



Agricultural Aspiration of Rural Youth

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out on the aspirations of rural youth engaged in agriculture farming. The study was undertaken in six taluks of Yavatmal and Nagpur district of Vidarbha in Maharashtra state during 2020-21, to analyze the aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture. The data were collected from a sample selected by random sampling methods 150 rural youth from (Pusad, Umardhed and Mahagaon taluks) Yavatmal district and other 150 rural youth from (Nagpur, Ramtek and Savner talukas) Nagpur district by using a pre-tested interview schedule. Standardized scales were used to the assessment of the aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture in the study. In this study, the majority (56.33%) of them aspired to take up improved agriculture occupation, 47.00 per cent of them aspired to take up dairy/poultry enterprise, 32.33 per cent of them aspired to the establishment of the poly house as protected cultivation, 47.00 per cent of them aspired to avail a sprinkler/ drip irrigation facility, 43.67 per cent of them aspired to enhance their land holdings by 2-4 acres, enhance their income by 50-75 per cent (42.33%), 37.33 per cent of them aspired to enhance their credit access by up to 33.00 per cent, 52.33 per cent of them aspired to acquire additional knowledge on crop production aspect, 41.00 per cent aspired to provide education to their children up to primary/middle school level education at the village level, and 56.33 per cent aspired to use KVKs /Agriculture Department/Agriculture University for having sources of information regarding market information/intelligence. The overall result was that more than half (58.66%) of the rural youth were involved in agriculture had a medium level of aspirations followed by an equal percentage of rural youth (20.67%) in each low and high levels of aspirations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Youth means energy and enthusiasm. Youth are the valuable resources of our country. They are the future communities' states and nations. Rural youth are the most important segment of the rural areas of a country. The rural youth of today are the hopes of tomorrow's better vision of agriculture. Rural youth are the backbone of the country. Rural youth have been playing quite a significant part in almost every country of the world as they possess zeal and vigor and they can build the nation. The emphasis on the rural youth is just because they are well aware of their strength and dynamism. Rural youth are recognized as effective "change agents". The rural youth are the most vital human resource of the nation on whom the present and future of the country depend. The progress of rural youth determines the development of a country. There are over 1.8 billion young people in the world today, 90.00 per cent of whom live in developing countries, where they tend to make up a large proportion of the population [1]. More than 400 million women Globally engaged in farm work, although there is absence of equal human rights in ownership of land in more than 90 countries [2] More than 400 million women around the world participate in agricultural projects, despite not having equal rights as men [3].

According to Census 2011, the youth population in India with the 15 to 35 years age group is approximately (35.36%) of the total population of 70 per cent (301 million) where rural youth live in rural areas and the remaining 30 per cent (129 million) were urban youth living in the urban area. As a majority of the rural youth come from rural areas, they are considered as the national agriculture builders of tomorrow. The population in the age group of 15-34 in India increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011, and 464 million in 2021. More than half of India's population is under the age of 25 years, with 65 per cent of the population under 35 years. The rural population is about 70 percent, and the indications are that the migration of rural youth to cities is around 45 percent in the country, which is quite alarming. Status in society, education for children, and security are typical aspirational themes for rural communities that are involved in agricultural activities [4].

The analysis of 22 studies and 419 research articles sheds light on the relationships between aspirations and rural youth. Aspirations of the rural poor play a significant role in shaping their activities and investments [5].

Aspirations characterize individuals' reflection of his /her several socio-psychological phenomena like aspiration, attitude, behavior, beliefs and traditions. An aspiration is one of these significant factors, which is straight forwardly concerned with the decision making of a person never see this aspiration directly but we know them to seem to work for. The level of aspiration must be expanded to include a variety of tendencies first it is an individual conception of his future prospects. This protects him against feeling or failure. In, this sense, the level of aspiration is affected by the future. Individual performance will be affected by a desire to do well. In this sense aspiration is a form of self-development.

1.1 Objectives

- i) To study the aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture
- ii) To study aspects-wise aspiration of rural youth towards agriculture

2. METHODOLOGY

In the present study, an exploratory research design was used. The present study was conducted in two districts of the Vidarbha region of regions Maharashtra state viz., Yavatmal (from Amravati revenue division) and Nagpur (from Nagpur revenue division). Three talukas from each district and five villages from each taluka were selected on the basis of the highest rural youth population, thus from 30 villages of a sample size of 300 rural youth were selected as respondents from these villages selected by using a random sampling method. The rural youth (male and female) with the age group of 16-30 years who must have been engaged in agriculture farming was considered respondents in this study.

For the measurement of aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture, the technique used by Preethi [6] with some alterations. To know the aspiration, rural youth were asked to mention their aspirations in farming activities, economic

and general by providing three items under each enterprise. Under each item of the enterprise, three sub-items were included in the study assigning a score of 3, 2 and 1 on a three-point continuum. The actual facts were collected personally with the help of a structured pre-tested interview schedule and data analyzed by suitable statistical methods to get a meaningful interpretation of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Aspects-wise Aspiration of Rural Youth towards Agriculture

An effort was made to assess the aspects-wise analysis of aspiration of rural youth towards agriculture. The results were analyzed and presented in Table 1.

The aspects-wise analysis of rural youth's aspiration towards agriculture was studied on the following dimensions. Farming activities aspirations, Economic aspiration and General aspiration of rural youth towards agriculture.

3.2 Aspirations about Farming Activities

3.2.1 Farming activities aspirations

It could be inferred from Table 1 that the majority of 46.00 per cent of rural youth aspired to take up horticulture along with agriculture, 42.67 per cent of them aspired to enhance crop productivity by 33 per cent, 46.67 per cent of them aspired to purchase combine harvester and tractor, 34.33 per cent of them not aspired to purchase livestock, 27.00 per cent aspired to purchase of more number cow/ buffalo, 56.33 per cent of them aspired to take up improved agriculture occupation, 47.00 per cent of them aspired to take up dairy/poultry enterprise, 38.00 per cent of them aspired to do packing farm produce for sale, 46.00 per cent of them not aspired to involved in the subsidiary occupation, 32.33 per cent of them aspired to the establishment of the poly house as protected cultivation, 45.00 per cent of them aspired to follow the use traditional storage facility, 47.00 per cent of them aspired to avail a sprinkler/ drip irrigation facility.

3.2.2 Economic aspiration

A birds-eye view of Table 1 inferred that 43.67 per cent of them aspired to enhance their land holdings by 2-4 acres, enhance their income by 50-75 per cent (42.33%), 52.00 per cent of rural

youth aspired to avail internet facility and 37.33 per cent of them aspired to enhance their credit access by up to 33.00 per cent, respectively.

3.2.3 General aspiration

It could be seen in Table 1, the majority of the respondent's rural youth (52.33 per cent) aspired to acquire additional knowledge on crop production aspect, 41.00 per cent aspired to provide education to their children up to primary/middle school level education at the village level, and 56.33 per cent aspired to use KVKs /Agriculture Department/Agriculture University for having sources of information regarding market information/intelligence.

The possible reasons might be the higher cost of land, technical complexities in land tenancy and they might be happy with the present status. It is observed that a huge majority of rural youth aspired to enhance crop production. Rural youth who aspired to enhance crop production would struggle hard to adopt superior practices for earning higher and continued profit. This might be attributed to the higher cost of implements, non-availability of irrigation/storage facility and non-availability of subsidies on farm implements. Similar results are reported by Hadagali [7], Lukngam and Tekale [8] and Preethi [6].

A critical look at Table 2 indicates the level of aspiration of rural youth practicing agriculture, it was found that more than half of them (58.66%) had a medium level of aspiration followed by the same percentage of respondents had low (20.67%) and high (20.67%) levels of aspiration towards agriculture.

It is possible that the aspirations are generally the result of increased contact with urban areas, more mass media participation and comparing themselves with other people. However, the majority of rural youth preferred farming as their occupation because of unemployment. Therefore, they aspired for the things which were within their reach.

The favorable factors for the increase in aspiration are more irrigation, income, improved technology, high use of mass media, social participation, training for skill development, etc. In the context of ever-increasing needs, demands and comforts, rural youths want to change their lifestyle by comparing with others.

The above results are in line with the outcomes reported by Tekale et al., [9], majority of rural

Table 1. Aspects-wise aspiration of rural youth towards agriculture

SI.No	Aspirations about farming activities	Frequency (n=300)	Percentage
I	Farming activities aspirations		
1.	Practicing allied activities in combination with agriculture		
	A. Agriculture alone	66	22.00
	B. Agri + Horti.	138	46.00
	C. Agri + Horti. +Forestry	51	17.00
	D. Agri + Horti. + Processing	45	15.00
2.	Enhancing crop productivity		
	A. None	09	03.00
	B. _ 33%	128	42.67
	C. 34-66%	115	38.33
	D. 67-100%	48	16.00
3.	Enhancing agricultural implements possession		
	A. None	37	12.33
	B. Hoe/ Mould board plough/ Power tiller/ Bullock drawn seed drill/Pump set	69	23.00
	C. Weeder/ Rotary weeder/ Thresher	54	18.00
	D. Combine harvester / Tractor	140	46.67
4.	Increase in the number of livestock		
	A. None	103	34.33
	B. Sheep/ Goat	44	14.67
	C. Cow /Buffalo	81	27.00
	D. Others (Fishery /Poultry, etc.)	72	24.00
5.	Occupational aspirations		
	A. Labour / Caste occupation	45	15.00
	B. Agriculture	169	56.33
	C. Improved cultivation	76	25.33
	D. Government service	09	03.00
6.	Enterprise aspirations		
	A. Agriculture	71	23.67
	B. Agri +Dairy/ Poultry/ Piggery	141	47.00
	C. Agri +Sericulture /Beekeeping	42	14.00
	D. Combination (Agri+ Input, Agri + rep., etc.)	46	15.33
7.	Post-harvest processing of products		

Sl.No	Aspirations about farming activities	Frequency (n=300)	Percentage
	A. Grading	56	18.67
	B. Value addition	81	27.00
	C. Packing	114	38.00
	D. Branding	49	16.33
8.	Subsidiary occupation aspirations		
	A. None	138	46.00
	B. Farm animals on rent	58	19.33
	C. Farm Implements on rent	50	16.67
	D. Kirana shop, carpenter, etc.	54	18.00
9.	Protected farming-related aspirations		
	A. None	79	26.33
	B. Green shade net house	87	29.00
	C. Poly house	97	32.33
	D. Fully atomized poly house	37	12.33
10.	Storage facility-related aspirations		
	A. None	46	15.33
	B. Traditional	135	45.00
	C. Warehouse	99	33.00
	D. Fully automated warehouse	20	06.67
11.	Irrigation facility-related aspirations		
	A. None	46	15.33
	B. Traditional	72	24.00
	C. Sprinkler/ Drip	141	47.00
	D. Fully automated Irrigation facility	41	13.67
II	Economic aspirations		
1.	Increase in land holdings		
	A. None	18	6.00
	B. 1-2 acres	98	32.67
	C. 2-4 acres	131	43.67
	D. >4 acres	53	17.67
2.	Enhancing income in agriculture		
	A. <25%	08	02.67
	B. 25-50%	101	33.67
	C. 50-75%	127	42.33

Sl.No	Aspirations about farming activities	Frequency (n=300)	Percentage
3.	D. >75%.	64	21.33
	Improvement in household material possession		
	A. None	17	5.67
	B. Radio/TV	43	14.33
4.	C. House Furniture	84	28.00
	D. Computer / Mobile / Internet facility	156	52.00
	Enhancing credit access for adopting agricultural innovations		
	A. None	43	14.33
	B. _ 33%	112	37.33
	C. 34-66%	92	30.67
	D. 67-100%	53	17.67
III.	General aspirations		
1.	Acquiring additional knowledge on innovative agricultural practices		
	A. None	6	2.00
	B. Production aspect	157	52.33
	C. Post-harvest processing aspect	64	21.33
2.	D. Marketing aspect	73	24.33
	Providing better and higher education for children		
	A. None	120	40.00
	B. Primary/Middle school education	123	41.00
	C. High school education	34	11.33
	D. Graduate and others	23	07.67
3.	Better access to market information/intelligence		
	A. None	05	01.67
	B. SMS services / KCC	80	26.67
	C. Bulletins	46	15.33
	D. KVKs/Agri. Dept./Agriculture University	169	56.33

Table 2. Overall aspirations of rural youth towards agriculture

Sl. No.	Aspirations	Frequency (n=300)	
		Number	Percentage
1	Low (<34.91)	62	20.67
2	Medium (34.91-69.89)	176	58.66
3	High (>69.89)	62	20.67
	Total	300	100.00

Mean= 52.40, SD = 17.49

youth (62.00 %) had performed medium level overall aspiration towards self-development. Radhakrishnan [10] and Radhakrishnan and Arunachalam [11] concluded that majority of respondents (64.00%) had a medium level of aspiration.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that more than half of the rural youth (58.66%) had a medium level of aspirations towards agriculture, whereas, 20.67 per cent of the rural youth had low and high levels of aspirations. The majority of the rural youth were observed in medium to high levels of aspiration category indicating the need to undertake different efforts especially by the planners to mold the rural youth's aspirations towards various agriculture occupation enterprises like dairy, poultry, sericulture, goat farming, value addition and small scale processing industry, as these will provide additional income along with agriculture for intellectual satisfaction and economically pleasing status of the rural youth in society and also efforts could be made by government agencies to provide better agricultural projects for fulfilling their farming, economic and general aspirations in a better way.

Income is the crucial factor to raise the aspirations of rural youth in agriculture. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of rural youth belonged to the low-medium category of annual income, therefore it is suggested that policy makers should mold the policies to attract and retain rural youth in agriculture through providing subsidiary agro-based enterprises like food processing, value addition, dairy, goatery, poultry, fishery, beekeeping and small scale industry, as these will provide supplementary income along with agriculture income to the rural youth and likewise efforts could be made by government agencies to provide better knowledge about agriculture and allied aspects like credits, marketing, etc., facilities to rural youth.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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