

Extent of Participation of Rural Youth in Farm Operations and Management Activities in Dimapur District of Nagaland

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Abstract

Agriculture is an important sector in the economic development and poverty alleviation drive of many countries. Though youth have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture, most of them have strong apathy toward it. This has resulted in mass unemployment and lack of sustainable livelihood among youth. With fewer youth into agriculture, the long term future of agriculture sector is in question. The state of Nagaland predominantly has a rice based agricultural system. The farmers of Nagaland are characterized by small land holding, less cash inflow and poverty. If they cultivate rice crop with proper cultivation methods their cash inflow will be more, which will lead to reduction of rural poverty and increase in capital for further investment. Since majority of the population are youth, they can contribute to a great extent if they participate in farming operations and management. Therefore, a comprehensive study was carried out in Dimapur district of Nagaland in the year 2018 to find out the extent of participation of rural youth in farming operations and management. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used for the selection of respondents. Total 120 respondents were selected for the study. Data were collected by administering a structured schedule. Statistical tools employed to analyse the data included frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation. The study revealed that majority of the youth had medium level of participation in farming operations and management.

Keywords: Rural youth, Farm operations, Nagaland, India.

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Introduction

Agricultural development is recognized by many as the only means through which rural development is possible as majority of the country's workforce is engaged in agriculture. It is therefore, necessary to analyse the role which the youth can play in agricultural development. Youth is usually determined in terms of age. According to National Youth Policy (2014), youths is defined in the age group of 15-29 years comprising 27.5 per cent of the population. Traditionally the rural youth learned the technique of agriculture from their parents. Now the situation is different; the educated youths have to teach adults the art and science of modern farming. That is why Deshmukh (1961) rightly stressed when he said "Bogged in tradition and ridden with prejudice, the rural world is waiting for the break through which only the clear vision and fresh vigour of the youths can provide." Youth are very important resources for every nation especially for sustaining agricultural productivity, an important sector for the development of a country.

Brooks et al. (2012) and Kararachet al. (2011) found that the creation of non-agricultural jobs may not happen in the short run; as such agriculture is likely to continue being a source of employment and livelihood in the medium to long term especially for countries that heavily depend on agriculture.

The number of youth is over 1.8 billion in the world today, 90% of whom live in developing countries, where they tend to make up a large proportion of the population and needs to be empowered since this is an important means of improving food security, youth livelihoods and employment. But, unfortunately this category of people is virtually left out in policies and programmes. There is insufficient youth participation in the agricultural sector (Mangal, 2009) even though this class of people is the most productive of any society as it contains people in the prime of their lives physically and mentally. Agriculture being one of the foundation pillars of any society can only function as such if this insufficient youth participation is reversed. For instance improving youth productivity in the agricultural sector and exploring effective livelihood diversification is imperative. Also, investing in the youth by promoting good habit is crucial if they are to realize their full potential. The youth with the dynamism and flexibility has the potential as an agent of positive change and this should be ensured by development programmes.

The state of Nagaland predominantly has a rice based agricultural system. The farmers of Nagaland are characterized by small land holding, less cash inflow and poverty. If they

cultivate rice crop with proper cultivation methods their cash inflow will be more, which will lead to reduction of rural poverty and increase in capital for further investment. The production and productivity of rice could be brought through increased adoption of modern technology and increasing the quality participation of rural youths in this sector. Further, the participation of rural youths in rice cultivation will be motivating factor for developing a sense of work culture for the youths of the non-sampled area and also for generating income through such production oriented activities.

From the above discussion it is clear that youth can be a considerable force which can be instrumental in bringing necessary changes in agriculture. But now - a - days agriculture in its present state appears not to be attractive to the youth. Thus it was felt that it will be worthwhile to study the extent of participation of the rural youth in farming also to find out in which operations or activities rural youth take part.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Dimapur district of Nagaland. A purposive cum random sampling design was followed for selection of respondents for the study. Under Dimapur district 2 sub-divisions namely Medziphema and Chumukedima were purposively selected. Two villages from each sub-divisions were selected randomly. Thirty respondents were selected from each of four villages by using random sampling procedure. Thus, the total sample size constituted 120 respondents (youth between 15-29 years).

The extent of participation of rural youth in farm operations and management activities was measured in terms of sixteen and nine dimensions respectively. The data collected were scored and analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Based on this index, the respondents were classified in to three categories as given below:

Category	Range
Low	$(\bar{X} - SD)$
Medium	$(\bar{X} \pm SD)$
High	$(\bar{X} + SD)$

The scale developed by Gill (1986) was used with slight modification.

Results and Discussion

i) Extent of participation in farm operations

The extent of participation of the respondents in farm operation is the frequency at which the respondents were taking active part in various farm operations.

From Table 1, it was found that (20.83%) of the respondents regularly participated in the land preparation followed by 60.83 per cent who participated sometime and (18.33%) never participated. In case of preparation of seed bed, 17.5 per cent regularly participated followed by 54.16% who participated sometime and 28.33 per cent never participated at all. 16.66 per cent of the respondents regularly participated on seed sowing followed by 67.5 per cent who sometime participated and 15.83 per cent who never participated in seed sowing. It was also observed that 16.66 per cent regularly puddle in the main field followed by 39.16 per cent who sometime puddle and 44.16 per cent never puddle in the main field. In case of application of fertilizer and manure, 10 per cent and 9.16 per cent of the respondents regularly apply fertilizer and manure followed by 28.33 per cent and 39.16 per cent of the respondents who apply sometime and 61.66 per cent and 51.66 per cent of the respondents never apply at all. Moreover it was seen that 19.16 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent of the respondents regularly participated in weeding, bunding and spraying/ dusting respectively whereas 25.83 per cent, 41.66 per cent, 63.33 per cent, never do those activities. Relating to harvesting very few (34.16%) participated regularly. In case of preparation of bundles, transportation of bundles from field to threshing floor, storage of straw, grains and transportation of storage to market majority of the respondents never participated in all this field farm operation.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents based on frequency of extent of participation in farm operations

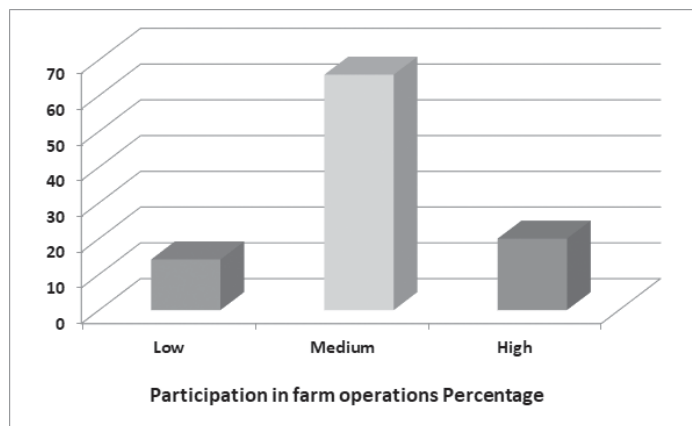
Sl. No.	Category	Regularly		Sometime		Never	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1.	Land preparation	25	20.83	73	60.83	22	18.33
2.	Preparation of seed bed	21	17.5	65	54.16	34	28.33
3.	Seed sowing	20	6.66	81	67.5	19	15.83
4.	Puddling in main field	20	16.66	47	39.16	53	44.16
5.	Application of fertilizers	12	10	34	28.33	74	61.66
6.	Application of manures	11	9.16	47	39.16	62	51.66
7.	Weeding	23	19.16	65	54.16	31	25.83
8.	Bunding	24	20	46	38.33	50	41.66
9.	Spraying/ Dusting	18	15	26	21.66	76	63.33
10.	Harvesting	41	34.16	66	55	13	10.83
11.	Preparation of bundles	30	25	63	52.5	27	22.5
12.	Transportation of bundles from field to threshing floor	25	20.83	57	47.5	38	31.66
13.	Threshing	20	16.66	47	39.16	53	44.16
14.	Storage of straw	17	14.16	39	32.5	64	53.33
15.	Storage of grain	33	27.5	41	34.16	46	38.33
16.	Transportation of storage to market	9	7.5	18	15	93	77.5

The Table 1.1 shows the extent of participation of the respondents in farm operations. An examination of the table reveals that majority of the respondent 65.83 per cent had medium level of participation followed by 20 per cent high and 14.16 per cent low

Table 1.1 Distribution of respondents based on extent of participation in farm operations

Sl. No.	Category	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
1	Low	<4.35	17	14.16		
2	Medium	4.35-20.93	79	65.83	12.64	8.29
3	High	>20.93	24	20		
	Total		120	100		

The mean score of the respondents was 12.64 with standard deviation of 8.29. Thus it can be concluded from the findings that majority of the respondents showed medium extent of participation in farm operations.



ii) Extent of participation in management activities

The extent of participation of respondents in management activities is the frequency at which the respondents took active part in various farm management activities.

From the Table 2, it was observed that majority of the respondents (47.5%), (45.83%), (43.33%), and (48.33%) regularly participated in distribution of labour in different farm activities, keeping contact/ vigilance for obtaining proper share from tenants, supervising labours in their day to day activities and allocation of funds to meet the expenses on different farm activities. Very few respondents (8.33%), and (5.33%) regularly participated in maintaining records of different farm produce and farm inputs. It was also observed that 16.66 per cent, 24.16 per cent, and 32.5 per cent of the respondents regularly

participated in collection or procuring inputs like seeds/ fertilizers/ plant protection chemicals from different agencies, contacting wholesaler/ middle man for selling of farm produce and arrangement of funds to meet the expenses on different farm activities followed by 39.16 per cent, 30.83 per cent and 27.50 per cent who sometime participated and (44.16%), (45.00%), and (40.00%) of respondents who never participated in those management activities.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents based on frequency of extent of participation in management activities

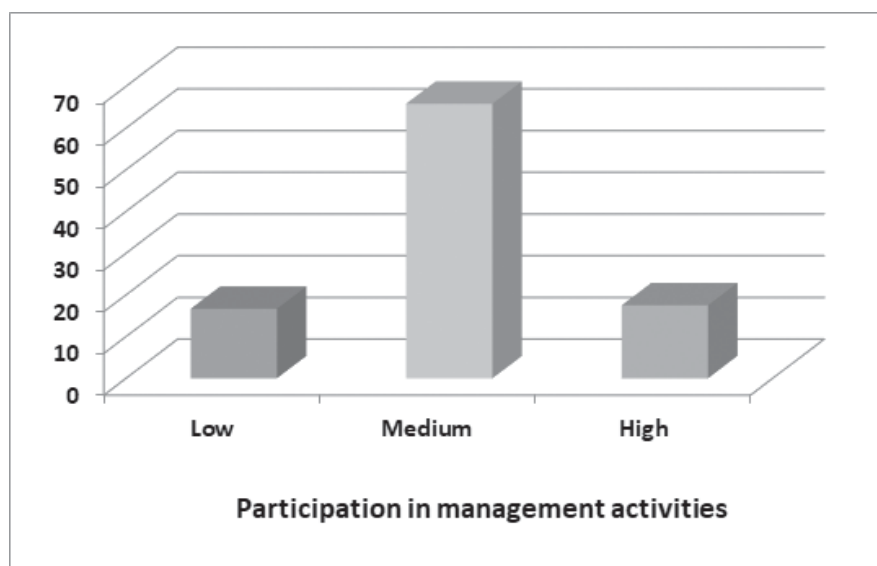
Sl. No.	Category	Regularly		Sometime		Never	
		<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1.	Distribution of labour in different farm activities	57	47.5	29	24.16	34	28.33
2.	Collection or procuring inputs like seeds/ fertilizers/ plant protection chemicals from different agencies	20	16.66	47	39.16	53	44.16
3.	Contracting wholesaler/ middle man for selling of farm produce	29	24.16	37	30.83	54	45
4.	Maintaining records of different farm produce	10	8.33	22	18.33	88	73.33
5.	Maintaining records of different farm inputs	7	5.83	21	17.5	92	76.66
6.	Keeping contact for obtaining proper share from tenants	55	45.83	32	26.66	33	27.5
7.	Supervising labour in their day to day activities	52	43.33	43	35.83	25	20.83
8.	Allocation of funds to meet various expenses on farm activities	58	48.33	32	26.66	30	25
9.	Arrangements of funds to meet the expenses on different farm activities	39	32.5	33	27.5	48	40

It is evident from the Table 2.1 that majority of the respondents had medium (65.83%) level of participation in management activities. About 17.5 per cent of the respondents had high participation and the rest 16.66 per cent had low level of participation in management activities.

The mean score of the respondents was 7.55 with standard deviation of 3.99. Thus, it can be concluded from the findings that majority of the respondents showed medium extent of participation in management activities.

Table 2.1 Distribution of respondents based on extent of participation in management activities **n=120**

Sl. No.	Category	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
1	Low	<3.56	20	16.66		
2	Medium	3.56-11.54	79	65.83	7.55	3.99
3	High	>11.54	21	17.5		
	Total		120	100		



Conclusion

It may be concluded that majority of the rural youth had medium level of participation in farm operations as well as management activities which suggest that extension experts should continue putting their efforts targeting this vibrant portion of the population so that their energy can be tapped and utilized for the development of agriculture. The extension functionaries may also communicate to the rural youth who are practicing farming with the help of ICTs so that they can get necessary information as and when required.

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