

Youth Potentials Build the Linkage between Present and Future of Farming in India

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Abstract

The progress and prosperity of a nation depends largely on the quality of human resource the country possesses. The present youth are the trend setters of future farming. India is the second most populous country in the world, but with an average age of 29, it has one of the youngest populations globally. As this vast resource of young citizens enters the workforce, it could create a 'demographic dividend'. A demographic dividend is defined by the United Nations Population Fund as economic growth resulting from a shift in a population's age structure, mainly when the working-age population is larger than the number of dependents. India is home to a fifth of the world's youth demographic dividend and this population advantage could play a critical role in achieving the nation's ambitious target to become a US\$ 5 trillion economy. During last one decade, rural India witnessed the continuous migration of rural youth to urban areas. This situation is very serious and alarming and the migration of rural youth created a vacuum in the villages. It has been observed and expressed by many enlightened persons that villages are becoming old age homes draining away the talented farm youth to stay away from farming in India. There are more than 608 million family farms around the world, occupying between 70 and 80 percent of the world's farmland and producing around 80 percent of the world's food in value terms. In the ancient India every family in each village was a single unit of production. This ancient family occupation has survived over the ages through a process of transfer from father to son,

generation to generation. But in recent times, with an exceptional externalization of farming and under pervasive influence of liberalization, privatization and globalization, this process of transfer of occupational knowledge within the community is seriously dislocated. Most of the younger generation sees very little to cherish in rural life. Thus rural youth, in their formative years, seem to find their role models elsewhere. In fact, the urban life, so visible now-a-days, appears to attract them in many ways. As a result, in rural society, many things that were regarded as most valuable in Indian social life seem to have suddenly become out dated. It is highly desirable that this kind of human resource must be retained in farming by creating rural and urban avenues favorable for agriculture growth and development. The present paper highlights the opinion in three major headings namely untapped youth potentials, current situation of farming and youth in India and future of farming and youth in India.

Keywords: Future of farming, farming in the hands of young generations, youth potentials, young farmers, skilled youth.

Introduction:

Untapped Youth Potentials

The potentials of youth must be identified and to be tapped in order to direct them towards the responsibility of carrying forward the future of Indian farming. The untapped youth potentials are operationally defined as follows:

I. Young farmers' teams

The young farmers' can be formed into teams and these teams must be assigned to some internship programmes related to advanced farming technologies viz., farm mechanization, application of drone technologies, adopting hydroponics and vertical gardening which are suitable to their locations.

II. Skilled but unemployed youth

Identify skilled but unemployed youth and train them properly to take up innovative farming methods and develop entrepreneurial skills to take up small scale and medium enterprises based on agriculture and allied sectors.

III. Optimistic attitude



The government can start National Young farmers force (NYFF) and recruit the youngsters with optimistic attitude towards farming likewise in NCC or NSS. The NYFF can work in the farm holdings of various state and central government institutions.

IV. Inclination towards farming

Day to day the average farm size holding is declined thus making the young farmers unable to do farming even though they are inclined towards the farming. Such youth potential can be identified.

V. Skill set of young farmers

The young farmers are enabled with multiple skill set like digital skills, soft skills, behavioral skills, managerial skills which must be tapped and to be utilized for upgrading farming community.

VI. Migration into farming

Now-a-days a small cohort of young professionals working in other sectors or other fields is migrating into farming occupation. Analyze and encourage them continue in the farming by providing handholding support to their innovative ideas in farming technologies.

VII. Agribusiness Inclination

The wings of agriclinincs and agribusiness centers must be spread to large extent in order to meet the agribusiness inclination of potential young agripneurship.

VIII. Transformed mindset

This covid-19 pandemic led to some psychological, social, economical, technical changes. During this hard time only farming occupation sustained despite of all external hindrances. This sort of mind set must be tapped to bridge the gap between present and future of Indian farming situation.

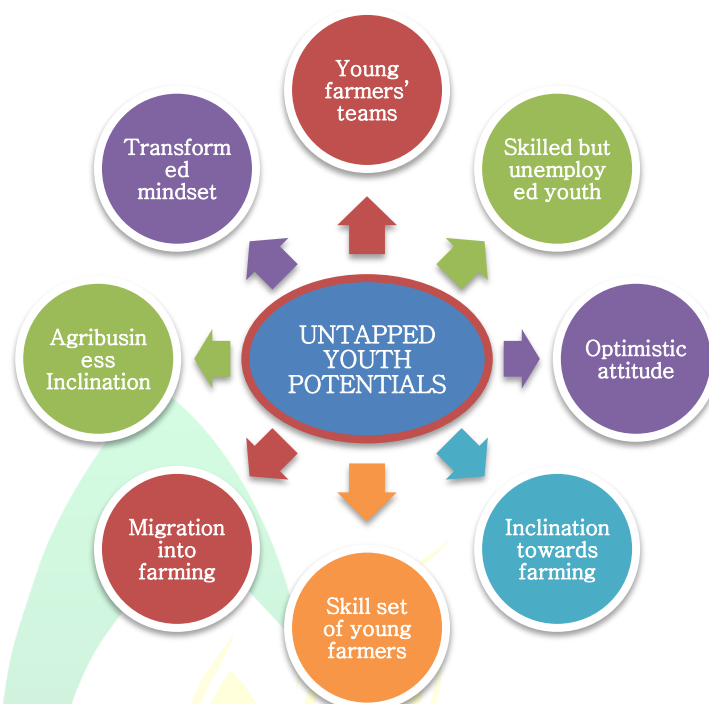


Figure: I. Untapped Youth Potentials

Current Situation of Farming and Youth in India

I. Falling average size of farm holdings

According to Agri-Census 2011

- a) There is sharp decline in the average size of farm holdings in India. Less than 1.5 ha
- b) 67.10% of Indian farmers are marginal farmers (<1 ha)
- c) Kharif 2015-16 average profit from farming is low and falling
- d) Income growth percentage between 2003-2013 is only 38% for marginal farmers (0.41-1ha land) whereas it is 102% for large farmers (>10 ha).

II. Share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP)

According to the Economic Survey 2020-2021, the contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product (GDP) has reached almost 20 per cent for the first time in the last 17 years, making it the bright spot in GDP performance. The resilience of the farming community in the face of adversities made agriculture the only sector to have clocked a positive growth of 3.4 per cent at constant prices in 2020-21, when other sectors slid. The share of agriculture in GDP increased to 20 per cent in 2020-21 from 17.8 per cent in 2019-20.

II. Indian age breakup

In 2021, about 25.78 percent of the Indian population fell into the 0-14 year category, 67.45 percent into the 15-64 age group and 6.78 percent were over 65 years of age. The government of India can take up special development programmes and design farm policies to attract the young cohort into farming.

III. Youth unemployment rate

If we observe youth unemployment rate is increasing in different global nations. In 2018 about 21% of global youth were neither in employment nor in education and training. In 2018 more than 30 % of Indians who are in the age group of 15-29 years were neither in employment, education nor having any training. Globally in 2020, more than one in five (22.4 per cent) young people aged 15–24 are neither in employment, education or training (NEET). Hence this cohort of youth must be identified, trained properly and directed towards farming.

IV. National Youth policy

NYP 2003 and 2014 have concentrated on overall development of youth in all aspects and contributed to development of nation but there is little focus on youth in farming or young farmers' development. Hence the involvement of youth in policy decision making must be encouraged.

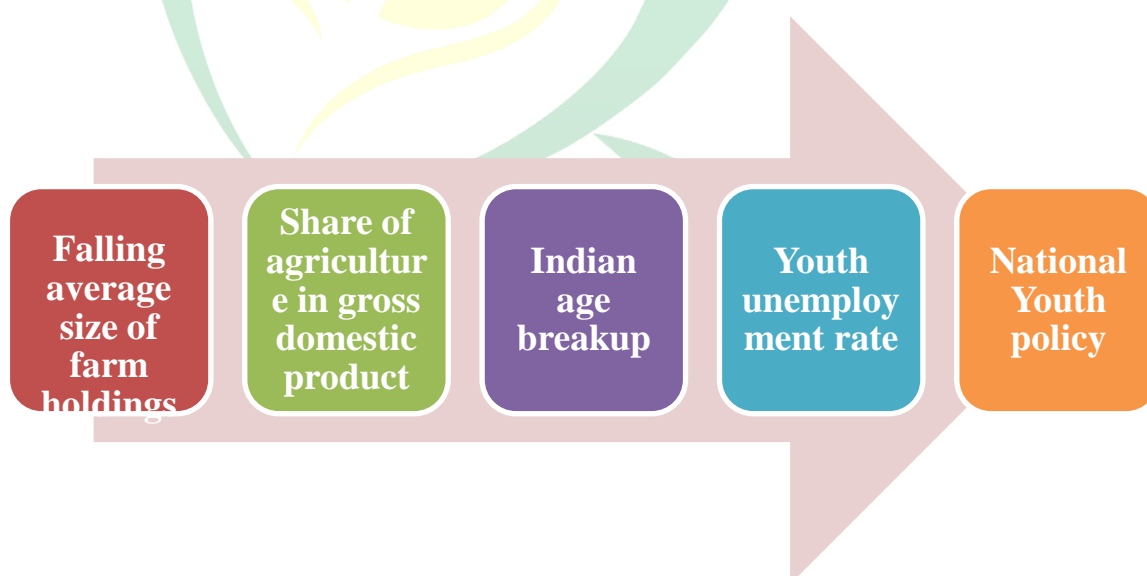


Figure: II. Current Situation of Farming and Youth in India

Future of Farming and Youth in India

I. Agriculture start up

www.justagriculture.in

As part of make in India start ups are prioritized. Hence agriculture startups related to farming which can employ young farmers must be given vast popularity and encouraged along with institutional support.

II. Innovative farming

In the coming decades only innovative farming can sustain. Innovative and profit making practices can attract the young farmers to come into farming as profession.

III. Digital Farming

A lot of research is going on digital farming. The young farmers of India must be enabled to meet the requirements of digital farming.

IV. Recognition to young farm families

Every human being lives on earth with motto to satisfy his and his family's basic needs. As human being is a social animal, he expects to live along with members in society with due recognition for his occupation. But there is no recognition or fame for those who do farming and those who are contributing to feed the nation. Hence there is a dire need to recognize the efforts of farm families and respect them in order to attract the youth towards farming.

V. Reservation system to young farm families

Most of the farmers earn nominal annual income. On an average 75 % of their income is spent towards their children's education and family health. Hence a new reservation system for educating their children can be given a thought in order to give a ray of hope for their future.

VI. Youth policy reforms

Impart farming as a compulsory course from primary school onwards for all streams of education to all the students universally, prioritize the young farmer's needs. Enable farming skills of youth, resource allocation and accessing must be stream lined. Along with attracting and retaining youth in farming they must be assured with standard income facilities.

Conclusion:

The untapped youth potentials must be studied comprehensively on a large scale and these potentials must be enhanced in order to achieve the goal of bridging the gap between the present and future of Indian farming. The research studies can be done on the above

mentioned areas that contribute to desirable changes in youth policy making in relation with the future farming situation.

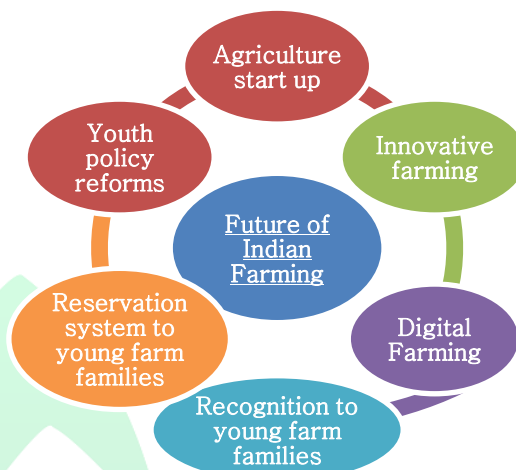


Figure: III. Future of Indian Farming

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Demographic dividend

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