

## MEASURING THE ATTITUDE OF RURAL YOUTH TOWARDS FARMING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HARYANA

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to measure the attitude of rural youth towards farming. The study was conducted in Haryana and sample constituted 270 rural youth. They represented randomly selected 270 households from 18 villages and 9 blocks of Hisar district. Data on socio personal and socio psychological characteristics were collected through face to face interviews and observation using a pretested questionnaire. A five point scale developed by Hari (2014) was used to measure the attitude of rural youth towards farming. The study revealed that 75.19% of rural youth had moderately favourable attitude towards farming. Significant and positive relationship was observed with the age, family size, land holding, herd size, level of participation in farm activities with their attitude towards farming. It is suggested that there is a need of special efforts to attract, train and retain the rural youth in farming as a whole by developing more favourable attitude towards farming by transforming the agriculture and making it more agribusiness oriented, scientifically attractive, and economically profitable.

**Key words:** Attitude towards farming, Aspirations, Farming, Rural youth

Many developing countries including India are giving utmost priority to engaging youth in agriculture. This is apparent from global trend of youth moving away from agriculture and rural areas. India is also losing more than 2,000 farmers every single day and since 1991, the overall number of farmers has dropped by 15 million (Sainath, 2013). Large-scale migration of rural youth from villages to urban areas has caused concern among the country's policy makers as such a trend, if not checked, is likely to affect agricultural activities in the future as most of those who are leaving agriculture have acquired basic skills in agriculture from their parents. In India also to check this trend, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) initiated one scheme named Attracting and Retention of Youth in Agriculture (ARYA) to encourage youth to take up farming (<https://dfr.icar.gov.in/Extension/ARYA>). This has several implications for the future of Indian agriculture and food security. Thus for preparing rural youth for agriculture sector it is vital to measure their attitude to identify gaps and opportunities.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Sample selection and data collection

An exploratory study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana due to approachability and familiarity of the researcher with the local conditions. The district is under control of Hisar division administratively which is divided into nine community development blocks and all were covered. Two villages from each block were selected randomly. Thus study was carried out in 18 villages. Fifteen rural youth (15-29 yrs) having education up to 12th standard, engaged in farming activities and whose father was alive, were selected from each of the selected village, making a total of selected randomly from 270 households.

Rural youth in the present study has been defined as a person (male) living in the village within the age group of 15-29 years as per the guidelines of "National Youth Policy, 2014" Government of India. Another reason is that youth in this age group (aged 15-29 years) comprised 27.5% of the population and contribute about 34% to India's Gross National Income (GNI). From these households, the eldest male youth available at the time of data collection was interviewed. One youth from one family was considered as unit of data collection. Primary data on socio-personal and socio-psychological characteristics were collected by researcher using a well structured interview schedule to elicit the information. Attitude was measured on five point continuum using a scale developed by Hari (2014). The scale consisted of seven positive and fourteen negative statements. For each positive statement the scores ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree attitude. Scoring was reversed for negative statements. The attitude score of each respondent was calculated by adding the scores of all statements, for that respondent. Based on scores, the respondents were categorized into 3 classes, *viz.* less favourable, moderately favourable and highly favorable using equal class interval methods between the minimum and the maximum scores. Data so collected on various characteristics were analyzed.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Respondents' Socio-Economic Profile

A perusal of Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were in age group of 21 – 29 years. Majority (65%) of them had qualification up to Inter level and agriculture farming as their main family occupation (75.56%). Regarding marital status, the results showed that 62.22 per cent respondents were single and came from

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**Table 1**  
**Socio personal profile of the respondents (N =270)**

Socio personal characteristics	f	%
<b>Age categories (years)</b>		
15-20	63	23.33
21-24	106	39.26
25-29	101	37.41
<b>Education status</b>		
Inter	177	65.55
Graduate	61	22.60
Post graduate	32	11.85
<b>Family main occupation</b>		
Agricultural farming	204	75.56
Business	10	3.70
Livestock farming	22	8.15
Agricultural labor	18	6.67
Non Agricultural labor	08	2.96
Service	08	2.96
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	102	37.78
Unmarried	168	62.22
<b>Family size (Numbers)</b>		
Small (2-5)	178	65.93
Medium(6-9)	79	29.26
Large (10-13)	13	4.81
<b>Family type</b>		
Joint	75	27.78
Nuclear	195	72.22
<b>Land holding</b>		
Landless	61	22.59
<1 ha	79	29.26
1-2 ha	70	25.93
<2 ha	60	22.22
<b>Livestock holding (Bovine) (average herd size 5.42)</b>		
< 3 animals	81	30.00
>3 animals	189	70.00
<b>Status of respondents</b>		
Student	112	41.48
Dropped out of school	03	1.11
Never attended school	04	1.48
Involved in farming activity	76	28.15
Engaged in Off-farm wage employment	19	7.04
Engaged in business	07	2.59
Unemployed and live with parents	49	18.15

small (65.92%) and nuclear family system (72.22%). Family land holding size was almost evenly distributed among the various categories. Majority belonged to small and marginal farmers' category and about 23% were landless. About 70 per cent of the respondents were having more than 3 animals. The study indicated that 41.48% were students having involvement in one or the other way in agriculture comprising crop farming, animal husbandry and other associated activities while 18.5% were unemployed and living with their parents in search of job or admissions for higher education.

Data in Table 2 reveal the major sources of information in animal husbandry and agriculture by the respondents. Under localite sources, majority of

respondents revealed the use of fellow farmers with highest mean score (2.53) and ranked I<sup>st</sup> followed by neighbours (2.39). The major formal sources of information for animal husbandry were paravets (Rank I<sup>st</sup>) followed by veterinary doctors (Rank II<sup>nd</sup>), VLDA (Rank III<sup>rd</sup>). Paravets belonging to some NGOs like JK Trust provide AI facilities at the doorstep of farmers and are in constant in touch with them. Therefore they are most preferred source of information followed by veterinarians and VLDA. In agriculture, farmers seek information mainly from village extension workers. As far as mass media utilization behaviour was concerned, majority of the youth (62.59%) were viewing television regularly followed by newspaper (54.81 %) and internet (43.33 %) to receive agriculture related information. Exhibitions and use of radio were ranked IV and V, respectively by the rural youth.

### Respondents' Socio-Psychological Profile

Data in Table 3 pertains to the classification of respondents as per their socio-psychological characteristics. The attitude of rural youth towards farming was found to be at medium level (75.19%). Only about 19% respondents had high favourable attitude towards farming and wished farming to be as their main occupation. Similarly, Kitturmath *et al.* (2013) observed that more than 70% of the respondents had moderately favourable attitude followed by less favourable and remaining about 14% with high favourable attitude towards rural development activities in Latur district of Maharashtra. Thus majority expressed either moderately favourable or less favourable attitude towards agriculture as a livelihood activity. This indicates low involvement of youth in agricultural production activities in the area. Youth of Malaysia had negative attitudes toward agriculture as revealed by Jeffrey *et al.* (2010) and viewed agriculture as an unattractive area to work and less remunerative (Abdullah *et al.*, 2012). Preethi *et al.* (2014) however revealed that in India 46.67% of farm youth of Karnataka had high level of perception towards agriculture whereas 30 and 23.33% had medium and low level of perceptions, respectively. The difference in attitude may be due to situational factors and non uniformity and inconsistent perception of youth towards agriculture.

Data further revealed that majority of the respondents (52.59%) had high achievement motivation followed by medium (41.48%) and low (5.93%). With regard to cosmopolitanism, it was seen that 71% were comparatively less cosmopolite while the rest had high cosmopolitanism. Majority of the respondents (53.33%) revealed medium orientation towards the credit whereas 30.74 per cent fell under high category.

**Table 2**  
**Utilization pattern of various sources of information**

Localite Sources	Extent of use						Mean score	Rank
	Regular		Sometimes		Occasionally			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Neighbors	133	49.26	110	40.74	27	10.00	2.39	II
Fellow farmers	159	58.89	94	34.81	17	6.30	2.53	I
Relatives	84	31.11	124	45.93	62	22.96	2.08	IV
Friends	124	45.93	107	39.63	39	14.44	2.31	III
<b>Cosmopolite sources</b>								
Village extension worker	36	13.33	117	43.33	117	43.33	1.70	IV
VLDA	55	20.37	105	38.89	110	40.74	1.80	III
Bank personnel	17	6.30	100	37.04	153	56.67	1.50	VI
NGO's	10	3.70	71	26.30	189	70.00	1.34	VII
BDO	26	9.63	87	32.22	157	58.15	1.51	IV
Scientists from university and ICAR Institutes	20	7.41	96	35.56	154	57.04	1.50	V
Gram sewak	31	11.48	133	49.26	106	39.26	1.80	III
School teacher	48	17.78	97	35.93	125	46.30	1.69	V
Veterinary doctor	50	18.52	117	43.33	103	38.15	2.39	II
Paravets	32	11.85	122	45.19	116	42.96	2.53	I
<b>Mass media sources</b>								
Radio	46	17.04	136	50.37	88	32.59	1.84	V
Television	169	62.59	89	32.96	12	4.44	2.58	I
Poster	28	10.37	104	38.52	138	51.11	1.59	VII
Educational films	31	11.48	95	35.19	144	53.33	1.58	IX
Exhibition	57	21.11	130	48.15	83	30.74	1.90	IV
Demonstration	36	13.33	92	34.07	142	52.59	1.61	VI
Farm publication	32	11.85	102	37.78	136	50.37	1.59	VIII
News paper	148	54.81	96	35.56	26	9.63	2.45	II
Internet	117	43.33	111	41.11	42	15.56	2.28	III

Decision making behaviour of a person is important psychological parameters that determine the participation of rural youth in farming. Data further show that about 70 per cent of the respondents had high decision making ability followed at medium (27%) and low levels (2.59%). The economic motivation of majority of the youth was also found high (75%) while about 24 per cent respondents had medium economic motivation. Innovation proneness and risk orientation were two more socio psychological parameters wherein majority of the rural youth (60% in each) fell under the medium level category. A large number of respondents (80%) had high market oriented as they preferred to sell their produce at higher prices. About 50 per cent of the respondents fell under category of high leadership ability followed by medium revealing that large number of youth from rural areas had the leadership qualities in terms of adoption of new technologies. As far as liking to migration was concerned, more than 80 per cent of the rural youth wished for migration from rural to urban areas to fulfil their aspirations.

Aspirations of the rural youth are also important psychological factors that determine their participation in the farming activities. Aspirations of rural youth for

deciding future were categorized into educational, occupational, economic, social and career related areas. Amongst these, 34 per cent respondents had high economic aspirations and ranked first followed by career and educational aspirations. Social aspirations were found at lowest level (7%). This may be due to the reason that youth desired agriculture to be more remunerative and profitable with better economic returns so that they could achieve success in careers for better social prestige. Thus for retaining youth in agriculture farming, it is essential to provide them better economic opportunities right in the villages. Hari *et al* compared the educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth of Rajasthan and Kerala and found variance as were influenced social and cultural factors. Parental influence was one of the key factors affecting aspirations of rural youth.

To understand the aspirations in detail it was further classified under different categories. It could be inferred from Table 4 that majority of the respondents (48.89%) aspired to be graduates under educational aspirations, preferred for government job as their occupational aspiration (24.07%), high income jobs as economic aspiration (67%) of respondents. A majority

**Table 3**  
**Socio psychological profile of the respondents**

Characteristics (score)	f	%
<b>Attitude towards farming</b>		
Less favorable (21 -48)	16	5.93
Moderately favorable (49-76)	203	75.19
Highly favorable (77-128)	51	18.89
<b>Achievement Motivation</b>		
Low (4-6)	16	5.93
Medium (7-9)	112	41.48
High (10-12)	142	52.59
<b>Cosmopolitaness</b>		
Low (<4 )	192	71.11
High (5-8 )	78	28.89
<b>Credit orientation</b>		
Low (6-8 )	43	15.93
Medium (9-11)	144	53.33
High (12-15 )	83	30.74
<b>Decision making behavior</b>		
Low (6-10)	07	2.59
Medium (11-14)	73	27.04
High (15-18)	190	70.37
<b>Economic Motivation</b>		
Low (7-10)	01	0.37
Medium (11=14)	65	24.07
High (15-18)	204	75.56
<b>Innovation Proneness</b>		
Low (10-12)	41	15.19
Medium (13-15)	164	60.74
High (16-18)	65	24.07
<b>Leadership ability</b>		
Low (6-8)	16	5.93
Medium (9-11)	115	42.59
High (12 -14)	139	51.48
<b>Market orientation</b>		
Low (8-13)	03	1.11
Medium (14-19)	49	18.15
High (20-24)	218	80.74
<b>Risk orientation</b>		
Low (7-11)	30	11.11
Medium (12-16)	161	59.63
High (17-21)	79	29.26
<b>Liking of movement of rural youth from rural areas</b>		
Yes	218	80.74
No	52	19.26
<b>Aspiration</b>		
Educational	51	18.89
Occupational	43	15.93
Economic	92	34.07
Social	21	7.78
Career	63	23.33

of the youth aspired to be respectable member of society (35.19%), under social aspiration and wanted to be an entrepreneur followed by soldier in the army under career aspiration which was revealed by about 26 and 25 per cent respondents, respectively. Categorywise economic aspirations came at the top followed by educational and social aspiration.

**Table 4**  
**Categorywise response towards aspirations for deciding their future**

Aspirational categories	f	%
<b>Educational aspiration</b>		
i. Intermediate	18	6.67
ii. Graduation	132	48.89 (I)
iii. Post graduation	94	34.81(II)
iv. Professional	26	9.63
<b>Occupational aspiration</b>		
i. Farming /Agriculture	50	18.52
ii. Animal husbandry	48	17.78
iii. Fisheries	17	6.30
iv. Horticulture	21	7.78
v. Government Job	65	24.07(I)
vi. Private Job	13	4.81
vii. Casual labour	0	0.00
viii. Own business	56	20.74(II)
<b>Economic aspiration</b>		
i. High income jobs	181	67.03 (I)
ii. High standard of living	47	17.41
iii. High material possession	42	15.56(II)
<b>Social aspirations</b>		
i. Socially recognized by all	81	30.00(II)
ii. Known in the society by few	70	25.93
iii. Respectable	95	35.19(I)
iv. Leader	24	8.89
<b>Career aspiration</b>		
i. Teacher	46	17.04
ii. Soldier in army	68	25.19(II)
iii. Veterinarians	26	9.63
iv. Doctor	13	4.81
v. Engineer	17	6.30
vi. Police officer	9	3.33
vii. Motor mechanic	2	0.74
viii. Architect	6	2.22
ix. Carpenter	0	0.00
x. Accountant	6	2.22
xi. Plumber	0	0.00
xii. Contractor	5	1.85
xiii. Entrepreneur	72	26.67(I)

**Respondents' Attitudes towards Farming and its Relationship with Socio Personal and Socio Psychological Characteristics**

Data in Table 5 reveal that respondents' attitude towards the statement “scientific farming is always be profitable” got the first rank with highest mean score of 4.07. The results indicate that youth may be retained in the farming if it is economically profitable and it can be possible only by dissemination and adoption of scientific practices and more effective Extension system both in agriculture and animal husbandry. The statements “farming requires high intelligence' and 'educated youth should come back to farming' got mean scores 3.99 and 3.69, respectively and were ranked II and III. Chander (2015) stated that in general, youth are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies and therefore agricultural extension services should target youth to transform agriculture.

**Table 5**  
**Attitude of rural youth towards farming**

Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Mean Score
It is better to stay idle than to opt farming	86	19	49	31	85	3.04
Only people of the lower stratum of society will take up farming	61	34	73	55	47	2.97
Scientific farming is always be profitable	133	54	64	7	12	4.07
Farming is the most laborious profession	55	38	80	52	45	2.98
Educated youth should come to farming sector	89	68	70	25	18	3.69
Farmer require high intelligence	134	59	37	21	19	3.99
Farming as a profession has bleak future in the country	63	47	75	35	50	2.86
With farming a person can be his own boss	94	50	74	26	26	3.59
Low price for agriculture produce along with high production cost has made farming uneconomical in present age	86	36	59	46	43	2.72
Youth involved in farming have old and unattractive lifestyle	60	28	83	59	40	2.97
No female will want a farmer as her groom	48	41	84	48	49	3.03
Farming allows a person to take care of his family members	69	70	54	47	30	3.37
It is very difficult for a farmer to attend social functions	49	38	87	56	40	3.00
Agriculture is a dominated by adults and youth have no say in it	26	55	79	45	65	3.25
Farming is the only solution to limit the unemployment rate of the country	75	58	85	25	27	3.48
To ensure food security is by attracting youth to farming	53	64	66	47	40	2.84
There is no quick return of money in agriculture	65	46	68	38	53	2.88
Farming offers many challenging but interesting situation	58	89	84	32	7	3.59
Peer pressure moves the youth out of agriculture	29	43	68	62	68	3.36
Farming restricts urban contact and recreational enjoyment	41	44	71	68	46	3.13
None of the Indian agriculture produce can compete in the global agriculture market	33	47	84	68	38	3.11

Table 6 shows the relationship between various socio- personal, psychological and economic characteristics of respondents with their attitude towards farming. It indicates that age, presence of more number of family members, larger land holding, larger herd size and high participation in farming activities had positive and significant relationship with the attitude of rural youth towards farming. It indicated that attitude became more favourable with the increase in age, family size, land size, herd size and participation of rural youth increased, their attitude became more favourable towards farming. Studies had also shown that age (Irshad, 2007) influenced the attitude of the individual towards a vocation, but the effect of age was contradicted by Maghnusson *et al.* (2001) in their study. Involvement in farming was found to have a more favourable attitude towards agriculture (D'Silva *et al.*, 2010). The present study further revealed that with the increase in level of education, high leadership ability, credit orientation, economic motivation,

achievement motivation, risk orientation, decision making ability, market and migration orientation of rural youth led to more unfavourable attitude towards farming and wanted to be shying away from agriculture. Variables like: gender, age and marital status did not significantly affect the attitudes of respondents toward the causes of leaving agricultural work, while education level significantly affected the attitudes. With the increase in these variables their understanding about available opportunities for them increased considerably as they found better alternatives to Agriculture, their attitude towards farming became less favourable. The findings of the present study are in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Nataraju *et al.* (2017) who also revealed that education, landholding, risk orientation, innovation proneness, social participation, mass media use, cosmopolitaness, scientist contact significantly influenced and contributed towards the perception of rural youth towards agriculture, aspirations and level of

**Table 6**

**Relationship between various social personal, psychological and economic characteristics of respondents with their attitude towards farming**

Characteristics	Attitude towards farming (r value)
Age	0.15*
Education of respondent	-0.24**
Family size	0.29**
Land holding	0.34**
Livestock holding	0.23*
Use of social media	-0.06
Formal info. source for farming	0.10
Social participation	0.07
Informal sources of info for farming	0.09
Innovation proneness	-0.03
leadership ability	-0.28**
Cosmopolitaness	0.01
Credit orientation	-0.24**
Economic Motivation	-0.13*
Achievement motivation	-0.24**
Risk orientation	-0.18**
Decision making behaviour	-0.37**
Market orientation	-0.27**
Overall aspirations	0.08
Migration behaviour	-0.22*
Level of participation in farming activities	0.42*

participation.

**CONCLUSION**

The study revealed moderately favourable predisposition of rural youth to participating in farming activities. Special efforts may be taken based on the findings to attract, train and retain the rural youth towards agriculture farming as a whole by making it more economical, remunerative and profitable with scientific interventions as mode of taking agriculture as agribusiness enterprises.

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