	967	2.52	16
AS12	Agriculture should be taught as a subject right from school to develop interest in the young minds(+)	1037	3.45	6
AS13	I fear that agriculture do not increase my intellectual growth(-)	859	2.86	14
AS14	I prefer to take up farming only as a part time activity(-)	866	2.85	15
AS15	I am curious to adopt new methods and update latest technology in my farm (+)	940	3.13	8
AS16	I shall take up farming and motivate my peer ones to do the same (+)	1090	3.63	4
AS17	Scientific farming is always profitable (+)	1139	3.79	1
AS18	I feel that agriculture does not require any specialized knowledge (-)	895	2.98	12

TS-Total Score, MS- Mean Score, R-Rank

Table 1 clearly indicate that 26.33 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 22.67 per cent strongly agree, 20.33 per cent disagree, 17.33 per cent strongly disagree and 13.33 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 11 based on mean score (3.03).

AS8. I carry self- esteem that I am a proud farmer

Table 1 clearly indicate that 25.33 per cent were agree with this statement followed by those coming under 24.67 per cent strongly agree, 20 per cent neutral, 17.67 per cent disagree and 12.33 per cent strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 7 based on mean score (3.32).

AS9. Farming is highly risky and challenging

Table 1 clearly indicate that 29.67 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 21.67 per cent disagree, 20.67 per cent strongly agree, 16.33 per cent strongly disagree and 11.67 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 12 based on mean score (2.98).

AS10. I enjoy farming because it only sustains my livelihood as well as national development

Table 1 clearly indicate that 31.33 per cent rural youth were agree with this statement followed by those coming under 30 per cent strongly agree, 21.33 per cent strongly agree, 13 per cent disagree and 4.33 per cent strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 5 based on mean score (3.52).

AS11. Low price for agricultural produce and higher production costs has made agriculture less feasible profession

Table 1 clearly indicate that 29.67 per cent were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 22 per cent neutral, 17.67 per cent disagree, 16.67 per cent strongly disagree and 14 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 16 based on mean score (2.52).

AS12. Agriculture should be taught as a subject right from school to develop interest in the young minds

Table 1 clearly indicate that 30.33 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 27.67 per cent strongly agree, 21.33 per cent agree and 10.33 per cent each under disagree and strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 6 based on mean score (3.45).

AS13. I fear that agriculture do not increase my intellectual growth

Table 1 clearly indicate that 28.33 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 24.67 per cent disagree, 17.67 per cent agree, 16.33 per cent strongly disagree and 13 per cent strongly agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 14 based on mean score (2.86).

AS14. I prefer to take up farming only as a part time activity

Table 1 clearly indicate that 25.67 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 24.67 per cent disagree, 17.33per cent strongly disagree, 16.67 per cent agree and 15.67 per cent strongly agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 15 based on mean score (2.85).

AS15. I am curious to adopt new methods and update latest technology in my farm

Table 1 clearly indicate that 25.33 per cent were agree with this statement followed by those coming under 20 per cent strongly agree, 19.67 per cent neutral, 18 per cent disagree and 17 per cent strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 8 based on mean score (3.13).

AS16. I shall take up farming and motivate my peer ones to do the same

Table 1 clearly indicate that 31 per cent were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 27 per cent neutral category, 25.33 per cent agree, 9.33 per cent disagree and 7.33 per cent strongly disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 4 based on mean score (3.63).

AS17. Scientific farming is always profitable

Table 1 clearly indicate that 46.33 per cent were strongly agree with this statement followed by those coming under 20 per cent neutral category, 16.67 per cent agree, 12.67 per cent strongly disagree and 4.33 per cent disagree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 1 based on mean score (3.79).

AS18. I feel that agriculture does not require any specialized knowledge

Table 1 clearly indicate that 30.67 per cent were neutral with this statement followed by those coming under 21 per cent disagree, 18 per cent strongly agree, 15.67 per cent strongly disagree and 14.67 per cent agree categories.

Table 2 revealed that this statement was ranked 12 based on mean score (2.98).

Overall Attitude of Rural Youth towards Agriculture as a Source of Livelihood

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of rural youth according to overall attitude based on mean and standard deviation. The results are depicted below.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents according to their overall attitude towards agriculture as a source of livelihood

Category	Respondent's Attitude	
	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Unfavourable (<52.27)	53	17.67
Neutral (52.27 to 64.65)	200	66.67
Highly favourable (>64.65)	47	15.67
Total	300	100
Mean-58.46	SD-6.19	

A perusal of table 3 indicated that majority of rural youth (66.67%) had neutral attitude followed by 17.67 per cent had highly unfavourable attitude and 15.67 per cent had highly favourable attitude when mean (58.46) and standard deviation (6.19) is used as a check.

Discussion

It is obvious that majority of rural youth had neutral attitude towards agriculture as a source of livelihood. Attracting and retaining youth in farming is critical for Indian agriculture. Most of the new innovations (both technical and institutional) require a skilled agricultural work force. For instance, promotion of high value agriculture, precision farming, organic cultivation, Hi-Tech horticulture, micro-propagation, Integrated Pest Disease and Nutrient Management, Post Harvest Management, development of backward and forward linkages etc, require well trained young farmers with enthusiasm and passion for farming and ability to take risks.

Attitude is the prime cause for the growth of an individual and will have great impact on the way we think, the way we perceive and the way we do the things. It is the determining factor for the success or failure of any vibrant endeavor. The results are in conformity with findings of Kitturmathet *al.* (2014) and Uttejet *al.* (2020).

Suggestions for future research

1. A similar study of research can be taken up in other parts of state involving large sample of rural youth.
2. Action research on the strategies adopted by successful farm youth in effectively dealing with vagaries and uncertainties in rural areas.
3. An evaluation study on the effectiveness of government efforts in retaining back of rural youth in farming.

Limitations of the study

1. The findings of the study were based on verbal expressions of the respondents. Therefore, the findings were conditioned by the extent of reliable and valid information provided by those selected for the purpose of investigation
2. The area of the study was restricted to two districts of Rajasthan state, Jaipur and Alwar, respectively. Hence, generalizations if any based on this could be restricted to other areas.

CONCLUSION

As farming is the most predominant avenue for the growth and development of a country, it became mandatory to strengthen the farming through potential and dynamic youth of the country. The attitude of youth towards farming is the important concern to design deliberate strategies for retaining youth in farming. Since youngsters are highly educated and more aware about mass media, their interest towards agriculture arouses. Improved technologies are welcomed by the youth as a means of simplifying their tasks. There is a dire need to bring remaining one-third of them to involve actively in farming. Hence, the extension functionaries and researchers must communicate the advance technologies which are feasible at farm level to

the youth in farming in time. Reduced costs of inputs and proper remunerative prices to their farm output also encourage them to involve in farming. Once their problems are addressed and are recognized by all stakeholders, youth will certainly show interest in agriculture as a source of livelihood.

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