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Livelihood assessment of rural youth through Krishi Vigyan Kendra interventions in Kanyakumari district

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Abstract

National agricultural development of today has its focus on rural youth who can gear the rapid socio-economic development progress in the rural areas. Agricultural policy makers in the nation are concerned about the widespread exodus of young rural people from farming to non-farm sectors and metropolitan areas. Agricultural operations in the future are expected to be impacted by this trend, which needs to be checked. A shift toward more economically and intellectually fulfilling agriculture techniques for the younger generation is rapidly approaching. Research on youth participation in creative and sustainable farming methods that contribute to agriculture's profitability must be addressed. The need for self confidence and sense of autonomy has to be boosted up among the rural youth through agro based trainings and capacity building programmes to make agriculture a profitable venture for the rural yout. This paper highlights on the entrepreneurial attributes, relevancy of the trainings and the challenges they face in for their sustained effort in agricultural sector. This study revealed a higher level of entrepreneurial behaviour with respect to entrepreneurial competency and financial competency in allied sector and more of socio business competency in farm+ allied together. The rural youth were convinced by the interventions with respect to the relevancy in enhancing awareness and knowledge (93.94%). All respondents (100%) in allied sector feel that the interventions provided has the capacity to create employment and reduce technological gap.

Keywords: Youth, livelihood, entrepreneurial behaviour, relevancy, challenges

Introduction

The focus of national agricultural development of today is focussed on rural youth who can gear the rapid socio-economic development progress in the rural areas. In India, around 70% of people under 35 reside in rural areas. The Government of India officially defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 29 years based on the recommendation of National Youth Policy, 2014. The definition of Government of India is the most widely accepted age limit in Indian context but varies depending on the programme being implemented. Approximately 550 million young people, including adolescents, live in the nation (Census Report, 2011). That represents roughly 19.1% of India's overall population. The average age in China and the United States of America was expected to be 37 years old in 2020, whereas the average age in India was just 29 years old. Through the channeling of youth's creative impulses, these demographic variances can be leveraged to elevate Indian agriculture to new heights. Many socioeconomic issues, including the profitability of agricultural endeavors, may be to blame for the current difficulty in keeping young people in the agricultural field. Policymakers in the country's agriculture sector are concerned about the large-scale movement of young people from rural areas to metropolitan areas and non-farm sectors. Research on youth participation in creative and sustainable farming methods that contribute to the profitability of agriculture must be conducted. The study conducted by Joshi and Kashyap (2020) [10] on awareness of rural youth on agri related livelihood options revealed that out of the total eighty-five livelihood options related to agriculture and allied sectors provided to them, awareness created among the rural youth was found to be low on 43 options, medium in the 18 areas and high in 24 areas. The reason found out was that they were being traditional cultivator for a long period in the area. The findings of a study conducted in Ghana by Amoako (2019) [3] highlighted that the skill development programmes positively influenced rural youth empowerment. Participants reported increased self-confidence and a sense of autonomy after completing the training. The acquisition of practical skills not only improved their employability but also imparted a sense of purpose and ambition among the youth. According to a study by Molla Mekonnen Alemu (2016) [9], the main factors that reduced the potential for agribusiness to be less appealing and profitable for young people were inadequate agricultural technology transfer, the connection between agribusiness and research, the management of market

information, inadequate infrastructure, capacity building and agribusiness technical assistance, and local and regional market opportunities. According to Ramya *et al*. (2017)'s [11] step-wise regression analysis, the primary variables that explained the livelihood security of tribal farmers were fatalism, risk orientation, family size, annual income, and exposure to the media. It was discovered that these five factors worked together to support tribal farmers' livelihood security. This paper makes an attempt to assess the livelihood of rural youth through interventions in agriculture and allied activities by Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Kanyakumari district.

Materials and Methods

Expose factor research design was followed in this research. The study team conducted a thorough examination of the body of literature, including reports and research publications. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to solicit the assessment of livelihoods and its potentials in creating employment opportunities for the youth. Discussion with rural youth who have undergone trainings at KVK Kanyakumari were contacted to capture their views and data for assessment of their livelihoods. They form the respondents of the study. This ex-post-facto study has 82 respondents in total. The Sampling procedure followed is purposive sampling as given below

Agriculture and Value Addition in Banana and coconut	40 Beneficiaries
Allied enterprises	42 Beneficiaries
Total	82 respondents

A well-structured interview schedule developed and data collected on livelihood enhancement, entrepreneurial behaviour and the relevancy of the interventions provided. Training needs of rural youth were also collected Tabulated and analysed. Mean score for each of the factors was also worked out individually. Data was analyzed using frequency, mean and percentages and ranks assigned on the basis of mean score.

Results and Discussion

The socio-economic background of youth may influence their decisions as well as their overall involvement in enterprising activities. In Indian scenario gender of an individual can influence the type and quality of work carried out by the individual due to the other responsibilities held by them. It was found that about majority of respondents involved in farming and allied activities was female (62.5%) and majority were male (59.5%) in allied activities alone. The results obtained showed that there are more females involved in the farming and allied sectors integrating and sharing the work force with more contribution than males in farm related work and allied work. This is most likely to be due to the fact that women are capable of doing more tedious work which is usually associated with farming and livestock than the males. In allied sector more involvement was seen in male. Similar educational aspirations and eventually in educational levels was observed irrespective of the gender. Graduation was observed in 50% of the rural youths in farming and allied sector and 66.7% involved in allied activities alone. Increase in unemployment may be the reason for youth showing involvement in allied activities which gives quick remunerations rather than from farm activities which takes a longer duration.

Table 1: Socio-economic background of Youth N=82

Particulars	Farm and Allied		Allied	
Age				
Below 25	4	10.0	4	9.5
25-35	21	52.5	20	47.6
Above 35	15	37.5	18	42.9
Gender				
Male	15	37.5	25	59.5
Female	25	62.5	17	40.5
Education				
High School and below	3	7.5	4	9.5
Higher Secondary	8	20	5	11.9
Diploma	9	22.5	5	11.9
Graduation and above	20	50	28	66.7
Information Need				
Innovative new products/varieties	28	93.3	32	97.0
Primary Processing Technology	12	40.0	28	84.8
Secondary processing	5	16.7	21	63.6
Standards	16	53.3	25	75.8
Quality control	9	30.0	24	72.7
By product utilization	14	46.7	27	81.8
Credit related information	22	73.3	31	93.9
Information sources				
Personal localite	34	85	40	95.2
Personal cosmopolite	23	57.5	38	90.5
Mass media	31	77.5	41	97.6
Social Media	32	80	39	92.9
SMS	11	27.5	9	21.4

Age
Youth respondents included in the study were aged between 18 and 45 years. Results showed that 52.5% were aged below 35 years, while 37.5% were aged above 35 in farming combined with allied sector. In allied sector alone an uniformity of age above 40 was observed.

Gender
Examining how gender is represented among young people in the study was important. More than half (62.5%) of the respondents in the farming and allied sectors were female, compared to 40.5% in the allied sector alone. This low number of male youth attributed to their involvement in farm related activities and more on allied activities.

Education
In terms of formal schooling, most of the respondents have completed graduation. Only 7.5 to 9.5 percent of respondents had low level of education in both the the types of farming.

Information Need
The most needed information is on Innovative new products or varieties. This is followed by primary processing technology and product standards. Credit related information is also required for the youth to initiate and activity after getting trained in various aspects.

Information Sources
The study's findings showed that Personal localite, personal channel and mass media were the main sources from where the youth used to obtain information. Most of the youth involved in allied activities utilized social media (92.9%) along with mass media (97.6%) and personal localite channels for getting information.

Entrepreneurial Attributes
The impact of KVK interventions on the employability and entrepreneurship prospects of rural youth in Kanyakumari district has been a subject of interest and research. Initiatives of KVK as trainings for youth, Entrepreneurial development programmes, On and Off campus trainings for youth have aimed to empower them with relevant skills and knowledge to improve their employability and entrepreneurial capabilities. The different attributes of Entrepreneurship have been studied and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of rural youth based on Entrepreneurial Attributes N=82

Particulars	Farm	%	Allied	%
Entrepreneurial Competency				
To create enterprise	29	72.50	42	100.00
To sell Products	22	55.00	35	83.33
To design products/services	15	37.50	17	40.48
To plan and organise production/ services	28	70.00	14	33.33
To set price	27	67.50	15	35.71
To analyse Characteristics of products	28	70.00	17	40.48
Socio Business Competency				
To analyze customer preference	29	72.5	26	61.9
To organize workers according to work	17	42.5	27	64.3
To choose appropriate management model for the enterprise	21	52.5	7	16.7
To design organogram	20	50	8	19.0
To start enterprise and carry out activities	25	62.5	28	66.7
Financial Competency				
Able to explain account details	5	12.5	26	61.9
Able to do balance sheet analysis	7	17.5	26	61.9
Able to calculate cost profit and revenue	20	50	40	95.2

Skill training programs have shown to significantly improve the employability of rural youth in Kanyakumari district. The acquisition of new skills and competencies enhances their chances of securing formal employment, leading to better livelihoods and economic empowerment. A study conducted in Assam showed that skill training programs contributed to higher employment rates and improved job placements among rural youth (Singh & Kalita, 2019) [1]. The respondents of the study revealed a higher level of entrepreneurial behaviour with respect to entrepreneurial competency and financial competency in allied sector and more of socio business competency in farm+ allied together.

Entrepreneurial Attributes	Farm and Allied	Allied
Entrepreneurial Competency Index	0.62	0.69
Socio Business Competency Index	0.55	0.40
Financial Competency Index	0.27	0.77

Relevancy of interventions
Krishi Vigyan Kendras are the public sector agriculture extension agencies at district level which deal with dissemination of need based technologies and latest agricultural technologies to farmers through awareness programmes, capacity building programmes On Farm Trials (OFTs), Front Line Demonstrations (FLDs) and skill trainings. Interventions provided to the rural youth falls in line with the information need and resources available in the locality. The relevancy of the interventions provided to youth were ranked in both the aspects. The rural youth were convinced by the interventions with respect to the relevancy in enhancing awareness and knowledge (93.94%). All respondents (100%) in allied sector feel that the interventions provided has the capacity to create employment and reduce technological gap. In farming and allied activities the table shows less relevancy in reducing technological gap (66.67%) and less relevant to increase adoption (50%) when compared to allied sector.

Table 3: Ranking by means of relevancy of intervention

Relevancy of interventions	Farming + allied	Rank	Allied	Rank
Relevant to enhance awareness and Knowledge	96.67	I	93.94	III
Create employment	83.33	**II**	100.00	I
Relevant to the local production system	76.67	III	87.88	IV
Relevant to increase production and income	70.00	IV	84.85	V
Reduces Technological gap	66.67	V	96.97	II
Relevant to increase adoption	50.00	VI	57.58	VI

Comparison between farm and allied sector and allied sector alone

A comparison was made to find out level of involvement of the youth and the magnitude of various attributes that are involved in farm and allied sector and allied sector alone. This will help to develop a strategical framework for improving sectoral involvement of youth.

Table 4: Comparison between farm and allied sector and allied sector alone

S. No	Particulars	Farm and Allied Activities	Allied Activities
1	Average age of the youth involved in Farm and Allied activities	33.7 years	35
2	Female youth involve in Agriculture and allied activities	62.5%	40.5%
3	Average land holding	0.84acres	1.32 ac
4	Average family members are involving in farm activities	1-2	1-3
5	Increase in cultivated area after training by KVK	0.66	No change
6	Increase in income after intervention by KVK	28.65%	45.8%
7	Information source regarding farm and allied activities	3-4 sources of	3-4
8	Increase in Entrepreneurial Behaviour	22.17%	68.82%
9	Employment generation:	(40%)	26
	100-200 man days (8hrs/day)	25	(27.5%)
	50-100 man days	20	22.5
	More than 200 man days	15	25

A comparison showed that in Farm and Allied activities 62.5% was female and in allied sector it was 40.5%. The average age of the youth involved in Farm and Allied activities 33.7 and 35 for allied activities. The average land holding was 0.84acres and 1.32 ac respectively. The increase in income after intervention by KVK was 28.65% and 45.8%. Increase in Entrepreneurial Behaviour was highest for allied activities (68.82%). A majority of 40% showed employment generation of 100-200 man days in Agriculture and value addition but it was 50-100 man days in allied activities which is showed a majority of 27.5% and 17.5% showed more than 200 man days of employment.

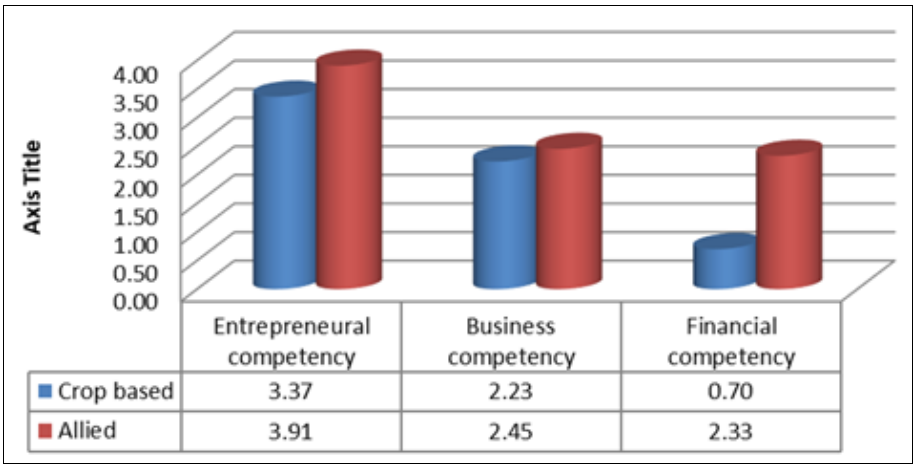
Constraints faced by rural youth

Unprecedented levels of rural-urban migration are being caused by young people in rural areas choosing not to pursue farming in favor of nonexistent white-collar employment in the city, despite the agricultural sector's rapidly expanding potential. To spark our generation's enthusiasm in agricultural production, it is challenging for rural youth to realize their full potential in this field. A list of the main obstacles that young people in the study region had to overcome is provided below.

Table 5: Constraints faced by rural youth

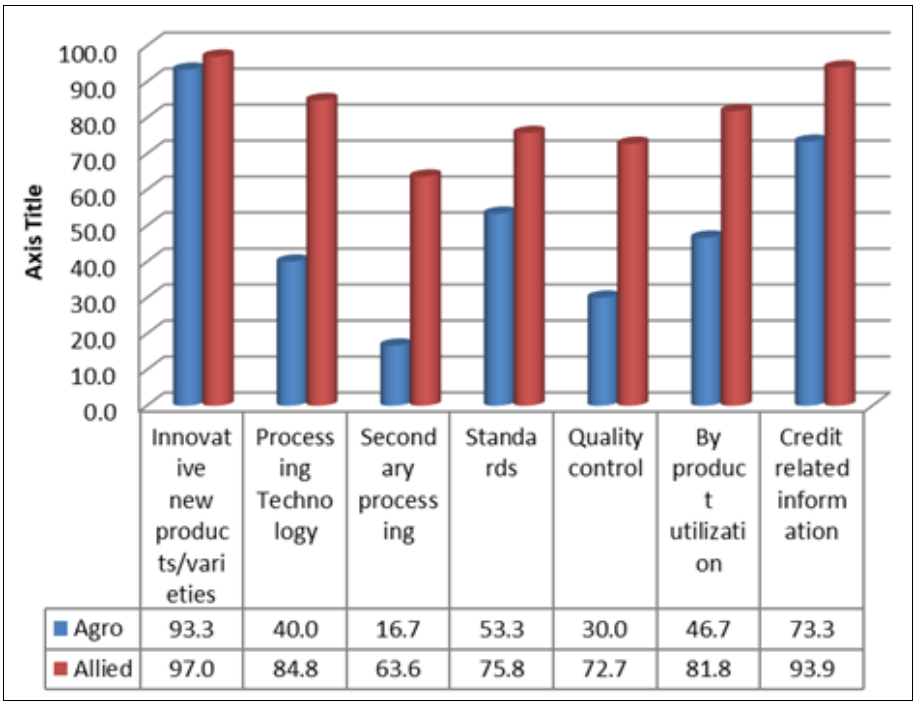
Constraints identified	Farm and allied activities		Allied alone	
	No	%	No	%
Financial Constraint	24	60	37	88.1
Marketing constraint	14	35	24	57.1
Technological Constraint	14	33.3	21	52.5
Policy related Constraints	7	17.5	3	7.1
Situational Constraint	2	5	6	14.3
Social Constraint	2	5	3	7.1
Others	16	40	9	21.4

Financial constraints are the main obstacle that rural youth face in their potential to be involved in various activities and to sustain them; these are followed by marketing and technological constraints. The identified constraints prevent the youth from continuing their involvement in agriculture and related activities.



	Entrepreneural competency	Business competency	Financial competency
Crop based	3.37	2.23	0.70
Allied	3.91	2.45	2.33

Fig 1: Entrepreneurial attributes



	Innovative new products/varieties	Processing Technology	Secondary processing	Standards	Quality control	By product utilization	Credit related information
Agro	93.3	40.0	16.7	53.3	30.0	46.7	73.3
Allied	97.0	84.8	63.6	75.8	72.7	81.8	93.9

Fig 2: Information need

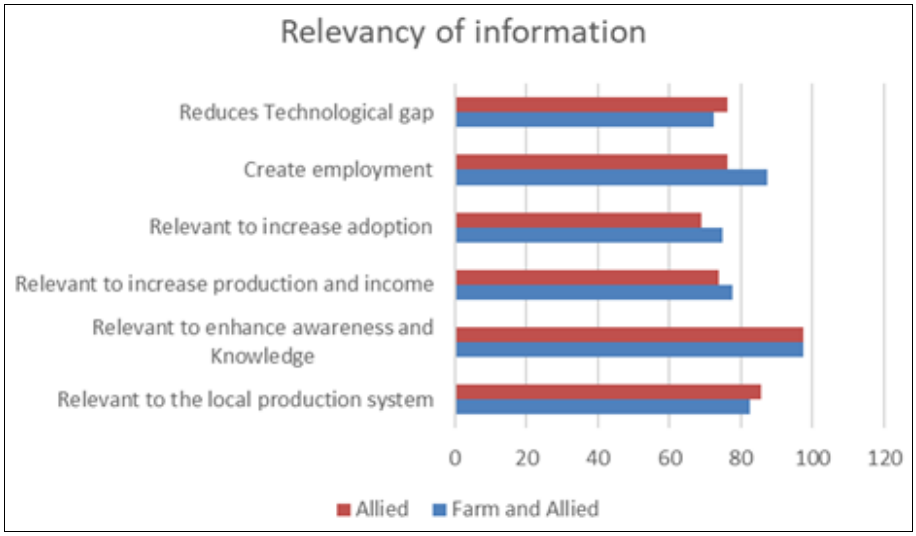


Fig 3: Relevancy of information

Conclusion

This study highlights on the various socio economic background of rural youth who have undergone trainings at KVK. An attempt has been made to compare the various aspects that that contribute to the entrepreneurial behaviour of the rural youth with respect to farm oriented integrated activities and allied activities alone. The respondents of the study revealed a higher level of entrepreneurial behaviour with respect to entrepreneurial competency and financial competency in allied sector and more of socio business competency in farm and integrated sector. It has been identified that financial constraint in the major challenge faced by the rural youth in potential involvement in various activities and to sustain them. On the basis of the findings it has been suggested for involving more youth through skill trainings to increase their efficiency and better understanding of scientific ways to optimise resource efficiency maximum output.

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