

## PROBLEMS FACED BY RURAL YOUTH IN FARMING

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### ABSTRACT

Rural youth form a vital human resource and it is a time of life full of potential and problems. A face-to-face survey research was conducted with a random sample of 100 rural youth respondents to probe into and identify the problems faced by rural youth in farming in Karnal district of Haryana in India. The findings indicate that most of the problems faced by the respondents in farming were economic in nature, which ranked first followed by social problems, psychological problems and general farming problems, respectively. It was concluded that rural youth development programmes should be formulated and implemented keeping in mind the needs and requirements of the young farming community in the area.

**Key words:** Rural youth, farming problems, economic problems, social problems and psychological problems.

### INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations people who are aged between 15 and 24 years are referred as "youth". The youth in India constitute 19 per cent of the total population (United Nations, 2001) and three-quarters of these people live in rural areas (Naika and Siddaramaiah 1990). Rural youth form a vital human resource, which needs to be explored and exposed to forward looking approaches, motivations and clear vision perspectives for the betterment and welfare of the nation.

The progress and prosperity of an agricultural country like India largely depends upon how effectively and efficiently the human resource potential of the rural youth is developed and fruitfully utilized in farming activities. Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that rural youth can play the key role in agricultural development, both in past and present, the persons responsible for formulating strategies, services and public policies for rural India have often tended to neglect the productive role of youth. Thus this young population is faced with several problems when they take up their father's occupation and get involved in farming. Under the circumstances it was felt necessary to probe into and identify the problems faced by rural youth in farming such that the policy makers and development organizations could take appropriate steps in solving their problems.

### METHODOLOGY

A descriptive face-to-face survey research was conducted in Karnal district of Haryana in India. Rural youth, in this study consisted of people belonging to the age group between 15 to 24 years. Two villages were selected randomly from Karnal block, which was also

selected by random method from the six blocks of Karnal district. Then, at the final stage, 50 respondents were randomly selected from each village to have a total of 100 rural youth respondents. Information was collected with the help of a pre-tested and well-structured interview schedule. Problems faced by rural youth respondents in farming were measured with the help of a three-point continuum scale i.e. "very serious", "serious" and "not so serious" with corresponding score value of 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Analysis was done by summing the score of each individual problem statement and then by averaging the scores for general, economic, psychological and social problems.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major areas of problems of rural youth in farming, along with the scores and their ranks are presented in Table 1. The table evinces that the major problem in farming perceived by the rural youth are economic in nature, which ranked first followed by social problems, psychological problems and general problems, respectively. Singha (1996) had reported that the major problem of Assamese rural youth in agriculture was economic, followed by general, social and psychological.

**Table 1. Problems Faced By Rural Youth In Farming**

Sl. No.	Problems	Mean score	Rank
1.	General problems	190.50	IV
2.	Economic problems	204.67	I
3.	Psychological problems	194.33	III
4.	Social Problems	195.86	II

**General Problems**—There were 16 sub-areas under this category (Table 2). It was found that "lack of interest of ADO/VLDO" successively followed by "lack of

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necessary training in crop and dairy farming" and "lack of timely and regular extension support" were the major severe problems experienced by the rural youth in farming. The other important problems perceived by rural youth in descending order of significance included "non-availability of veterinary staff and medicines", "unemployment and under-employment", "lack of guidance for participation in development programmes", "lack of proper leadership in the area", "non-availability of necessary inputs", "untimely message", "non-availability of plant protection equipments", "letharginess", "non-adaptability of cross-bred cows in the local conditions", "non-availability of good breedable bulls", "complexity involved in maintenance of cross-bred cows", "lack of irrigation facilities" and "lack of interest on the part of parents/guardians in farming", respectively.

**Table 2. General Problems Faced By Rural Youth in Farming**

Sl.No.	General problems	Total score	Rank
i.	Latharginess	167	X
ii.	Unemployment and under-employment	214	V
iii.	Lack of proper leadership in the area	203	VII
iv.	Non-availability of necessary inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc.)	203	VII
v.	Non-availability of plant protection equipments	171	IX
vi.	Lack of irrigation facilities	136	XIV
vii.	Complexity involved in maintenance of cross-bred cows	137	XIII
viii.	Non-adaptability of cross-bred cows in the local conditions	162	XI
ix.	Non-availability of good breedable bulls	152	XII
x.	Non-availability of veterinary staff and medicines	217	IV
xi.	Lack of timely and regular extension support	250	III
xii.	Lack of necessary training in crop and dairy farming	257	II
xiii.	Lack of interest of ADO/VLDO	258	I
xiv.	Untimely message	187	VIII
xv.	Lack of interest on the part of parents/guardians in farming	123	XV
xvi.	Lack of guidance for participation in development programmes	211	VI

The above findings clearly points out for the need of tailor-made, regular and timely extension support and training in farm related activities specially suited to the requirement of the future genera farmers. Extension workers serving the rural areas should take special care and interest in involving and facilitating the rural youth in all development activities. The government should ensure regularity of the extension staff at the villages. The private players and NGOs should come forward

effectively and efficiently to shoulder the responsibility of extension activities along with government in this new era of privatization and liberalization. The critical inputs like veterinary medicines, fertilizers and chemicals should be made available in time. Besides, the government, the NGOs and corporate sector should come out with innovative employment generation programmes for rural youth, such that these highly potential people are retained in their rural areas.

**Economic Problems**—Table 3 reveals that under economic problems, "high cost of production" was perceived as the severe most problem by the rural youth. This was closely followed by problems like "high cost of farm inputs", "complicated as well as time consuming loaning procedure", respectively. Some other pertinent problems were "lack of subsidies", "lack of credit facilities", "low economic returns", "exploitation by the middleman in the market", "low annual income of the parents" and finally "lack of marketing facilities".

**Table 3. Economic Problems Faced By Rural Youth In Farming**

Sl. No.	Economic problems	Total score	Rank
i.	High cost of farm inputs (fertilizers, chemicals, animal feed and veterinary medicines)	249	II
ii.	High cost of production	253	I
iii.	Lack of subsidies	212	IV
iv.	Lack of credit facilities	208	V
v.	Complicated as well as time consuming loaning procedure	241	III
vi.	Exploitation by the middleman in the market	169	VII
vii.	Lack of marketing facilities	155	IX
viii.	Low economic returns	191	VI
ix.	Low annual income of parents	164	VIII

Thus, the government and institutions dealing with rural credit should work out plans and procedures to create more credit facilities for the farmers and the process should be simple and fast. Provisions for providing loans to young farmers should also be made available. In this era of liberalization, the farmers should be helped out with indirect subsidies, as provided by even industrially developed nations.

**Psychological Problems**—The psychological problems faced by the rural youth are given in Table 4. Among the psychological problems, "higher risk involved in farming", closely followed by "lack of adequate knowledge and skill in farming" were found to be the serious bottlenecks being faced by the rural youth involved in farming. "Farming is very laborious", "lack of innovativeness", "low decision making ability" and

“negative attitude of others towards farming” respectively were recorded as the other important psychological problems in farming as perceived by the rural youth.

**Table 4. Psychological Problems Faced By Rural Youth in Farming**

Sl. No.	Psychological problems	Total	Rank score
i.	Lack of adequate knowledge and skill in farming	225	II
ii.	Lack of innovativeness	188	IV
iii.	Low decision making ability	164	V
iv.	Negative attitude of others towards farming	147	VI
v.	Higher risk involved in farming	234	I
vi.	Farming is very laborious	208	III

Motivating the rural youth in farming is the dire need of the time. They should be actively involved in the farm decision-making processes. The extension workers should provide special attention and interest to the views of these young farmers. Insurance companies should be persuaded to cover all the crops to reduce the risk in farming. Then only the high potential rural youth can perform like champion farmers.

**Social Problems**—Table 5 presents the social problems faced by rural youth. Out of the seven sub-areas, the respondents reported “lack of rural youth organization in the area” as the major social problem. They also felt that “low educational status of rural people” followed by “poor economic conditions of rural people”, respectively were the other important problems faced by them in farming. The other social problems faced by rural youth were “lack of health and medical facilities”, “lack of cultural and recreational programmes in the area” and “lack of transport facilities”. “Hesitance in adoption of other caste-oriented work” was also found as one of the social problems being faced by the youth in the rural areas.

The findings clearly indicate that rural development organizations should take initiatives in forming rural youth organizations in every village, which will work

and lead to the creation of a healthy social, cultural and sporting environment in the rural areas. Besides, adequate medical facilities have to be made available at the villages.

**Table 5. Social Problems Faced By Rural Youth n Farming**

Sl. No.	Social problems	Total score	Rank
i.	Poor economic conditions of rural people	227	III
ii.	Hesitance in adoption of other caste-oriented work	144	VII
iii.	Low educational status of rural people	249	II
iv.	Lack of transport facilities	152	VI
v.	Lack of cultural and recreational programmes in the area	161	V
vi.	Lack of health and medical facilities	174	IV
vii.	Lack of rural youth organization in the area	264	I

### CONCLUSION

The problems that are faced by today’s rural youth are many and varied. There is a need for them to be fruitfully employed and there is an equally important need to solve their economic, social, psychological and other problems. Thus, rural youth development programmes should be formulated and implemented keeping in mind the needs and requirements of the young farming community in the area. Rural youth organizations, similar to 4-H Clubs in USA, should be started in the villages of India. Leadership development programmes for rural youth should be initiated. Location-specific and need based training programmes should be organized for the farm youth such that this potential mass are motivated to remain in the rural areas. Extension workers should take special care to listen and solve the problems of this section of the society. Rural youth if organized properly can perform more effectively and efficiently than any other and it will lead to the prosperity of the entire rural community in general. Right initiative by the government and concentrated extension efforts by all concerned can go a long way in bringing confidence and satisfaction in the face of this young farming community.

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