

“A STUDY ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IDUKKI DISTRICT, KERALA”

*Sikha Shaju

PG Scholar, Marian College Kuttikkanam (Autonomous)

**Ms. Mamtha Mariam

Assistant Professor, Marian College Kuttikkanam (Autonomous)

ABSTRACT : *Capacity building and youth empowerment in agriculture has become imperative in India due to the high rate of youth unemployment, overdependence on white collar job and the need to prepare a replacement for the aging local subsistence farmers. Evidence reveals that youth engagement in agriculture is declining amidst rising youth unemployment yet the services and industrial sectors despite growing at considerably faster rates have not created enough jobs for the burgeoning youthful labour force. As a result, rural people are moving towards urban areas to obtain better employment opportunities and amenities of life. This study sought to establish factors influencing youth participation in agricultural value chain in the Idukki district of Kerala. Thus the emerging opportunities can be utilized with full potential to accelerate the transformation of agricultural activities into a viable business.*

Keywords: *Capacity building, Youth Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the cultivation and breeding of animals, plants and fungi for food, fiber, biofuel, medicinal plants and other products used to sustain and enhance human life. Agriculture was the key development in the rise of sedentary human civilization, whereby farming of domesticated species created food surpluses that nurtured the development of civilization. The major agricultural products can be broadly grouped into foods, fibers, fuels, and raw materials. The study of agriculture is known as agricultural science. Over one third of the world's workers are employed in agriculture. Youths are the successor farming generation and therefore the future of food security.

The ageing smallholder farmers are less likely to adopt the new technologies needed to sustainably increase agricultural productivity. There is therefore a pressing need to engage the youth in ways that they can see a promising future in Agriculture as well as to influence them to pursue careers in agriculture-based industries. Farming offers the young generation a chance to make a difference by growing enough food to feed the world. There are many challenges ahead for the sector but if young people are offered education in agriculture, a voice at policy level, and in the media, and are engaged with innovations then the agriculture industry can attract youth again. If youth are given proper chances to engage in agriculture then it will lead to their capacity building and empowerment.

Capacity building (or capacity development) is the process by which individual and organizations obtain, improve, and retain the skills and knowledge needed to do their jobs competently whereas Youth empowerment is a process where children and young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives. Youth in agriculture are the foundation, powerhouse, future hope and leaders of nation. But their potentiality has been ignored but if it's being properly determined then youth will be able to play a great role in our agriculture sector and they will also be able to improve their future through agriculture.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Youth's are the future of a country with their limitless energy and aspiration. Hence there is a need to ensure a successful and healthy agricultural sector in this country. The ability of agriculture sector to create an environment so that youth are willing to embark in this sector is grossly required. The youth should also start looking at the agriculture sector as an opportunity for them to increase their capacity building and to be self-employed. In this context, it is worth considering the following questions to bring better clarity about youth in agriculture:

- What are the factors affecting capacity building in agriculture?
- What is the relationship between youth empowerment and agriculture?
- What is the level of capacity building of youth present in agriculture?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study titled “Capacity Building and Youth Empowerment in Agriculture” has been carried out with the following objectives:

- 1) To identify the factors affecting capacity building of youth in agriculture.
- 2) To study the level of capacity building of youth with respect to agriculture.
- 3) To study the relationship between youth empowerment and agriculture.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- H₀1:** There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the perception of youth.
H₀2: There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the awareness of youth.
H₀3: There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to capacity building.
H₀4: there is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the economic factors.
H₀5: there is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the institutional factors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted a descriptive, analytical research design so as to gather relevant knowledge on “**Capacity Building and Youth Empowerment in agriculture with special reference to Idukki district, Kerala**” by conducting sample survey. The present study incorporates the collection of both primary and secondary data for an in depth investigation. The researcher aimed to collect the Primary data with the help of a well-structured questionnaire administered to 50 samples.. The population of the study includes the youth in agriculture sector of Idukki district. The sample respondents were collected using convenient sampling methods.. Secondary data were also recorded in the study which consists of reports of projects and studies conducted by experts, professional journals, magazines and online sources. The data collected were properly analysed to arrive at realistic results using appropriate mathematical and statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test which were supported by charts, graphs and SPSS. Data were collected during the year 2018.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anania P (2016), describes that the main aim of the paper was to identify the socio-cultural and economic factors affecting effective youths’ participation in agricultural marketing co-operative societies. Specifically, the study intended to examine the economic factors hindering effective youth’s participation in agricultural and marketing co-operatives.

Sarfo A (2015), in this paper the context of youth employment, agricultural development offers one of the most effective opportunities to engage youth, create jobs and improve livelihoods.. Several factors impede youth involvement in agriculture, such as educational background, access to land and financing, low agricultural productivity etc. Success stories are emerging that highlight changing attitudes among young men and women towards undertaking agriculture as a career option.

Yusoff A, Ahmed N, Abdul H (2015), this paper conceptualizes that an integration of factors at individual, institutional and social levels may enhance Gen Y’s agropreneurial intention through the mediating role of perceived desirability and feasibility.

TNAU, Coimbatore (2014), this work shows that the younger generation will be interested in taking to farming as a profession only if farming becomes both economically and intellectually attractive. The future of food security in our country will depend on both the strengthening of the ecological foundations essential for sustainable agriculture, as well as attracting the educated youth to farming and allied professions.

Bagson E, Alfred B (2013), this study revealed that there is movement away from farming culminating to limited youth participation in agriculture as a result of limited youth control of resources or products even though farming is profitable. It is recommended on the basis of this that an enabling environment be created, for instance resources such as capital and land and products from farming should be controlled by the youth since this will motivate and attract them.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE 1
PERCEPTION OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

MEASURES	AN	ME	STANDARD DEVIATION
I aspire a career in agriculture.	400	3.1	1.0881
I perceive agriculture to be a profitable business.	800	3.4	.83885
I appreciate agriculture as a source of income.	600	3.8	.80837
Agriculture offers opportunities for gainful employment by increasing food security and boosting economic growth and development.	000	3.8	.78246
Agriculture is hampered by lack of skills.	200	3.6	.94524
There is high risk and uncertainty in agriculture.	800	3.7	1.0745
I see agriculture as a low status profession.	600	2.1	1.0372

Overdependence on white collar job affects agriculture.	200	3.9	.80407
More training should be given to youth regarding agriculture and career.	400	4.0	.92494
Lack of support from family.	917	3.2	.84949
Lack of support from society.	800	5.1	8.0500
Lack of support from government.	958	3.8	.90482
Farming is meant for older generation.	200	1.8	1.0437
Youth empowerment in agriculture helps in the development of our nation.	600	4.1	.68094

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 shows that, the highest mean value (5.18) among youth perception is for the lack of support from the society. This states that it is a major cause that affects the relationship between youth empowerment and agriculture.

TABLE 2
AWARENESS OF YOUTH REGARDING AGRICULTURE

MEASURES	AN	ME	STANDARD DEVIATION
Local agriculture department frequently organizes training for youth.	400	3.4	1.0333
The type of training and topics covered, adequately meets the needs of youth agribusiness community.	200	3.4	.90554
I have various sources and types of information to guide myself in agriculture.	400	2.8	1.0372
There is extremely low local community and involvement in youth oriented Programs.	000	3.1	.93131
I have least knowledge about the incentives/ other schemes/ facilities provided by the government to promote agriculture.	000	3.7	.99488
Not aware of entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture.	200	3.4	.88271

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 reveals the awareness the youth have regarding the agriculture sector, the highest mean value (3.7) is for the factor that the youth have least knowledge regarding the incentives/other schemes provided by the Government. This acts as a hindrance towards the level of capacity building of youth in agriculture.

TABLE 3
MEASURES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF YOUTH

MEASURES	AN	ME	STANDARD DEVIATION
Private sector skill's gap is being addressed.	200	3.1	.65900
More focus should be given on leadership abilities, personal development and other life skills training.	400	3.5	.73429
Utilisation of training provided effectively.	800	3.0	1.0269
Vocational education and training with entrepreneurship abilities have a key role to play.	600	3.5	.76024
I need more emphasis on personal qualities like self-confidence, creativity, -willingness to take risks and to collaborate with others working in agriculture.	200	3.9	.60068

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from table 3 that the main factor that affects capacity building in agriculture is the emphasis on confidence, innovation, creativity, willingness to take risk etc. as it has the highest mean value of 3.92 whereas vocational education and training has the lowest mean value (3.08).

TABLE 4
ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT EFFECTS YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

MEASURES	AN	ME	STAN DARD DEVI ATION
Land available for agriculture activity is sufficient.	800	3.6	1.1682
The land available is not suitable for cultivation.	000	3.5	1.0738
Land prices are high.	800	3.7	1.2170
Distance to the nearest market to sell the agro-produce is more.	600	3.6	.91718
Credit influence youth participation in agriculture.	200	3.4	.81039
Parents allow youth to farm only in the existing land.	000	3.4	.75593
The commodity prices are high.	400	3.7	.63278
Inadequate weather condition.	400	3.7	.80331
Subsidies/grants received are satisfactory.	800	3.1	1.0437
Non-availability of labours.	600	3.3	1.0052
High labour turnover.	400	3.4	.81215

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from table 4 that the major economic factor that affects the relationship between youth and agriculture is the high price of land as it has the highest mean value (3.78). They are not able to buy more land for cultivation due to its high price.

TABLE 5
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS IN AGRICULTURE

MEASURES	AN	ME	STAN DARD DEVI ATION
More focus should be given on agro-preneurship experiential learning	400	3.7	.63278
Training quality should be improved	800	4.0	.56569
Better mentoring and incubation should be provided	600	3.6	.77222
Current curriculum and training provided is outdated and not effective in encouraging youth	600	3.6	.79821

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 reveals that the Institutional factor with regard to the improvement of training quality has the highest mean value (4.08). The quality of the training provided to the youth has an effect on their capacity building in agriculture, as the quality of training increases the capacity building will also increase.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis test is a statistical test that is used to determine whether there is enough evidence in a sample of data to infer that a certain condition is true for the entire population. Hypothesis testing refers to the formal procedures used by statisticians to accept or reject statistical hypothesis. Gender may have an influence on the youth perception, awareness, capacity building, economic factors, and institutional factors. In order to test gender, the collected data were analysed using independent sample t-test. The results are presented in the succeeding paragraphs.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to the (a) perception of youth, (b) awareness, (c) capacity building, (d) economic factors and (e) institutional factors.

(a) Impact of gender of the respondents on youth perception regarding agriculture

TABLE 6
YOUTH PERCEPTION

Male		Female		t	df	Sign (2- tailed)
Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
3.46	.453	3.42	.334	.424	48	.674

Source:

Table 1

Table 6 shows the result of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5% significance level. Since the P value is more than .05 for perception (male=3.45, female=3.42), the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to youth perception.

b) Impact of gender of the respondents on youth awareness regarding agriculture

TABLE 7
YOUTH AWARENESS

Male		Female		t	df	Sign (2- tailed)
Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
3.45	.28	3.42	.22	.301	48	.765

Source : Table 2

Table 7 shows the result of t-test administrated on the collected data at 5% significance level. Since the P value is more than .05 for awareness (male=3.28, female=3.34), the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to youth awareness.

c) Impact of gender of the respondents on capacity building in agriculture

TABLE 8
CAPACITY BUILDING

Male		Female		t	df	Sign (2- tailed)
Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
3.64	.286	3.44	.338	2.23	48	.030

Source: Table 3

Table 8 shows the result of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5% significance level. Since the P value is more than .05 for awareness (male=3.46, female=3.42), the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to capacity building.

d) Impact of gender of the respondents on the economic factors affecting agriculture

**TABLE 9
ECONOMIC FACTORS**

Male		Female		t	df	Sign (2- tailed)
Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
3.28	.305	3.42	.334	.357	48	.651

Source : Table 4

Table 9 reveals the results of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5% significance level. Since the P value is less than .05 for awareness (male=3.64, female=3.44), the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is significant difference between male and female with regards to economic factors. It indicates that the male members are the once who experience the negative outcomes of the economic factors listed.

e) Impact of gender of the respondents on the institutional factors affecting agriculture

**TABLE 10
INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS**

Male		Female		t	df	Sign (2- tailed)
Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
4.054	.319	3.555	.319	4.330	48	.000

Source :Table 5

Table 10 shows the results of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5% significance level. Since the P value is less than .05 for awareness (male=4.05, female=3.55), the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is significant difference between male and female with regards to institutional factors. It indicates that the male members are the once who experience the negative outcomes of the institutional factors listed.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Youth perception has the highest mean value (5.18) among youth perception is for the lack of support from the society. This states that it is a major cause that affects the relationship between youth empowerment and agriculture.

With respect to the awareness the youth have regarding the agriculture sector, the highest mean value (3.7) is for the factor that the youth have least knowledge regarding the incentives/other schemes provided by the Government. This acts as a hindrance towards the level of capacity building of youth in agriculture.

The main factor that affects capacity building in agriculture is the emphasis on confidence, innovation, creativity, willingness to take risk etc. as it has the highest mean value of 3.92 whereas vocational education and training has the lowest mean value (3.08).

The major economic factor that affects the relationship between youth and agriculture is the high price of land as it has the highest mean value (3.78). They are not able to buy more land for cultivation due to its high price.

The Institutional factor with regard to the improvement of training quality has the highest mean value (4.08). The quality of the training provided to the youth has an effect on their capacity building in agriculture, as the quality of training increases the capacity building will also increase.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

There is no significant difference between male and female with regard to youth perception.

There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to youth awareness.

There is no significant difference between male and female with regards to capacity building.

There is significant difference between male and female with regards to economic factors.

There is significant difference between male and female with regards to institutional factors.

CONCLUSION

'Capacity Building and Youth Empowerment in Agriculture' considering Idukki district provides insights into various factors that affect capacity building of youth in agriculture, the level of capacity building of youth, the relationship between youth empowerment and agriculture based on the variable, gender. In some instances the results are compelling and consistent with other studies and in other cases as shown in this study, the findings are different. In an overall perception it can be said that the youth plays a great role in the agricultural sector of our country today. The involvement of youth can be improved more by implementing adequate measures to increase the empowerment of youth and their capacity building.

SUGGESTIONS

1. More emphasis should be given on improving the personal qualities of youth which includes self-confidence, innovation, creativity, willingness to take risks and the ability to collaborate with others working in agricultural sphere.
2. To increase the level of capacity of youth in agriculture the awareness of different entrepreneurial opportunities should be provided to the youth, with proper focus on agro-entrepreneurship experiential learning.
3. More support should be provided from the part of the society for encouraging and empowering youth in agriculture sector. Also adequate credit policies should be provided to the youth which will help them to meet high cost of land.

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