



## Major Constraints and Suggestions for Better Involvement in Agriculture of Rural Youth Practicing Agriculture

A.S. Gomase<sup>1</sup> and V.S. Tekale<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Extension Education, Post Graduate Institute, Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup>College of Agriculture, Mul, Chandrapur, Dr. PDKV, Akola-444104, Maharashtra, India

Email : [anilgomase2002@yahoo.co.in](mailto:anilgomase2002@yahoo.co.in)

### Abstract

The results indicated that of the respondent's rural youth were interested in taking agriculture occupation also as a sole profession or in a mix with some other subsidiary occupation. The constraints as perceived by respondent rural youths in the agricultural profession were identified and respondents' rural youth were asked to recognize the most important explanations. The respondent's rural youth specified that lack of knowledge/training for modern agricultural technologies/skills (78.67%), non-availability of labours/high cost of labours (66.33%), lack of awareness of ongoing schemes/ subsidies (65.33%), lack of alternative employment/subsidiary business during the lean period of agriculture (65.00), destruction of the crop by wild animals (60.33%), lack of awareness benefits of ICTs and low internet connectivity (58.67%), lack of remunerative prices for farm produce (57.33%), decreased size of the land holding due to division of family (56.33%) and non-availability of quality and improved seed in time/low quality of inputs (55.00%) were the important constraint expressed by the more than fifty percent of respondents rural youth, which make agriculture unattractive to them. As per suggestions possible to overcome constraints urgent need to focus on empowering rural youth with the latest knowledge of modern technology and skill development, use of social media by extension workers to communicate ongoing schemes and subsidies and by establishing custom hiring center for small farmers, agro-processing and marketing units, it creates employment for rural youth in lean period.

**Key words :** Agriculture, constraints, rural youth and vidarbha.

### Introduction

In our country, rural youth constitute a numerically overriding potential, creative and also a courageous segment of the population. India being a land of villages, the majority of the people residing in it are having farming as an occupation of their livelihood. Agriculture plays a key role in India's economy contributing about (17.00%) of the whole GDP and employing over (60.00%) of the population. Indian agriculture has registered impressive growth over the previous few decades. The food grain production has increased from 51 MT in 1950-51 to a staggering 297 MT during 2020-21 highest ever since independence (1). At current 50.00 per cent of India's population is under the age of 25 years and over 65.00 per cent below the age of 35 years. The majority of them live in rural areas. The population in the age group of 15-34 years 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. Making India the world's youthful country with 64 per cent of its youth population within the working cohort (2).

The younger generation will be interested in taking farming as a profession only if it becomes both economically and intellectually attractive. The future of

food security in our country will depend on both strengthening of the ecological foundations essential for sustainable agriculture, as well as attracting the educated rural youth to farming and allied professions such as animal husbandry, inland and marine fisheries, agro-forestry, agro-processing and agri-business. Agriculture is the need for hours to make a more attractive and profitable business occupation. It is clear that there is a huge scope in agriculture. Rural youth with risk-bearing capacity and pursuit for the newest knowledge in the agriculture sector can prove to be the right agribusiness enterprise in rural areas. Also, same time providing direct employment and income generation sector to the large and vulnerable segment of the society. The present study was undertaken with the objectives to find out constraints faced by rural youth in agriculture and suggestions to overcome the problems.

### Materials and Methods

In the present research study, an exploratory research design was used. Maharashtra state was purposively selected. Two districts each from Vidarbha region viz., Yavatmal (from Amravati revenue region) and Nagpur (from Nagpur revenue region). Three talukas from each district and five villages from each taluka were selected on

the basis of the highest rural youth population, thus making a total sample of 300 respondents. The data were collected by personal interview method through a structured pre-tested interview schedule and collected data analyzed by suitable statistical methods.

## Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by respondents' rural youth practicing in agriculture the data presented in Table-1. It indicated the major constraints expressed by the rural youth in practicing agriculture which are discussed in sequence are as follows :

It could be observed from Table-1 that, the perceived constraint namely lack of knowledge/training for modern agricultural technologies/skills from the extension agency working under of state department of agriculture, state agricultural universities and private firms on recent technologies in crop production, crop protection, post-harvesting and processing and marketing was reported by 78.67 per cent of the rural youth. Information is the prerequisite for performance.

Accurate information at the correct time will act as a guide and show the right path to reach the targeted goal. Rural youth in agriculture might have felt the importance of information in their day-to-day activities. They might have felt the need for village-level sources of information as well as ICTs utilization in agriculture farming.

Non-availability of labours/high cost of labours are perceived major constraints (66.33%). The probable reason for the constraints given by rural youth might be for the scarcity of labours increased due to migration of labours to rural to urban area for employment, the government distributed grains at cheap rate in fair price shop is also a major reason behind non-availability of labours, availability of employment with high wage rate urban areas, other occupation, the dignity of labor, low wage rate in a rural area.

Sixty-five percent of rural youth reported constraints regarding awareness about the ongoing schemes/programmes of subsidies. Probable reasons for constraints given by rural youth are that the extension worker have a higher workload so they can't possibly regular visit villages and they do not stay in regular headquarters and lack interest in print media regarding publicity of ongoing schemes/programmes. They expressed opinions to solve constraints and create awareness through social media, printed materials like posters, charts, etc. Therefore, a majority of rural youth are seeking information from friends, progressive farmers and relatives.

From the above table, it is depicted that the majority

of the rural youth (65.00%) perceived constraints of lack of subsidiary business during a lean period as present methods of agriculture management do not provide them regular and continuous employment throughout the year and they have to depend on other subsidiary sources of earning in rural areas. They realized the need to increase overall net income from the productivity of the existing crops, shifting from subsistence agriculture to seed production and nursery multiplication, the introduction of new crops like rose, sweet corn, baby corn, and subsidiary rural enterprises like dairy, sheep, fish farming, azolla, vermicompost, value addition to agriculturally based products and promotion of custom hire service center of improved agricultural implements and tractors.

The majority (60.33%) of rural youth expressed constraints destruction of crops by wild boars/animals. Animals such as wild pigs, deer, wild boars, moles, monkeys and many other wild animals may cause serious damage to crops. They can damage the plants by feeding on plant parts or simply by running over the field and trampling over the crops the significant yield losses and provoke additional financial problems by the rural youth. Successful rural youth in agriculture suggested technologies for wild animal crop protection i.e., agricultural fences, wire fences, plastic fences, electric fences, natural repellents, chemical repellents, biophysical barriers and electronic repellents.

The awareness regarding the use of ICT (58.67%) rural youth expressed constraints in the usefulness of modern information and communication technologies in agriculture. ICT can provide information about the production, realization and access to the latest local and global information on weather. ICT can connect small farmers living in rural areas to access prices, credit facilities, market rates, etc. Rural youth say they do not have enough connectivity of internet to run computer and smartphones in rural areas. To get the best out of the ICTs, basic infrastructure should be provided first to the community and for twenty-four hours a week for computers and internet use.

The constraints expressed by the rural youths, (57.33%) non-remunerative prices for their produce. The reason behind this is that after harvesting farm produces, they don't have a storage facility at the village level. They have to make the urgent need of payment of wages and purchasing of crop input for next season, etc. Due to more arrival in the market and at present marketing system in the hands of a commission agent or traders and sell their produce at low rate and intrusion of middlemen who takes advantage of this situation.

To overcome this constraint, they expect to provide

Table-1 : Constraints perceived by respondents' rural youth while practicing in agriculture.

Sr. No.	Constraints	Frequency (N=300)		Rank
		F	%	
1.	Lack of knowledge/ training for modern agricultural technologies/skills	236	78.67	I
2.	Lack of remunerative prices for farm produce	172	57.33	VII
3.	Lack of proper market information/intelligence	119	39.67	XI
4.	Lack of educational facilities to children in village	69	23.00	XVII
5.	Non-availability of labours/high cost of labours	199	66.33	II
6.	Lack custom hiring service center for farm implements	65	21.67	XVIII
7.	Lack of irrigation facilities/low level of the water table	117	39.00	XII
8.	Lack of awareness of ongoing schemes/subsidies	196	65.33	III
9.	Lack of storage facilities for farm produce	116	38.67	XIII
10.	Non-availability of quality and improved seed in time/low quality of inputs	144	55.00	IX
11.	Lack of alternative employment/subsidiary business during the lean period of agriculture	195	65.00	IV
12.	Destruction of crops by wild animals	181	60.33	V
13.	High cost of input/cultivation	84	28.00	XV
14.	Lack of approach road and transport facilities	132	44.00	X
15.	Irregular electricity supply	92	30.67	XIV
16.	Lack of awareness of benefits of ICTs and low internet connectivity	176	58.67	VI
17.	Decreased size of the land holding due to division of family (Land Fragmentation)	169	56.33	VIII
18.	Non-accessibility to the credit facility	76	25.33	XVI
19.	Non-availability of health care facilities in the village	63	21.00	XIX

Note : F = Frequency, % = Percentage

strong market linkage to farmers to sell the produce. Facilitating market linkage involves understanding the demand and supply situation, transient storage, transport infrastructure and easy access to the markets. One major strategy identified was encouraging the group approach as investments in the above require a collective approach that provides a critical mass of products and also improves their bargaining power.

More than fifty percent of respondents (56.33%) of the rural youth perceived constraints of decreased size of land most of the rural youth find farming as an unattractive proposition especially since many land holdings are turning unviable because of the unabated fragmentation of land. The rural youth see no future in tilling such as tiny lands.

The non-availability of quality and improved seed in time/ low quality of inputs was the subsequent constraint perceived by 55.00 per cent of the rural youth. The unavailability of seeds of certified varieties and hybrids, adulteration of fertilizers, substandard irrigation equipment and unabated price hikes of quality inputs. The insufficient access to quality inputs in the rural areas. In addition, the dominance of the private sector in the input market and the privatization of sale, distribution and import of inputs are also found to restrict the involvement of rural youth in agriculture.

The majority of rural youth 44.00 per cent expressed constraint of approach road to farm and transportation facility in a rural area. Small farmers now also rely on a bullock cart for the transportation of their produce. The

approach road is temporary roads that become muddy and useless in the rainy season. Most essential work needs to complete the seasonal farm operations i.e., seed sowing, fertilizer and pesticide application, intercropping and harvesting operations due to lack of facility rural youth leads to low income. Transport infrastructure is needed for easy access to the markets for selling their farm produce.

More than one-third (39.67%) of the respondents perceived a 'lack of proper market information intelligence' to be another major prevailing constraint. The rationale behind it would be the lack of communication tools which makes them unaware of potential markets and the information on the existing prices of the products in those markets. By and large, the farmers rely on the price information furnished by the traders. The market price information provided generally is quite beneficial to the traders, rather than to the farmers. In reality, most of the small and marginal farmers more often than not, are in the total dark as far as market intelligence is concerned. The rural youth want a proper system communicating the forecast to producers and farmers' marketing decisions. For e.g., whether to sell immediately or store the produce, whether to market the produce inland or overseas, during which part of the year the commodity can fetch remunerative prices, etc.

A considerable percentage (39.00%) of rural youth perceived constraints of lack of irrigation facility and low level of the water table. Irrigation is one of the essential researches for a crop to grow perfectly with a protective

irrigation facility. The appropriate amount of water or don't get on critical periods of crop growth. Farmers rely on rainwater for irrigation.

One-third of the rural youth (38.67%) perceived 'lack of storage facilities for farm produce' constraint in agriculture. Agricultural commodities are characterized by perishability, bulkiness and seasonality. Inadequate storage facilities might lead to pest infestations, quality deterioration and discoloration which would make the product unfit for marketing due to which the farmer might incur heavy loss. Irregular electricity supply is a perceived major constraint (30.67%). The probable reason for the constraints given by rural youth might be increased electricity consumption as a proportion to scarcity of power generation. Sometimes low voltage problems lead to damaged irrigation equipment.

A substantial percentage (28.00%) of rural youth perceived constraint of the high cost of input i.e., Seed, fertilizers, insecticide, electricity and diesel. The rural youth wish to make his fields more productive and he has no option but to use them as much as is good for the crop but somewhere down the line, he fails to do that because their price goes beyond his reach.

More than one forth 25.33 per cent of the respondents stated 'non-accessibility to credit facilities' as the constraint that confined their participation in agriculture. The reason behind it would be the increased adherence of nationalized banks to stringent credit disbursal norms which affects the small and marginal producers in the rural economy. Apparently, this would also pave way for the moneylenders to extend their monopoly on these desperate cultivators.

Lack of education facilities for children in villages is a constraint expressed by 23.00 per cent of rural youth. The probable reason for the constraint given by rural youth was insufficient infrastructure such as classrooms, teachers, equipment and facilities, availability of chairs and desks and professional competencies of teachers.

A considerable percentage of rural youth perceived constraint of 'lack custom hiring service center for farm implements' (21.67%). Farm mechanization would be a better solution to the problem of unavailability of labours and higher labours wages. But due to the higher procurement price of farm machineries, it is not possible to own personally by rural youth. The rental basis cost involved in hiring these machineries was found to be

affordable to cultivators. The last constraint expressed by 21.00 per cent of respondents was the non-availability of health care facilities in villages. The research findings match with the findings of (3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

## Conclusions

The study revealed that a majority of the respondent's rural youth belonged to the age group of 16 to 30 years engaged in agriculture occupation. They expressed major constraints i.e. like lack of knowledge/training for modern agricultural technologies/skills, non-availability of labours/ high cost of labours, lack of awareness of ongoing schemes/ subsidies, and lack of alternative employment/subsidiary business during the lean period of agriculture are major constraints expressed by rural youth. So, urgent need to focus on empowering rural youth with the latest knowledge of modern technology and skill development, use of social media by extension workers to communicate ongoing schemes and subsidies and by establishing custom hiring centers for small farmers, agro-processing and marketing units, it creates employment for rural youth in lean period.

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