

Correlates of Rural Youth's Socioeconomic Attributes and Attitude towards Rural Development Activities

ABSTRACT

Young people in rural areas are a crucial segment of the rural society, and they contribute greatly to agriculture and rural development. The research study was conducted in Majholi block of Jabalpur district in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh during the year 2019-20 to comprehend the attitude of youth towards rural development activities. The primary data were collected from 120 rural youth across seven villages by conducting personal interview. A scale constructed by Radhakrishnan and Arunachalam [11] is used to compute the attitude of youths regarding rural development activities. The results indicated that the majority of the youth had favorable attitude towards rural development activities. The education, family type, annual income, source of information, achievement motivation, extension contact and social participation of youths were found to be positively and significantly correlated with their attitude towards rural development activities. Hence, the study suggested that there is need to promote rural-based developmental activities and create scope for enrolling and involving youth in developmental activities.

Keywords : Attitude, Empowerment, Rural Youth, Rural development activities.

INTRODUCTION

Youth have the drive, optimism, and vision to get things done and make a positive difference in the realm of rural development. In context of India, almost two-thirds of the country's population is under the age of 35. According to the 2011 Census, the India's youth population, including adolescents, is around 550 million. This pool of young people will play a critical role in determining the country's fate. The rise in the youth population has made India the world's youngest country and one of the top in terms of human resource. It is critical to capitalize on this demographic dividend and channel the youth's potential toward country's development. After finishing their studies, rural youth in developing countries refuses to return to their villages to make an effective contribution to the development of rural areas and communities where they live, but instead migrate to urban areas. This is due to a variety of obstacles such as a lack of income and employment, poor infrastructure, limited opportunities for further professional growth, an impaired social life, an impoverished and undeveloped infrastructure. However, confronting and resolving these issues necessitates the commitment, support, and enthusiasm of youth to make a contribution with full potential to rural development. Engaging young people in rural development should be one of the primary goals of rural development policies, and rural development strategies should be based on this goal.

“Attitude is the degree of the positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object”[13]. Psychological object means any symbol, phrase, slogan, idea, person and institution towards which people can differ with respect to positive or negative effect. Development on the other hand can be defined as the progress made by a nation to overcome its social, political and economic problems in order to improve the quality of life of the people through the effective mobilization of its resources[3]. As far as rural development and agricultural development are concerned, youth constitute the driving force; their attitude is cultivated in a very way that they are productive, especially when the goal is to bring about rural development. The primary reason behind this is that youth possesses a variety of attributes that, when fostered and nourished, can be highly beneficial to agricultural and rural development. Umeh & Odom[14] studied on role and constraints of youth associations in agricultural and rural development at Aguata LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria reported

that clubs and organizations have become involved in a variety of activities such as planting, construction, contribution to the advancement and application of science and technology, resource efficiency, manufacturing and rural job creation and youth populations are associated in the use of recommended farming techniques and systems, as well as research activities to find alternate methods and ideas that may benefit rural livelihoods

The rural population's living standard is determined by several factors such as food and health, safety, education, homes and protection. Agriculture is significantly vital, and it is assumed to be incredibly significant for people in rural areas. Their active participation in agriculture is possible only if they have requisite skills, information and a positive attitude towards agriculture. According to Exposure Natinal Youth Policy Draft [5] favorable attitude is one of the important prerequisites for the willingness to participate in agriculture and choosing agriculture as a career and participation of young people and interventions on behalf of the community will integrate and bond youth with their communities. Youth must be involved in monitoring programmes at the village / Panchayat level to improve quality and reduce misuse and corruption. Youth populations are associated in the use of recommended farming techniques and systems, as well as research activities to find alternate methods and ideas that may benefit rural livelihoods . The active participation of rural youth in developmental activity is highly dependent on their frame of mind, opinion and their willingness to bring prosperity and development in their village. Radhakrishnan and Arunachalam[11,12] suggested and reported that understanding youth's attitude is an important perspective and currently, state and central governments are initiating a variety of rural development activities through various schemes in order to improve rural conditions.

With this in mind, this study was carried out to investigate the attitude of rural youth and the relationship between personal, psychological, and social economic characteristics of youths with their attitude towards rural development activities, which in turn make sure the development of the rural areas as well as community. This study is useful to policymakers to make plan and implement programmes in rural areas more effectively.

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh state in India. Majholi block was purposively selected due to the highest number of youth clubs are active in this block. Out of 197 villages in Majholi block only seven villages were selected based on maximum number of youth registered under Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan. From each village 10 per cent of the youth were selected on the basis of proportionate random sampling. Thus, selected sample was comprised of 120 respondents. Ex-post facto research design was used for the purpose of the study. Primary data was collected with the help of well structured interview schedule consisting of both open-ended and closed ended questions. The scale constructed by Radhakrishnan and Arunachalam [11] was employed to learn the attitude of rural youth towards rural development activities. Respondents were instructed to complete ten-item scale. The scores for positive items ranged from 5 to 1 and were labeled as strongly agree- 5, agree -4, undecided -3, disagree -2, and strongly disagree -1 , while the scores for negative items were reversed. The score was calculated by adding the scores obtained for each item. Scores ranged from 50 to 10, with 50 being the highest and 10 being the lowest (minimum). The responses are classified as less favorable, moderately favorable, or highly favorable using the cumulative frequency method. The data was organized, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and correlation coefficient.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that 55.83 per cent of respondents had a moderately favorable attitude , whereas 24.17 per cent of them had highly favorable attitude and 20 per cent youths expressed less favorable attitude towards rural development activities respectively. The research findings are in line with the study of Veeramasu and Jahanara [15]who revealed in their study on attitude of rural youth towards rural development programmes in Guntur block of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh that majority (60.84%) of the rural youth have favorable attitude followed by less favorable (24.16%) and more

favourable (15.00%) attitude towards the rural development activities. Another study by Kitturmath et al.[6] on demographic profile and attitude of rural youth towards rural development activities revealed that majority (70.83%) of the respondents had favourable attitude followed by less favourable attitude 15 per cent and the remaining 14.17 per cent of the respondents belonged to more favourable attitude in rural development activities.

Table 1. Distribution of Rural Youth based on their attitude towards rural development activities (N=120)

S. n.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less favorable attitude	24	20
2.	Moderately Favorable attitude	67	55.83
3.	Highly favorable attitude	29	24.17

Respondents Attitude towards rural development activities-

Data in table 2 reveals that among the ten items majority of youth agreed with “Participation of rural youth in rural development activities will bring rural prosperity” with the highest mean score of 4.14 followed by “Agriculture is the best venture for rural youth so as to make them self-employed” “Promotion of youth clubs paves ways for the systematic execution of rural development”, “Any development activities for rural youth must have its base on their social and economic needs”, “Rural youths are to be trained properly to use the available rural resources for the development activities” with mean score of 4.05, 4.00, 3.88 and 3.84, respectively Furthermore, maximum respondent disagreed with the negative statements like “Youth participation is not required for the rural development activities” with mean score of 3.76 followed by “Vocational training programmes for youth are simply a means of wastage of time”, “Youth cannot get profitable income from the village/agriculture based activities”, “We have not seen any self-employment programmes for rural youth now days”, “Support from the rural development programmes is not available in time for rural youth” with mean score 3.74, 3.67, 3.21 and 2.58 respectively. The findings indicate that youth had favorable attitude toward rural development activities and understand the need for development, and that their role is critical and they must contribute wholeheartedly and works with zest and enthusiasm for developing rural areas. The result is in agreement with Chander[4] who stated that youth seem to be inclined to adopt ideas and technologies, so agricultural extension services should target youth in order to transform agriculture and rural development. It could be concluded that youth had a favorable attitude toward rural development activities, but they still require some encouragement from the government or an organization to prepare favorable and supportive policies, plans and projects to involve youth in developmental activities as well as to strengthen and revitalize the existing extension system, responsible for technical know-how and other relevant details to youth regarding interventions of rural development in their respective area.

Table 2. Attitude of rural youth towards rural development activities-

S.n.	Statements	SA	A	UN	D	SDA	Mean score
1	Rural youths are to be trained properly to use the available rural resources for the development activities.	28	61	21	4	6	3.84
2	Participation of rural youths in rural development activities will bring rural prosperity.	42	42	30	4	2	4.14
3	Any development activities for rural youths must have its base on their social and economic needs.	45	37	24	6	8	3.88
4	Agriculture is the best venture for rural youth so as to make them self-employed.	42	45	20	8	4	4.05
5	Promotion of youth clubs paves ways for the systematic execution of rural development.	44	45	19	12	0	4.00
6	Youth participation is not required for the rural development activities .	0	5	4	70	16	3.76

7	Youth cannot get profitable income from the village/agriculture based activities.	4	4	25	58	31	3.67
8	Vocational training programmes for youths are simply a means of wastage of time.	5	5	23	60	25	3.74
9	We have not seen any self-employment programmes for rural youths now days.	5	10	22	55	25	3.21
10	Support from the rural development programmes is not available in time for rural youth.	30	45	10	15	20	2.58

➤ **Correlates of socio-economic attributes of youth and their attitude towards rural development activities-**

Table 3. Correlation analysis of selected socio-economic attributes of youth with attitude they possess towards rural development activities.

S.n.	Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Education	0.342**
2	Religion	0.127 ^{NS}
3	Caste	0.037 ^{NS}
4	Family Type	0.212*
5	Marital status	0.091 ^{NS}
6	Occupation	0.032 ^{NS}
7	Annual income	0.219*
8	Source of information	0.288**
9	Achievement motivation	0.577**
10	Extension Contact	0.357**
11	Social participation	0.327**

* - 0.05 level of significance

** - 0.01 level of significance

NS = No significant

Table 3 depicts the relationships among various socio-economic characteristics of youth and their attitude toward rural development activities in the study area. It indicates that the independent variables like education, source of information, achievement motivation, extension contact, social participation (at 0.01 level of significance) and family type, annual income (at 0.05 level of significance) of the youth were significant and positively correlated with their attitude towards rural development activities. This could be due to the fact that as level of education, source of information, achievement motivation, extension contact and social participation increases, youth become more aware of the benefits of rural development and build a favorable perception towards rural developmental activities. Whereas variables like religion, caste, marital status and occupation had no significant relationship with the attitude of youth towards rural development activities. **The findings are partially supported Habib et al.[6], Habib[7] and Kitturmath et al. [8] who revealed that youths are the formidable part of any country and the extent of rural development and prosperity depends majorly on the kind of youths living in those areas. They also concluded that youth possess the zeal and potential which is if very essential and if directed in a right direction with right guidance would prove to be highly valuable for the rural community. It was revealed that education, extension contact and achievement motivation of youths had significant and positive correlation with attitude while family type, source of information and social participation had no significant relationship with attitude they possess with regards to rural development. Another study of Anarase et al [1] on relationship between profile of rural youth and attitude towards village development activities inferred that education, religion, family type and size, annual income, source of information, extension contact and achievement motivation of youths were positively and significantly correlated with attitude towards village development activities. Whereas a study on attitude of youth towards rural development projects in Lagos State, Nigeria by Olujide[9] found that majority of respondents**

belonged to youth organizations and took part in rural development projects and also concluded that educational level has no effect on respondents' actions toward rural development, but attitude has an effect on respondents' level of participation in rural development projects. This is a positive indicator of project sustainability in rural areas, and the government should help provide funds for rural development projects. Furthermore, extension agents, particularly those in the agricultural sector, should assist in the formation of youth organizations related to rural development.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that majority of the youth (55.83 %) had favorable attitude towards rural development activities. The variables like education, family type, annual income, source of information, achievement motivation, extension contact and social participation were found to be significantly correlated with rural youth attitude for rural development activities. Rural development in India is extremely crucial for the country's overall progress. Young people are equip with skills and competencies they work hard and are avid to accomplish something, involvement of youth can bring improvement in rural communities in different areas to bring sustainable rural development .Youth participation in rural developmental projects would therefore end up making a very empirical contribution to socio - economic development of rural areas , increase economic opportunities at the village level, and improve the living condition of rural communities as by bringing overall prosperity and welfare in rural areas.

Consent

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

RECOMMENDATIONS :-

This research indicated that youths living in the rural areas possessed favourable attitude towards rural development and they are ready to contribute in the field of developing the rural community. Therefore, promoting them by creating opportunities, taking up plans and programmes, voluntary involvement of youth in decision and policy making activities for rural community may help in improving the condition of rural area as well as of people living there. We recommend that with the help of local authorities government should draft policies more cohesively in regard to the area nearby Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh for assisting in improving the quality of education, resources that are needed in the rural areas and room to manoeuvre so that maximum number of youths can be retained in the villages and their potential to be utilized in developing rural areas.

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