



UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, BANGALORE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
GKVK, BENGALURU- 560065

Name: **Rajesh C M**
ID. No.: PAMB0032
Class: II PhD. (Ag. Extn)

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Seminar-I
on
Challenges and Strategies for youth in Agriculture

Synopsis

In India, over 58% of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. As per Ministry of Statistics, the share of agriculture and allied sectors was 18.8 % of the Gross Value Added during 2021-22 at current prices. Average monthly income of farmer's households is Rs. 6426, of which 47.9 % of income comes from cultivation. Today, the main concern has shifted from higher farm production to higher returns on their investments. However, agriculture in India is faced with multiple challenges for accelerating agricultural growth these challenges may include low farm productivity, limited access to inputs and market, fragmentation of land, natural resource degradation, climate change, non-remunerative price, and limited surplus for value addition. Thus, on the one side, there is a need to diversify agriculture and make it more remunerative with the thrust on value addition and processing, on the other hand, the rural youth are moving away from agriculture sector. Youth are expected to play a vital role in the much-anticipated transformation of agriculture in India. According to national youth' policy, persons in the age group of 15-35 are defined as young.

At present, around 35% of the total population is in the age group of 15-35 years, out of which 75% live in rural areas. Migration of rural youth to cities is around 45% in the country, and it is estimated that only about 5% of youth are engaged in agriculture. In developed countries, skilled workforce is in the range of 60% to 90% of the total workforce, whereas in India, the skilled workforce is as low as 10%. Creation of successful economic models in the villages is crucial to catalyze and energize youth to become entrepreneurs in rural. Retaining youth in agriculture, is therefore strongly linked to agriculture. At present, the youth are having different needs, challenges, aspirations, attitudes, habits, and values of life. The development of personal, social, economic, and spiritual aspects of rural youth are possible, only when their needs, challenges, aspirations, habits, and values of life are recognized early and guided properly with this background the present seminar is conceptualized with the following objectives.

1. Challenges and Strategies for youth in Agriculture
2. To know about the ARYA project
3. To review related case studies/research studies

Challenges: The important **personal factors** faced by youths to avoid agriculture as livelihood where they wanted to do any work other than farming, didn't want to bring their children into agriculture, avoiding work in difficult weather conditions and didn't want to do drudgery-oriented work. The **social factors** responsible for avoiding agriculture as a livelihood were parents want their children to achieve a high social position through education, girls of the current generation don't want to marry a farmer, lack of support from family members to continue farming, no social acknowledgement of farming as a carrier. Agriculture carries a considerable **financial** risk because it is a profession that is reliant on nature, high production costs, insufficient funds for farming. The primary **psychological factors** were unfavorable perceptions towards agriculture as a profession, loss of enthusiasm in farming, lack trust in adopting scientific farm technologies and a risk averse attitude.

Strategies: Agricultural extension service - can effectively boost youth participation in agriculture transformation since they are eager to adopt new ideas and technologies. Increased NGO participation, counseling and advising rural youth, creating awareness about youth programmes, fostering entrepreneurship, promoting scientific farming and agri-business are some of the most effective extension strategies that could be used. Mass media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) can also be used effectively to pique the interest of youth in agriculture Capacity building of youth. Young people require training and skill-building opportunities that will prepare them to participate actively in decision-making processes. To make agriculture a profitable venture, young farmers should be guided to implement integrated farming system, mixed farming system, organic farming, and precision farming for better utilization of natural resources and attain sustainable productivity. Promotion of Agro- Eco tourism

ARYA (Attracting and Retaining of Youth in Agriculture)

Realizing the importance of rural youth in agricultural development, ICAR has initiated a programme on "Attracting and Retaining of Youth in Agriculture (ARYA)". during 2015-16. Under this scheme, special efforts are being taken up to attract the rural youth under the age of 35 years in agriculture to provide income generating opportunities and engage them in agriculture. Skill development of rural youth is helping in regaining their confidence levels to pursue farming as a profession.

Research studies

Obaiah *et al.* (2018) found that, association between independent variables with their income generation of rural youth, revealed that education level, land holding, annual income, mass media exposure, have significant positive association with their income generation.

Sharma (2021) reported that, implementation of ARYA Project showed a very positive and significant impact in terms of qualitative aspects of goat farming and poultry farming, as there is increase in employment opportunities, improvement of management practices, health status of the family, educational status, daily nutritional intake, food security, social security and by reducing migration of youth.

Conclusion

To attract and retain youth in agriculture a respectable brand image is to be formed so that people's view on Agriculture sector is altered. Agriculture needs to be perceived as an enterprise and the farmer as an agri-preneur and there is a wide range of scope that need to be explored by young people because they have the creativity and desired innovation needed to reshape the agriculture.

Reference

- OBAIAH, M. C., PULLAMRAJU, K. AND D KODANDARAMI, R., 2018, Impact assessment of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nellore on income generation of rural youth through training programs *J. pharmacogn. phytochem.*, 7 (5): 217-219.
- SONIKA SHARMA, 2021, Impact of Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA) Project on Goat and Poultry Farming in Rajasthan. *Ph.D. Thesis* (Unpub.), Univ. of Agric. and Tech., Udaipur.