

Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture by Extension person

Miss. Tejashri Pandurang Dahiphle

Introduction:

It is predicted that youth will be essential to the much-awaited change of Indian agriculture. The national youth policy defines young people as those between the ages of 15 and 35. Currently, 35% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 35, with 75% residing in rural areas. Approximately 45% of young people in the nation are thought to have moved from rural to urban areas, with only 5% of them working in agriculture. In affluent nations, skilled workers make up between 60% and 90% of the labour force, but in India, this number is as low as 5% of the workforce (20–24 years old). Encouraging young people to further their education and pursue agriculture as a means of subsistence in rural areas presents some obstacles.

To inspire and motivate young people to start their own businesses in rural areas and mentor others around them, it is essential to create viable economic models in the villages. It is challenging, but not impossible, to pique rural youth's interest in and confidence in agriculture, given the numerous instances of successful agriculture that have been demonstrated in a variety of settings.

Agriculture and youth retention in agriculture are so closely related. The apparent inequalities in basic utilities, communication, health, and education facilities between rural and urban areas have led to a noteworthy increase in the movement of young people from rural areas to metropolitan areas in quest of better livelihood possibilities.



Miss. Tejashri Pandurang Dahiphle

*Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Extension Education, College of Agriculture,
Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli- 415712, District Ratnagiri (M.S.)*

In order to empower rural youth and recognise the significance of youth in agricultural development, particularly with regard to food security in the nation, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched the "Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA)" programme in 2015–16. Under this programme, further efforts are being made to engage and provide chances for income generation to rural youngsters under the age of thirty-five.

A unique nationwide extension programme may be launched to address the issues concerning rural youth in order to mobilise them towards greater participation in agricultural production activities. Youth participation in agriculture can be effectively encouraged by agricultural extension services because they are willing to adopt new ideas and technologies. Some of the effective extension strategies could be more NGO participation, counselling and guiding rural youth, creating awareness about youth programmes, entrepreneurship development, and promotion of scientific farming and agri-business. It is also possible to employ information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the mass media to effectively draw young people's attention to agriculture. To inspire other young farmers, innovative young farmers' or agripreneurs' success stories might be broadcast on radio, television, and

newspapers. Social media and community radio can also be very helpful in energising and educating young farmers about the opportunities in the agriculture industry.

Youth are frequently discouraged from choosing farming because of the country's challenging financial availability. Consequently, there is a need for an efficient credit linking system created specifically to support aspiring young farmers. Extension services can help youth establish businesses lower down the agricultural value chain or find innovative methods to fund their agricultural endeavours. Access to financing from many institutional sources can be facilitated by working within group processes such as farmer producers' groups, cooperatives, youth clubs, and farmers' organisations. Regulatory bodies should be cautious to ensure that youth institutions and organisations have adequate accessibility and transparency, as well as a transparent network of communication between them.

A major step towards refocusing attention and allocating resources to accomplish important goals of connecting youth to agriculture would be for State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and other institutions involved in agricultural education to make youth development a priority area. Instilling in students the self-assurance and skills necessary to pursue agriculture as a

career can be greatly aided by the extensive network of agricultural universities and colleges. Graduates of farming schools can start as rural entrepreneurs by opening agri-clinics and agri-business centres (ACABC) in villages. In order to support more agricultural graduates in villages to launch new rural businesses, the ACABC programmes that are now in place should be expanded. Training on product processing, value addition, marketing, advertising, branding can be offered and organized. The development of agrotourism will also give young people the chance to obtain inspiration for new sources of income. The current extension system also needs to address the following areas: mobilising young farmers to start microbusinesses and high-tech initiatives; developing technical skills; and fostering "soft" skills like leadership, communication, and business acumen.

Role of Extension Person to Attract Youth in Agriculture

- ➔ **Motivation** - As young people see the neglect and backwardness of the rural areas, they lose inspiration and often see little hope for their own futures.
- ➔ **Opportunities** -There are too few programmes which attempt to reach young people, or projects which seek to integrate the youth into rural development activities

- ➔ **Involvement** -Often young people feel isolated and unable to get involved in local rural development activities. They have no representation and no means of making their voice heard.
- ➔ **Training** - Many young people will have been formally educated but still lack the skills required to make a living in the rural areas. Often youth is ill-prepared and illequipped for the demands of rural development.

