



Factors Influencing Youth to Move Away from Agriculture

Dr. M. Sampath Kumar*, Dr. K. Rajesh, Ms. K. Bhavya Sree, Dr. R. Sathish, and Dr. T. Arunbabu

Babu Jagjivan Ram Agricultural College, Sircilla – 505 405

Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad- 30, Telangana

Corresponding Author

Dr. M. Sampath Kumar

Email: sampathmspr@gmail.com



OPEN ACCESS

Keywords

Agriculture, Factors influencing, Rural youth

How to cite this article:

Kumar, M. S., Rajesh, K., Bhavya Sree, K., Sathish, R. and Arunbabu, T. 2024. Factors Influencing Youth to Move Away from Agriculture. *Vigyan Varta* 5(8): 142-145.

ABSTRACT

Agriculture is one of the major sources of the Indian economy where more than 60 per cent of the population depends on it for survival. Unfortunately, as per the survey of 5,000 farm households across 18 states of India, Sood (2014) reported that 76% of farmers wanted to give up farming. Agriculture is seen as a non-remunerative livelihood activity with unstable returns due to the increasing costs of production, climatic risks, market failures, and a lack of social respectability. Lack of attention to the needs of farmers, especially youth, has contributed to rising agrarian distress and consequently, weak aspirations in agriculture. India presently has the leading population of youth (356 million) in the globe even more than that of china (269 million). In currently, 43.6% of the population in Telangana is between the age of 15- 40. There are several factors which influencing youth to move away from agriculture includes low income, low minimum support price, small landholdings, parent's expectations, lack of interest and non-farming aspirations and negative perception towards farming, inadequate and expensive irrigation facility and non-availability of labours/ high cost of labours, stress, Risk and uncertainties in farming and marketing problems.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is core to every nation's development and it remains fundamental to poverty reduction and economic growth especially for the developing countries in the 21st century (World Bank, 2008). India in the whole world is known as the youngest country with 66 % of the population under the age of 35. Presently, Indian agriculture is facing a number of emerging challenges like land fragmentation, labour shortage, depleting natural resources, climate change, low profitability, competition due to market liberalization, nutrition and gender issues etc. Around 61% of farmers said they would readily quit farming if they get alternative jobs in urban areas. Farming, according to them, has become a problem of high production cost and low income with very little promise of change (Singh, 2017).

The society largely looks down upon farming, as also families of prospective brides do not prefer farming youth. Consequently, there is growing disenchantment among rural youth towards agriculture vocation and they find it much lucrative to migrate to cities to do even menial jobs. The scenario of migration is very dangerous and thinkable because 19 per cent of the Indian population was in urban areas in 1951 and expected to jump to around 42.5 per cent of the total population by 2025 (Census, 2011). It has been observed that only 20 per cent youth of rural families are directly engaged in the agriculture as a source of employment which is an indicator of grim situation of agriculture in future (Kumar and Slathia, 2017). Large-scale migration of rural youth from farming to urban areas has caused concern among the agricultural policy makers, since, such a trend, if not checked, is likely to affect agricultural activities in the future. The truth is the young India is running away from farming, they are running behind technology and software.

Importance of youth in agriculture

Young farmers play an important role in ensuring food security if they are encouraged to involve in farming and their challenges are addressed. Youth are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies and therefore agricultural extension services should target youth to transform agriculture. Agricultural extension services can be effectively addressed by encouraging and supporting participation of youth in agriculture. Improving youth capacities and increasing their involvement will help in changing the negative perception about farmers as 'uneducated and unskilled'. The participation of rural youth in the development process is essential in order to bring change in socio-economic structure and improving the quality of living of an individual.

Factors influencing youth to move away from farming

Economic factors

Low income: Sood (2014) found that about 53.37 per cent of farm households earn income lesser than poverty line income. Bihar, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Puducherry and Jharkhand had more than 60 per cent farm households earning less than poverty line while Telangana, Sikkim, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, D and N Haveli, Meghalaya, Punjab, Kerala, Chandigarh and Delhi had less than 40 per cent farm households earning below poverty line.

Low minimum support price: Low MSP rates are fixed by the government and MSP is not set for all the available crops which are the biggest problem among farmers in India.

Small landholdings: Youngsters are not able to get enough land to cultivate. All children get a share in their father's property that leads

to division of landholdings. Cultivation on such a small area is not economically feasible (Ram *et al.*, 1999).

Social factors

Low social status: Farming has low occupational status. Farmers don't get much respect as compared to people from another profession. Farming stands at lowest ladder as the profession in the society. Girls do not want to marry a farmer, marrying a farmer means physically hard life (Kaundinya, 2017).

Parent's expectations: Farmers don't want their children to take up agriculture as a profession. Parents always encourage their children to study to become doctors, accountants. The farmers wish their children to become professionals in other fields rather than agriculture, due to strenuous way of life and hardship experienced, thus, students 'enrolment into college/University of Agriculture is one of the least compares to technological or other professional Universities in India.

Psychological factors

Lack of interest and non-farming aspirations and Negative perception towards farming: Youth perceive farming as boring, not profitable and unable to support their livelihood, stressing and as a profession which require hard physical labour. Youth's attitude towards farming is mostly negative (World Bank, 2008).

Stress: Farming occupation encompasses all types of stresses to farmers; the farmers mostly experience unpredictable weather and financial problems as major stress factors (Khuresi and Somnundaram, 2018). The suicides among farmers all over India are the result of mental stress and this mental stress is most often caused by poverty and especially by indebtedness (Kumar, 2015).

Physical factors

Inadequate and expensive irrigation facility and non-availability of labours/ high cost of labours: Research study shown that farmers were facing various problems of inadequate irrigation facility (58.17%) (Singh, 2017). Lack of efficient irrigation systems (46%), often refers to the need for drip irrigation systems, which remain unaffordable among farmers (Guilini *et al.*, 2017). A farmer can't look after his farm without the help of added labours. Farming has become very difficult to function without labourers and skilled workers. The migration to urban areas also made difficult for the availability of agricultural labourers (Kaundinya, 2017).

High cost for buying and operating farm machinery: Farming is not seen as a viable business for small farmers. The primary reason, apart from the high-cost factor, was that farm equipment was used only for a few weeks' duration across the year, during the harvesting season.

Marketing problem: In agricultural marketing transportation cost, inadequate market infrastructure, lack of market information, lack of processing units, storage facility, price fluctuation were the major problems (Reddy and Kalasria, 2017).

Subsidies: Government has implemented agricultural debt, weaver and debt relief scheme. More subsidies and welfare schemes announced by the central and state government do not reach up to the farmers in reality. On the contrary, only big land holders are benefited by these schemes.

Risk and uncertainties in farming: Uncertainty and risk go hand in hand with farming. Agricultural production is directly dependent on nature including, (droughts, floods, frosts, storms, cyclones etc.) and long-term climate (such as climatic change including greater variability due to changes in

the greenhouse effect) and the ever-changing incidence of pests and disease

CONCLUSION:

India is losing more than 2,000 farmers every single day and that since 1991, the overall number of farmers has dropped by 15 million. Involvement of youth is epic necessary for agricultural development while at present youth involvement is below the mark despite of having agricultural education degree (Chander, 2018). Generally, youth are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies and, therefore, government, SAUs and extension services should target youth to transform agriculture. The youth could be the ideal catalyst to change the poor image of persons involved in agriculture, especially in the rural communities given their greater possibility to adapt new ideas, concept and technology which are all important to changing the way agriculture is practiced and perceived. By encouraging and supporting youth participation in agriculture improving their capacities and increasing their involvement will also help in changing the negative perception about farmers as “uneducated and unskilled, physical labourers engaged in a glamour less vocation with extremely low economic returns” There is urgent need to enhance the agricultural graduates’ participation in agricultural production. Important identified constraints are hard work, no assurance of profit, lack of incentives in farming, lack of access to farm implements and inputs, lack of insurance facility in agriculture and inadequate credit facilities. All these problems need attention to encourage the youth’s participation in agriculture.

REFERENCES

- Chander, M. (2018). Youth: Potential target for agricultural extension. Retrieved from esa.oskarblues.in/youth-potentialtarget-for-agricultural-extension/ on 13 Oct 2018.
- Giuliani, A., Mengel, S., Paisley, C., Perkins, N., Flink, I., Oliveros, O. and Wongschowski, M. (2017). Realities, perceptions, challenges and aspirations of rural youth in dryland agriculture in the midelt province, morocco. *Sustainability*, 9 (6): 871; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9060871>.
- Kaundinya, M. (2017). The difficulty of being a farmer. Retrieved from <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/UUK14BsraCTBUNOcJqwQYL/The-difficulty-of-being-a-farmer.html> on 18 Oct 2018
- Khuresi, S. and Somsundaram, K. (2018). Assessment of occupational stress among farmers in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra. *Internat. Journal of Communication Media and Public Health*. 5 (4): 1434-1440.
- Kumar, A. and Slathia, P. (2015). Rural youth in Agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/rural-youth-inagriculture/> on 12 Oct 2018.
- Ram, A., Saha, M. and Miyazaki (1999). Subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings. *Journal of Arid Environment*. 41(4): 463-477.
- Reddy, A.N.J. and Kalasria (2017). Problems of agricultural marketing in India. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313845567>. Problems of Agricultural Marketing in India.
- Singh, A. (2017). Beyond traditional farming. Retrieved from <http://www.hamarikrishi.com/beyond-traditional-farming> on 12 Oct 2018.
- Sood, J. 2014. India’s deepening farm crisis. 2014. Retrieved from the website (<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/indias-deepening-farm-crisis-76-farmers-want-to-give-up-farming-shows-study>) on 22.06. 2022.