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## Attitudes of rural youth towards agriculture as an occupation

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**Abstract**

The importance of agriculture to the socio-economic development of the country cannot be overemphasized. Agriculture sector is potentially the largest employment providing sector in the country. Despite this, unemployment is high among rural youth, who prefer to migrate to urban areas to take up low paying jobs. The present study was carried out mainly to find out the attitude of youth towards agriculture as an occupation. Keeping this in view, a study was conducted in Warangal district of Telangana state with a total sample of 120 youth who are selected using simple random sampling technique. The objective of the study was to know the attitude of youth towards agriculture as occupation. The data was collected from primary sources with structured interview schedule. The study employed descriptive statistics and rank order method to analyse the data. The study indicated that one third (34.2%) of the total youth had neutral attitude towards agriculture. It is followed by moderately favourable (28.3%) and moderately unfavourable (18.4%) attitude towards agriculture, whereas only 10.8 per cent and 8.3 per cent of them had highly favourable and highly unfavourable attitude respectively. As a whole, leading portion of the youth inclined towards favourable attitude towards farming. Among male youth one third (33.4%) had moderately favourable attitude towards agriculture, followed by neutral attitude (30.0%) and same per cent (13.3%) had highly favourable and moderately unfavourable attitude towards agriculture, and only 10.0 per cent of them had highly unfavourable attitude. Among female youth more than one third (38.4%) had neutral attitude towards agriculture, followed by same per cent (23.3%) had moderately favourable and moderately unfavourable attitude towards agriculture, whereas only 8.4 per cent and 6.6 per cent of them had highly favourable and highly unfavourable attitude respectively.

**Keywords:** Rural youth, agriculture, occupation

**Introduction**

Global population of youth reached one billion marks in 2000 and this increased to 1.2 billion in 2011. Out of these, 754 million (85 %) live in developing countries and approximately 60 % live in Asia alone. The youth population growth rate is generally higher in the poor countries and their number has tripled since 1950s. By the year 2025, the number of youth living in developing countries is likely to reach 89.5 %. In view of their significance, the United Nations has declared 2011 as the 'International Year of Youth' (World Youth Report, 2012) [1]. Youth employment: Youth perspectives on the pursuit of decent work in changing times. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs). Rural youth account for around 55 % of the total world youth population. They are also among the most disadvantaged groups in the society and have limited access to educational programs. Involvement of youth in agriculture is necessary for overall development of low income nation as well as youth in these nations in particular. Their active participation in agriculture is possible only if they have requisite skills, information and a positive attitude towards agriculture. A favorable attitude is one of the important prerequisites for the willingness to participate in agriculture and choosing agriculture as a career (GI, 2012). In India, about 70 % population is below the age of 35 years, making it the youngest nation in the World. According to some estimates, the proportion of population under 25 years in India is 51 %. Some experts refer to this large proportion of youth as "demographic dividend" because greater proportion of the population is young and in the working age group which can lead to economic growth. However, out of the youth population of 460 million, only 333 million youth in India are literate and unemployment rate is highest (10.6 %) among youth. By 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 year old, whereas in China and the United States of America the average age is estimated to be 37 years. This high percentage of youth can be utilized for taking Indian agriculture to new heights by channelizing the creative energies of the youth through development of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. This predominance of youth in the population is expected to last until 2050.

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Hence, the National Youth Policy (2012) emphasizes youth empowerment in different spheres of national life. There are several advantages of involvement of youth in agriculture as they have the latent energy, capacity and ability to produce, propensity to learn and grasp new ideas or technologies faster and they are excellent source of ideas and innovations (Government of India, Top of National Youth Policy, 2012). According to Swaminathan, M.S. (2007), Migration of young people to urban areas in search of job has reduced the availability of human resources for agricultural activities. Tackling factors that negate interest of youth in agriculture will ensure improvement in agricultural production, which is essential for food security of the nation. If agriculture is profitable, then it can serve as a source of gainful employment for the youth. This will go a long way in solving the problem of migration of youth arising from under or disguised unemployment in agriculture sector. Involvement of youth in agriculture is essential as they not only contribute to the labour force but also bring fresh ideas and skills and adopt innovations more easily. Hence, it is important to know the attitude of rural youth towards agriculture as occupation. In view of the above, objective of the study is to find out the attitude of youth towards agriculture as occupation. This will help in formulation of suitable policies, providing incentives and opportunities and designing educational training programme that can help in attracting youth in agriculture.

### Review of Literature

Lyocks *et al.* (2013) investigated that majority (75.20%) of the youth like agriculture, followed by 4.10 per cent of them don't like it, 17.40 per cent of them had neutral attitude. Only 3.30 per cent of them responded as 'forced to like it'.

Anamica and Ravichandran (2014) indicated that 42.50 per cent of the fully migrated youth had less favourable attitude, followed by moderately favourable attitude (35.00%) and highly favourable attitude (22.50%) whereas, 33.12 per cent of the partially migrated youth had less favourable attitude, followed by moderately favourable attitude (39.33%) and highly favourable attitude (27.50%). They also revealed that, more than three-fourth (77.50%) of the non-migrant rural youth were found to possess a moderately favourable to highly favourable attitude towards agriculture. Only less than one-fourth (22.50%) of them were found to hold a less favourable attitude towards agriculture.

Kitturmath *et al.* (2014)<sup>[7]</sup> observed that majority (70.83%) of the respondents had favourable attitude, followed by less favourable attitude (15.00%) and the remaining 14.17 per cent of them had more favourable attitude towards rural development activities.

Kimaro *et al.* (2015)<sup>[6]</sup> observed that 74.5 percent rural youth who participated in agricultural activities had favourable attitude towards agriculture.

### Materials and Methods

Ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. Warangal district of Telangana state was selected. Four mandals in the district and 3 villages from each mandal were selected using simple random sampling technique. Thus, a total of 12 villages were selected. From each village 10 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique thus constituting 120 respondents for the study.

Attitude was defined as "the degree of positive or negative affect associated with some psychological object." (Thurstone, 1946).

For the present study, attitude of youth towards agriculture was operationalised as the psychological disposition of the youth about agriculture in varying degrees of favourableness or unfavourableness.

For measuring attitude, Scale developed by Shivacharan (2014)<sup>[10]</sup> was used with modifications. The final attitude scale to measure the attitude of youth towards farming comprised of 14 statements, out of which were 10 positive statements and 4 negative statements measured on a five point continuum viz., strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (UD), disagree (DA) and strongly disagree (SDA) with 5,4,3,2 and 1 for positive statements and vice-versa for negative statements respectively.

### Administering the scale

The final attitude scale was administered on the sample of rural youths. They were asked to express their reaction in terms of their agreement or disagreement with each item by selecting one of five response categories. The total attitude score for each respondent was obtained by adding the scores of their responses of all the statements and arbitrary classification of the respondents was made into five categories viz., Highly Unfavourable (14 to 24), Moderately Unfavorable (25 to 35), Neutral (36 to 48), Moderately favourable (49 to 59), Highly favourable (60 to 70).

### Results and Discussions

It is apparent from the table 1 that one third (34.2%) of the total youth had neutral attitude towards agriculture. It is followed by moderately favourable (28.3%) and moderately unfavourable (18.4%) attitude towards agriculture, whereas only 10.8 per cent and 8.3 per cent of them had highly favourable and highly unfavourable attitude respectively. As a whole, leading portion of the youth inclined towards favourable attitude towards farming.

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**Table 1:** Distribution of Youth According To Their Attitude towards Agriculture N=120

S. No.	Category	Male		Female		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Highly Unfavourable	6	10.0	4	6.6	10	8.3
2.	Moderately Unfavourable	8	13.3	14	23.3	22	18.4
3.	Neutral	18	30.0	23	38.4	41	34.2
4.	Moderately Favourable	20	33.4	14	23.3	34	28.3
5.	Highly Favourable	8	13.3	5	8.4	13	10.8
	Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

Some of the youth might be adopting the latest technologies in farming, both in production and marketing and enjoying the fruits of success in farming. They might be treating the agriculture more in commercial angle rather than as a livelihood activity. This situation has developed more favourable attitude towards farming. The availability of

needed resources and complementary environmental conditions might also have contributed for the above attitude. On the other side, the scarcity of resources, unforeseen environmental conditions, lack of knowledge and skills and lack of appropriate marketing strategies might have contributed for unfavourable attitude. Simultaneously the youth also might be attracted towards off farm activities and other job related activities which are time bound and less laborious than farming. The overall attitude signifies the mixture of favourableness and unfavourableness towards farming which can be taken as an opportunity to attract the youth by adopting meticulous motivational models so as to retain the youth in farming. Abdullahi *et al.* (2010) <sup>[1]</sup>, Bahamana (2010) <sup>[5]</sup>, Angaitkar *et al.* (2013) <sup>[4]</sup> and Kitturmth *et al.* (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> also found the similar results in their studies.

### Conclusion

More than one-third of the youth in farming were with moderately to highly favourable attitude towards farming. So, there is dire need to bring remaining two-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 recognised by all the stakeholders of farming community, the youth in farming will certainly show interest in farming as a profession.

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