

RESEARCH PAPER

Constraints and suggestions elicited by the rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities

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Abstract: The study was conducted in Dharwad and Gadag districts of Karnataka during 2023-24, focusing on the agriculture and allied activities undertaken by rural youth. Using an “*Ex-post facto*” research design, two taluks were randomly selected from each district and two villages from each taluk, resulting in eight villages. From each village, 20 rural youth were randomly selected, totaling a sample size of 160. Data was collected through personal interview using a well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule. Major constraints faced by the rural youth were lack of irrigation facilities (86.88%) followed by lack of positive attitude towards agriculture and allied activities (85.00%), low efficiency of labor (81.88%), inability to store the produce to sell during high market price (76.25%), non-availability of agri inputs in-time (74.38%), prevalence of farmers distress due to lack of assured income from agriculture and allied sectors (73.13%), uncertainty of yield and income from agriculture (68.75%), uncertainty of the market prices (66.25%), non-availability of agricultural labor (63.75%), fear of drudgery in agriculture and allied activities (58.75%), high cost of production (56.25%) and high cost of labor (54.38%). Suggestion elicited by rural youth were timely release of insurance amount (97.50%) followed by creating positive attitude towards agriculture and allied activities among rural youth (91.25%), adequate irrigation facilities (86.25%), timely supply of necessary inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides (85.63%), timely release of credit (81.88%), establishment of local markets (66.25%), strengthening mechanization in agricultural sector (49.38%), establishment of storage facility at village level (40.00%), liaison with organizations to purchase the produce directly from the farmers (33.13%) and strengthening and increasing extension staff in agriculture and allied sectors (13.75%).

Key words: Agriculture, Allied activities, Constraints, Rural Youth, Suggestions

Introduction

Agriculture, as the foundation of the global economy, plays a pivotal role in sustaining livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. Globally, it accounts for approximately 37.00 per cent of land use (Anon, <https://data.worldbank.org> 2019-20), providing employment to about 26.00 per cent of the population, with a significantly higher share in rural areas. India, as an agrarian economy, showcases the critical role of agriculture, especially for rural communities. Agriculture and its allied sectors remain the largest livelihood provider in the country, contributing around 14.00 per cent to the GDP and employing nearly 49.00 per cent of the population. Rural youth, who form a substantial segment of the Indian demographic are a vital resource for transforming and modernizing agricultural practices. With their potential to adopt new ideas, technologies and practices, rural youth can act as catalysts for improving productivity and sustainability in agriculture and allied sectors.

India is the largest producer of pulses, contributing around 23-25 million metric tons annually, with global productivity ranging from 1.0-1.30 tons per hectare (Anon, [http://dpd.gov.in/final annual report 2022-23](http://dpd.gov.in/final%20annual%20report%2022-23)). Millets, mainly produced in Asia and Africa, where India is the top producer with about 11 million metric tons, while global productivity averages 1.20 tons per hectare (Anon [https://apeda.gov.in/millet portal/Production 2023-24](https://apeda.gov.in/millet%20portal/Production%202023-24)). For oilseeds, soybeans dominate global production at 375 million metric tons, with Brazil, United States and Argentina as leading producers. Global productivity for soybeans is around 2.8-3.0 tons per hectare, while rapeseed

and groundnut yield 2.0-3.0 tons and 1.5-3.5 tons per hectare, respectively (Anon, <https://www.usda.gov> 2023-24). These variations in production and productivity reflect the influence of factors such as irrigation, technology and regional climate conditions across different regions.

Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for about 47.00 per cent of India's rural population, with rural areas relying heavily on agriculture for employment (Anon, Economic Survey of India 2020-21). However, similar to global trends, the share of rural youth engaged in traditional farming activities is decreasing due to factors like urban migration, low profitability and the labor-intensive nature of farming. Rural youth in India are still engaged in agriculture, but many are shifting toward allied sectors such as dairy farming, horticulture and agro-processing for better income opportunities.

Despite its critical role in the economy, India's agricultural sector faces numerous challenges, particularly in retaining youth. Low profitability, lack of access to modern farming tools and limited land ownership are key barriers for rural youth. Furthermore, the increasing fragmentation of landholdings makes it difficult for young farmers to achieve economies of scale. To address these challenges, the Indian government and various organizations are promoting allied sectors and providing training in modern farming techniques, financial support through subsidies and improved access to credit.

In Karnataka, rural youth participation in agriculture and allied activities is still significant but faces challenges similar to

other regions of India. According to reports and observations, approximately 40-45 per cent of rural youth in Karnataka are involved in agriculture, with a growing inclination towards allied sectors. In districts like Gadag and Dharwad, where agriculture is often affected by water scarcity and climatic vulnerabilities, youth are diversifying into allied sectors like, dairy farming, sheep and goat rearing, horticulture, agro processing and poultry farming.

The need to secure sustainable livelihoods for rural youth in agriculture in India is urgent, as the country has a young and rapidly growing population. Governments are increasingly focusing on boosting rural incomes through programs like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), which aim to enhance agricultural productivity and rural employment. By addressing challenges related to land ownership, access to finance and technological training, India aims to secure a more prosperous future for its rural youth in the agricultural sector. This study focuses on understanding the constraints faced by rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities and seeks their suggestions to address these issues. By identifying these challenges and potential solutions, the study aims to contribute to the development of strategies that encourage youth participation in agriculture and allied sectors, thereby fostering rural economic growth and stability.

Material and methods

The study was conducted in Dharwad and Gadag districts of Karnataka during 2023-24, focusing on the agriculture and allied activities undertaken by rural youth. Using an “*Ex-post facto*” research design, two taluks were randomly selected from each district and two village from each taluk, resulting in eight villages. From each village, 20 rural youth were randomly selected, totaling a sample size of 160. The age group of people considered for this research was between 18-35 years.

To understand the challenges and suggestions of rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities. A comprehensive

list of constraints and suggestions was prepared based on an extensive review of literature, consultations with Social Science experts and insights from pre-testing the interview schedule. Rural youth were asked to express their agreement with each statement on the list by responding with a ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ The responses were analyzed using frequency and percentage to identify the most prevalent constraints and prioritize actionable suggestions.

Results and discussion

Constraints faced by the rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities

It is evident from Table 1 that the most significant constraint faced by rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities is the lack of irrigation facilities, as reported by 86.88 percent of respondents. This is followed closely by the lack of a positive attitude toward agriculture and allied activities (85.00 %), which suggests a broader issue of disinterest or disillusionment among the youth in this sector.

Low labor efficiency is another key challenge, as identified by 81.88 per cent of respondents, indicating potential deficiencies in skill levels or physical productivity. Similarly, the inability to store produce for selling during high market prices (76.25%) highlights the lack of proper storage facilities, forcing farmers to sell their produce at unfavorable prices.

The non-availability of agricultural inputs in time (74.38%) also poses a major obstacle, emphasizing the need for timely access to seeds, fertilizers and other essential materials. Additionally, prevalence of farmers distress due to lack of assured income from agriculture and allied sectors (73.13%) and the uncertainty of yield and income from agriculture (68.75%) and uncertainty of the market prices (66.25%) reflect the economic instability and unpredictability in the agricultural sector.

Other notable constraints include the non-availability of agricultural labor (63.75%), fear of drudgery in agriculture and allied activities (58.75%) and the high costs of production and labor (56.25% and 54.38%, respectively). These challenges collectively underline the systemic barriers preventing rural youth from fully engaging in agricultural activities.

The results are in line with Tarde *et al.* (2005), Adekunle *et al.* (2009), Pushpa (2010), Patel and Prajaapati (2013), Ramjiyani *et al.* (2015), Kwenye and Sichone (2016) and Sanjeevika *et al.* (2018).

Suggestion made by the rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities

From Table 2, indicates that most critical suggestions made by the rural youth is the timely release of crop insurance, as indicated by 97.50 per cent of respondents. This reflects the importance of financial security in mitigating risks related to unpredictable weather and market conditions. A significant number of rural youths (91.25%) also emphasized the need for creating a positive attitude toward agriculture and allied activities, indicating the necessity of rebranding farming as a viable and respectable livelihood. Similarly, adequate irrigation facilities (86.25%) and the timely supply of necessary inputs

Table 1. Constraints faced by the rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities n=160

Statements	f	%	Ranks
Lack of Irrigation facilities	139	86.88	I
Lack of positive attitude towards agriculture and allied activities	136	85.00	II
Low efficiency of labour	131	81.88	III
Inability to store the produce to sell during high market prices	122	76.25	IV
Non availability of agri inputs in-time	119	74.38	V
Prevalence of farmers distress due to lack of assured income from agriculture and allied sectors	117	73.13	VI
Uncertainty of yield and income from agriculture	110	68.75	VII
Uncertainty of the market prices	106	66.25	VIII
Non availability of agricultural labour	102	63.75	IX
Fear of drudgery in agriculture and allied activities	94	58.75	X
High cost of production	90	56.25	XI
High cost of labour	87	54.38	XII

Table 2. Suggestion made by the rural youth in undertaking agriculture and allied activities

Statements	f	%	Ranks
Timely release of crop insurance	156	97.50	I
Creating positive attitude towards agriculture and allied activities among rural youth	146	91.25	II
Adequate irrigation facilities	138	86.25	III
Timely supply of necessary inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc	137	85.63	IV
Timely release of credit	131	81.88	V
Establishment of local markets	106	66.25	VI
Strengthening mechanization in agricultural sector	79	49.38	VII
Establishment of storage facility at village level	64	40.00	VIII
Liaison with organizations to purchase the produce directly from the farmers	53	33.13	IX
Strengthening and increasing extension staff in agriculture and allied sectors	22	13.75	XIII

like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides *etc* (85.63 per cent) were highlighted as vital steps to improve agricultural productivity.

The timely release of credit (81.88%) and the establishment of local markets (66.25%) were seen as critical measures to provide financial and market accessibility. Further, strengthening mechanization in agricultural sector (49.38%) was identified as a way to reduce the physical drudgery of farming and improve efficiency.

Other suggestions include the establishment of storage facilities at the village level (40.00%) to enable better market timing and liaison with organizations to purchase the produce directly from the farmers (33.13%) to secure assured markets. A smaller proportion (13.75%) of rural youths recommended strengthening and increasing extension staff in agriculture and allied sectors to provide technical support and advice. These

insights point toward actionable strategies to address the barriers faced by rural youth in agriculture, with an emphasis on infrastructure, financial security and changing perceptions about farming. The outcome is in line with the result of Gomase and Tekale (2022), Uttej (2022) and Shivaji and Madhuprasad (2023).

Conclusion

The findings of this study under score the critical challenges and opportunities faced by rural youth in agriculture and allied activities. Key constraints, such as inadequate irrigation facilities, lack of timely input supplies and economic uncertainties, highlight the systemic barriers that hinder youth engagement in this sector. Additionally, the prevalence of a negative perception of agriculture as a viable livelihood option further dissuades rural youth from active participation. However, the study also reveals a strong potential for positive change through targeted interventions. Suggestions from the youth, including timely disbursement of crop insurance, enhanced irrigation infrastructure and fostering a positive attitude toward agriculture, provide a roadmap for policymakers and stakeholders. Establishing local markets, improving mechanization and strengthening storage facilities are actionable measures that can significantly alleviate the challenges faced by rural youth.

By addressing these issues and leveraging the suggestions provided, the agricultural sector in northern Karnataka can be revitalized, making it more attractive and sustainable for rural youth. The active involvement of young individuals in agriculture is not only vital for rural development but also for ensuring food security and economic stability in the region. This study reaffirms the need for a comprehensive approach to empower rural youth and integrate them meaningfully into the agricultural value chain.

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