

Relationship between Aspirations and Personal, Psychological and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Rural Youth in India

Dr. G. Vidyavathi¹, Dr. Y. Sridevi², Dr. M. Vasantha Rao³, Devarapalli Rayappa⁴,
Dr. K. Venkata Padma⁵

^{1,2}Asst.Professor, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (I.A.S.E), Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

³Faculty, Dept. of Education, Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Krishna Dt. A.P. India.

⁴Research Scholar, Dept. of Education, Anurag University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

⁵Asst Professor, Management Studies, Aditya University, Surampalem, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

Youth have the drive, optimism, and vision to get things done and make a positive difference in the realm of rural development. In context of India, almost two-thirds of the country's population is under the age of 35. According to the 2023 Census, the India's youth population, including adolescents, is around 550 million. This pool of young people will play a critical role in determining the country's fate. The rise in the youth population has made India the world's youngest country and one of the top in terms of human resource. It is critical to capitalize on this demographic dividend and channel the youth's potential toward country's development. After finishing their studies, rural youth in developing countries refuses to return to their villages to make an effective contribution to the development of rural areas and communities where they live, but instead migrate to urban areas. This is due to a variety of obstacles such as a lack of income and employment, poor infrastructure, limited opportunities for further professional growth, an impaired social life, an impoverished and undeveloped infrastructure. However, confronting and resolving these issues necessitates the commitment, support, and enthusiasm of youth to make a contribution with full potential to rural development. Engaging young people in rural development should be one of the primary goals of rural development policies, and rural development strategies should be based on this goal.

"Attitude is the degree of the positive or negative effect associated with some psychological object".

Keywords: Development, Nation, Progress, Psychological, Rural, Socio-Economic, Youth

INTRODUCTION

Psychological object means any symbol, phrase, slogan, idea, person and institution towards which people can differ with respect to positive or negative effect. Development on the other hand can be defined as the progress made by a nation to overcome its social, political and economic problems in order to improve the quality of life of the people through the effective mobilization of its resources. As far as rural development and agricultural development are concerned, youth constitute the driving force; their attitude is cultivated in a very way that they are productive, especially when the goal is to bring about rural development. The primary reason behind this is that youth possesses a variety of attributes that, when fostered and nourished, can be highly beneficial to agricultural and rural development.

The rural population's living standard is determined by several factors such as food and health, safety, education, homes and protection. Agriculture is significantly vital, and it is assumed to be incredibly significant for people in rural areas. Their active participation in agriculture is possible only if they have requisite skills, information and a positive attitude towards agriculture. According to Exposure National Youth Policy Draft favorable attitude is one of the important prerequisites for the willingness to participate in agriculture and choosing agriculture as a career and participation of young people and interventions on behalf of the community will integrate and bond youth with their communities. Youth must be involved in monitoring programmes at the village / Panchayat level to improve quality and reduce misuse and corruption. Youth populations are associated in the use of recommended farming techniques and systems, as well as research activities to find alternate methods and ideas that may benefit rural livelihoods.

Participation of Rural Youth in Developmental Activity

The active participation of rural youth in developmental activity is highly dependent on their frame of mind, opinion and their willingness to bring prosperity and development in their village. Radhakrishnan and Arunachalam suggested

and reported that understanding youth's attitude is an important perspective and currently, state and central governments are initiating a variety of rural development activities through various schemes in order to improve rural conditions. With this in mind, this study was carried out to investigate the attitude of rural youth and the relationship between personal, psychological, and social economic characteristics of youths with their attitude towards rural development activities, which in turn make sure the development of the rural areas as well as community. This study is useful to policymakers to make plan and implement programmes in rural areas more effectively.

It could be concluded that majority of the youth (55.83 %) had favorable attitude towards rural development activities. The variables like education, family type, annual income, source of information, achievement motivation, extension contact and social participation were found to be significantly correlated with rural youth attitude for rural development activities. Rural development in India is extremely crucial for the country's overall progress. Young people are equip with skills and competencies they work hard and are avid to accomplish something, involvement of youth can bring improvement in rural communities in different areas to bring sustainable rural development .Youth participation in rural developmental projects would therefore end up making a very empirical contribution to socio - economic development of rural areas , increase economic opportunities at the village level, and improve the living condition of rural communities as by bringing overall prosperity and welfare in rural areas.

Youth stands for Aspirations

Among human resources of any nation, the vital chunk happens to be its youth. India has a power of youth. Youth stands for aspirations. Youth have been playing quite a significant role in almost every country of the world as they possess the zeal and vigour necessary to create opportunities for national development (Bhanu, 2006). Youth stand for aspirations. In the present study the post graduate students do have some aspirations. They have the desire to know, explore and experiment. They have the ability to learn and enrich their knowledge. These aspirations may be influenced by some academic, personal, socio-psychological variables. There are various factors which may determine level of aspirations and educational achievements. Poor academic performance leads to lack of fruitful aspirations and subsequently results in loss of confidence of the incumbent. The personal characteristics and the family background of the students may greatly influence their aspirations and educational achievements.

Youth are the power

The overall development of a country depends on their regimented, active and skilled youth power. Youth as a concept has been generally defined all over the world as a group of human being who have reached at the end of puberty but have not yet acquired the full rights and duties of adult life. Therefore in general, youths are considered as those between the age group of 18 to 35 years According to the initial figures of the 2011 census, the youth population in the country including adolescents is around 550 million. India had a total youth population of 460 millions that is 40.00 per cent of the total population. Out of this population, about 70.00 per cent were rural youth and the remaining 30.00 per cent were urban youth. Aspirations represent individuals reflection of his / her several socio psychological phenomena like aspiration, attitude, behaviour, beliefs and traditions an aspiration is one of these important factors, which is directly involved in the decision making of a person never see these aspiration directly but we know them seem to work for. The level of aspiration must be expanded to include the variety of tendencies first it is an individual conception of his future prospects. This he protect himself against felling or failure. In, this sense, level of aspiration is affected by future. Individual performance will be affected by a desire to do well. In this sense aspiration is a form of self-development.

Youth are the most Potent Segment

Youth are the most potent segment of the population of a country. The youth of today are the hopes of tomorrow. They are the real spirit for future agriculture of the country. Forces that shape and influence youth today will be the forces that dominate our country tomorrow. Youth look not only for a livelihood, but for dignity and for purpose and meaning in their lives. The socio-economic development and prosperity of rural areas depends, to a considerable extent, on the type of youth living in rural areas, because the rural youth have abilities to orient themselves to go along the main stream of the development process

In this context, the present investigation is carried out with the following specific objectives:

1. To know the personal and socio-economic profile of rural youths
2. To study the aspirations of rural youth in agriculture
3. To study the relationship between personal and socio-economic characteristics of rural youth with their aspirations

Conceptualizing Youth and their Aspirations

Conceptualizing youth and their aspirations through a gender lens Definitions of the 'youth' vary across disciplines, countries, and organizations. By and large, policy discourse in developing countries treats youth as a transition between childhood and adulthood, during which individuals experience sexual maturation and increasing socioeconomic

independence (World Bank 2006; Benell 2007). Yet, authors have problematized the idea of youth transitions, particularly in situations of poverty, where school and work, dependency and provision, criss-cross and manifest themselves in a non-linear fashion (Jeffrey and McDowell 2004; Sommers 2012; Morrow 2013). Others have rebuked the notion of a symmetry between biological and social development processes (Wyn and White 1997; Morrow 2013). So too has the depiction of youth as 'in waiting' to become adults been countered by those arguing that youth are also members of society and in a state of being, not merely becoming (Leavy and Smith 2010; White 2012).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Still, 'youth' are commonly treated as an undifferentiated group with essential, static qualities and with little agency (Wyn and White 1997). Accordingly, current approaches to addressing the 'youth in agriculture problem' focus on including more 'youth' in farming, much like the 'women in development' approach did with 'women' in the 1980s and 1990s (and, some argue, still does (Chant and Gutmann 2002)). These critiques have urged a reconceptualization of the youth as a social construction, and a relational concept "which offers an approach to understanding the social meaning of growing up that can take account of the diverse ways in which young people are constructed through social institutions, and the ways in which they negotiate their transitions" (Wyn and White 1997, p.13- 4). This approach situates young people's actions and ideas in relation to other social actors, and shifts the focus from young people as a homogeneous group to the power dynamics that structure intra- and inter-generational relations. Although still seldom realized, such an undertaking can allow other factors of social differentiation, such as gender, education or socio-economic status, to come to the fore in their intersection with age as structuring young people's positions in society (Langevang and Gough 2012; Achambault 2014). Indeed, as Hansen et al. (2008), and Langevang and Gough (2012, p. 243) remind us, youth is "clearly a gendered concept, with some young women experiencing youth only as a brief interlude between puberty and motherhood."

If the youth are a differentiated group, so too are their experiences, ideas, and aspirations. These aspirations are shaped by the complex interplay of factors across local, regional and even global scales. Two predominant streams of thought posit that aspirations: 1) are hopes and dreams, which may be untethered from realistic outlooks, or 2) are linked with expectations and realistic achievements (Leavy and Smith 2010). In the latter perspective, aspirations represent the "ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals" (Quaglia and Cobb 1996, p. 130). The formation of aspirations involves dynamic processes of circumscription, by which one establishes the range of acceptable alternatives, and compromise, by which one identifies which of those alternatives is realistic given one's self-concept (i.e. awareness of one's own characteristics and abilities) (Gottfredson 1981; Armstrong and Crombie 2000). Aspirations are embedded within an opportunity space that shapes occupational opportunities and their desirability based on prevailing institutions; i.e. the formal and informal rules, codes of conduct, and norms that define what is appropriate action, and structure human interactions (North 1991; Bruton et al. 2010).

Drawing on earlier works of Sumberg and colleagues, Sumberg and Okali (2013, p. 262) define the opportunity space within which aspirations are formed as "the spatial and temporal distribution of the universe of more or less viable [work] options that a young person may exploit as she/he attempts to establish an independent life." They distinguish between the near and distant opportunity space. The 'near' opportunity space includes placespecific socio-economic characteristics, such as local resources and access to markets, that allow certain economic activities to take place in the given locale. It also includes socio-relational factors, such as norms and relations across socially differentiated groups, that place value on particular activities over others, and influence the meanings associated with different occupations, for specific genders, in specific contexts (see also Langevang and Gough 2012). The 'distant' opportunity space exists beyond the local, and young people may exploit it through migration at different points of their life. Aspirations are not static, but may shift as changes in the opportunity space redefine what is possible and desirable in the present and future (Mwara 2017). Bourdieu's (1990) notions of doxa and habitus, combined, provide further analytical space for understanding how aspirations are formed through subjective and inter-subjective processes.

Drawing on Bourdieu, Zipin et al. (2015) describe how one's culture, society, community, and family transmit values, provide role models, and impose rewards or sanctions for following or deviating from certain accepted pathways. Doxic aspirations are formed by dominant perceptions about worthy futures, propagated by current-day populist ideologies that circulate via the media and other channels in various areas of everyday life until they are taken for granted, or represent commonsense (doxa).

Habituated aspirations are a function of one's self-concept and embodied dispositions (personal history and conditions), which are linked to family characteristics, socio-economic position, and community history (habitus) (Bourdieu 1990). These dispositions offer a sense of situated possibility, or of one's probable futures. Educational attainment influences one's self-concept and aspirations because it affects perceived and actual opportunities. Moreover, "notions of happiness, quality of life, lifestyle and satisfaction as ultimate life goals ... impact on educational aspirations and occupational choice" (Leavy and Smith 2010, p. 5).

CONCLUSION

Young people's personal ideas about what constitutes socially acceptable and desirable occupations not only reflect, but also contribute to (re)defining the opportunity space. Hence, aspirations entail human agency to imagine, desire, and pursue alternative futures; a process which may necessitate capacitation to move beyond prevailing social tendencies (Zipin et al. 2015). Gender shapes aspirations due to its influence on the "formation of self concepts and on perceptions of occupational opportunity space and status" (Leavy and Smith 2010, p. 9). Individuals are less likely to compromise on elements (such as norms) assimilated earlier in their development cycle (Gottfredson 1981). Gender norms, or common beliefs about how women and men should be and act at a given time and place, which are internalized at an early developmental stage, thus critically influence young women's and men's educational and occupational aspirations (Armstrong and Crombie 2000; Overå 2007). It is from this vantage point that we examine the differentiated aspirations of young rural women and men in our study sites, and their relation to agriculture.

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