



Study on attitude of youth towards Agriculture in Manikandam block of Tiruchirappalli District

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Abstract

The study was undertaken at Manikandam block of Trichy district, to analyze the attitude youth towards agriculture. Attitude was one of the objectives in view; the study was conducted in fourteen villages of Manikandam block.

The results of this study showed that, majority of the youth with an insight to promote agriculture were found to fit in the lower young age group of 15 to 25 years. Nearly two-third of current generation youth had moderate to high favorable attitude towards agriculture. Since youngsters are highly educated and more aware about mass media, their interest towards agriculture arouses. Improved technologies are welcomed by the youth as a means of simplifying their tasks with passion.

Key words - Attitude-Rural Youth-Agriculture

Introduction

Youth power has been a buzz word that has captivated the minds of the intelligentsia since a long time. The Government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years and it also varies depending on the programme. (Draft National Youth Policy, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2012).

Youth are the primary productive human resource of socio-economic development. It is therefore, essential to locate the role of youth in mainstream development. This pool of youth population is a decisive factor in determining our nation's destiny. The phenomenal rise in the youth population has made India the youngest nation and one of the top human resource metrics in the world. It is vital to utilize this demographic dividend and channelize the youth and their creative energies for nation-building. Hence, India should capitalize to invest on this young pool of India and divert their involvement towards farming.

It is imperative for the nation to produce food not only to feed its one billion plus human population but also for an equal number of livestock. At this juncture young minds with creativity and achievement motivation seemingly can handle impossible tasks such as climate change adaptation & mitigation and enduring malnutrition. Generally, youth are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies and therefore they can easily transform the present status of farming. The youth could be the ideal catalyst to change the poor image of persons involved in farming, especially in the rural communities given their greater possibility to adapt new ideas, concept and technology which are all important to changing the way farming is practiced and perceived. Moreover, with the rise in their aspirations, their exposures to new age media like internet, smart phones, television, and the youth are now looking for a better life and job. The only way to stop them from leaving the villages is by ensuring better economic prospects for them in farming and improving the quality of life in the rural belt.

Given that nearly 35 percent of the country's population falls under the 15-35 years of age band and roughly 75 percent of them live in rural areas, disenchantment with farming on such a large scale is worrisome. If a majority of population moves to cities, it would put a great strain on the already overburdened urban centers. Besides, it would be a huge loss for the farming based rural economy as the youth possess the greatest potential to transform farming into a science- and knowledge-based economy. An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols." (Hogg and Vaughan 2005).

Methodology

Based on the objectives of the study, Tiruchirappalli district was chosen as the locale of the study, since the Tiruchirappalli, being located in the centre of the state, is a developing cosmopolitan city with one of the highest youth population. Manikandam block from Trichy district was selected since more number of colleges was located in this block. More youth population was also recorded in this block. This has been chosen based on convenience of the researchers for collecting data. Based on the ranking by population (As per 2011 census), top 14 villages were chosen, out of the total 22 revenue villages in Manikandam block. From each of the selected village, five respondent youth were selected by following lottery method of simple random sampling procedure. The sample constituted to a total of 70 respondents.

Attitude of youth towards farming was measured with the help of five point scale developed for the study. The scale selected with 24 statements was adopted by Shireesha (2016) were administered to the 70 sampled youth in farming. They were requested to give responses to each statement in terms of their own degree of agreement or disagreement on a five point continuum. The total score of the respondent on the scale was obtained by summing up the scores of all the statements in the scale. The possible minimum and maximum score was 24 and 120. The respondents were grouped into the following 5 categories based on the scores obtained by each of them. The data thus collected were analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools.

Findings and Discussion

Attitude of Youth towards agriculture

Attracting and retaining youth in farming is critical for Indian agriculture. Most of the new innovations (both technical and institutional) require a skilled agricultural work force. For instance, promotion of high value agriculture, precision farming, organic cultivation, Hi-Tech horticulture, micro-propagation, Integrated Pest Disease & Nutrient Management, Post Harvest Management, development of backward and forward linkages etc, require well trained young farmers with enthusiasm and passion for farming and ability to take risks. Hence, the results and implications of the present study on attitude of youth towards agriculture are enlightened below.

Attitude is the prime cause for the growth of an individual and will have great impact on the way we think, the way we perceive and the way we do the things. It is the determining factor for the success or failure of any vibrant endeavor. As farming is the most predominant avenue for the growth and development of a country, it became mandatory to strengthen the farming through potential and dynamic youth of the country. While their contribution towards attaining agriculture security cannot be under estimated, their lukewarm attitude towards agriculture is a primary issue of concern and challenge to the future of the agriculture in India. The attitude of youth towards farming is the important concern to design deliberate strategies for retaining youth in farming.

Table 1- Scoring the attitude of youth towards agriculture

(n=70)

S.No	Attitude Category	No. of respondents	Per cent
1.	Highly Unfavorable	5	7.20
2.	Moderately Unfavorable	8	11.70
3.	Neutral	11	16.30
4.	Moderately Favorable	32	45.30
5.	Highly Favorable	14	19.50
Total		70	100.00

Nearly half (45.30 %) of the total youth had moderately favorable attitude towards agriculture. It is followed by highly favorable (19.50 %) and neutral (16.30 %) attitude towards farming. Whereas, only 11.70 per cent and 7.20 per cent of youth had moderately unfavorable and highly unfavorable attitude towards agriculture respectively. This finding is in line with the findings of Angaitkar *et al.* (2013)

Nearly two-third of current generation youth had moderate to high favorable attitude towards agriculture. Since youngsters are highly educated and more aware about mass media, their interest towards agriculture arouses. Improved technologies are welcomed by the youth as a means of simplifying their tasks. There is a dire need to bring remaining one-third of them to involve actively in farming. Hence, the extension functionaries and researchers must communicate the advance technologies which are feasible at farm level to the youth in farming in time. Reduced costs of inputs and proper remunerative prices to their farm output also encourage them to involve in farming. Once

their problems are addressed and their suggestions are recognized by all the stakeholders of farming community, the youth will certainly show more interest in farming as a profession.

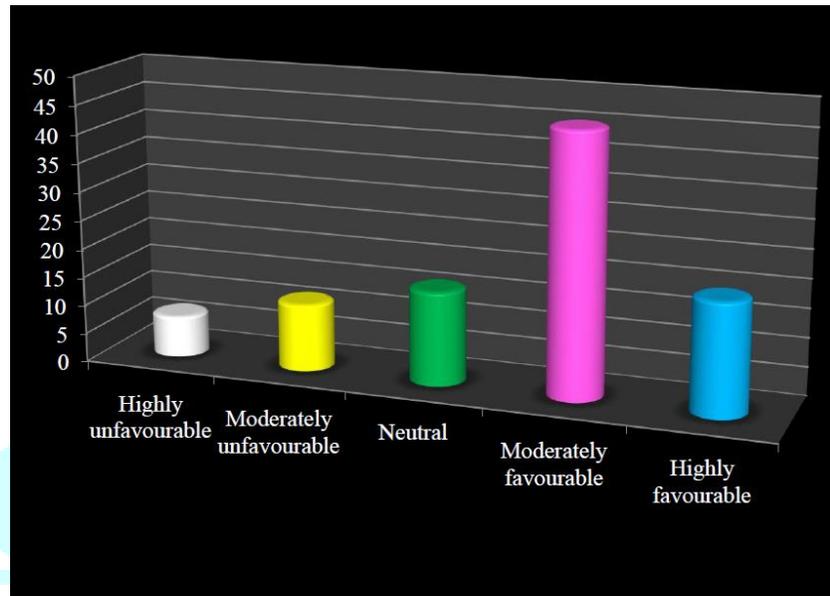


Figure 1- Graphical representation of youth's attitude towards agriculture

Statement Wise Analysis of Attitude of Youth towards Farming

The attitudinal disposition of youth towards farming was clearly explained by analyzing each statement in terms of its favourableness or unfavourableness by the youth in farming and the same was presented in the table below.

Table 2. - Statement wise analysis of youth's attitude towards agriculture

Statement No	Statement	Mean	Rank
1	I feel proud to be as part of profession feeding the Nation	4.71	I
2	I am willing to seek for further knowledge and skills in farming	4.41	II
12	I enjoy the relationship with nature through farming	4.17	III
11	I am ready to invite innovations in farming	4.07	IV
3	Advanced technologies encourage youth to flourish in farming	4.01	V
8	I want to be an elite person in society through farming	3.89	VI
10	I work hard and smart to make farming worthy	3.80	VII
7	Farming leads to increase in standard of living	3.77	VIII
6	I can overcome any type of hardships in farming	3.70	IX
5	I don't want to continue in farming further*	3.66	X

4	Farming will give less scope for higher education accessibility to our children*	3.61	XI
15	I prefer to be a farmer than as an employee	3.49	XII
14	I feel farming is more profitable than any other occupation	3.47	XIII
24	I will not encourage my children to be in farming*	3.40	XIV
23	For highly educated youth, it is unwise to do farming*	3.39	XV
20	The present environment is more hopeful for farming	3.03	XVI
18	As there is no other means of income, I am forced to do farming*	2.86	XVII
16	There is less opportunity for career development in farming*	2.71	XVIII
19	Access to inputs and marketing is poor in farming*	2.69	XIX
13	Farming is more stressful*	2.63	XX
17	Farming is cumbersome compared to other occupations*	2.53	XXI
9	Farming is not viewed as a respectable profession in the society*	2.34	XXII
22	Shortage of resources is major limiting factor in farming*	2.20	XXIII
21	If you choose farming, you have to be ready to face adverse effects*	2.14	XXIV

* Negative statement

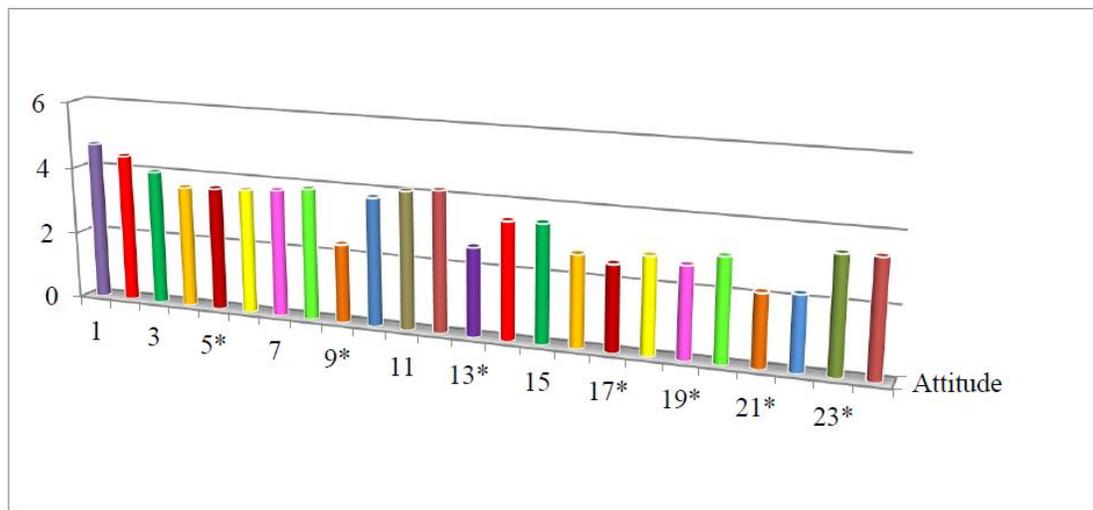


Figure 2 - Statement wise analysis of youth's attitude towards agriculture

Youth feel proud to be as part of profession feeding their nation. They view agriculture as a noble occupation in this trending generation. By choosing farming, youth are ready to face adverse effects. This attitude accounts for their risk bearing ability.

Summary and Conclusion

Nearly two-third of current generation youth had moderately to highly favorable attitude towards agriculture. The extension functionaries and researchers must communicate the advance technologies which are feasible at farm

level to the youth in farming in time, thereby triggering their positive attitude. The outcome of the present investigation demands the need for future investigations in several directions.

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