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Determinants of rural youth attitude towards secondary agriculture practices

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Abstract

Secondary agriculture includes value-added activities beyond primary farming, aimed at reducing waste and increasing income. Many youths view these practices as an opportunity for self-employment, increased income, and modern farming. However, attitudes may vary based on awareness, education, access to resources, family or community support *etc.* Understanding their attitude is crucial for designing effective policies and programs that encourage youth participation, reduce rural unemployment, and promote sustainable agricultural development. The study was conducted in Kheda district with a total of 120 respondents through a structured interview schedule. From the study it was found that more than half (51.67%) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards secondary agriculture practices, followed by a neutral and unfavourable attitude. The correlation between profile characteristics of the rural youth and their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices revealed that the variables *viz.*, entrepreneurial experience, annual family income, training received, social media exposure, scientific orientation, risk orientation, market orientation were highly significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Keywords: Attitude, rural youth, relationship, secondary agriculture practices

Introduction

The Indian agriculture is undergoing a paradigm shift from mere sustenance and food security to profitability and nutritional security. The challenges of increasing population, declining land holdings, degrading soil and water resources, climate change underscore the need for diversification of the agricultural sector to ensure the sustainability of country's economy beyond traditional primary agriculture. To achieve this, primary agriculture needs to be complemented by secondary agriculture (Vaishnavi & Soumya, 2023)^[9].

Secondary agriculture includes all practices and processes, which add value to primary agricultural commodities using efficient technologies, market information and consumer preference (Chengappa, 2013)^[1]. The Ashok Dalwai Committee report 2018 has defined secondary agriculture as a production activity at enterprise level and highlighted secondary agriculture as a means to enhance primary agriculture and build up agricultural enterprises through farm-linked activities (NAAS, 2020)^[6].

Government has taken up few remarkable initiatives like establishment of mega food parks, creation of integrated cold chains, modernization of abattoirs, quality control laboratories, research and development (Lakshmi and Purnima, 2018)^[4]. In India, secondary agriculture practices have gained increasing attention in recent years. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) since 2017-18, aimed at modernizing

infrastructure and supply chains. In 2020, the government launched the Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, which aims to provide financial and technical support to small-scale food processing units.

Youth are key drivers of innovation and entrepreneurship, and their perception of these practices directly influences their willingness to participate. The current developmental models spur migration of educated and skilled youth away from agriculture, leaving a scarcity of skilled and progressive farmers/entrepreneurs in the rural and agricultural sector. Studying their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices helps identify the factors that may hinder adoption and it enables policymakers, extension agencies to design targeted interventions, such as skill development programs, access to credit, and mentorship opportunities. Promoting rural youth in agripreneurship and adoption of such practices is a strategic step toward modernizing agriculture and ensuring its long-term viability.

Objectives

1. To study the attitude of rural youth towards secondary agriculture practices
2. To study the relationship between profile of the rural youth and their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices

Methodology

The study was undertaken in Kheda district of Gujarat state, India. The talukas were purposively selected based on maximum number of trainings provided by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kheda on secondary agriculture practices. A total of 120 respondents were selected by proportionate random sampling and responses were collected by direct face to face interaction through a structured interview schedule. The responses were recorded and analyzed through statistical software SPSS and various methods such as frequency, percentage, correlation coefficient were deployed.

Results and Discussion

1. Attitude of rural youth towards secondary agriculture practices

The attitude of the rural youth towards secondary agriculture practices reflects their interest, perception, and willingness to engage in value-added agricultural activities like food processing, packaging, and agribusiness.

1.1 Statement wise attitude of the rural youth towards secondary agriculture practices

Table 1 revealed that nearly three-fourth (71.67%) of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘One gets higher

returns by running secondary agriculture units’, followed by strongly agree and disagree with 24.17 per cent and 4.10 per cent, respectively. Slightly more than half (52.50%) of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘Secondary agriculture units provide income throughout the year’, followed by strongly agreed with 35.00 per cent and undecided with 12.50 per cent. More than half (55.83%) of the respondents were agreed with the statement ‘Training on secondary agriculture practices is very helpful for rural youth’, followed by strongly agreed, undecided and disagreed with 26.67 per cent, 13.33 per cent, 4.10 per cent, respectively.

Slightly more than two-fifth (42.50%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement ‘Secondary agriculture units is the best source of employment for rural youth irrespective of his level of education’, followed by strongly agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed with 32.50 per cent, 11.67 per cent, 8.33 per cent and 5.00 per cent, respectively. Slightly more than two-fifth (43.33%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement ‘The adoption of secondary agriculture units is very risky for farming community’, followed by undecided, agreed, strongly agreed and strongly disagreed with 26.67 per cent, 11.67 per cent, 10.00 per cent and 8.33 per cent, respectively.

Table 1: Statement wise attitude of the rural youth towards secondary agriculture practices

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1.	One gets higher returns by running secondary agriculture units	29 (24.17)	86 (71.67)	00 (0.00)	05 (04.10)	00 (0.00)
2.	Secondary agriculture units provide income throughout the year	42 (35.00)	63 (52.50)	15 (12.50)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)
3.	Training on secondary agriculture practices is very helpful for rural youth	32 (26.67)	67 (55.83)	16 (13.33)	05 (4.10)	00 (0.00)
4.	Secondary agriculture units is the best source of employment for rural youth irrespective of his level of education	39 (32.50)	51 (42.50)	14 (11.67)	10 (08.33)	06 (05.00)
5.	The adoption of secondary agriculture units is very risky for farming community	12 (10.00)	14 (11.67)	32 (26.67)	52 (43.33)	10 (08.33)
6.	The management of secondary agriculture units is complex and difficult	22 (18.33)	42 (35.00)	20 (16.67)	31 (25.83)	05 (04.67)
7.	Secondary agriculture is a profitable business, even though it needs more investment	34 (28.33)	60 (50.00)	16 (13.33)	10 (08.33)	00 (0.00)

*SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, UD- Undecided, DA- Disagree and SDA- Strongly disagree *Figure in parentheses shows percentage

Slightly more than one-third (35.00%) of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘The management of secondary agriculture units is complex and difficult’, followed by disagree, strongly agreed, undecided and strongly disagreed with 25.83 per cent, 18.33 per cent, 16.67 per cent and 4.67 per cent, respectively. Exactly half (50.00%) of the

respondents agreed with the statement ‘Secondary agriculture is a profitable business, even though it needs more investment’, followed by strongly agreed, undecided and disagreed with 28.33 per cent, 13.33 per cent, 16.67 per cent and 8.33 per cent, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices (n=120)

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Per cent
1	Strongly unfavourable (07.00 to 12.60 score)	00	00.00
2	Unfavourable (12.61 to 18.20 score)	13	10.83
3	Neutral (18.21 to 23.80 score)	37	30.83
4	Favourable (23.81 to 29.40 score)	62	51.67
5	Strongly favourable (29.41 to 35.00 score)	08	06.67
Total		120	100.00

Table 2 indicated that more than half (51.67%) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards secondary agriculture practices, followed by a neutral attitude with 30.83 per cent, unfavourable attitude with 10.83 per cent and strongly favourable attitude with 6.67 per cent. None of

the respondents were found to have a strongly unfavourable attitude towards secondary agriculture practices. It can be concluded that a significant majority (84.50%) of the respondents had a neutral to favourable attitude towards secondary agriculture practices. The probable reason behind

this could be the training programmes arranged by KVKs under ARYA scheme to motivate rural youth in agriculture and allied activities. Field visits, success stories, government subsidies could have motivated them to consider agribusiness as a profitable and steady source of income. The findings is somewhat similar with the results of Parmar *et al.* (2012)^[8] and Mubeena *et al.* (2020)^[5].

1.2 Relationship between profile characteristics of the rural youth and their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices

The relationship between various personal, socio-economic, psychological characteristics of the rural youth and their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices were analyzed using correlation coefficient as shown in Table 3. It was found that the independent variables, entrepreneurial experience, annual family income, training received, social media exposure, scientific orientation, risk orientation, market orientation were highly significantly correlated with their attitude at 0.01 level of significance. Education, social participation, innovativeness are significantly correlated with their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices at 0.05 level of significance. Size of family, extension contact, credit orientation were positive and non-significant while, family occupation had negatively nonsignificant with their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices. These findings underscore the importance of equipping rural youth with hands-on training opportunities. Practical exposure strengthens their scientific orientation, risk-taking ability, and understanding of market dynamics. Furthermore, ensuring access to market linkages and promoting knowledge dissemination through social media can significantly boost their motivation and preparedness to adopt secondary agriculture practices. The results were found in conformity with Nagar *et al.* (2023)^[7], Chinchmalatpure & Koshti (2021)^[2], and Kowsalya *et al.* (2017)^[3].

Table 3: Relationship between profile characteristics of the rural youth and their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices

Sr. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient
1.	Education	0.189*
2.	Size of family	0.163 ^{NS}
3.	Entrepreneurial experience	0.245**
4.	Annual family income	0.262**
5.	Family occupation	-0.007 ^{NS}
6.	Social participation	0.186*
7.	Training received	0.268**
8.	Extension contact	0.0421 ^{NS}
9.	Social media exposure	0.288**
10.	Scientific orientation	0.423**
11.	Risk orientation	0.302**
12.	Market orientation	0.315**
13.	Credit orientation	0.068 ^{NS}
14.	Innovativeness	0.217*

*Significant at 0.05 level **Highly significant at 0.01 level ^{NS} Non-significant

Conclusion

With rising unemployment and limited land resources, secondary agriculture practices present sustainable alternatives that align with the entrepreneurial aspirations of young people. Positive perceptions are often influenced by exposure to training, modern technologies, and successful

role models within the sector. More than half of the respondents had favourable attitude towards secondary agriculture practices, followed by a neutral, unfavourable attitude and strongly favourable attitude (6.67%). A favourable attitude among rural youth can significantly contribute to the transformation and sustainability of the agricultural sector. Positive attitudes are often linked to higher entrepreneurial experience, annual family income, training received, social media exposure, scientific orientation, risk orientation, market orientation which were highly significantly correlated with their attitude and variables *viz.*, education, social participation, innovativeness are significantly correlated with their attitude at 0.05 level of significance. The size of family, extension contact, credit orientation was found to be positive and non-significant while family occupation showed negative and non-significant relationship with their attitude towards secondary agriculture practices. It can be concluded that training and capacity-building programmes, financial support and technical guidance could develop more positive attitude and further adoption of such income-generating practices.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest

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