

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 7; Issue 5; May 2024; Page No. 412-415

Received: 15-02-2024
Accepted: 19-03-2024

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Knowledge and perception of urban youth on urban agriculture

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2024.v7.i5f.648>

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Abstract

The goal of the current study was to evaluate urban youth's perceptions and degree of knowledge regarding urban agriculture. About 105 urban youngsters from Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu were chosen at random for the study. The majority of young people living in cities are immigrants from rural areas, and they do not currently engaged in agriculture. According to the current study, the majority of farmers had a medium degree of understanding about agricultural practices, general agriculture, agricultural technologies, and agricultural schemes and policies. While young people in urban areas view urban agriculture more favorably than they do with other sector as a whole, they view it differently as a profession. Young people who receive financial aid, education, career opportunities, and technological integration would play a significant role in urban agriculture.

Keywords: Urban agriculture, knowledge, urban youth, perception

Introduction

Urbanization is a primary driver of change in the globe today, with the global urban population expected to nearly double from 3.5 billion to more than 6 billion by 2050. It is a challenge for both urban and rural locations. Supporting the most vulnerable groups in an urbanizing world necessitates talks about food, agriculture, and cities within the context of rural-urban linkages. According to a 2007 UN State of the World Population study, by 2030, 40.76 percent of the country's population is predicted to live in cities, and by 2050, two-thirds of the global population will live in cities. (World Urbanisation Prospects, 2014). Resources are constantly limited. Even in a developing and densely populated country like India, resources are scarce. The population increase causes a shortage of even the most basic resources, such as food. According to a World Bank Group report, "more than half of all children under the age of four are malnourished, 30% of newborns are significantly underweight, and 60% of women are anemic." (World Bank Group, 2010). The recent global food price crisis has highlighted the need of recognizing and addressing the causes of food insecurity among the urban poor.

Poor urban dwellers, who are predominantly net food consumers and rely heavily on markets for their food supplies, are more exposed to unfavorable food price shocks, and they are regularly the group in society that suffers the most from rising food costs. Urban agriculture is one of the global alternatives for meeting the food needs of urban populations. At the home level, urban agriculture can provide a source of income as well as direct access to a broader range of nutritionally dense foods (Vegetables, fruit, and meat) and a more diverse diet (Zezza, A., & Tasciotti,

L., 2010) ^[10].

Youth are expected to play an important role in India's long-awaited agricultural reform. According to national youth policy, those aged 15 to 35 are considered young. The migration of rural youth to urban areas is estimated to be over 45% in the country, with only about 5% of young engaged in agriculture. Youth participation in agricultural activities has the ability to address the aging farm population and minimize youth unemployment. This group of people acts as the backbone of every society's economy, a key source of insights and innovations, the primary market for food consumption, and are frequently the stakeholders and leaders of the general public, public policy, and social development (Geza *et al.*, 2021) ^[3]. In practically every nation around the globe, Youth have played a vital part because youth members possess the zeal and skill required to provide opportunities for national growth. Youth development determines community and national growth. The social and economic growth and prosperity of agricultural regions are dependent on the youth of the country.

Materials and Methods

The study was undertaken to assess urban youth's knowledge and perceptions of urban agriculture in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. For the purpose of the study, around 105 urban youth were selected randomly from the district. The knowledge level of urban youth on urban agriculture was assessed using four separate criteria: general agriculture, agricultural practices, agricultural technologies, and agricultural schemes and policies. Perceptions of urban agriculture among urban youth have been studied over four

dimensions: urban agriculture, agricultural technologies, agriculture as a profession, and agricultural schemes and policies. Respondents were asked to rank a list of options for getting involved in urban agriculture. The data were collected with the help of the pre designed interview schedule by approaching the youth for personal interview to get more reliable information. Collected data were tabulated and analyzed using mean, percentage analysis and Garrett

ranking.

Results and Discussion

Total 105 respondents being urban young in age 15- 29 years were studied to analyze their knowledge and perception on urban agriculture during the period of January and February 2024. Socioeconomic characters of urban youth in Coimbatore district is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socioeconomic characters of urban youth in Coimbatore district

(N=105)				
Sr. No.	Variables	Particulars	Frequency (N=105)	Per cent (%)
1	Gender	Male	68	65
		Female	37	35
2	Age	Less than 20	18	17
		20-25	74	71
		Greater than 25	13	12
3	Discipline	Agriculture	26	25
		Arts	24	23
		Engineering	24	23
		Law	19	18
		Medicine	12	11
4	Farming Background	Yes	57	54
		No	48	46
5	Practicing urban agriculture	Yes	32	30
		No	73	70

Table 1 shows that of the 105 respondents, 65% of the respondents were male and 35% were female. According to age, where 71% of the respondents were between Age 20 - 25 years, 17% of them were less than 20 years and 12% of them were above 25 years of age. Based on their discipline of the study where 25% students belonged to Agriculture, 23% belonged to Arts, 23% belonged to Engineering, 18% belonged to Law and 11% belonged to Medicine. About 54% of the urban youth in Coimbatore district were from farming background and 46% of the urban youth were not from farming background. It also reveals that only 30% of the urban youth were practising urban agriculture and 70% of the urban youth were not practising urban agriculture currently.

Distribution on respondents based on their level of knowledge in different aspects of urban agriculture is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution on respondents based on their level of knowledge in different aspects of urban agriculture

(N=105)		
Aspects	Total mean score	Rank
General Agriculture	3.13	III
Agricultural practices	3.55	I
Agricultural technologies	3.29	II
Agricultural schemes & policies	3.00	IV

Among four different aspects of knowledge, urban youth had more knowledge towards agricultural practices followed by agricultural technologies, schemes and policies. It shows that the urban youth were more aware of agricultural practices and had least knowledge on agricultural schemes and policies been employed and supported with the findings of Frick *et al.*, (1995) ^[2].

Distribution of respondents based on their overall knowledge on urban agriculture is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on their overall knowledge on urban agriculture

(N=105)		
Knowledge Range	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Low (<10)	14	13
Medium (10 to 16)	74	71
High (>16)	17	16

Overall knowledge of urban youth on urban agriculture were analyzed through percentage analysis and categorized into three levels of knowledge. About 13% of the youth were having low level of knowledge on urban agriculture, 16% of the youth are having high level of knowledge on urban agriculture and most of the youth that is 71% of them were having medium level of knowledge on urban agriculture and the results were supported by Duncan, D. W., & Broyles (2006) ^[1].

Distribution of respondents based on their different dimensions of perception towards urban agriculture is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on their different dimensions of perception towards urban agriculture

(N=105)		
Dimensions	Frequency	Rank
Urban Agriculture	18.49	I
Agricultural technology	18.38	II
Agriculture as a profession	17.62	IV
Agricultural schemes & policies	17.70	III

Among four different dimensions of perception, urban youth had more positive perception towards urban agriculture in general followed by agricultural technologies, schemes and policies and agriculture as profession. It shows that the urban youth have high perception for urban agriculture in general and agriculture as profession had least perception

level among urban youth on urban agriculture. Distribution of respondents based on their overall perception towards urban agriculture is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on their overall perception towards urban agriculture

(N=105)		
Perception score range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (<62)	17	16
Medium (62 to 82)	70	67
High (> 82)	18	17

Overall perception of urban youth towards urban agriculture were analysed through percentage analysis and categorized into three levels of knowledge. About 16% of the youth were having low level of perception on urban agriculture, 17% of the youth were having high level of perception towards urban agriculture and most of the youth about 67%

of them were having medium level of perception towards urban agriculture and the respondents had positive perception on urban agriculture as in findings of Ngahdiman *et al.*, (2017) ^[5].

$$\text{Percentage position} = \frac{100 \times (R_{ij} - 0.50)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} item by j individual,

N_j = Number of items ranked by j^{th} individual

Garrett ranking formula

List of suggestions were identified to involve youth in urban agriculture and ranked by the respondents accordingly using Garrett ranking formula followed by Kalvakolanu *et al.*, (2019) ^[4] and presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Suggestions to involve youth in urban agriculture

S. No	Suggestions	Garrett mean score	Mean Rank
1	Education and awareness	60.26	I
2	Training and hands on experience	56.14	IV
3	Youth leadership and ownership	40.49	VII
4	Technology integration	58.22	II
5	Collaboration and networking	43.77	VI
6	Career opportunities	57.89	III
7	Cultural relevance	37.23	VIII
8	Recognition and rewards	46.01	V

Among the list of suggestions ranked to involve youth in urban agriculture, Education & Awareness was ranked first followed by technology integration, career opportunities and so on. The results represents that urban youth were expecting a proper education and awareness on urban agriculture to get involved and provided the career opportunities in the urban agriculture to the youth will lead to a prosperous growth of the nation.

Conclusion

Most urban youth are more knowledgeable about agricultural practices than agricultural technology policies and schemes, and urban youth had more positive perception on general urban agriculture, whereas urban youth have a lower perception of urban agriculture as a profession. Creating interest and confidence in agriculture among young people is tough, but not impossible. Youth who receive education, professional prospects, technological integration, and financial aid will play an important role in urban agriculture. Youth participation in urban agriculture will be a powerful force for positive change, pushing long-term development at both the local and global levels. By utilizing the innovative thinking, power, and passion of young people, urban agriculture has the ability to convert cities into dynamic, resilient, and equitable communities where everyone has access to good food and prospects for prosperity.

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