

Participation of Rural Youth in Agriculture

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra State in 2016. The main objective was to study the extent of participation of rural youth in Agriculture. The responses were collected with the help of a pretested schedule by contacting rural youth personally. Hence ex-post facto design of social research was used in the present investigation. Majority of the respondents participating in agricultural activities expressed that they take decisions by consulting elders. With regard to participation in farm operations majority of the respondents had medium level of participation. More than half of the respondents (68.33 per cent) expressed that they participate in maintaining record of milk. With reference to participation of rural youth in management of animal activities like milking of animals and in getting fodder from the farm to the cattle shed 55.83 per cent and 49.17 per cent of the respondents expressed that they only do this work. In economic activities like purchase of farm implements/ machines 58.33 per cent expressed that they do the work with others. In case of borrowing/repaying loan 93.33 per cent expressed that they never do this work.

Keywords: Rural youth, Participation, Agriculture

In India, it is well known that youth are the backbone of the rural economy. The youth of today are the future citizens of the country. They are the hope of tomorrow. Youth reflect the national potential and represent the life blood of a nation. Development of youth determines the development of the community and the country as a whole. The socio-economic development and prosperity of the rural areas depend upon the kind of youth in the country, because, rural youth have the ability to orient themselves to go along with the mainstream development process. Youth are the precious human assets who can play an important role in nation building activities, if opportunities are provided. If a country can harness a creative and pervasive force like youth, it can substantially and quickly advance

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towards modernization in agriculture. *

Agriculture generally involves five stages viz., production, consumption, processing, storage and marketing. In most of these stages rural youth can be actively involved. They are participating in most of the agriculture operations like ploughing, harrowing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, post-harvest activities and so on. Rural youth participate in marketing where the trade or enterprise is highly/commercialized. Rural youth play a key role in performing various tasks related to dairy and goatery enterprises activities like maintenance of cattle/ goat shed, feeding of animals, collection of fodder for animals *etc.* The participation of rural youth in farming gains more importance because it solves the problem of unemployment; secondly the young farmers are innovative and accept new farm technology earlier than the older ones. Hence, this study was focused on the objective to study the participation of rural youth in Agriculture.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra State with a sample size of 120 youth respondents from 12 villages. The data from respondents were collected with the help of a pretested schedule by contacting them personally. Hence, ex-post facto design of social research was used in the present investigation. An interview schedule was prepared in view of the objective of the study and data were collected by personal interview from selected respondents, regarding their participation in agriculture. For measurement of participation teacher made test was used in which four major indicators were identified. A Schedule was developed to measure all these indicators with the help of suitable continuum. The score of all these indicators was converted into an index. Further, overall participation index (PI) was estimated with the help of the formula given below.

$$PI = \frac{\text{Obtained participation score}}{\text{Obtainable participation score}} \times 100$$

Results and Discussion

The data in Table 1 indicates distribution of respondents according to their participation.

1. a Participation of Rural Youth in Farm Decision Making

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents according to Participation in Farm Decision Making

Sr. No.	Farm Decisions	Respondents (n=120)				
		A	B	C	D	E
1	Selecting hybrid varieties	22 (18.33)	52 (43.34)	12 (10.00)	19 (15.83)	15 (12.50)
2	Using disease/weed preventive spray	25 (20.83)	65 (54.17)	20 (16.67)	04 (03.33)	06 (05.00)
3	Using chemical fertilizers	00 (00.00)	52 (43.34)	28 (23.33)	24 (20.00)	16 (13.33)
4	Using labour on temporary basis	15 (12.50)	10 (08.33)	20 (16.67)	44 (36.67)	31 (25.83)
5	Maintaining record book of farm	17 (14.17)	23 (19.17)	73 (60.83)	07 (05.83)	00 (00.00)
6	Buying the farm implements	20 (16.17)	16 (13.33)	63 (52.50)	12 (10.00)	09 (07.50)
7	Building the farm implements	24 (20.00)	23 (19.17)	56 (46.67)	04 (03.33)	13 (10.83)
8	Taking opinion of Govt/ Non-Govt institutes about farm business	12 (10.00)	23 (19.17)	51 (42.50)	04 (03.33)	30 (25.00)
9	Taking credit for farming	09 (07.50)	24 (20.00)	61 (50.83)	17 (14.17)	09 (07.50)
10	Doing subsidiary activities like poultry farming and others	17 (14.17)	42 (35.00)	34 (28.33)	15 (12.50)	12 (10.00)

A – Exclusively I take the decision, B - I take the decision by consulting my father/ elders, C - We take decision together, D – Father/elders take decision by consulting me, E – Only Father/elders take decision

The data furnished in Table 1 indicate the results of participation of rural youth in farm decision making. Near about fifty per cent of respondents (43.34%) expressed that the decision of selecting hybrid varieties was taken by them by consulting their father/ elders followed by 18.33 per cent respondents who expressed that they exclusively take the decision of selecting hybrid varieties. The respondents were distributed according to their farm decision making in farm operations like using disease/ weed preventive spray. Over half the respondents (54.17%) were taking decisions by consulting their father or elders followed by 20.83 per cent of respondents who were taking their own decision and 16.67 per cent of respondents who take decisions together with their father/elders. The proportion of respondents

who expressed that only father/elders take decisions and by consulting them was 5.00 and 3.33 per cent, respectively. Regarding use of chemical fertilizers, majority of the respondents (43.34%) were taking the decision by consulting their father/elders followed by 23.33 per cent respondents who take this decision together, 20.00 per cent respondents also expressed that their father/elders take the decision by consulting them. Decision on use of labour on temporary basis was always taken by father/elders in consultation with respondents (36.67%) and in case of one fourth of the respondents (25.83%) only their father/elders are taking this decision. Majority of the respondents are taking decisions together with their father/elders regarding maintaining of record book of farm (60.83%), buying the farm implements (52.50%), taking credit for farming (50.83%), building the farm implements (46.67%) and taking opinion of Government or Non Government institutes about farm business. For doing subsidiary activities like poultry farming and others, more than one third of the respondents (35.00%) took their decision by consulting their father or elders and nearly 28.33 per cent of them are taking decisions together with their father/elders.

From the above findings it can be concluded that majority of the respondents are taking decisions together with their father or elders regarding farming activities like maintenance of farm records, buying and building farm implements, taking credit for farming and institutional opinion about farm business. Majority of the respondents are also taking decisions by consulting their father or elders, regarding use of disease or weed spray, chemicals and fertilizers and selection of improved hybrid varieties.

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents according to their Level of Participation in Farm Decision Making

Sr. No.	Farm decision making Index	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33)	34	28.33
2	Medium (34 to 66)	60	50.00
3	High (Above 66)	26	21.67
	Total	120	100

It is revealed from Table 2 that half of the respondents (50.00%) were concentrated in medium category of farm decision making followed by 28.33 per cent respondents who come under the category of low level of farm decision making, while 21.67 per cent respondents had high farm decision making.

This clearly indicates that rural youth were participating in the farm decisions, but

not on their own; they used to take decisions in consultation with their father and elders, hence the extent of farm decision making was medium.

1.b Participation of Rural Youth in Farm Operations

Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents according to Participation in Farm Operations

Sr. No.	Farm Operations	Respondents (n=120)			
		A	B	C	D
1	Are you participating in land preparation for crop?	16 (13.33)	05 (04.16)	32 (26.67)	67 (55.84)
2	Are you participating in sowing of seed?	10 (08.33)	45 (37.50)	16 (13.33)	49 (40.84)
3	Are you participating in irrigating the field?	68 (56.67)	08 (06.66)	30 (25.00)	14 (11.67)
4	Are you participating in intercultural operations on the farm?	13 (10.83)	67 (55.84)	25 (20.83)	15 (12.50)
5	Are you participating in fertilizer application?	15 (12.50)	40 (33.33)	35 (29.17)	30 (25.00)
6	Are you participating in spraying of insecticides/fungicides/herbicides?	00 (00.00)	32 (26.67)	57 (47.50)	31 (25.83)
7	Are you participating in harvesting of crop?	00 (00.00)	69 (57.50)	21 (17.50)	30 (25.00)
8	Are you participating in operating of farm implements?	21 (17.50)	31 (25.83)	45 (37.50)	23 (19.17)
9	Are you participating in threshing and drying of farm produce?	00 (00.00)	43 (35.83)	42 (35.00)	35 (29.17)

A - Only I do this work, B - Get done through labour, C - I do with others, D - I never do this work

The data in Table 3 indicates the results of participation of rural youth in farm operations. More than fifty per cent of the respondents expressed that they never do the work of land preparation for crops (55.84%) and about one fourth of the respondents get it done with others (26.67%). In the operation of seed sowing 40.84 per cent of the respondents never participate, while 37.50 per cent of the respondents get it done through labour. More than half of the respondents (56.67%) were found to participate in irrigating the field on their own and 25.00 per cent were doing it with others. Regarding intercultural operations, 55.84 per cent of the respondents get it done through labour, while 20.83 per cent were doing it with others. In the fertilizer application, 33.33 per cent of the respondents get it done through labour, 29.17 per cent do it with others and 25.00 per cent of the rural youth have never done this operation. For the spraying of insecticide, fungicides or herbicides, nearly 47.50 per cent of the respondents are doing this

work with others or through labour (26.67%). Harvesting of crop was always done through labour, as expressed by 57.50 per cent of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were operating farm implements with others (37.50%) or get it done through labour (25.83%). In threshing and drying of farm produce, 35.83 per cent of the respondents get it done through labour, while 35 per cent of them are doing with others. On the same line Ahire *et al.* (2001) reported that participation of rural youth in farm activities was varying.

It is concluded from the findings that except in irrigation, no farm activities were done by most of the rural youth on their own.

Table 4. Distribution of the Respondents according to their Level of Participation in Farm Operations

Sr. No.	Farm Operations Index	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33)	26	21.67
2	Medium (34 to 66)	61	50.83
3	High (Above 66)	33	27.50
	Total	120	100

It is revealed from Table 4 that, in case of level of participation in farm operations, majority of the respondents *i.e.* 50.83 per cent had medium level of participation in farm operations, 27.50 per cent of the respondents had high level of participation in farm operations, while, 21.67 per cent of the respondents had low level of participation in farm operations. These findings corroborate with the findings of Nale (2003).

1.c Participation of Rural Youth in Animal Husbandry

Table 5. Distribution of the Respondents according to participation in Animal Husbandry

Sr. No.	Animal Husbandry Activities	Respondents (n=120)			
		A	B	C	D
1	Are you participating in cleaning animals?	32 (26.67)	08 (06.66)	54 (45.00)	26 (21.67)
2	Are you participating in feeding of animals?	56 (46.67)	00 (00.00)	36 (30.00)	28 (23.33)
3	Are you participating in getting fodder from farm to cattle shed?	59 (49.17)	04 (03.33)	25 (20.83)	32 (26.67)

4	Are you participating in vaccination of animals?	26 (26.66)	00 (00.00)	38 (31.67)	56 (46.67)
5	Are you participating in taking animals for artificial insemination?	24 (20.00)	00 (00.00)	28 (23.33)	68 (56.67)
6	Are you participating in milking of animals?	67 (55.83)	00 (00.00)	23 (19.17)	30 (25.00)
7	Are you participating in maintaining record of milk?	82 (68.33)	00 (00.00)	21 (17.50)	17 (14.17)
8	Are you participating in rearing of hybrid animals?	03 (02.50)	00 (00.00)	12 (10.00)	105 (87.50)
9	Are you participating in poultry farming?	21 (17.50)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	99 (82.50)
10	Are you participating in cleaning of animal shed?	54 (45.00)	02 (01.67)	34 (28.33)	30 (25.00)

A - Only I do this work, B - Get done through labour, C - I do with others, D - I never do this work

The data furnished in Table 5 indicates the results of participation of rural youth in Animal Husbandry activities. Among the management practices, cleaning of animals was done by majority of the respondents (45.00%) with others, followed by 26.67 per cent of the respondents who do this work on their own; however 21.67 per cent of them have never done the cleaning of animals. Nearly half of the respondents (46.67%) participated in feeding of animals and nearly one third of rural youth (30%) did it with others, while nearly one fourth of the respondents (23.33%) have never done this activity. Almost half of the young respondents (49.17%) were getting fodder from farm to cattle shed and 20.83 per cent were doing this with others. Regarding vaccination of animals 46.67 per cent rural youth respondents never participated in vaccination of animals, while 31.67 per cent did it with others and 26.67 per cent were doing this work on their own. More than half of the respondents (56.67%) never take their animals for artificial insemination, 23.33 per cent respondents send their animals with others and 20.00 per cent have taken their animals for artificial insemination.

Regarding milking of animals, 55.83 per cent of the respondents themselves are doing milking, 19.17 per cent of the respondents are doing it with others and one fourth of the respondents have never done this activity (25%). Majority of the youth respondents (68.33%) had maintained milk record on their own. A great majority of the respondents (87.50%) never participated in rearing hybrid animals and near about similar per cent of respondents (82.50%) have never done poultry

farming. Majority of the respondents (45%) are participating in cleaning of the animal shed on their own, while 28.33 per cent are doing it with others.

Table 6. Distribution of the Respondents according to Level of Participation in Animal Husbandry

Sr. No.	Animal Husbandry activities Index	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33)	19	15.83
2	Medium (34 to 66)	82	68.34
3	High (Above 66)	19	15.83
	Total	120	100

It is observed from Table 6 that a majority of the respondents (68.34%) were having medium participation in animal husbandry activities followed by 15.83 per cent of the respondents who had low participation and 15.83 per cent of the respondents who had high participation in management of animals.

1. d Participation of Rural Youth in Economic Activities

Table 7. Distribution of the Respondents according to Participation in Economic Activities

Sr. No.	Economic Activities level	Respondents (n=120)		
		A	B	C
1	Are you participating in storage of farm produce?	10 (08.33)	70 (58.34)	40 (33.33)
2	Are you participating in selling of farm produce?	12 (10.00)	32 (26.67)	76 (63.33)
3	Are you participating in maintaining farm records?	15 (12.50)	67 (55.83)	38 (31.67)
4	Are you participating in selling/buying of bullocks or other farm animals?	12 (10.00)	25 (20.83)	83 (69.17)
5	Are you participating in purchase of farm implements/machines?	12 (10.00)	70 (58.33)	38 (31.67)
6	Are you participating in purchase of insecticide/fungicide/herbicide required for spraying?	15 (12.50)	55 (45.83)	50 (41.67)
7	Are you participating in purchase of animal fodder?	14 (11.67)	35 (29.16)	71 (59.17)
8	Are you participating in selling of milk?	23 (19.17)	52 (43.33)	45 (37.50)
9	Are you participating in borrowing/repaying loan?	00 (00.00)	08 (06.67)	112 (93.33)

A - Only I do this work, B - I do with others, C - I never do this work

The data in Table 7 indicate the results of participation of rural youth in economic activities. Regarding storage of farm produce over half of the respondents (58.34%) said that, they do with others, 33.33 per cent of the respondents expressed that, they never do this work and 8.33 per cent of the respondents expressed that they exclusively do this work. Regarding participation of youth in selling of farm produce, majority of the respondents (63.33%) said that, they never do this work. 26.67 per cent of the respondents said that they do with others followed by 10.00 per cent of respondents who expressed that they exclusively do this work. Over half the respondents (55.83%) said that, they participate with others in maintaining farm records, 31.67 per cent of the respondents said that they never do this work while 12.50 per cent of respondents expressed that they exclusively do this work. With reference to activities like, selling/buying of bullocks or other farm animals 69.17 per cent expressed that they never do this work, 20.83 per cent do with others followed by 10 per cent who exclusively do this work. In activities like, purchase of farm implements/machines and purchase of insecticides/fungicides/herbicides required for spraying, the distribution of respondents is as follows with three statements, "I do with others (58.33 per cent) and (45.83 per cent), "I never do this work" (20.83 per cent and 22.50 per cent) followed by (10.00% and 12.50%) "I exclusively do this work". in activities like, purchase of animal fodder and selling of milk, 59.17 per cent and 37.50 per cent of the respondents never do this work, 29.16 per cent and 43.33 per cent do with others followed by 11.67 per cent and 19.17 per cent who exclusively do this work. Regarding participation of youth in borrowing/repaying loan, majority of the respondents (93.33 per cent) said that, they never do this work. 6.67 per cent of the respondents said that they do with others.

Hence, it is concluded that majority of rural youth never participated in some of the economic activities like borrowing or repaying of loan, buying and selling of farm produce and farm animals, their artificial insemination and purchase of fodder. They were participating with others in some of the activities like storage of farm produce, maintaining farm records, purchase of implements, machinery, insecticides/ fungicides/ herbicides and selling of milk.

Table 8. Distribution of the Respondents according to their Economic Activities Level

Sr. No.	Farm Economic Index	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33)	48	40.00
2	Medium (34 to 66)	52	43.33
3	High (Above 66)	20	16.67
	Total	120	100

It is observed from Table 8 that, majority of the respondents (43.33%) were having medium level of participation in economic activities, followed by 40.00 per cent of the respondents who were having low level of participation in economic activities and only 16.67 per cent of the respondents had high level participation in economic activities.

Overall Participation of Rural Youth in Agriculture

Table 9. Distribution of the Respondents according to overall Extent of Participation

Sr. No.	Extent of participation Index	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33)	17	14.17
2	Medium (34 to 66)	81	67.50
3	High (Above 66)	22	18.33
	Total	120	100

It is observed from Table 9 that a great majority of the respondents (67.50%) were having medium extent of participation followed by 18.33 per cent of the respondents who had high extent of participation and 14.17 per cent of the respondents were found to have low extent of participation.

Most of the respondents were not participating fully in all the agricultural activities. The reason might be that youth are losing interest in agriculture or due to insufficient knowledge about different agricultural operations. Hence there is a need to train the youth on certain issues of agriculture and help them to acquire more knowledge and create interest. It is clear from the findings that, majority of the rural youth indicated that training is needed in selection of seed material, identification of pests and diseases and selection of hybrid varieties. The administrators and policy makers should organize training programmes in these

areas to increase the knowledge and skill of rural youth. A similar finding was reported by Hiremath (2000) and Shinde (2001).

Conclusion

Rural youth are very attracted towards urbanisation and the need to earn assured income which they could not find in agriculture or in rural areas. Due to the present scenario of agriculture in Vidarbha region, the farming community has developed pessimism towards agriculture, hence they are not encouraging their children towards agriculture. The suggestions given by rural youth are all concerned with the generation of assured income from agriculture and the need for formal education from childhood that can help them to change their perception and increase participation and decision making in agriculture.

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