

Profile Characteristics, Constraints and Suggestions of Farm Youth Practicing Family Farming in Parbhani District of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Family farming plays an important role in Indian agriculture with its potential in eradication of poverty with various cost effective, resource sufficient aspects along with income gaining, socio-economic and psychological aspects. Therefore, studying the comprehensive nature of the farm youth through their profile characteristics, make a significant contribution in this field. The systematic study and analysis of the profile characteristics of farm youth provide an idea on the extension activities to be conducted to improve the knowledge, skill and attitude of the young farmers of Parbhani district. Two taluks were selected and from each taluk four villages were selected based on the maximum number of farm youth involved in family farming. In each village the list of farm youth practicing family farming was prepared in consultation with extension personnel and 20 respondents were selected from each village by using snowball technique, thus, making total sample of 160. The study revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age category, farming experience at medium level with the education level up to pre-university level. More than half of the respondents belonged to medium level of psychological characteristics. Majority of farm youth families belonged to small size of land holding (60.62%), medium level of livestock units (46.25%) and materials (55.00%). The major constraint faced by the farm youth lack of infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage *etc.*) and they have suggested to provide proper infrastructure facilities (Transportation, electricity, storage *etc.*).

Keywords : Constraints, Family farming behaviour, Farm youth, Profile characteristics

INDIA is predominantly an agriculture dependent nation where 54.60 per cent of its population is engaged in agriculture (Anonymous, 2021). Our country is the youngest nation in the world with 40.00 per cent of the population falling in the youth category and 67-68 per cent of them live in rural areas (Rajendran and Paul, 2020). Agriculture sector being a largest employer for rural youth, many young farmers engage in high-tech, high risk and high-returns agri-ventures. More than 85 per cent of farmers belonged to small (1.00 to 2.00 ha) and marginal farmers (< 1.00 ha), majority of them are practicing family farming for their livelihood in India (Anonymous, 2020). In relation to this, family farming

is a means an agricultural holding which is managed and operated by a household and where farm labour is largely supplied by that household. Family farming behaviour is the totality of behaviour of a farm youth in relation to his farming activities. Family farms contribute majorly to economy of the nation as it constitutes 85 per cent of total agricultural holdings in the country and 60 per cent of the production comes from these family farms (Bitan *et al.*, 2016). A family farm is 'managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including that of both women and men'. The family farming assumes the greater importance for sound management of farm resources to enhance the farm productivity

and reduce the environmental degradation; improve the quality of life of resource poor farmers and to maintain sustainability.

In India, youth are major producer of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked because agriculture is largely house hold enterprise. Farm youth has either direct or indirect effect on the family farming behaviour. The constraints and suggestions with respect to farm youth practicing family farming helps in understanding predisposition of farm youth to participating in family farming activities and making it more economical and profitable.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected Parbhani district of Maharashtra state during 2022-23. Out of nine taluks, two taluks namely,

Parbhani and Jintur were selected based on the maximum number of farm youth involved in Family Farming, in consultation with extension personnel of development departments. Further, from each taluk, four villages were selected. From each village, the list of farm youth practicing family farming was prepared in consultation with extension personnel and 20 farm youth from each village were selected by using snowball technique, thus, making a total sample 160 respondents. Data were gathered through personal interview method with the help of structured pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were quantified and analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The personal, psychological and socio-economic characteristics were categorised as low, medium and high based on the mean and standard deviation. Constraints and suggestions were ranked based on mean scores.

TABLE 1
Personal characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Mean	SD	Level	f	(n=160) %
Age (Farm Youth)	-	-	Young (18-25 yrs.)	39	24.37
			Middle (26-30yrs.)	89	55.63
			Adult (31-35yrs)	32	20.00
Education	-	-	Illiterate	00	00.00
			Read & write	00	00.00
			Primary school	17	10.62
			Middle school	23	14.38
			High school	39	24.38
			PUC	52	32.50
			Diploma	00	00.00
			Degree	29	18.12
			PG	00	00.00
Family size	-	-	Small (<5 members)	39	24.38
			Medium (5-8 members)	74	46.24
			Large (>8 members)	47	29.38
Farming experience (years)	9.86	1.62	Low (< 9.05)	25	15.63
			Medium (9.05- 10.67)	98	61.25
			High (>10.67)	37	23.12
Livestock Rearing Experience (years)	7.73	1.40	Low (<7.03)	51	31.88
			Medium (7.03-8.43)	73	45.62
			High (>8.43)	36	22.50

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile Characteristics of the Farm Youth practicing Family Farming

The results of personal characteristics of the farm youth were presented in Table 1. The results revealed that more than half (55.63%) of the respondents belonged to middle aged, followed by young (24.37%) and adult (20.00%) aged youth categories. Nearly 32.50 per cent of the farm youth had completed their education up to pre-university level, followed by high school (24.38%), middle school (14.38%), 18.12 per cent were graduates and 10.62 per cent of them completed primary schooling. Majority of farm youth belonged to medium family size (46.24%) followed by large (29.38%) and small (24.38%) sized family. Majority of the farm youth had medium level of farming experience (61.25%), followed by high (23.12%) and low (15.63%) level. The 45.62 per cent of farm youth were experienced at medium level followed by low (31.88%) and high (22.50%) level in livestock farming.

Majority of the enthusiastic and efficient middle aged youth belonged to farming background which made them to build their experience in farming including livestock rearing. They were able complete their education from high school to pre-university level. The reason might be due to functioning of government and private aided schools, few of the respondents would have studied in colleges situated in nearby towns. As majority of them belonged to medium sized family and all their efforts were concentrated towards farming and family welfare at early age rather than higher education. Hence, the farm youth (at the age of 26 to 30 years) were experienced in farming, livestock rearing at medium level with their affordable education level. Similar findings were reported by Dhanashree *et al.* (2014), Harshitha (2018) and Sampraja (2022).

The result of psychological characteristics of the farm youth were presented in Table 2 and it is revealed that more than half (60.00%) of the respondents belonged to medium level of extension orientation, followed by low (26.25%) and high (13.75%) levels

of extension orientation. Majority of the respondents belonged to medium level (45.63%) mass media use, followed by 35.00 per cent and 19.37 per cent of high and low level, respectively. More than half of the farm youth had medium level marketing orientation (60.62%), followed by 30.00 per cent and 9.38 per cent of them belonged to low and high level, respectively. About 46.24 per cent, 29.38 per cent and 24.38 per cent of them had medium, high and low level of scientific orientation, respectively. About half of the farm youth (50.00%) had high level of achievement motivation followed by low (35.00%) and medium (15.00%) level. Majority (68.12%) of respondents had medium level of credit orientation followed by 28.76 per cent and 03.12 per cent of them had low and high level, respectively. Deferred gratification of respondents ranged from medium level (50.62%) to low level (29.38%) and 20.00 per cent of high level.

The reason for the medium level of psychological characteristics of farm youth might be enthusiasm, experience and interest of the farm youth in finding new things through extension personnel contact, participating in various social and extension activities and use of different mass media. Education level and need for the modern technologies attract and motivate the farm youth towards building up of regular extension contacts. Lack of awareness on extension services or dearth of the interest in consulting the extension officers/ agents created a number of the farm youth to lower extension orientation. Due to the knowledge and awareness about credit institutions (like FPOs, SHGs, Government Schemes *etc.*) and acceptance of financial assistance by farm youth had progressed compared to age-old farmers. Similar findings were reported by Gopala (2006), Ereneus (2010), Yashodhara (2015) and Harshitha (2018).

The result of socio-economic characteristics of the farm youth were presented in Table 3. About 39.38 per cent of farm youth annual income belonged to medium level of annual income, whereas 31.24 per cent belonged to high level and 29.38 per cent belonged to low level of annual income. About 60.62 per cent of respondent families were belonged small

TABLE 2
Psychological characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Mean	SD	Level	f	%
Extension Orientation	5.79	1.44	Low (<5.07)	42	26.25
			Medium (5.07- 6.51)	96	60.00
			High (>6.51)	22	13.75
Mass Media Use	18.76	1.37	Low (<18.07)	31	19.37
			Medium (18.07-19.44)	73	45.63
			High (>19.44)	56	35.00
Marketing Orientation	15.72	1.60	Low (<14.92)	48	30.00
			Medium (14.92-16.52)	97	60.62
			High (>16.52)	15	09.38
Scientific Orientation	16.66	1.15	Low (<16.08)	39	24.38
			Medium (16.08-17.23)	74	46.24
			High (>17.23)	47	29.38
Achievement Motivation	27.40	1.66	Low (<26.57)	56	35.00
			Medium (26.57-28.23)	24	15.00
			High (>28.23)	80	50.00
Credit Orientation	1.75	0.52	Low (<1.49)	46	28.76
			Medium (1.49-2.01)	109	68.12
			High (>2.01)	05	03.12
Deferred Gratification	38.90	2.50	Low (<37.65)	47	29.38
			Medium (37.65-40.15)	81	50.62
			High (>40.15)	32	20.00

TABLE 3
Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Mean	SD	Level	f	%
Annual Income	68793.75	16497.03	Low (<60545.24)	47	29.38
			Medium (60545.24-77042.26)	63	39.38
			High (>77042.26)	50	31.24
Land Holding	-	-	Marginal (<2.5 acres)	35	21.88
			Small (2.5-5 acres)	97	60.62
			Big (>5 acres)	28	17.50
Livestock Possession	11.66	5.46	Low (<8.93)	55	34.38
			Medium (8.93-14.39)	74	46.25
			High (>14.39)	31	19.37
Material Possession	11.75	1.22	Low (<11.14)	32	20.00
			Medium (11.14 -12.36)	88	55.00
			High (>12.36)	40	25.00

land holder's category followed by 21.88 per cent marginal and 17.50 per cent big holding categories. About 46.25 per cent of farm youth possessed medium level of livestock, 34.38 per cent possessed low and 19.37 per cent high level. About 55.00 per cent of farm youth possessed medium, 25.00 per cent possessed high and 20.00 low level of materials.

The probable reason for the above findings might be attributed for diverse annual income groups of respondents, due to the size of the land holding, subsidiary occupations like dairy farm, poultry and fishery by the respondents. Another reason might be majority of them were educated and can assume economic aspects of various units. The fragmentation of their ancestral land might have resulted to smaller size of land holdings. To carry out the farming efficiently respondents owned several materials like plough, tractor, pump set etc. Similar findings were reported by Malik (2010); Jyoti (2012) and Harshitha (2018).

Constraints Faced by Farm Youth and their Suggestions with Respect to Family Farming Behaviour

Constraints faced by farm youth with respect to family farming behaviour are represented in Table 4. The major constraints faced by the farm youth were lack of infrastructural facilities (Transportation, Electricity,

Storage etc.) (rank I), followed by non-availability of quality inputs (like seeds and fertilizers) in time (rank II) and lack of market facilities (rank III).

Suggestions given by farm youth to improve family farming behaviour are represented in Table 5. The major suggestions given by the farm youth were provide proper infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage etc.) (Rank I), timely supply of necessary inputs (seeds/ planting material/ breeds/species/fertilizers) (Rank II) and provide timely market information and facilities at local level (Rank III).

The reasons might be due to lack of sufficient facilities to transport the products, irregular electricity supply which pose difficulties in irrigation, storing of products resulting in wastage of products and bring less or no profit to farm youth. Non-availability of timely and quality seeds and fertilizers make the farm youth difficult in farming. Further, to get better prices for their produce they have suggested to provide the marketing facilities at local level which include storage and transportation facilities. Supply of necessary inputs in time to take up activities. Further, organizing need based training programmes to increase knowledge and skills to solve the field problems. Similar findings were reported by Madhu (2010) and Saha & Bahal (2010).

TABLE 4
Constraints faced by farm youth with respect to family farming behaviour

Constraints	Number	Percentage	Rank
Lack of infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage etc.)	148	92.50	I
Non availability of quality inputs (like seeds and fertilizers) in time	143	89.38	II
Lack of market facilities	135	84.37	III
Complicated procedure to get loan	128	80.00	IV
Poor accessibility of extension agencies for technical guidance	121	75.63	V
Failure of crops (Hailstorm, Pest and Diseases etc.)	118	73.75	VI
Poor water management	111	69.38	VII
Inadequate support from officials of agriculture & other departments	108	67.50	VIII
Lack of credit to invest on other income generating activities	101	63.13	IX
Skill requirement of farm family	97	60.63	X
High cost of production and lower returns	89	55.62	XI

TABLE 5
Suggestions of farm youth to improve family farming behaviour (n=160)

Suggestion	Number	Percentage	Rank
Provide proper infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage etc.)	152	95.00	I
Timely supply of necessary inputs (seeds/ planting material/ breeds/ species/fertilizers)	147	91.88	II
Provide timely market information and facilities at local level	145	90.63	III
Provision of easy, timely and adequate credit at lower interest rate	138	86.25	IV
Extension personnel should visit their farm once in a week during crop season	131	81.88	V
A comprehensive crop insurance scheme to protect farmers not only from vagaries of nature but also from market fluctuations	124	77.50	VI
There is need for fixing minimum support price for all the crops	119	74.38	VII
Provide adequate support from the department officials	110	68.75	VIII
Provide credit timely with subsidy (financial support)	102	67.50	IX
Effective extension methods (field days, result demonstration, method demonstration etc.) should be conducted periodically	98	61.25	X

The involvement of youth in agriculture plays major role to bring potential change as they are more productive and receptive to new ideas and advanced technologies. Their risk taking ability and their inclination towards modernization might help to make farming as profitable enterprise. The study revealed that 55.63 per cent of the respondents belonged to middle age category, 32.50 per cent completed their education up to pre-university level, 61.25 per cent had medium level farming experience. More than half of the respondents belonged medium level of extension orientation (60.00%), credit orientation (68.12%) and deferred gratification (50.62%). Farm youth owned small land holding (60.62%), medium level of livestock units (46.25%) and materials (55.00%). The major constraint faced by farm youth lack of infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage etc.) was (rank I) and they have suggested to provide proper infrastructure facilities (Transportation, Electricity, Storage etc.) (rank I). The results of the study implied the need for planning and organizing the extension education programmes and activities for farm youth by selecting them considering their major profile

characteristics, constraints and suggestions to increase the family farming behaviour.

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