

A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF YOUTH TOWARDS AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the backbone of India. India is the country which has huge youth population. As India is a developing country in all sectors, it is the same in agriculture sector too. Most of rural youth in the country is not interested to do agriculture. Rural youth are the prospect of future agricultural sector. By way of a growing world inhabitants and a reducing agricultural yield in combination with a rural migration, supportable food production and supply are vulnerable. Young farmers play a vital role in safeguarding food security for forthcoming generations but they face many challenges. The objective of the study is to 'understand the perception of youth belonging to agriculture family of Pichanur village of Coimbatore District towards agriculture'. Purposive sampling method was adopted to collect primary data from 37 families. From the study, it is found that majority of the youth belonging to agriculture family is not interested in continuing agriculture so it is important that the government should take necessary steps to increase the hope and confidence level in the field of agriculture among youth.

Keywords: Youth, agriculture, Rural and family.

INTRODUCTION

The history of agricultural science in India dates posterior to Rig Veda. India ranks second in the world in agricultural output, seventh largest agricultural exporter worldwide and the sixth largest net exporter. India is an agrarian country; with around 70 % population still belong to rural areas and depending on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Though agriculture sector contributes only 13.7% to GDP, it determines the life of more than 50% of population in the country. When we compare our agricultural productivity with world standards, it is very less. It is due to the usage of obsolete farming technology and lack of planning in water management.

Sustainable in the field of farming is the greatest significance as farmers face many problems related to it. Excess fertiliser practise not only makes the plants reliant on artificial fertilisers but also destroys the quality of both ground and surface water (Akand Sitra, 2015). Further, the slow agricultural growth is a concern in India and the agricultural practices did not give both economically and environmentally sustainable (World Bank, 2008). Ours is a land of the youth and youth of rural area are the future of agricultural sector. Because of many push and pull factors, the youths are migrating to urban places and they have started choosing other sectors for their livelihood. The parents of the farming family are not interested to involve their young ones in farming activities and the literate youth in the rural area are also not interested in farming. Nowadays agriculture has become a sector with a number of difficulties and finally there is no profit in it. Hence, it is necessary to learn the perception on agriculture among youth belonging to agriculture family.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Baah Charles (October 2014) studied on ‘Assessment of the youth in agriculture programme in Ejura-sekyedumase district’. It was found from the study that the facility of land and agro-inputs, agricultural extension services and agribusiness management training has motivated the beneficiaries to take part in the Government of Ghana initiated the ‘Youth in Agriculture programme’ (YIAP). The programme also changed the negative view of the youth on farming and generated significant income.

Prosper John Kimaro, Nathaniel Naiman Towo, Benson H. Moshi (February 2015) conducted a study on rural youth’s participation in agricultural activities in Tanzania’ with the objective of finding out the role played by rural youth in agriculture and examining the socio-economic needs, types of agricultural activities engaged and the factors that influence them to take up agriculture. From the study it was observed that majority of the youths were interested to invest more in their own agriculture land rather than working as labour or involved in family farms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of knowledge on agriculture among the rural youths.
- To study the perception of youth towards agriculture.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design: Descriptive research design was adopted by the researcher in the study. Researcher used survey method to assess the farmer’s socio-economic status, knowledge and perception.

Area of study: The Pichanur village in Madukkarai block of Coimbatore district was selected for the study as the lands in that area were being converted for on-agriculture activities due to market dynamics.

Sampling: 37 families were selected purposively who had agriculture land and also youth in their family.

Tools of data collection: A self-structured interview schedule was prepared by the researcher through an interaction with the field experts and academicians. The items in the interview schedule are classified in to different categories viz. Socio-economic status, Knowledge on agriculture and perception on youth towards agriculture.

The level of knowledge on agriculture among the respondents was assessed by using a self-developed instrument. It is a three point scale with eight items (No. 20 through 27) which was developed based on the face and content validity. All the questions were positive in nature. For all the questions, score value 0 was given to the response 'No idea', score value 1 was given to the response 'Yes' and score value 2 was given to the response 'No'. Thus, the higher the score value, the higher was the level of knowledge on agriculture. It may be noted here that the lowest possible score was zero and the highest score was 20. The mean score obtained was 12.32. The reliability of the self-developed instrument was checked through the Reliability Analysis. The reliability coefficients [for 11 items] was Alpha = .519

The level of perception on youth towards agriculture among the respondents was assessed by using a self-developed instrument. It is a three point scale with seventeen items (No. 28 through 44) which was developed based on the face and content validity. All the questions were positive in nature. For all the questions, score value 0 was given to the response 'No idea', score value 1 was given to the response 'Yes' and score value 2 was given to the response 'No'. Thus, the higher the score value, the higher was the level of perception of youth towards agriculture. It may be noted here that the lowest possible score was zero and the highest score was 34. The mean score obtained was 21.43. The reliability of the self-developed instrument was checked through the Reliability Analysis. The reliability coefficients [for 17 items] was Alpha = .519

Period of study: The collection of data was started on 5th December 2015 and it went up to 7th January 2016.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Socio Economic Profile of the respondents taken for the study- It was found that less than half (40.6 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 25-30 years, 48.6 per cent of the respondents had studied under graduation and above, 45.9 per cent of the respondents were

earning between Rs.5000 – Rs.10000 per month, 51.4 per cent of the respondents were spending Rs.1000 – Rs.3000 per month. Nearly two-third (64.9 per cent) of the respondents had no savings habit, nearly half (48.6 per cent) of the respondents had owned 1-3 acres of land, 37.9 per cent of the respondents depended on open well irrigation and 56.8 per cent of the respondents said that agriculture production was decreased in the last 5 years.

2. Knowledge on Agriculture – Majority (86.4 per cent) of the youth in the agriculture family involved in agriculture activities, nearly two-third (64.9 per cent) of the respondents had knowledge on when and how to sow seeds, 64.9 per cent of the respondents had knowledge on when to use pesticides in the field, 64.9 per cent of the respondents knew what type of fertilizers to add in the crop, 64.9 per cent of the respondents knew when to remove weeds, 64.9 per cent of the respondents had knowledge on how to harvest the crop, nearly two-third (64.9 per cent) of the respondents knew how to market the yields, more than three-fourth (75.7 per cent) of the respondents were not aware of government schemes for farmers and most (91.9 per cent) of the respondents had not interacted with field staff of agriculture department.

Table 1: Overall Knowledge Score

S.no	Level of Knowledge	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low	22	59.5
2	High	15	40.5
	Total	37	100
Mean – 12.32 S.D – 3.66 Minimum value – 0 Maximum value – 22			

Hence it is understood from the Table 1 that the level of knowledge on agriculture by youth belonged to agriculture family was low.

3. Perception on Agriculture – About 80 per cent of the respondents had stated that agriculture is the part of their everyday family life, majority (86.5 per cent) of the respondents opined that agriculture is important for the development of community, 97.3 percent of the respondents had said that they were interested to learn agriculture, more than one-third (37.8 per cent) of the respondents had no idea about job opportunity in agriculture sector and 54.1 per cent of the respondents were uncertain about their continuation in agriculture sector in the future. Majority (86.5 per cent) of the respondents had said that agriculture is an interesting field, 54.1 per cent of the respondents said that agriculture field does not have good future, majority (89.2 per cent) of the respondents said that farming did not give profit. Majority (89.2 percent) of the respondents experienced challenges in agriculture, 91.9 per cent of the respondents opined that agriculture

was only field facing hardship, 94.6 per cent of the respondents felt that hard work faced in the field is not rewarded, 94.6 per cent of the respondents considered that farming did not give a prosperous life, 67.6 per cent of the respondents did not sure to take over the farming, 48.6 per cent of the respondents believed that only youngsters can bring changes in the agriculture field.

Table 2: Overall Perception Score

S.no	Level of Perception on Agriculture	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low	22	59.5
2	High	15	40.5
	Total	37	100
Mean – 21.43 S.D – 3.19 Minimum value – 0 Maximum value – 34			

Hence it is understood from the Table 2 that the level of perception of the youth belonged to agriculture family on agriculture was low.

4. Perception of Youth on Agriculture by Education

H₀: Higher the level of Education lowers the level of perception

Table 3

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Coefficient of Correlation
Perception of youth towards agriculture	37	21.43	3.193	Coefficient of correlation r=.428(**) (p<0.01) Insig
Education	37	11.38	2.005	

The Table 3 indicates the extent of influence of respondents’ perception of youth on agriculture by education. The coefficient of correlation value (r =.428) shows that there is no significant relationship between the education and the perception of youth towards agriculture at 0.01 level. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

5. Perception of Youth on Agriculture by Income

H₀: Higher the income from agriculture, higher the level of perception towards agriculture.

Table 4

S.No	Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Coefficient of Correlation
1	Perception of youth towards agriculture	37	21.43	3.19	Coefficient of correlation r=.102(**) (p<0.01) sig
2	Income	37	1.86	0.419	

The Table 4 above indicates the extent of influence of respondents’ perception of youth on agriculture by education. The coefficient of correlation value (r =.102) shows that there is a significant relationship between the income from agriculture and perception of youth on agriculture of the respondents at 0.01 level. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

6. Knowledge on Agriculture by Youth Engaged in Agriculture

Group statistics

Youth engaged in Agriculture	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	32	11.9688	3.64987
No	5	14.6000	3.13050

The mean value of youth engaged in agriculture is 11.96 and that of not engaged is 14.6. Hence it is understood that the youth not engaged in agriculture have more knowledge on agriculture than the Youth engaged in Agriculture.

The t-test has been applied to find out the significant difference between youth engaged in agriculture and youth not engaged in agriculture with reference to knowledge on agriculture.

H₀ : There is no significant difference between youth engaged in agriculture and youth not engaged in agriculture with reference to knowledge on agriculture

T-test

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
-1.522	35	.137

The t-test result shows that, the significant value is 0.137 at 5% level of significance. As the significant value is more than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted and the result shows that there exists no significant difference between youth engaged in agriculture and youth not engaged in agriculture with reference to knowledge on agriculture.

Factors Affecting the Key Variables

- ✓ There is an insignificant relationship between the education and perception of youth towards agriculture.
- ✓ There is a significant relationship between the income and perception of youth towards agriculture.
- ✓ There is no significant difference between youth engaged in agriculture and youth not engaged in agriculture with reference to knowledge on agriculture.

SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Giving necessary advanced relevant training about agriculture among the youngsters.
- ✓ Special efforts to improve the close interaction between the farming community and agriculture department
- ✓ Ensuring subsidies and low interest loans to agriculture sector.
- ✓ Direct marketing of agriculture products without any middlemen.
- ✓ Introducing and promoting online marketing.
- ✓ Linking the rural youth involved in agriculture with agriculture universities.

CONCLUSION

From this research it is concluded that majority of youth was not interested in agriculture as there was no profit and hard work was not rewarded properly. The farmers were not able to repay the loan and that led to migration, selling of lands etc. So as a result, the youths with literacy were not interested to continue in agriculture. According to World Bank (2011), India has to build a productive, competitive, and diversified agricultural sector and facilitate rural, non-farm

entrepreneurship and employment. Hence, it is need of the hour that the Government of India has to take necessary steps to intervene this unaddressed issue all these years in order to encourage our rural youth to continue and also take up agriculture.

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