

Agripreneurship for Unemployed Rural Youths: A Study on Problems and Prospects

Dr. Babu K. A

Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Government First Grade College, Harihara – 577601.
Karnataka state

Abstract

Technological advancements have posed different prospects and problems at every walk of life. This is also true to the field of agriculture where traditional agriculture business has witnessed shift towards technology based agricultural activities and also start-ups. There is a new hope towards improvement in the Indian agriculture sector which is supported by technology. Agriculture and allied sectors have various opportunities for young graduates. Hence, rural youths are required to participate in Agri-business (Agripreneurship) not only to address unemployment issue, but also to address food security issue and also issues related to technological and digital revolution. India is an agriculturally based country having abundant land for agricultural activities. Even today good number of people has engaged themselves in agricultural activities. Majority of the rural youths are being educated with the purpose of securing decent jobs, but due to advancements in technology and increased number of educated youths, most of them are suffering without being employed in a job. Hence, agripreneurship is the best opportunity to engage unemployed rural youths in agricultural activities in more productive way. This increases the revenue of the county and helps in boosting the economy. There are many prospects for entrepreneurship in agriculture such as, production, marketing, supply chain and allied services. Meanwhile, agripreneurship is facing many problems, such as climate change, changing habits of consumers, reduction in the land suitable for cultivation etc. Agripreneurship helps country in achieving socio- economic development. Hence, the study focuses on analysing the prospects and problems of agripreneurship in India, particularly with regard to unemployed rural youth.

Keywords: Agripreneurship, unemployed, rural youths, problems, prospects.

INTRODUCTION

Indian economy is a mixed developing economy. It is a youngest country in the world with highest population as youths. Karnataka is geographically one of the largest states in India. Its economy is basically agrarian economy. Major portion of the agricultural land depends on the monsoon which is normally uncertain. As there is a constant increase in the population of the country, the demand for agrifood products is increasing at higher rates. At the same time, the number of graduates is also escalating constantly. Graduates of present generation make use of technology in every walk of their life. Hence, in order to achieve increased production of agrifood products, there is a need for modernization of agriculture. This will not only solve the problem of shortage of agrifood products, but also the issue of graduate unemployment.

Agriculture is an important source for the present youth to address the problem of unemployment.

Present generation youth are well versed with the technology. Adoption of technology in the field of agriculture will help in tackling the multifold issues. It is very challenging for the country to meet food needs with the present traditional agricultural practices and ageing farmers. If agriculture is embraced by the today's youth as an entrepreneurial venture, country will be able to match the demand for agrifood with its supply. Large chunk of youth is forced to rely on employment presently, but they are underpaid in majority cases. Hence, there is an urgent need for the country being highly populated and having advantage of possessing highest portion of the population in the productive age (young), to encourage them to involve in the agribusiness. Hence, the study attempts to trace out the factors that will influence youths to involve in agriprenurship. It also attempts to analyze the opportunities and challenges for the youth in the agriprenurship. The results of the study revealed that the youth are reluctant to engage themselves in agricultural activities and want to depend on the employment, as the agricultural yield is uncertain and expensive at present.

Youth engagement in agriculture can contribute positively towards addressing the issues of producing enough food and also offering jobs for unemployed people. Indian economy is a 7th largest mixed economy in terms of its GDP level and 3rd in terms of its Purchasing Power Parity. Karnataka economy is basically agriculture-based economy, but its output depends on the changes in the monsoon. It is a largest producer of medicinal and spice crops.

Agriprenur: Agriprenur is an individual who identifies a need for agricultural related products in the marketplace and works to fulfil it. (Uplaonkar & Biradar, 2015)

Agriprenurship: Any Entrepreneurial activity in the field of agricultural sector is known as agriprenurship. Any idea or vision of entrepreneurship transformed into new business of agriculture is coined as agriprenurship. It is a comprehensive, technology-oriented approach to be adopted in farming.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Laud Kpakpo Addo (2018) attempted to find out the factors which influence young graduates to engage in Agri entrepreneurship and also attempted to identify how these factors influence on their agriprenurship performance. It is found from the study that young graduates must possess enterprising qualities, skills, strong technical, professional and business management capabilities.

Ch. Jyothi Sreedhar and T. Siva Sri Mani Kanta (2022) carried out research which aimed at problems & prospects of agriprenurs. The questionnaire is prepared with 21 relevant questions to collect primary data. Respondents were asked to respond on five points Likert's scale. Results of data analysis revealed that the channel of distribution & Financial support is as significantly affecting the agriprenurs.

Gautam Parmar and Raju M. Rathod (2022) aims to investigate the perception towards barriers of entrepreneurship in Agriculture (Agriprenurship) among agricultural background students. The study found that the barriers to ariprenurship are proper agricultural knowledge followed by marketing support, Availability of capital, Availability of Land, climate change, seasonality whereas least important factors were fear of failure and agriculture not considered as good profession.

Virupakshi Patil Devarmani (2019) attempted to study the role of Agri – business in economic growth of a country and its challenges in Karnataka. Though the country is agriculturally based, unemployment issue still exists in rural areas of the country. Hence, it is concluded that there is an urgent need for the development of Agriprenurship in Karnataka through suitable government policies and strategies.

Darshan S. Gaonkar & Kalpita Ramnath Naik (2020) carried out research mainly to study the potential areas and opportunities for Agripreneurship in India and to identify the various forms of Agripreneurship. Further it also identifies various problems or challenges and future strategies for promoting Agripreneurship in India.

E.S. Ikuemonisan and A.E. Akinbola (2021) intended to study and determine the factors that influence the agripreneurial intention among undergraduate students in state owned universities in Ondo State. From the data analysis, it is concluded that the agripreneurship interests among the students were largely influenced by freelancers and their colleagues. It is also found that though the quality of teachers and quality of learning are statistically significant, their effect on students' agripreneurial intention is very weak.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the important objectives of the study

- To study the Agri – business opportunities for young entrepreneurs
- To study the challenges of Agri-business in Karnataka state
- To understand the various financial supports for Agri-business from both state and central governments
- To study the prospects of agripreneurship in general and particularly to rural unemployed youths.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A) Research Design

Since the research involves a study on problems and prospects of agripreneurship to rural unemployed youths, the data needs to be collected through direct observation and also based on verifiable data as evidence. Hence, empirical research method is applied.

B) Research area

Davanagere is a district with plenty of educational institutions offering education in various streams in Karnataka state. But, large number of graduates from this district move to Bengaluru in search of jobs despite having fertile agricultural land holdings. Hence, this study is restricted to Davanagere district of Karnataka state in India.

C) Sampling Design

Since study mainly depends on primary data, it is collected through structured questionnaires served to rural youths. For the data collection, convenience sampling technique is adopted. In total 150 questionnaires were served to respondents, out of which only 118 questionnaires were returned by the respondents.

D) Data Analysis

The data analysis is done by using percentage and correlation tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table - 1: Demographic Profile of the respondents

| VARIABLES | | FREQUENCY | PERCENT |
|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|
| GENDER | Male | 95 | 81 |
| | Female | 23 | 19 |
| | TOTAL | 118 | 100 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION | Matriculation | 37 | 31 |
| | Pre – University Course | 21 | 18 |
| | Graduation | 46 | 39 |
| | Post Graduation | 14 | 12 |
| | TOTAL | 118 | 100 |
| AGE OF RESPONDENTS (YEARS) | 20 – 30 | 34 | 29 |
| | 30 – 40 | 41 | 35 |
| | 40 – 50 | 26 | 22 |
| | Above 50 | 17 | 14 |
| | TOTAL | 118 | 100 |

Interpretation:

Out of the total respondents, majority are male between the age of 30 to 40 years and are graduates.

Table – 2 Table showing barriers to Agripreneurship

| Barriers | Opinion | | | | | Total | Mean | S. D |
|----------------------------|---------|----|----|----|----|-------|-------|-------|
| | SA | A | N | D | SD | | | |
| Lack of Confidence | 41 | 36 | 7 | 23 | 11 | 118 | 3.619 | 0.225 |
| Lack of capital | 12 | 23 | 11 | 44 | 28 | 118 | 2.551 | 0.159 |
| Non availability of labour | 45 | 28 | 3 | 25 | 17 | 118 | 3.500 | 0.222 |
| Lack of knowledge | 33 | 14 | 5 | 29 | 37 | 118 | 2.805 | 0.186 |
| Lack of Marketing support | 50 | 32 | 4 | 18 | 14 | 118 | 3.729 | 0.233 |
| Govt. policies | 20 | 15 | 7 | 47 | 29 | 118 | 2.576 | 0.164 |

(Note: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, N – Neutral, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree)

Inference:

From the data analysis, it is evident that the lack of marketing support is the important barrier to agripreneurship (Mean – 3.729, S.D – 0.233), followed by lack of confidence among rural youth in carrying out Agri business (Mean – 3.619, S.D – 0.225). Least ranking is given to the lack of capital barrier (Mean – 2.551, S.D – 0.159)

Table - 3: Factors influencing on Agripreneurship

| Factors influencing on Agripreneurship | Responses | | | | | Total Agreed | % of Agreed |
|--|-----------|----|----|------|------|--------------|-------------|
| | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | | |
| Financial support by the government | 70 | 41 | 02 | 5 | None | 111 | 94 |
| Technological support | 59 | 31 | 09 | 16 | 03 | 90 | 76 |
| Climate conditions | 66 | 44 | 04 | 04 | None | 110 | 93 |
| Fertility of the soil | 57 | 48 | 09 | 03 | 01 | 105 | 89 |
| Marketing facility | 80 | 33 | 05 | None | None | 113 | 96 |
| Irrigation facility | 65 | 34 | 06 | 06 | 07 | 99 | 84 |
| Availability of labour | 58 | 49 | NO | 05 | 06 | 107 | 91 |

(Note: SA – Strongly Agree, A =Agree, N= Neutral, DA= Disagree, SDA = Strongly Disagree)

Inference:

As per the opinion of the rural youths, marketing facility is the factor which is influencing to the greatest extent, followed by financial support by the government to carry out agripreneurship venture.

Prospects of Agripreneurship:

Indian agriculture has a significant potential in building personal wealth and also in contributing towards national income and also social development.

Following are the important prospects of agripreneurship:

- **Eradicating unemployment:**

Agripreneurship helps county like India which is having huge population depending only on formal employment in industrial and service sectors by creating more employment opportunities particularly to rural youths through self-employment.

- **Achieving personal gratification and financial rewards:**

Agripreneurship helps rural unemployed youths in finding something new and innovative which is creating economic value. This will help them in achieving personal gratification of earning for themselves and offering chance to others in earning their livelihood.

- **Increased exports and income:**

Through new ventures in agripreneurship, youths with high enthusiasm will be able to produce agricultural products which are of export quality. Through the export of such products, they help country in earning foreign exchange.

- **Opportunity to make use local resources:**

Agripreneurship is the venture which makes use of the resources available locally to produce the products which are demanded worldwide.

- **Availability of wide consumer market:**

India is a growing economy having people with high per capita income coupled with purchasing power. Hence, the agripreneurship gains momentum in meeting the consumer demand and reaping economic benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below mentioned are the important recommendations of the study:

- Findings of the survey revealed that the lack of marketing support is the major barrier to agripreneurship. Hence, the governments should take initiative to offer marketing facilities to the products produced by these rural unemployed youths.
- Respondents have also opined that they lack confidence. It is because of dearth of capital and knowledge of business. Hence, the governments must direct banks to offer collateral free loans to some extent and establish training institutions particularly in Agri business.
- Education system is preparing majority of youths towards employment. Due to the advancement in technology, employment opportunities have subsided. Hence, it is the only area where rural youths can find their source of earning. Therefore, our education system should encourage youths to seek opportunities in agricultural businesses.

CONCLUSION

Agripreneurship not only contributes towards the production of abundant quantity of nutritious foods to meet the demand, but also helps in combating problem of unemployment. As India is an agriculture-based country, it can reap the foreign exchange profits, by exporting quality agriculture products to various countries at a very competitive price. This demands for professional and technical training to rural youths. Agriculture process needs to be modernised in order to attract young people towards agricultural business. India is an agriculturally based country having lot of prospects in carrying out agricultural businesses. Rural youths who are expected to be engaged in agricultural entrepreneurship are lacking capital and marketing support. If governments initiate some actions in this regard, country can combat the problem of unemployment and achieve higher economic growth.

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