

Perception and Challenges of Rural Youth Towards Agribusiness

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Abstract

Indian agriculture today does not stand on any one level when it comes to its development. Transition of agriculture towards agribusiness conveys that present day farmers are practicing agriculture in professional manner with intent of transforming it into commercial and more profitable activity as compared to early days. Agri-business generates potential employment opportunities too in agribusiness management and trade. Due to its nature of covering a wide range of activities of differing magnitude, agribusiness has got tremendous scope. The youth cohort plays a pivotal role across nations, exhibiting vibrancy, innovation, dynamism, and a commendable enthusiasm required to catalyze prospects for domestic progress. They manifest ardor, drive, and a resolute mindset, rendering them an invaluable reservoir of human capital. The developmental trajectory of a nation is contingent upon the magnitude of its youthful demographic, underscoring their instrumental role in its advancement. Therefore, keeping all this in mind the present study was undertaken with the objective to explore the perception and challenges about agribusiness among rural youth. The study was conducted in four districts of Haryana state where Agri Business Centers were located. Thus from Bhiwani, Jind, Hisar, and Kurukshetra districts a sample of 240 rural youth from 16 villages formed the sample of the study. It was found that majority of the respondents had medium level of perception regarding economic, informational and technological aspects while high level of perception towards social and psychological aspects of Agribusiness activities. In relation to challenges perceived by rural youth in agribusiness, the study found that business know how and access to affordable employees were the most challenge that were perceived by youth when venture into agribusiness.

Keywords: Youth, Agribusiness, Perception and Problems

INTRODUCTION

Youth often refers to the period of transition from childhood to adulthood, encompassing processes of sexual maturation and growing social and economic autonomy from parents (Bennell, 2007). Achieving a heightened growth trajectory in agriculture is imperative for ensuring the enduring food security of the nation, given the projected escalation in demand for food grains. To effectively respond to these multifaceted demands, there is a pressing need to modernize and diversify agricultural practices. The infusion of young individuals into the agricultural workforce injects a dynamic blend of vigor, vitality, and inventive thinking. Numerous young farmers are actively involved in ventures characterized by

advanced technology, heightened risk, and potentially elevated returns, such as protected agriculture, precision farming, organic agriculture, floriculture, and the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. Notably, these ventures are predominantly pursued by the younger generation, while their older counterparts tend to avoid them (Bhat et al., 2015). Agribusiness encompasses both public and private domains. The public sector involves the economic and administrative activities related to the provision of goods and services managed and operated by governmental entities. On the other hand, the private sector pertains to the segment of the economy primarily focused on generating private profits and is independent of government control. Agri-business encompasses the investigation of prospects pertaining to production, marketing, and processing within the domain of agriculture and its associated sectors, including horticulture, forestry, fishery, and livestock. This field also encompasses the enhancement of cultivation methodologies, agricultural machinery, as well as the utilization of fertilizers and pesticides, encompassing pre-harvest and post-harvest phases. It further extends to cover the meticulous handling, storage, transportation, as well as the packaging and labeling procedures applied to agricultural products (Bairwa and Kushwaha, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Haryana state. From Haryana state, four districts were selected purposively where the Agri Business Centres were located i.e. Bhiwani, Jind, Hisar, and Kurukshetra. A total sample of 240 rural youth having knowledge of Agribusiness from 16 villages from selected districts formed the sample of the study. The data for the study were collected through a well-tested interview schedule and intimate interaction with each of them. Data so collected were statistically treated to reveal relevant information. Perception was operationalized as interpretation of rural youth towards agribusiness. It is a dynamic phenomenon that may be continuously changes with the individual. Perception was measured with the help of scale of Mubeena (2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- personal profile of the rural youth

Results regarding socio personal profile of rural youth shows that most of the respondents were between the age group of 24.1-30 years and majority were male, 65.00% respondents belonged to general category, 67.50 % were married, around one fifth of the respondents were educated up to high school followed by middle school, 40.00% of respondents having medium education status of family, 64.59% respondents having joint family type and large family size, 69.16% respondents had no participation in any social activity and half of the respondents (50.00%) had 31.-5 years of experience in farming.

Table 1: Socio personal profile of Rural Youth

Sr. No	Variables & Categories	Respondents				
		Bhiwani	Jind	Hisar	Kurukshetra	Total
		n=60	n=60	n=60	n=60	N=240
1	Age					
	18-24 years	07(11.67)	11(18.33)	05(8.33)	05(8.33)	28(11.67)
	24.1-30 years	32(53.33)	34(56.67)	40(66.67)	41(68.33)	147(61.25)
	30.1-35 years	21(35.00)	15(25.00)	15(25.00)	14(23.34)	65(27.08)
2	Gender					

	Male	52(86.67)	56(93.33)	48(80.00)	51(85.00)	207(86.25)
	Female	08(13.33)	04(6.67)	12(20.00)	09(15.00)	33(13.75)
3	Caste					
	SC/ST	02(3.33)	05(8.33)	03(5.00)	05(8.33)	15(6.25)
	BC/OBC	20(33.33)	10(16.67)	15(25.00)	24(40.00)	69(28.75)
	General	38(63.34)	45(75.00)	42(70.00)	31(51.67)	156(65.00)
4	Marital status					
	Married	35(58.33)	42(70.00)	40(66.67)	45(75.00)	162(67.50)
	Unmarried	25(41.67)	18(30.00)	20(33.33)	15(25.00)	78(32.50)
5	Education					
	Illiterate	08(13.33)	11(18.33)	10(16.67)	05(8.33)	34(14.17)
	Primary school	10(16.67)	13(21.67)	05(8.33)	11(18.33)	39(16.25)
	Middle school	15(25.00)	11(18.33)	10(16.67)	14(23.34)	50(20.84)
	High school	13(21.66)	15(25.00)	12(20.00)	15(25.00)	55(22.91)
	Graduate	10(16.67)	06(10.00)	13(21.66)	10(16.67)	39(16.25)
	Post Graduate	04(6.67)	04(6.67)	10(16.67)	05(8.33)	23(9.58)
6	Family Education Status					
	Low (2.0-3.0)	12(20.00)	19(31.67)	07(11.67)	21(35.00)	59(24.58)
	Medium (3.1-4.0)	27(45.00)	30(60.00)	24(40.00)	15(25.00)	96(40.00)
	High (4.1 -5.0)	21(35.00)	11(18.33)	29(48.33)	24(40.00)	85(35.42)
7	Type of family					
	Nuclear	20(33.33)	21(35.00)	18(30.00)	26(43.33)	85(35.41)
	Joint	40(66.67)	39(65.00)	42(70.00)	34(56.67)	155(64.59)
8	Size of family					
	Small (upto 4 members)	10(16.67)	14(23.33)	12(20.00)	20(33.33)	56(23.34)
	Medium (5-7 members)	16(26.67)	18(30.00)	18(30.00)	15(25.00)	67(27.91)
	Large(Above 7 members)	34(56.66)	28(46.67)	30(50.00)	25(41.67)	117(48.75)
9	Social participation					
	No membership	42(70.00)	39(65.00)	45(75.00)	40(66.67)	166(69.16)
	Member of one organization	15(25.00)	16(26.67)	13(21.67)	14(23.33)	58(24.16)
	Member in two or more organization	03(5.00)	05(8.33)	02(3.33)	06(10.00)	16(6.68)
10.	Experience in farming					
	Upto 3 years	18(30.00)	11(18.33)	20(33.33)	26(43.33)	75(31.25)
	3.1-5 years	35(58.33)	30(50.00)	25(41.67)	30(50.00)	120(50.00)
	Above 5 years	07(11.67)	19(31.67)	15(25.00)	04(6.67)	45(18.75)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Level of perception of rural youth towards agribusiness

Perception is the process whereby sensory input is organized into meaningful experience. An attempt was made to assess the perception of rural youth towards agri-enterprises. It was clearly seen that from table 2 majority of respondents (64.58%) had medium level of perception regarding economic aspects, 56.66% and 70.42% respondents had high level of perception in social and psychological aspects and 56.25% respondents had medium level of perception in informational and technological aspects.

Table 2: Level of perception of youth towards agribusiness

Sr. No.	Perception	Districts				
	Level of perception	Bhiwani n=60 f(%)	Jind n=60 f(%)	Hisar n=60 f(%)	Kurkshetra n=60 f(%)	Total N=240 f(%)
A. Economic aspects						
1	Low (0-5)	16(26.67)	13(21.67)	12(20.00)	7(11.67)	48(20.00)
2	Medium (6-10)	34(56.67)	29(48.33)	45(75.00)	47(78.33)	155(64.58)
3	High (11-16)	10(16.66)	18(30.00)	3(5.00)	06(10.00)	37(15.42)
	Mean ± SD	7.57±2.84	8.60±3.47	7.13±2.58	7.92±2.88	7.80±2.99
B. Social aspects						
1	Low (0-4)	03(5.00)	02(3.3)	03(5.00)	06(10.00)	14(5.83)
2	Medium (5-9)	29(48.33)	25(41.67)	23(38.33)	13(21.67)	90(37.51)
3	High (10-14)	28(46.67)	33(55.00)	34(56.67)	41(68.33)	136(56.66)
	Mean ± SD	9.13±2.88	9.25±2.42	9.70±3.07	9.77±3.17	9.46±2.90
C. Psychological aspects						
1	Low (0-5)	04(6.66)	02(3.33)	-	02(3.33)	08(3.33)
2	Medium (6-10)	25(41.67)	10(16.67)	16(26.67)	12(20.00)	63(26.25)
3	High (11-16)	31(51.67)	48(80.00)	44(73.33)	46(76.67)	169(70.42)
	Mean ± SD	10.75±3.39	11.17±2.88	11.73±2.97	10.87±2.98	11.13±3.07
D. Informational and technological aspects						
1	Low (0-5)	-	01(1.67)	02(3.33)	-	03(1.25)
2	Medium (6-12)	39(65.00)	26(43.33)	32(53.33)	38(63.33)	135(56.25)
3	High (13-18)	21(35.00)	33(55.00)	26(43.34)	22(36.67)	102(42.50)
	Mean ± SD	11.63±2.77	12.38±3.00	11.73±3.48	11.62±2.65	11.84±2.99

Figures in parenthesis indicate Percentages

Perception plays an important role in influencing the interests of the rural youth in agripreneurship. The above trend revealed that medium level of perception towards economic and technological aspects might be that these aspects were found to be strongly influencing the intention of the rural youth to participate in agripreneurship.

The present finding are in turned with the finding of Mubeena (2020) reported that rural youth had medium level of perception towards agri-enterprises. Agriculture as a whole needs to be reshaped to appeal young, to make them see it as an avenue of wealth creation rather than subsistence mechanism. Farming needs to

be perceived as an enterprise and young farmers of today need to be viewed as agripreneurs and not mere cultivators of crop. Therefore care must be taken to make agriculture sector both intellectually satisfying and economically rewarding to attract and retain youth in agriculture.

Problems perceived by rural youth towards agribusiness

A problem is a situation, condition, or issue that presents a challenge or difficulty and requires a solution or resolution. It represents a discrepancy between an existing state of affairs and a desired state or outcome.

Challenges of capital and technical knowhow: The table 3 depicts the results about challenges perceived by the respondents towards agribusiness. Majority of the respondents (87.50%) perceived business know how as major problem having a mean score of 2.79 followed by access to capital (83.34%), access to technical assistance (83.33%) with a mean score of 2.70 and access to information about agribusiness having a mean score of 2.71

Challenges of access to Inputs, Machinery and Services: Majority of the respondents (87.50%) perceived access to affordable employees was also big challenge for them (MS=2.79) followed by those who perceived access to agricultural inputs was not an easy task having a mean score of 2.74.

Table 3: Problems perceived by youth towards agribusiness n=240

Sr. No.	Statements	Respondents					
		Agree (3)	Undecided (2)	Disagree (1)	Total score	Mean score	Rank
		f(%)	f(%)	f(%)			
A. Challenges of capital and technical knowhow							
1	Access to capital	200(83.34)	20(8.33)	20(8.33)	660	2.75	II
2	Access to information about agribusiness	193(80.42)	25(10.42)	22(9.16)	651	2.71	III
3	Business know how	210(87.50)	10(4.17)	20(8.33)	670	2.79	I
4	Access to mentors	178(74.17)	30(12.50)	32(13.33)	626	2.60	V
5	Access to technical assistance	200(83.33)	10(4.17)	30(12.50)	650	2.70	IV
6	Inadequate skill and knowledge	150(62.50)	50(20.83)	40(16.67)	590	2.45	VIII
7	Limited access to land	180(75.00)	20(8.33)	40(16.67)	620	2.58	VI
8	Lack of storage	168(70.00)	30(12.50)	42(17.50)	606	2.52	VII
9	Disease outbreak	170(70.83)	40(16.67)	30(12.50)	620	2.58	VI
B. Challenges of access to Inputs, Machinery and Services							
10	Access to agricultural inputs	195(81.25)	28(11.67)	17(7.08)	658	2.74	II
11	Access to extension services	185(77.08)	30(12.50)	25(10.42)	640	2.66	III

12	Access to affordable employees	210(87.50)	10(4.17)	20(8.33)	670	2.79	I
13	Access to agricultural machinery	170(70.83)	30(12.50)	40(16.67)	610	2.54	IV

Figures in parenthesis indicate Percentages

In case of the unsuccessful agripreneurs, the major reasons for discontinuance of the agri enterprise were, securing employment from other sectors and concerned about the future as agri enterprise involves risk taking ability. Whereas clients were facing the challenges in the areas like challenges of capital and technical knowhow and challenges of access to inputs, machinery and services. Steps may be taken to provide the financial support to the clients to bear the service charges laid by agripreneurs. There is an inevitable need to focus these challenges and to evolve suitable solutions to overcome these limitations. The study conducted by Gajbhiye et al. (2007) also supported the findings and reported a study on challenges encountered by agribusiness enterprises. They found that at the primary level, the most significant pre-launch difficulties were scarcity of internal capital and business know how. The secondary tier of challenges was the unavailability of necessary inputs and insufficient technical or training resources.

Relationship between independent variable with their perception

Education, family education status, family size, social participation and experience in farming were found to have significant relationship with economic, social, psychological and informational and technological aspects of perception of rural youth towards agribusiness.

Table: 4 Relationship between independent variable with their perception

Sr. no.	Independent variable	Economic aspects	Social aspects	Psychological aspects	Informational and technological aspects
1.	Age	0.078	0.153	0.188	0.150
2.	Gender	0.055	0.018	0.004	0.078
3.	Caste	0.112	0.291*	0.074	0.043
4.	Marital status	0.074	0.089	0.143	0.219
5.	Education	0.371**	0.316*	0.255*	0.438**
6.	Family education status	0.298*	0.438**	0.255*	0.475**
7.	Type of family	0.097	0.080	0.069	0.140
8.	Family size	0.273*	0.361**	0.316*	0.340**
9.	Social participation	0.314*	0.435**	0.223*	0.312*
10	Experience in farming	0.265**	0.290**	0.302**	0.298**

*-Significant at 0.5 level

** - Significant at 0.1 level ^{NS} – Not significant

CONCLUSION

From the analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that Majority of rural youth were between the age group of 25-30 years, were married, educated up to high school having medium family education status with joint large size of family. The most of the rural youth were having medium level of perception towards economic and technological aspects and high level of social and psychological aspects of agribusiness. Education, family education status, family size, social participation and experience in farming were found significant relationship with perception towards agribusiness. Business know how and access to affordable employees were the most challenge that were perceived by youth when venture into agribusiness. Therefore it can be concluded that by giving more support towards youth and encouraging them to agripreneurship the growth of the country can be increased by multiple folds.

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