

Perception of Youths Towards Farming as Means of Livelihood

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted covering six districts of the Odisha namely Khurda, Nayagarh, Kendrapada, Puri, Sambalpur and Jagatsinghpur with total sample size of 250. The sample was selected at random fulfilling the criteria of belonging to rural areas, below age group of 35 years, educated up to middle school standard and above, having experience in farming, in search of alternative job and experiencing dissatisfaction with farming. Mismatching of education of persons to work with soil and animals, hazards of climate, difficult to compete in the business, less remunerative character of farming and difficult to meet family requirements are the reasons for dislike of youths towards farming. Lack of farmers' support policy, continuous land fragmentation, lack of facilities for agri-business, risk and hazards, lack of social security are the major constraints to retain youths in farming for livelihood. Strong marketing facilities, insurance policy, risk coverage, mechanized farming, regulatory technologies are the major expectations from govt. to take up farming. The suggestions for better farming enterprise in Odisha include export oriented farming, strong marketing facilities, strong production control system, farmer as friendly policy, infrastructure, irrigation and commodity group approach. However no farming less than 1 hect. of land is subject to debate as by the sample.

Key words: Means of livelihood, mechanized farming system, quality inputs.

INTRODUCTION

At present agriculture does not appear to be sustainable livelihood system. There are multiple factors of social, economic, cultural and political reasons contributing towards diversification in farming. The farmers who are old or above middle aged, somehow or other are sticking to their parental occupation where the youth exhibit negative reaction to the farming. On the basis of such events they cannot sustain their living standard. In India at rural sector the youth population within 35 years is 74,24,90,639 consisting 51.39 per cent male and rest 48.61 per cent female. The huge population accounts for 13.87 per cent of the total population within age group of 13-19 years, 8.73 per cent in range of 20-24 years and 18.45 per cent within 25-35 years of age.

The youths do not stick to agriculture profession because of non-stable income, non professional growth and non-recognition by the society. The feeling is reflected and strengthened as evidenced by high suicidal rate of farmers accounting to 2, 56,913 by the year 2010.

The study was conducted in Odisha to determine the perception of youths towards farming as means of living, reasons for declining of interest towards farming, constraints in operation of farming as livelihood system and expectation of youths from government to opt for

farming in business mode. Gouda *et. al.*, (2013) reported that rural youths involved in cotton cultivation have obtained substantial profit in farming. Singh and Sharma (2013) in a study of rural youth in agriculture and rural development in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh concluded that the problems of youth are unavailability of employment in rural areas. Added to this unavailability of training centers to provide training for improve in agriculture, profit and year round income flow as the reasons for migration into cities. More wages and less risk are the incentive for youth to move outside. Ini. A.Akpabio in the study of Agriculture extension, agriculture development and youth employment in Nigeria reported that value orientation and capacity development, innovative and dynamic production system in agriculture sector will attract youth for agriculture. Vinay Kumar *et. al.*, (2013) suggested that young people have enormous potential for innovation, entrepreneurship and risk taking. A strategy in farming should involve technology and training from management point of view as means of generating increased income. It will provide social reorganization to youth. Kadam *et. al.*, (2013) reported that creation of remunerative economic opportunities for young people in agriculture would provide opportunities for them to be in farming. Sailaja (2013) reported from Maharashtra that young farmers as producers have a greater capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship. This capacity may better equip them to

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address the emerging requirements of agriculture and the rural non farm economy. The participation of youth in decision making is advised to be emphasized. Satapathy and Mishra (2013) observed that crop insurances, strong market link, farm mechanization, input facilities and incentives are required to retain youth in agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted covering six districts of the Odisha namely Khurda, Nayagarh, Kendrapada, Puri, Sambalpur and Jagatsinghpur with total sample size of 250. The sample size is given below.

Table 1: Sample Selection

District	Number of sample	% of the total
Khurda	41	16.40
Nayagarh	42	16.80
Kendrapada	42	16.80
Puri	56	22.40
Sambalpur	41	16.40
Jagatsinghpur	28	11.20
Total	250	100.00

The sample was selected at random fulfilling the criteria of like (1) belonging to rural areas, (2) below age group of 35 years, (3) must have education up to middle school standard and above, (4) having experience in farming, (5) in search of alternative job and (6) experiencing dissatisfaction with farming.

The respondents were personally interviewed to obtain relevant information. A scoring system was adopted to quantifying the qualitative response and the result so obtained are presented here with.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons of dislike towards agriculture

The youths express dissatisfaction to take up farming as livelihood for variety of reasons. The reactions of the respondent about disliking for farming have been analyzed as given in Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons of dislike towards agriculture

Reasons for dislike	Mean Score	Rank
Low social prestige	2.28	X
Not remunerative	2.66	V
Hazards of climate	2.68	III
Ample job outside farm	2.30	IX
Not a skilful job	2.26	XI
Work with soil and animals	2.72	II
No scope for upward social mobility	2.50	VIII
Not good for educated persons	2.76	I
Lack of year round income	2.57	VII
Difficult to compete	2.67	IV
Difficult to meet family requirements	2.62	VI

Data in Table 2 revealed that educated youth are not interested because they have to work with soil and animals. Hazards of climate are found to be a constant discouraging factor followed by difficult to compete for living with farming occupation. The other reasons cited were, agriculture is not remunerative, difficult to meet family requirements, absence of year round income with no scope for upward social mobility, ample jobs available outside farm, low social prestige and not involving skill oriented activities. However, these are the reasons for which the youths move for city based job, construction work, business and engagement in industrial sector.

Perceived constraints in management of farm

Farming as a family occupation is going on after generation to generation in rural sector of Odisha. The good farmers with better return are attached with social prestige. But the youth perceive serious constraints in management of farm as has been reflected in table given below.

Table 3: Constraints in Management of farms

Constraints	Mean score	Rank
Low return ratio	2.45	VI
More of risk and hazards	2.65	IV
Lack of facilities for agribusiness	2.68	III
Lack of farmer support policy	2.72	I
Uneconomical farm size	2.12	X
Lack of effective farmer co-operative societies	2.34	IX
Non-remunerative farm technology	2.41	VIII
High cost of inputs and labor	2.42	VII
Lack of social security at old age	2.51	V
Continuous land fragmentation	2.71	II

Results revealed that lack of farmer support policy was mentioned as the main constraint in farming enterprises. Continuous land fragmentation, lack of facilities for agri-business, more of risk and hazards are the other reasons for which the youth are not interested to take up farming. The other constraints include, lack of social security at old age, low return ratio from farming, high cost of inputs and labor that do not permit youths to take up farming for living. The other successive constraints were non-remunerativeness of farm technology, lack of effective farmer's co-operative societies and an economical farm size. These factors create negative attitude in the minds of the youth to step into farming business.

Expectations of youth from government to opt for farming

The farming cannot progress without adequate support of the government. At present state and central government are providing inputs in various forms to support the farming community. However, the sample youths expressed the following expectations to attract them into farming business.

Table 4: Expectations from government

variables	Mean score	Rank
Credit in time with low rate of interest	2.40	VI
Availability of quality inputs	1.24	IX
Strong marketing facilities	2.76	I
Strong insurance policy	2.67	II
Mechanized farming system	2.60	IV
Product linked to industries	2.12	X
Risk coverage	2.64	III
Remunerative well proven technology	2.48	V
Intensive extension support	2.00	XI
Old age pension	2.30	VII
Tax free business	2.28	VIII

Table 4 revealed that there were 11 expectations from the government to make farming attractive and profitable. Strong marketing facilities, insurance policy and risk coverage are top most issues that youth need consideration by the government.

The subsequent expectations were, mechanized farming system, well proven technology and credit with low rate of interest and old aged pension for social security to satisfy the requirements of youth to take up farming. The other factors mentioned are tax free from business, availability of quality inputs, establishment of quality inputs and establishment of product linked industries at different localities.

Suggestions for improvement in farming livelihood system

Youth desires some modifications and changes not only in farming system but also in social system to contain youth in farming. The suggestions are summarized in table below.

Table 5: Suggestions for making farming attractive

Suggestions	Frequencies	Percentage
Production control	170	68.00
Export oriented farming	242	96.80
Strong local market facilities	237	94.80
Buy back system for all commodities	132	52.80
Commodity group approach in production system	75	30.00
Urban amenities at village	92	36.80
Irrigation facilities	88	39.20
Infrastructure in terms of cold storage, transport etc.	143	57.20
Continuous power supply and subsidy provision	155	62.00
Farmers friendly policy	162	64.80
No farming less than 1 hect. land	68	27.20

The youth feel that the present day farm business needs export oriented farming and strong local marketing facilities to create a confidence for assured income. besides production control to escape from distress sale and farmers friendly policy. The other suggestions are continuous power supply, subsidy provision, infrastructure in terms of cold storage and transport and buy back system for all commodities. The suggestions like urban amenities at village, commodity group approach in production system and not allowing farmers to operate for farm with less than 1 hect. of land.

CONCLUSION

Reluctance of educated youth to work with soil and animals, hazards of climate, difficult to compete in the business, less remunerative character of farming and difficult to meet family requirements are the reasons for dislike of youths towards farming. Lack of farmers support policy, continuous land fragmentation, lack of facilities for agri- business, risk and hazards, lack of social security are the major constraints to retain youths in farming for livelihood. Strong marketing facilities, insurance policy, risk coverage, mechanized farming, regulatory technologies are the major expectations from govt. to take up farming. The suggestions for better farming enterprise in Odisha include export oriented farming, strong marketing facilities, strong production control system, farmer as friendly policy, infrastructure, irrigation and commodity group approach. However no farming less than 1 hect. of land is subject to debate as by the sample.

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