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Constraints and Suggestions Offer by the Rural Youth in Adopting Agriculture as an Occupation

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A B S T R A C T

Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of the Indian economy and a primary source of livelihood for rural communities. However, in recent years, the participation of rural youth in agricultural activities has shown a declining trend due to changing aspirations, economic uncertainties and inadequate institutional support. Recognizing the importance of youth in sustaining agricultural growth, the present study was undertaken to know the constraints and suggestions offered by the rural youth adopting agriculture as an occupation. The study was carried out in eighteen villages of six talukas from Junagadh, Rajkot and Gir Somnath districts of Gujarat State. Total 10 respondents from each selected villages and making a total 180 rural youth through random sampling. Data were collected using a structured and pre tested interview schedule with help of personal interviews. Appropriate statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean score, ranking and arbitrary methods were used for data analysis. The results of the research study indicated that the major constraints perceived by rural youth were; low market price of produce leading to low and irregular income, unavailability of land or very small landholding and difficulty in getting married due to farming occupation. Whereas to enhance youth participation in agriculture, respondents suggested government should ensure remunerative pricing for agricultural produce, rural youth should be convinced about the importance of food as the basic requirement of our country and government should introduce agricultural education from primary level and enhance practical focus at higher education levels

Introduction

Agriculture continues to be the cornerstone of India's economic development and rural livelihood. Despite its vital contribution to national GDP and employment generation, the sector faces a major challenge due to the declining participation of rural youth. Once viewed as a respectable and stable source of income, agriculture is now perceived by many young people as an uncertain and less rewarding occupation (Sreelakshmi *et al.,* 2024). This changing mindset poses a serious threat to the sustainability of agricultural growth and the future of food and livelihood security in the country.

Rural youth, who represent the most dynamic and innovative section of the population, play a vital role in

transforming and modernizing agriculture. Their active participation is essential for adopting improved technologies, promoting agripreneurship, and ensuring the continuity of farming traditions (Tejaswi *et al*., 2025). However, the attitude and perception of rural youth towards agriculture are influenced by various personal, socio-economic, psychological, and communication-related factors. A positive attitude encourages active engagement in farming and innovation, whereas a negative perception often results in migration to urban areas, underemployment, or withdrawal from the agricultural sector (Sreelakshmi *et al.,* 2024). The term "constraints" refers to the obstacles, limitations or difficulties that restrict rural youth from effectively engaging in or sustaining agricultural activities. On the other hand, "suggestions" denote the feasible ideas, recommendations, or strategies proposed by youth to overcome these barriers and enhance their participation in agriculture (Mubeena *et al*., 2021).

Several studies have highlighted that rural youth perceive agriculture as less profitable compared to non-farming occupations due to uncertain returns, lack of social prestige, and limited access to technological and institutional resources (Sreelakshmi *et al*., 2024). Such challenges discourage youth from considering agriculture as a viable livelihood option.

To address this issue, it becomes essential to assess the suggestions of rural youth in overcoming the constraints in adopting agriculture as an occupation. Understanding these aspects can help policymakers, extension agencies and educational institutions to design youth-centric programs, entrepreneurship models and motivational initiatives that encourage greater youth participation in farming. Strengthening youth engagement in agriculture is not only crucial for ensuring food and livelihood security but also for revitalizing the rural economy through innovation, sustainability, and self-reliance.

Research Methodology

The Ex-post facto research design was followed for carrying out the study. For drawing the sample for the study multistage sampling technique *viz*., purposive and random sampling were used. The study was conducted in Junagadh, Rajkot and Gir Somnath district of Saurashtra, Gujarat state purposively because these districts are nearer to the researcher, so researcher can easily collect data from these districts. Two talukas from each district and three village from each taluka were selected randomly. Thus, total eighteen villages from six talukas were selected randomly. Ten rural youth from each village were randomly selected.

Thus, a sample of total 180 respondents from eighteen villages was considered for the study. The sixteen independent variables undertaken in this study viz; age, education, farming experience, size of family, livestock holding, family main occupation, land holding, marital status, annual income, socio-economic status, risk orientation, economic motivation, achievement motivation, innovativeness, social participation and source of information. The independent variables were measured by using suitable scales and procedures adopted by various researchers with suitable modifications. The interview schedule was prepared in Gujarati language in light of the objectives of the study and was pre-tested. Suitable modifications on the basis of pre-testing were incorporated in the final schedule. The data of this study were collected by arranging personal interview with all 180 rural youth. The data then were classified and analysed in to quote meaningful findings. The statistical measures such as mean, percentage, standard deviation and coefficient of correlation were used in the study.

Results and Discussion

Constraints Faced by Rural Youth in Adopting Agriculture as an Occupation

In the present study, constraints were collected using an open-ended format, allowing rural youth the freedom to express the challenges they experience in their own words. The responses were then categorized, and the frequency and percentage for each constraint were calculated. Based on the frequency, appropriate ranks were assigned to determine the most pressing constraints faced by the rural youth. The data regarding the constraints faced by rural youth in adopting agriculture as an occupation are presented in Table 1.

The data presented below in the table 1 indicated that rural youth face a wide range of challenges in adopting agriculture as an occupation.

The most frequently reported constraint was low market price of produce leading to low and irregular income, cited by 78.89 per cent of respondents, and ranked first,

indicating a major concern about profitability and income stability in farming. This was followed by unavailability of land or very small landholding (75.56 per cent, ranked II), pointing to structural limitations that restrict independent farming.

A notable social barrier—difficulty in getting married due to farming occupation—ranked third, with 72.22 per cent of youth reporting this constraint, highlighting the lack of social acceptance and prestige associated with agriculture. Lack of resources (capital and credit) and high input costs (71.11 per cent, Rank IV) and unavailability of labour for farming operations (68.89 per cent, Rank V) were major operational and financial challenges faced by the respondents.

These findings reflect serious economic limitations that reduce youth participation in agriculture. Environmental concerns were also significant. Uncertain climatic conditions and erratic weather due to climate change (67.22 per cent, ranked VI) and irregular yields due to heavy attack of pest and disease on crops (65.56 per cent, ranked VII) indicate that production-related risks play a considerable role in discouraging youth. Social image-related issues such as lack of social status associated with farming (62.22 per cent, ranked VIII) and peer pressure and social discouragement that farming is not for the educated (56.67 per cent, ranked XI) further reveal the psychological and cultural obstacles influencing youth decisions.

Marketing and technical barriers such as low marketing skills and lack of marketing infrastructure (60.56 per cent, ranked IX), farming involves drudgery and physical hardship (58.33 per cent, ranked X), and lack of support from government schemes or policies (53.89 per cent, ranked XII) also featured prominently.

Additional concerns included unavailability of quality water for irrigation (50.56 per cent, ranked XIII), lack of proper training, guidance and modern technology information (48.33 per cent, ranked XIV) and lack of practical farming knowledge and experience (28.33 per cent, ranked XV), pointing to important informational and infrastructural gaps that need to be addressed. The findings are more or less in line with the findings of Maurya *et al.* (2022) and Shivaji and Madhuprasad (2023).

Table.1 Constraints faced by rural youth in adopting agriculture as an occupation

(n=180)

Sr. No.	Constraints	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Low market price of produce leading to low and irregular income	142	78.89	I
2.	Unavailability of land or very small landholding	136	75.56	II
3.	Difficulty in getting married due to farming occupation	130	72.22	III
4.	Lack of resources (capital and credit) and high input costs	128	71.11	IV
5.	Unavailability of labour for farming operations	124	68.89	V
6.	Uncertain climatic conditions and erratic weather due to climate change	121	67.22	VI
7.	Irregular yields due to heavy attack of pest and disease on crops	118	65.56	VII
8.	Lack of social status associated with farming	112	62.22	VIII
9.	Low marketing skills and lack of marketing infrastructure	109	60.56	IX
10.	Farming involves drudgery and physical hardship	105	58.33	X
11.	Peer pressure and social discouragement that farming is not for the educated	102	56.67	XI
12.	Lack of support from government schemes or policies	97	53.89	XII
13.	Unavailability of quality water for irrigation	91	50.56	XIII
14.	Lack of proper training, guidance and modern technology information	87	48.33	XIV
15.	Lack of practical farming knowledge and experience	51	28.33	XV

Table.2 Suggestions given by rural youth to overcome the constraints in adopting agriculture as an occupation

(n=180)

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
1.	Government should ensure remunerative pricing for agricultural produce	128	71.11	I
2.	Rural youth should be convinced about the importance of food as the basic requirement of our country	118	65.56	II
3.	Government should introduce agricultural education from primary level and enhance practical focus at higher education levels	113	62.78	III
4.	Extension agencies/ workers should create awareness among rural youth about agriculture through training programmes	111	61.67	IV
5.	Family and peer groups should encourage youth to take up agriculture	109	60.56	V
6.	The cost of agricultural inputs should be reduced	106	58.89	VI
7.	Government should provide incentives for adoption of modern farming technologies	104	57.78	VII
8.	Extension agencies should provide timely information about latest agricultural technologies	102	56.67	VIII
9.	Government should offer financial assistance to farmers during off-season to manage risks	99	55.00	IX
10.	There should be enhancement in technical knowledge on field-level agricultural operations	97	53.89	X
11.	Ensure adequate availability of water and irrigation infrastructure	95	52.78	XI
12.	There should be ensured availability of farm labour.	90	50.00	XII
13.	There should be provision of accurate and timely information on climatic conditions	87	48.33	XIII
14.	There should be improvement in availability of storage and warehousing facilities	73	40.55	XIV

Suggestions Given by Rural Youth to Overcome the Constraints in Adopting Agriculture as an Occupation

In the present study, suggestions were collected from the rural youth through open-ended responses. The suggestions were carefully analysed and compiled. The frequency and percentage of rural youth endorsing each suggestion were calculated, and based on these values, ranks were assigned.

The data presented in the Table 2 highlighted that the top-ranked suggestion, reported by 71.11 per cent of respondents was that the government should ensure remunerative pricing for agricultural produce. This indicates that stable and fair pricing remains a top priority for youth to see agriculture as profitable. Ranked second was the suggestion that rural youth should be convinced about the importance of food as the basic requirement of our country, supported by 65.56 per cent of respondents.

The third-ranked suggestion was that the government should introduce agricultural education from the primary level and enhance the practical focus at higher levels, reported by 62.78 per cent of the youth. Other high-ranking suggestions included the need for training programmes by extension workers to raise awareness about agriculture (61.67 per cent, ranked IV) and motivation from family and peer groups to support youth in choosing agriculture as a profession (60.56 per cent, ranked V). These emphasize the social and educational dimensions influencing youth engagement. Suggestions such as reducing the cost of agricultural inputs (58.89

per cent, ranked VI), providing incentives for adoption of modern technologies (57.78 per cent, ranked VII) and timely information about latest agricultural technologies (56.67 per cent, ranked VIII) indicate the need for greater economic and technological support. At rank IX, 55.00 per cent of youth suggested that the government should offer financial assistance during the off-season, pointing to risk mitigation needs in farming.

Other operational suggestions included enhancing technical knowledge on field-level agricultural operations (53.89 per cent, ranked X), ensuring adequate water and irrigation infrastructure (52.78 per cent, ranked XI) and ensuring availability of farm labour (50.00 per cent, ranked XII). Lower-ranked yet relevant suggestions included accurate and timely climatic information (48.33 per cent, ranked XIII) and improving storage and warehousing facilities (40.55 per cent, ranked XIV), reflecting informational and post-harvest support needs. The findings are more or less in line with the findings of Uttej *et al.* (2022) and Shivaji and Madhuprasad (2023).

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