

An analytical study on identification of avenues to retain rural youth

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Coimbatore district on the rural youth to know about the pull factors and their empowerment needs so as to create opportunities to retain youth in rural areas. The results showed that good infrastructure facilities such as hospitals, schools and marketing facilities (91.77%) and employment opportunities, high income and better social life and standard of living (85.00%) were the pull factors that would attract the youth towards rural areas. Annual income and information seeking behaviour had positive and significant relationship at 1 per cent whereas economic motivation at 5 per cent level of probability with pull factors of respondents. Cent per cent of the respondents wanted to have training on contemporary agricultural technologies, entrepreneurial skill development and effective farm management. Majority (98.33% each) of the respondents expressed that they needed training on farm mechanization and farm diversification followed by training on accessing information related to agricultural marketing and agro-industrial mechanization (96.77% each).

Keywords: Rural youth; pull factors; empowerment needs; avenues

INTRODUCTION

The youth population determines a country's growth potential. The youth population has increased from 168 million in 1971 to 422 million in 2011 (Anon 2017). In India, 50.1 per cent of the population was in the age group of 24 years and less in 2011. This constituted for 30.8 and 19.3 percentages in the ages of 0-14 and 15-24 years respectively. This proportion has been estimated to fall to 34.7 per cent in 2036 (Nanda and Sharma 2020). In Tamil Nadu, more than half of youth in the age group 15-24 years live in rural areas and the youth population constitutes to nearly 1.24 crores (Sivakumar 2014). The youth in rural areas have ample opportunities to participate in agriculture and allied activities.

Though lot of opportunities are available for development of rural youth because of wide spread illiteracy in rural areas, unemployment among the educated youth, lack of proper guidance, lack of interest and confidence lead to poor participation of rural youth in agriculture and allied activities. White (2012) reported that rural unemployment rates are higher than urban

rates and youth unemployment rates are typically around twice the adult rate.

Sharma and Bhaduri (2009) reported that 35 per cent of youth migrate for work outside the villages and most of the youth migration is seasonal. Most of them work as agricultural labourers and also in factories. Skill development of rural youth will help in improving their confidence level and encourage them to pursue farming as profession, generate additional employment opportunities to absorb under-employed and unemployed rural youth in secondary agriculture and service related activities in rural areas. Therefore this study has been undertaken to find out the avenues to retain youth in rural areas based on the pull factors to attract the rural youth towards agriculture and empowerment needs of rural youth.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Annur, Thondamuthur, Kinathukadavu, Sular, Periyanaickenpalayam and Pollachi blocks of

Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. A total of 60 respondents consisting of rural youth between the age of 15 to 24 were selected by employing snowball sampling technique. The data were collected from the respondents through the google forms created for the study as well as by telephonic survey due to pandemic Covid 19 situation. The collected data were analysed by using percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation and correlation analysis.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Factors responsible to attract rural youth towards agriculture

Factors responsible to attract rural youth towards agriculture were studied by the pull factors as detailed in Table 1. It is clear from the data that availability of good infrastructure facilities such as hospitals, schools and marketing facilities attracted more than 90.00 per cent (91.77%) of the rural youth. Majority (85.00% each) of the respondents said that employment opportunities, high income, better social life and standard of living were the pull factors followed by higher level of educational facilities (81.77%) and lower risk from natural hazards (50.00%). Radhakrishnan (2013) also reported that lot of employment opportunities were available in the non-agricultural sector which ensure livelihood security as one of the pull factors followed by high income.

Relationship between profile characteristics of the respondents and pull factors

To know about the relationship between profile characteristics of the respondents and the pull factors, Pearson correlation coefficient was applied and the results are furnished in Table 2.

The variables, annual income and information seeking behaviour had positive and significant relationship at 1 per cent whereas economic motivation at 5 per cent level of probability with pull factors of respondents. This explains that if good employment opportunities are created in the villages so as to have good annual income and improvement in economic conditions, youth may be attracted to come to work in villages. Also if they happen to get adequate information in village itself, they would rather be willing to stay in villages.

Empowerment needs of rural youth

The empowerment needs of rural youth were analysed and the results are furnished in Table 3. All

the respondents wanted to have training on contemporary agricultural technologies, entrepreneurial skill development and effective farm management. Majority (98.33% each) of the respondents expressed that they needed trainings on farm mechanization and farm diversification followed by trainings on accessing information related to agricultural marketing and agro-industrial mechanization (96.77% each).

All the respondents also suggested to have access to productive agricultural resources and formation of farm youth self-help groups followed by agro-industrial modernization (96.77% each), creation of credit and loan scheme for youth in agriculture (91.77) and inclusion in programme the planning related to agriculture and rural development (88.33%).

Avenues identified to retain youth in rural areas

Based on the detailed analysis on pull factors and empowerment needs of rural youth, avenues like creation of more number of non-agricultural employment opportunities in the villages like establishment of jam, pickle and squash preparation units, handicraft shops, hotels, bakery, catering, tailoring, automobile workshops, agricultural implements electric motor, tractor, repair workshops etc, set up of skill development centres by the government in each block, establishment of village knowledge centres in each block, formation of farm youth self-help groups and awareness creation on credit and loan scheme for youth in agriculture were identified to retain youth in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

From the present study it can be concluded that the youth may be trained to develop their skills both in agriculture and allied activities as well as in non-agriculture sector. Extension officials may organize suitable farm management and entrepreneurship development training programmes to increase the confidence level of youth so as to encourage them to pursue farming as a business. If there are more employment opportunities available in the village itself, the youth may be retained in the villages. More awareness creation campaigns on credit and loan schemes for youth in agriculture should be organized that may help the rural youth to create their own employment opportunities in their villages itself.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to pull factors

Pull factor	Respondents (n= 60)	
	Number	%
Availability of good infrastructure facilities	55	91.77
Employment opportunities	51	85.00
High income	51	85.00
Better social life and standard of living	51	85.00
Higher level of educational facilities	49	81.77
Lower risk from natural hazards	30	50.00

Multiple responses

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient of profile characteristics of respondents with pull factors (n= 60)

Variable	Correlation coefficient
Age	-.023*
Educational status	.149
Occupational status	.067
Marital status	-.060
Farming experience	-.013*
Annual income	.000**
Innovativeness	.136
Information seeking behaviour	.000**
Risk orientation	-.089
Economic motivation	.029*

**Significant at 1% LoS, *Significant at 5% LoS

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their empowerment needs

Need	Respondents (n=60)	
	Number	%
Training on contemporary agricultural technologies	60	100.00
Training on entrepreneurial skill development	60	100.00
Training on effective farm management	60	100.00
Training on post-harvest technologies	57	95.00
Training on farm mechanization	59	98.33
Training on farm diversification	59	98.33
Training on accessing information related to agricultural marketing	58	96.77
Access to productive agricultural resources	60	100.00
Agro-industrial modernization	58	96.77
Formation of farm youth self-help groups	60	100.00
Creation of credit and loan scheme for youth in agriculture	55	91.77
Representation and participation in programme planning related to agriculture and rural development	53	88.33

Multiple responses

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