

Constraints faced by the rural youth while shifting from agriculture to other non-farm occupations- an analysis in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

India has rich rural youth potential. The population of rural youth in developmental activities contributes to national development. Several studies confirm that there exists a shifting pattern in the occupation of rural youth from agriculture to other non-farm activities and during this process they experience lot of constraints and difficulties. An analysis of such constraints would help in developing appropriate strategies. Hence in this study an analysis was made in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu with 120 rural youth respondents. Most of the respondents stated that the uncertain nature of job, uncertainty in the income level, unlimited working time, language problem, large travelling distance etc were their key constraints.

Keywords: Agriculture; rural youth; constraints; respondents

INTRODUCTION

Youth represent a nation, strength, hopes and aspirations. Rural youth constitute a numerically dominant, potentially resourceful and adventurous segment of the population. More than 50.00 per cent of India's current population is below the age of 25 and over 65.00 per cent below the age of 35 years. The population in the age group of 15-34 increased from 351 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021. By 2020 India is set to become the world's youngest country with 64.00 per cent of its population in the working age group (Anon 2013). In India the rural youth population accounts for 68.84 per cent of the national population. Rural youth are engaged in diversified occupational activities and 65.00 per cent of them are involved in agriculture-oriented occupational activities. Owing to seasonal uncertainties, high cost of labour and price fluctuations the rural youth divert themselves now a days to various other non-farm activities.

Vasumathi (2003) found that majority of the dairy, fruit juice making and sales entrepreneurs (40.00%), coir making entrepreneurs (40.00%), flower business entrepreneurs (56.66%) and half (50.00%) of the tamarind processing entrepreneurs had high level of economic motivation.

In the process of shifting from agriculture to other non-farm activities they experience diversified constraints and hence they land in distress and lose their confidence to continue their developmental activities. There are lot of studies on the push factors that is constraints pushing the rural youth from agriculture. Anamica (2013) found that majority of the rural youth (98.12%) perceived lack of remunerative prices for farm produce to be the prime constraint prevalent in agriculture followed by lack of quality inputs (about 90.00%), finance (>80.00%), proper market information (about 77.00%), proper marketing linkage (76.87%), proper market intelligence (73.12%), proper storage facilities (71.87%), farm machineries (61.25%) and farm managerial skills (50.00%). Janani (2015)

revealed that 34.29 per cent of the respondents faced lack of suitable infrastructure and marketing facilities in agriculture followed by lack of confidence (25.71%) and low literacy (21.90%).

Namasivayam (2005) reported that rural entrepreneurs were facing many crucial problems in agriculture such as lack of technical knowhow, lack of technological development, market uncertainty, inadequate income and lack of remuneration.

Bharthvajan (2014) observed that the women entrepreneurs faced problems like finance, administrative and regulatory requirements, lack of management skills or training, marketing, technology, lack of confidence, lack of working capital, limited mobility, male dominated society, low risk bearing ability, socio-cultural barriers etc.

Hence in this study an attempt has been made with the main objective to study the constraints of rural youth in their shifting process from agriculture to other non-farm occupations.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore district consists of twelve blocks and out of these Annur and Karamadai blocks were purposively selected based on the maximum area under agricultural crops and rural youth population. Apart from the above factors Karamadai block is situated adjacent to Erode district and Annur block is

very close to Tirupur district. Erode and Tirupur districts are famous for textile industries which provide enormous employment opportunities for rural youth of neighbouring districts. Hence possibility of moving rural youth from these blocks to these adjacent districts is more. Three villages from each block were selected based on the discussions held with the officials of State Department of Agriculture of the respective blocks. Totally 120 respondents were selected by employing proportionate random sampling method. Percentage analysis was used to get meaningful interpretation of the results.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The distribution of respondents according to the constraints faced by rural youth while shifting from agriculture to non-farm occupational activities is presented in Table 1.

Data show that cent per cent of the respondents expressed that uncertain job and income were the foremost constraints faced by them. Most of the respondents in the study had temporarily diverted to other occupations during off-seasons. The probability of finding a suitable job with sufficient income on a temporary basis was quite difficult. Majority of the respondents (89.16%) reported unlimited work time as their critical constraint which prevented them from getting involved in other daily works and family commitments. The other social constraints faced by them were difficulty of getting accustomed to the new city culture and grasping the language (80.00%) of the

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to constraints faced by them during the process of shifting to non-farm activities (n= 120)

Constraint	Respondents*	
	Number	Percentage
Uncertain nature of job	120	100.00
Uncertainty in income	120	100.00
Unlimited work time	107	89.16
Language problem	96	80.00
Travelling distance and expenses	87	72.50
Stress due to work load, loneliness	79	65.83
Discrimination due to language/race/caste	71	59.16
Housing problems	51	42.50
Transfer of service/contract	39	32.50
Population pressure	24	20.00

*Multiple responses

new social system. Travelling distance and expenses were the problem of 72.50 per cent respondents. Stress due to work load and loneliness (65.83%), discrimination due to language/race/caste (59.16%), housing (42.50%), transfer of service/contract (32.50%) and population pressure (20.00%) were other problems reported by the respondents.

Anyhow a holistic approach is to be developed to educate these young farmers with all the necessary skills to become successful agricultural entrepreneurs. This would help them in gaining confidence and empowerment.

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