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Study on constraints faced by entrepreneurial behaviour of youth in agriculture & allied sectors of Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

India's agricultural sector, while employing nearly 50-60% of the population, contributes only about 18.5% to the national GDP, highlighting the need for modernization and value addition. Agripreneurship has emerged as a promising pathway to bridge this gap by fostering innovation, self-employment, and rural development. This study aimed to assess the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh. A multistage random sampling technique was employed to select 160 respondents from 16 villages across four blocks. Entrepreneurial behaviour was analysed through three major dimensions innovativeness, achievement motivation, and risk orientation. The findings revealed that a majority of respondents displayed medium levels of innovativeness (56.87%), achievement motivation (68.75%), and risk orientation (61.25%). Overall, 60% of the respondents exhibited medium entrepreneurial behaviour, while only 21.25% demonstrated high levels. These results indicate a moderate level of entrepreneurial potential among rural youth, with significant scope for improvement. The study recommends targeted interventions such as capacity building, entrepreneurship training, mentoring, and access to resources to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem in rural areas. Empowering youth in agriculture through such measures can lead to sustainable rural livelihoods and inclusive economic growth.

Keywords: Rural youth, Agricultural occupation, Knowledge level, Entrepreneurial behaviour, Constraints in agriculture

Introduction

India, with over 50-60% of its population dependent on agriculture, remains fundamentally anchored in its agrarian roots. Although agriculture contributes only 15-18% to India's GDP, the sheer scale of dependence underscores the critical need for innovation and empowerment in this sector. Agripreneurs-young, skilled individuals who integrate entrepreneurial approaches into agriculture are emerging as change agents capable of revitalizing rural economies and securing food systems for the future.

The Government of India has spearheaded initiatives such as the Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY) under the NSDC and PMKVY frameworks to equip rural youth with vocational skills aligned to agricultural and allied sectors. Between the past three years, 45,565 farmers were trained under STRY, complemented by over 1.15 crore farmers trained via ATMA, and nearly 5.96 lakh through KVKs. These skill-building efforts target technical proficiency in agro- processing, modern farming methods, and value chain integration.

While the broader Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) has trained over 1.6 crore youths since 2015, only about 2.43 million have obtained jobs, reflecting an employment placement rate of less than 15%. This gap indicates that training alone cannot solve unemployment; it must be paired with programs that promote entrepreneurship and agricultural innovation.

Agripreneurship initiatives like the Agri clinics & Agribusiness Centres (ACABC) scheme, RKVY-RAFTAAR, Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) Centres, and the "Innovation and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development" program have filled this innovation gap. Through these schemes, agripreneurs receive grants, incubation support, mentorship, and market linkage assistance. For instance, RKVY-RAFTAAR's ABI ecosystem and the Innovation & Agri-Entrepreneurship scheme under RKVY offer pre-seed and seed funding, orientation, and a structured startup incubation environment.

Moreover, agripreneurship extends beyond traditional farming. It includes ventures across dairy, fisheries, horticulture, agro-processing, and decentralized market systems, which not only boost rural incomes but also strengthen supply chains and local economies. Empowering rural youth with exposure, digital skills, and entrepreneurial mindsets can shift perceptions of agriculture from drudgery to opportunity especially when these initiatives leverage social media, modern technologies (e.g., agritech, AI, precision farming), and structured support systems.

In sum, integrating skills training, incubation, and entrepreneurial support under schemes like STRY, PMKVY, ACABC, and RKVY-RAFTAAR can enable rural youth to drive sustainable agripreneurship. This not only

enhances productivity and innovation in agriculture but also fosters youth-led economic development across the rural spectrum.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Uttar Pradesh, India, with a specific focus on Ghazipur district. The selection of Uttar Pradesh was intentional, based on the researcher's familiarity with the region, which facilitated efficient data collection within a limited timeframe. The researcher's proficiency in the local language and cultural context enhanced rapport with participants, contributing to the authenticity and reliability of the data gathered.

Ghazipur district, located in the eastern part of the Varanasi Division, was chosen for its diverse demographic and socio-economic profile. The district spans 3,377 square kilometres and comprises 16 administrative blocks. It is bordered by Ballia and Bihar to the east, Jaunpur and Varanasi to the west, Mau to the north, and Chandauli to the south. The district's population, as per the 2011 Census, stands at approximately 3.62 million, with a sex ratio of 952 females per 1000 males and an average literacy rate of 71.78%. These indicators reflect a mix of rural and semi-urban characteristics, making Ghazipur an ideal site for grassroots-level research.

From the 16 blocks in Ghazipur, four were randomly selected for the study: Manihari, Jakhania, Ghazipur, and Mardah. Each block represents a unique socio-cultural and geographic segment of the district. Within each block, four villages were randomly chosen, resulting in a total of 16 villages. The selected villages include Hardaspur Kashi, Gauspur, Hansrajpur, and Chokari from Manihari; Odasan, Mirpur, Alipur Madra, and Dhamupur from Jakhania; Talwal, Paraa, Fatehullahpur, and Bikapur from Ghazipur; and Gulal Sarai, Raneepur, Mardah, and Sarai Mubarak from Mardah.

Respondent selection was carried out using a simple random sampling technique. In each block, 10 individuals were selected from each of the four villages, ensuring a diverse representation of age, gender, caste, and occupation. This yielded a total of 40 respondents per block and 160 respondents overall. The sample size was deemed sufficient to capture a range of perspectives while remaining manageable for in-depth qualitative analysis.

Data collection involved structured interviews and field observations. The researcher employed a semi-structured questionnaire to guide conversations, allowing flexibility to explore emergent themes. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to throughout the study. This methodology ensured a robust and contextually grounded understanding of the research problem.

Results

Table 1: Constraints Faced by Agricultural Respondents: Mean Perception Scores (MPS) and Ranking of Key Challenges

S. No.	Constraints	Respondents	
		MPS	Rank
1.	Lack of proper storage and post-harvest facilities, resulting in significant wastage of agricultural produce.	18.25	VII
2.	Climate change and environmental challenges, such as soil degradation and water scarcity	31.05	II
3.	Fragmented landholdings and small farm sizes, making it challenging to achieve economies of scale.	29.18	III
4.	Lack of awareness and training on modern farming practices and market trends.	24.33	V
5.	Perception of agriculture as a low-income and labour-intensive occupation among rural youth.	35.16	I
6.	Inadequate irrigation facilities and dependence on monsoon rains, leading to crop losses and uncertainties.	24.43	IV
7.	Insufficient access to agricultural credit and financing options, limiting investment opportunities.	12.98	X
8.	Limited opportunities for value-addition and Agri-entrepreneurship in the region	18.89	VI
9.	Limited access to modern agricultural technologies and equipment, hindering productivity and efficiency.	16.12	VIII
10.	Inadequate infrastructure and transportation facilities, hampering market access.	15.01	IX

Discussion

1. **Perception of agriculture as a low-income and labour-intensive occupation among rural youth MPS:** 35.16% Many rural youths view agriculture as unattractive due to hard labour, unpredictable income, and lack of career growth. This perception leads to migration and reduced interest in farming as a profession.
2. **Climate change and environmental challenges (soil degradation, water scarcity) MPS:** 31.05%. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, soil fertility loss, and depleting groundwater are severely impacting agricultural productivity and long-term sustainability.
3. **Fragmented landholdings and small farm sizes MPS:** 29.18% Small and scattered farms prevent farmers from adopting mechanization or achieving economies of scale, thus reducing efficiency and profitability.
4. **Inadequate irrigation facilities and dependence on monsoon rains MPS:** 24.43% Many regions still depend heavily on rainfall. The lack of robust irrigation systems makes crop production risky and seasonal.
5. **Lack of awareness and training on modern farming practices and market trends MPS:** 24.33% Farmers often lack access to updated knowledge on farming techniques, crop diversification, and market demand, affecting decision-making and yield.
6. **Limited opportunities for value-addition and Agri-entrepreneurship in the region MPS:** 18.89% There are few facilities or initiatives to support food processing, branding, or direct market access, which restricts profit margins and entrepreneurial ventures.
7. **Lack of proper storage and post-harvest facilities MPS:** 18.25% Inadequate cold storage, warehousing, and processing units lead to high post-harvest losses, especially in perishable produce.
8. **Limited access to modern agricultural technologies and equipment MPS:** 16.12%Due to cost, awareness, or availability, many farmers cannot use modern tools

and machinery, lowering efficiency and output.

9. **Inadequate infrastructure and transportation facilities MPS:** 15.01% Poor roads, limited transport networks, and market linkages make it difficult to sell produce efficiently and at fair prices.
10. **Insufficient access to agricultural credit and financing options MPS:** 12.98% Many farmers struggle to access loans or investment due to lack of collateral or institutional barriers, preventing timely input purchases and farm improvements.

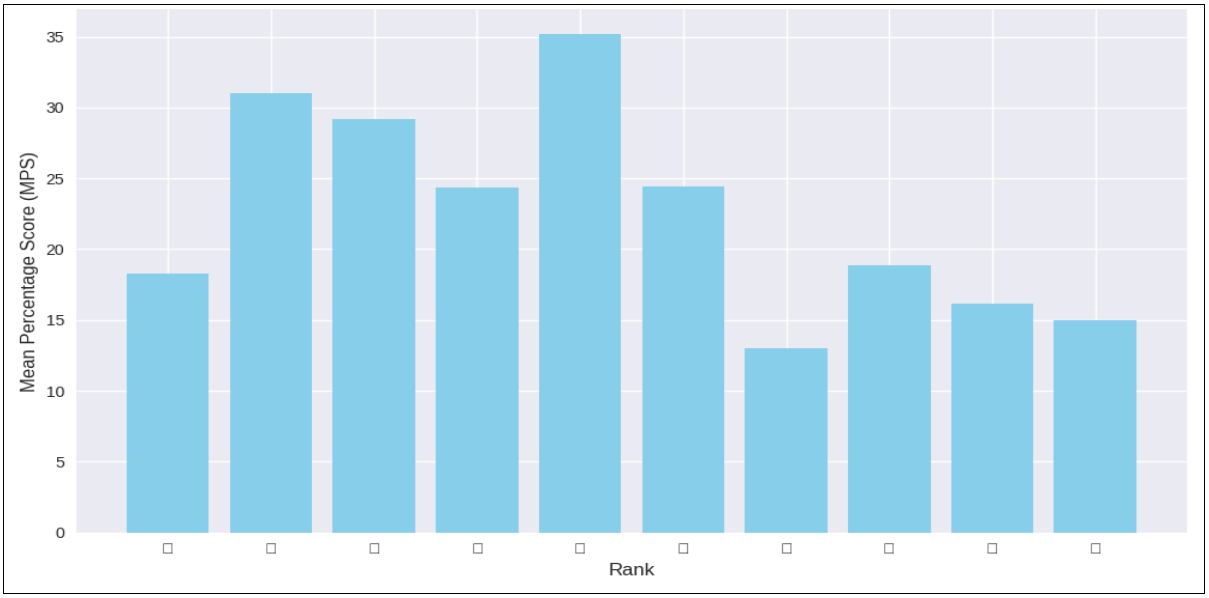

Fig 1: MPS Values by Rank

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that multiple interlinked constraints hinder the growth and sustainability of agriculture in the region. Chief among them is the perception of agriculture as a low-income and labor-intensive occupation, particularly among rural youth, which ranks highest in severity. Environmental challenges, such as climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity, along with fragmented landholdings, also pose major obstacles to agricultural development. Mid- level constraints include inadequate irrigation, lack of awareness about modern practices, and limited scope for value addition and Agri-entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, insufficient access to credit, outdated technologies, and poor transportation infrastructure further compound these issues. These findings underscore the urgent need for policy interventions that focus on modernizing agricultural practices, improving infrastructure, ensuring financial inclusion, and reshaping youth perceptions about farming. Addressing these constraints in a holistic manner can significantly enhance productivity, rural livelihoods, and the overall resilience of the agricultural sector.

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