



Youth Engagement in Agriculture

Vaishali Singh¹, Dr. Jaya Verma², Dr. Ani Bajpai²

Abstract:

The agricultural sector faces a looming challenge: an aging population of farmers. Encouraging youth engagement in agriculture is crucial for ensuring food security and rural development. This article explores the importance of youth involvement in agriculture, the challenges they face, and strategies to promote their participation. It highlights the potential of youth to bring innovation, technology, and fresh perspectives to this vital field. Additionally, youth have pessimistic perceptions about agriculture's capability to improve their living standards due to minimal youth involvement in agricultural activities and shared understanding of the sector's contribution to general economic growth.

Keywords: Agriculture, Food, Economics, Youth

Introduction:

The Indian economy depends heavily on agriculture, which also creates jobs, rural development, and food security. Nonetheless, the industry has a tough time drawing in and keeping fresh talent. India has to come up with creative strategies to get the younger generation involved in agriculture because the country's youth population is increasing. India, with around 600 million people under 25, has one of the highest young populations in

the world. Involving this population in agriculture is essential to tackling global food security issues and guaranteeing the country's food supply is sustainable. The agricultural industry may benefit from the new ideas, inventive perspectives, and desire to embrace new technologies that young people bring to the table. Encouraging young people to work in agriculture can also close the generational divide and maintain the long-term sustainability of the sector.

Vaishali Singh¹, Dr. Jaya Verma², Dr. Ani Bajpai²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Textile and Apparel Science, Community Science, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur

²Teaching Associate, Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, Community Science, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur

Why is Youth Engagement in Agriculture Important?

The global population is projected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, placing immense pressure on food production systems. Agriculture is already grappling with issues like climate change, resource depletion, and market volatility. The aging farmer population in many regions further threatens the sector's sustainability.

Youth, brimming with energy, creativity, and technological aptitude, offer a solution. They can:

- **Drive innovation:** Youth are adept at adopting new technologies like precision agriculture and vertical farming, which can revolutionize food production.
- **Enhance sustainability:** Their concern for environmental issues can lead to more sustainable practices like organic farming and resource conservation.
- **Bridge the digital divide:** Tech-savvy youth can bridge the gap between rural and urban areas by disseminating information and facilitating e-commerce in agriculture.

Strategies to Encourage Youth Participation in Agriculture

We need to take a multifaceted approach that addresses the obstacles young people experience and emphasizes the

potential in order to encourage them to seek jobs in agriculture.

- ❖ **Raising awareness:** Hold job fairs and awareness campaigns to highlight the variety of career options in agriculture as well as the industry's potential for expansion and innovation.
- ❖ **Investing in education:** updating agricultural education and training programs to include contemporary methods, tools, and knowledge of agribusiness management that appeals to youth interests.

- ❖ **Providing resources and support:** Putting in place policies and initiatives like the Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centers Scheme (ACABC) and the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) that give young agripreneurs access to finance, land, and other resources.

- ❖ **Leveraging technology:** Encouraging the use of cutting-edge digital tools and technologies in agriculture to increase the industry's efficiency and appeal to youth.

Opportunities for Youth in Agriculture

Young people can pursue a variety of employment opportunities in agriculture in agro-processing, crop production, livestock, and agri-inputs, among other sub-sectors. Prospective farmers can take advantage of the expanding markets for unique produce,

organic farming, and value-added items. Youth with a background in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) now have more options to utilize their abilities in agriculture thanks to the development of digital agricultural technologies and precision agriculture. Drones, data-driven decision-making, and smart farming are a few instances of cutting-edge technologies transforming the sector.

In India, youth who want to work in agriculture have access to a wide range of educational and skill-building opportunities. To give students the skills and knowledge they need, organizations like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), State Agricultural Universities, and several Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) offer specialized courses and training programs. Despite the prospects, Indian millennials view agriculture as a low-status and low-paying profession. This image is further exacerbated by a lack of exposure to the diverse array of job pathways and opportunities for progression within the industry.

The availability of resources and land is a major obstacle for young individuals wishing to launch agribusinesses. The dispersion of agricultural holdings and the high cost of land make it challenging for aspiring business owners to obtain the capital needed to start their enterprises. Furthermore,

traditional methods are frequently the center of agricultural education and training in India, with little attention paid to contemporary methods and technologies. It may be difficult for young people to acquire the necessary skills to thrive in the changing agricultural scene as a result of this schooling gap.

Government initiatives to attract youth towards Agriculture:

The Indian government is launching a number of initiatives to make the most of the demographic dividend and the potential of the youth. Sustainable rural development, gender equality, and social inclusion are the cornerstones of these projects. A number of the schemes and initiatives consist of:

ARYA Program: Drawing and Holding Young People in the Agriculture Industry An initiative known as ARYA (ICAR) was launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. This program will be implemented by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK-Agriculture Science Centers) in 25 states nationwide.

Youth in Agriculture: Government Initiatives' Role 200–300 young people will be trained by each KVK to pursue auxiliary and related businesses in agriculture, such as fisheries, dairying, and poultry production.

Atma Nirbhar Krishi Yojana (India): This Indian government program aims to empower farmers and improve agricultural

marketing infrastructure through various initiatives.

Next Generation Farmers On-Farm Training Program (Canada): This program provides financial assistance to experienced farmers who mentor and train the next generation of agricultural professionals.

Rural Youth Development Scheme (RYDS) (Kenya): This Kenyan government initiative offers grants and training to young people interested in agribusiness ventures.

Conclusion

Engaging youth in agriculture is not just a necessity; it's an opportunity. By addressing the challenges they face and fostering an enabling environment, we can unlock their potential to transform the agricultural sector. By cultivating a new generation of farmers, we can ensure a more secure, sustainable, and food-secure future for all.

References

1. Henning, J. F., Nienaber, A. E., & Kirsten, J. F. (2022). Review on engaging the youth in agribusiness. **Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies**, 12(3), 321-342. [DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2023.2193486]
2. Leavy, J., & Smith, M. K. (2010). Youth-headed households and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa: A

review of the literature. **AIDS and Behavior**, 14(Suppl 1), S55-S66. [DOI: 10.1007/s10461-010-9404-1]

3. Njeru, R. W. (2017). **Entrepreneurship in agriculture for sustainable development in Africa**. Springer.
4. Swarts, J., & Aliber, M. (2013). **Youth in agriculture and agribusiness in eastern and southern Africa**. African Minds.
5. Turolla, G. A. (2019). **Innovation in agricultural and food systems: The role of young entrepreneurs**. FAO.