INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a significant role in the Indian economy as it contributes to 17% of the total GDP and provides livelihood to over 60% of the population (Kant, 2019). The future of Indian agriculture depends largely on the perception of rural youth towards farming as an occupation. It is observed that constraints in farming are on the rise and these constraints could lead farm families to opt for other alternative occupations for living. The rapid growth and diversification of developmental activities have resulted in a much needed expansion of employment opportunities, but, at the same time, has triggered rural-to-urban migration.

PERCEPTION OF RURAL YOUTH TOWARDS FARMING AS AN OCCUPATION IN PUNJAB

ANJANA RAI * AND KIRANJOT SIDHU

Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, College of Community Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana-141 004

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to study the perception of the 200 rural youth studying in class 10th/11th/12th aged 14-19 years in Punjab state towards farming as an occupation. Economic, socio-cultural, personal, physical and psychological factors were worked out to measure the perception of youth towards farming as an occupation. The findings of the study revealed that nearly three fourth of the respondents (71.5%) perceived that farming was not economically profitable occupation and they were dissatisfied with the income earned from farming. Nearly half of the sample (49%) agreed that other occupations can be undertaken along with farming as farming is seasonal and gives enough time to be involved in other subsidiary occupations. Most of the respondents (91%) agreed that farmers can earn throughout their life as there is no retirement age for farming. Youth (95.5%) also perceived that farming has as a low social status and it was also considered as physically laborious occupation by 97.5 percent of the respondents and most of the youth (98%) viewed that farming is associated with health risks due to exposure to heat, cold, dust and chemicals. However, majority (84%) of the youth believed that hard work in farming kept them healthy. More than three fourth of the sample youth (78.5%) dislike farming and were disinterested. Three fourth of the respondents (75%) were dissatisfied with income from farming as it was insufficient to fulfil their family expenditure.

Key words: Farming, Occupation, Perception, Punjab Agriculture and Rural Youth
migration. This trend has inadvertently resulted in the shift of farm labour to non farm sectors.

With growing urbanization, better literacy standards and greater skill attainment by rural youth, one of the tremendous threats which India is facing in the field of agriculture is whether the youth belonging to farming families would opt for farming as their future occupation or, owing to growing scope in other areas, would go ahead with diversified occupation. Aspiring farmers, including the farmer’s son, are being compelled to go in to divergent employment. Do we ever hear parents saying that their son/daughter will take up agri business? Parents find farming to be a non-prestigious, highly laborious and 24 × 7 type of occupation, the output from which is dependent not only on one’s own labour but mostly on nature, government policies, etc. Agriculture in the present scenario appears to be so unattractive to young people and they are turning away from agricultural or rural occupations (White, 2012). In a survey, it was found that less than 10% percent of rural youth were engaged in farming activities whereas about 18.6 percent youth were involved in non farm activities and they were earning higher wages by Rs.50 than the agricultural workers in Ludhiana and Bhatinda districts of Punjab (Leavy and Smith, 2010).

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is critical to comprehend how the youth perceive farming as an occupation particularly in Punjab. Perception is never a result of individual experiences. It is formed through an interaction with the entire environment that one is exposed to and his visualisation of particular situation or event. Hence, a pan Punjab data from different agro - climatic zones from a representative sample of one male child of the family who were studying in either class 10th/11th/12th was necessary to understand the perception of rural youth towards farming as an occupation. Keeping this in view, the study was conducted to analyse the factors contributing to perception of school going youth towards farming as an occupation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Punjab state during 2017-2021 covering all the five agro-climatic zones of Punjab. Punjab has 23 districts. Out of these, two districts were selected randomly from each zone, thus, a total of ten districts were selected for the study. From each selected district, one block in which the main city or some other main city is situated and second block far away from the city was selected. Hence, twenty blocks were selected for the study.

A total of 10 farm families actively engaged in farming as their major family occupation were selected from each block through random sampling. Data was collected from one male child studying in class 10th/11th/12th. It was studied using statements prepared for the purpose on a specific scale and responses were obtained from youth studying in class 10/11/12 between 14-19 years of age. The total sample size of the study was 200.

Measurement of the variable perception: It refers to the way in which farming is regarded, understood and interpreted by farm family members as an occupation on economic, socio-cultural, personal, physical and psychological
dimensions. A scale consisting of 19 statements regarding economic factors, 17 to measure socio-cultural factors, 8 for physical, 11 to measure personal factors and 16 for psychological factors was developed. Thus, a total of 71 statements were constructed for the study. The responses for each statement were rated on a five point continuum. Positive statements were assigned score 5 to 1 for strongly agreed to strongly disagreed and negative statements were assigned reverse score from 1 to 5 for strongly agreed to strongly disagreed.

Mean Score: Mean score was calculated by adding score of each statement for each factor on the basis of agreement and disagreement and divided by number of statements. Mean score for each of the factors was also worked out individually. Data was analyzed using frequency, mean and percentages and ranks assigned on the basis of mean score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of youth towards economic factors associated with farming as an occupation: Data as shown in Table 1 reveals that very large percentage (93.0%) of sample youth agreed that farming was associated with low income and profit making was difficult having mean score of 1.36 contributed mostly in negative perception of youth and only 20% of youth agreed that farming was economically profitable occupation. The reason could be that farm returns have been decreased due to an increase in land rents which was supported by 87.0 percent of youth with lowest mean score of 1.30 and it was most contributing factor in perceiving agriculture in a negative light. The vast majority (90%) of youth responded that diversification in farming can save family expenditure incurred by the family on the purchase of the produce having mean score of 4.13 and it was second most contributing factor in positive perception of children towards economic factors of farming as an occupation. The highest mean score (4.19) was obtained for the fact that farmers can earn throughout his/her life as there was no retirement age in farming. Ramesh and Madhavi (2015) found that agriculture occupation was an economically profitable among farm families as agricultural activities were based completely on family labour which used their children as helpers to provide a non-paid working force. Adejboh et al. (2016) also found a negative perception of students towards farming as an occupation due to poor income from farming. Sawant et al. (2014) discovered that the majority of the students perceived agriculture as a stepping stone to other occupations, but that the job required enormous capital.

The majority (82%) of children responded that other occupations were more lucrative due to less risk in monetary returns having mean score of 1.48. Kumar et al. (2019) discovered that the high risk associated with farming due to dependency on nature followed by the high cost of inputs were the principal economic factors leading to farming families shunning farming. Researcher (Singh, 2015) of Uttar Pradesh also reported that farmers could not fulfil their basic needs only through farm income.
Table 1: Distribution of youth according to their perception towards economic factors of farming as an occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
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<th>Mean Ra-score nk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical factors</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Paid labour can be substituted with family labour to earn more profit from farming.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Farming is associated with low income.</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Farming is becoming highly mechanized leading to increased cost of investment.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Income from farming is too less in comparison to other occupation.</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Small farmer's daily income is more in comparisons to labours.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Farmers are not satisfied with their household economic condition.</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Low income from farming results in farmers committing suicides.</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>It is possible to earn high profit from farming.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Farmers are not sure about their income from farming till their produce is sold in the Mandis.</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Occupations other than farming are more lucrative.</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Many other income generating allied activities can be undertaken along with farming.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
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Table 01 Contd.
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Diversification of crops can help to save expenditure to be incurred by family of purchase of the produce.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Profitability in farming decreases due to inadequate storage facilities.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Farmer organisation is mandatory for defending farmers' interest in their negotiation with intermediaries.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Returns from farm has decreased due to increase in land rents</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>One can earn throughout his/her life as there is no retirement age in farming.</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Engagement in farming leaves abundant time for undertaking subsidiary occupations.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Agriculture commodities are perishable and its improper storage can cause heavy loss to farmers.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Farming is economically profitable occupation.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* f= frequency and %= percentage

*SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree
Table 2: Distribution of youth according to their perception towards socio-cultural factors of farming as an occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Physical factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Status of farming stands at lowest ladder as the occupation in the society</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Farmers are not considered professionals.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Parents guide their children to leave farming and go to cities in search of other jobs.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farm family desire their children to select high status occupation.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Farming is a status symbol for farmers in Punjab.</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Family values and love increases as a result of children working in farming along with their parents and siblings.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Family members can effectively manage their family responsibilities along with farming.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Farming help to maintain family and social bonds</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>High income is possible through farming for maintaining high living standards.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Farming is done because this has been done by previous generations.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 02 Contd.
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<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Ra-score</th>
<th>nk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>No one values a farmer in the society.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Salaried employment is seen as the more prestigious occupation in comparison to farming.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Girls do not want to marry a farmer as it means living in a village.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Farmer is not the first choice of girls for a groom due to less income.</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Agriculture land help in finding the good match for children.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Occupations involving physical work are considered low grade</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Younger generation looks down upon physical work.</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* f= frequency and %= percentage

*SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree
Socio-cultural factors associated with farming as an occupation: Perception of youth associated with socio-cultural factors is depicted in data as shown in Table 2 reveals that with vast majority (90%) of youth perceived low social status of farming as an occupation having second least (1.33) mean score which contributed to forming a negative perception for socio-cultural aspects of farming as an occupation. Perceptions of students on career prospects in agriculture were poor societal value of farmers (Adejoh et al. 2016). Majority of youth (83.5%) stated that were guided by their parents to go for other jobs and it was second most important factors that contributed to negative perception of youth. The vast majority (90%) of youth viewed salaried employment as prestigious than farming and they felt that no one values a farmer in the society having a mean score of 1.78 which lead to negative perception among youth. However, they agreed (65%) that having agriculture land can help to find good match for youth with mean score of 3.83 which was third most important aspect for forming positive perception regarding socio-cultural factors and farming (72.5%) helps to keep the family together (social bonding).

More than half of the respondents (60%) stated that farmers can effectively manage their family responsibilities along with farming having highest mean score (3.75) contributed mostly in forming positive perception towards socio-cultural factors. Nearly three fourth of the youth (72.5%) agreed that farming with parents and siblings can improve social bonding within the family and society as well increases love among the family members obtained second highest mean perception score (3.63) which lead towards positive perception regarding farming as a occupation. Similar results were also reported by Kumar et al. (2019) in Gujarat who also found that the majority of farm families expressed that they would like to offer high social status to youth by providing higher education. Lack of family support to continue farming and lack of encouragement from family members also leads to youth avoiding farming as a occupation. Lack of recognition was also an important factor. Widiyanti et al. (2019) revealed that the majority of the youth agreed that farming had low social status and some youth with neutral attitudes stated that they would like to continue to work with their parents and manage the land inherited from the parents. Onima et al. (2017) in their study on attitude of farmers towards farming as an occupation in Gujarat found that majority (74.28%) of farmers agreed that farmers were least privileged category in the modern society. Bhuva et al. (2017) concluded that more than half (52.38%) farmers felt farming stands at lowest ladder as occupation in the society, but at the same time revealed that 53.33 per cent of the farmers were strongly agreed that farming provides freedom to manage work time by self. Few also reported (15%) sense of pride in being a farmer (Sood, 2014).

Perception towards physical factors of farming as an occupation: Data revealed in Table 3 indicates that the most of the respondents (96%) perceived farming to be physically laborious having a mean score of 1.07 contributed mostly in forming negative perception among rural youth and 98.5% percent mentioned health risks due to
Table 3. Distribution of youth according to their perception towards physical factors of farming as an occupation (n=200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>f</td>
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<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Farming needs hard work</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Marrying a farmer means physically hard life.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hard works in farming keep farmers healthy</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farming do not involve drudgery laden activities anymore.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Farmer is always at risk due to exposure to extreme heat, cold and dust</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Farming involves health risk due to the handling of chemicals.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Farming helps to keep one healthy through involvement in physical work</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Farming involves a lot of physical work.</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* f= frequency and %= percentage

*SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree
exposure of heat, cold, dust and chemicals with a mean score of 1.17, but the majority (84.0%) of sample youth believed that hard work in farming kept them healthy having the highest mean score of 3.87, which led to the formation of positive perception. Nearly three-fourth (70.00 %) of farmers in Gujarat also strongly agreed that farming involved hard physical work (Bhuva et al, 2017).

Perception towards personal factors of farming as an occupation: More than three fourth (78.5%) of youth dislike farming and 91.0 percent were disinterested in farming with a mean score of 1.32 contributing to the formation of a negative perception as shown in Table 4. Agrawal and Agrawal (2017) and (Sood, 2014) reported that the interests of farmers were important in farming and their occupational satisfaction affected their incentive to invest in farming. (Akubari, 2017). Adejoh et al., (2016) and (Jayne, 2010) found that young people were usually not interested in this field of work, in large part due to their perception of farming being antiquated and unprofitable. This can be attributed to that the majority of youth were not participating in farming activities along with their parents, so they were unable to feel the pleasure of satisfaction of feeding others. Almost 60.0 percent of sample youth disagreed with the statement that people working in cities can also work in agriculture as a occupation. However, 42.0 percent of youth stated that use of new technologies/practices can help to increase farming income placed at second rank in forming positive perceptions towards personal factors among youth and the vast majority (92.0%) agreed that farmers are their own master and can do their occupation according to their own wishes and timings had the most dominant effect (3.68 mean score) on positively perceiving agriculture.

Data indicated in Table 4 shows that majority (80.0%) youth did not enjoy farming and were uninterested in it. They felt that their parents were forced to do farming due to a lack of other options for livelihood and considered that farming was only for uneducated people. Narain et al. (2015) found that about 92.0 per cent of farmers in the Buldelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh were practising farming due to a lack of any other options. The results are in accordance with Prasad et al. (2006) in Tamil Nadu and Manoranjitham et al. (2010) and Kumar et al. (2019) also found that the personal factors had the dominant effect on perceiving agriculture in poor light. Farmers were not interested in farming and were uninterested in bringing youth into the farming occupation. The majority of the farm families were not interested due to work in harsh weather conditions and desired to avoid drudgery-oriented work. Widiyanti et al., (2019) indicated that youth had a positive perception of farming because of the independence factor and authority to manage time and resources in farming and make farming an alternative work choice because the job opportunities and requirements in the formal sector are becoming more and more difficult.

Perception towards psychological factors of farming as an occupation: More than half of the respondents (66.5%) were dissatisfied with income from farming and it was not sufficient to meet their family expenditure. Most of the youth (94.0%) believed that debt had driven farmers to commit suicide. A study was conducted on farmer’s suicides at national level (Government of India,
Table 4: Distribution of youth according to their perception towards personal factors of farming as an occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA f</th>
<th>A f</th>
<th>U f</th>
<th>D f</th>
<th>SD f</th>
<th>Mean Ra-score nk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I enjoy farming.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I have an interest in farming.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Farming is chosen as an occupation when no other option is available.</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farming is not just an occupation; it is the way of life.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Farmers enjoy hard work.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>There is no master in farming.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Use of new technologies/practices can help to increase income from farming</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Farming gives me happiness and satisfaction.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Farming is for the uneducated people.</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>People employed in cities can also do farming for better income as well as for their passion.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Physical work adversely effects the health</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* f= frequency and %= percentage

*SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree
Table 5: Distribution of youth according to their perception towards psychological factors of farming as an occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean Ra-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
<td>f %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Income from farming is sufficient to fulfil the basic needs of family members.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Farming helps to protect family heritage.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Indebtedness has pushed the farmers for committing suicides.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farming as it is the very stressful occupation.</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Farmer has no social status resulting in low self-esteem.</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Psychological stress and depression are very common among farmers.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Economic hardship causes stress to farmers</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Farming is dependent on many factors.</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Farmer is his own master.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 05 Contd.
### Table 05 Contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA f</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A f</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>U f</th>
<th>U %</th>
<th>D f</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD f</th>
<th>SD %</th>
<th>Mean Ra-score nk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Crops are always at risk of pest and disease attack.</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.11 XV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Farming has become increasingly risky due to unpredictable weather conditions.</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.12 XIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Farmers are committing suicide.</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.19 XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Farmers commit suicide because they cannot satisfy their family needs.</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.57 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Farming is a satisfying occupation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>1.93 VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Farming is satisfying as it helps to feed people</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>2.26 III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Fluctuations in farm income makes farming very risky occupation</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.08 XVI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* f= frequency and %= percentage

*SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD= Strongly Disagree
2020) to determine the causes of farmer's suicides identified that indebtedness and farming related issues were the prominent causes among Indian farmers. A very large percentage (96%) perceived farming as an occupation with a lot of uncertainty like fluctuating income and this occupation entirely depends on weather and market price policies and it was a stressful occupation due to economic reasons associated with pests and diseases 2014) had the most dominant effect (1.08 mean score) on negatively perceiving psychological aspect of agriculture as an occupation. Farmer is his own master had the most dominant effect (4.04 mean score) on positively perceiving psychological factors associated with agriculture.

It was found that farming was satisfying occupation for less than 20% of families. The psychological satisfaction can be attributed to independence as the majority of the youth believed that they could be their own master in this occupation. The majority (85%) of youth pointed out that farming helps in protecting our heritage (3.93 mean score), whereas farming was a satisfying occupation (1.93 mean score) for very low percentage (16.5%) of youth and nearly one fourth (24%) of youth derived satisfaction by feeding others through farming with a mean score of 2.26 (Table 5). The findings of Getnet and Asrat (2012) also indicated that farming was difficult and stressful work. Farmers were found to have an increased prevalence of psychological morbidity, depression and levels of anxiety than non-farmers.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings implicated that one can earn throughout his life through farming, but income from farming was too less and fluctuating in comparision to other occupations. The negative aspects of the socio-cultural factors was that parents guide their children to go to cities and search employment. The positive aspects was that family members can effectively manage their family responsibilities along with the farming. Farming was considered as physically laborious by the youth (97.5%). However, they believed that hard work kept them healthy. Youth dislike farming and were disinterested in it and it was considered as a stressful occupation (75%). Perception of youth towards farming as an occupation plays a very important role in determining the future of farming as an occupation and retaining youth in agriculture in India.

REFERENCES


White, B. 2012. Agriculture and the generation problem: rural youth, employment and the future of farming. IDS Bulletin No. 6, Malden, USA.
