



Behavioural Attitude of Rural Youth and their Involvement in Agriculture: A Geographical Study of Morigaon District, Assam

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Article History: Received: 12/10/2022

Revised: 29/11/2022

Accepted: 05/12/2022

Abstract

Agriculture is the economic base of the Morigaon district. However, the older generation, which makes up one-third of the labour force, still works in agriculture. Most of the youth choose other occupations rather than farming as a career. As a result, the agricultural sector is experiencing a shortage of labour. Even highly educated youth prefer alternative careers to farming. In the current study, an effort has been made to focus on the behavioural attitude of youths and their involvement in agriculture in Morigaon district of Assam. Through an interview schedule, data from 120 rural youth was collected. The study revealed that the use of modern technologies in agriculture is usually profitable, which could motivate youths to pursue careers in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, it has been found that the attitude of rural youth and their involvement in agriculture is significantly influenced by age, the occupation of the head of the family, and the size of the landholding.

Keywords: Agriculture, occupations, farming, alternative careers, livelihood.

DOI: 10.48047/ecb/2022.11.12.87

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the basis of the economic structure of Morigaon district, where 75.20 percent of the total population is directly engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. With a 92.34 percent (2011) rural population, Morigaon district is not self-sufficient in food production. The total population of Morigaon district is 9,57,423 as per the 2011 census report (the projected population in the district is 11.67 lakh in 2022). The majority of the cultivators and farmers in the district are of the older generation. The older generation may sometimes not accept modern agriculture. Therefore, agricultural production in the district is, to some extent, slower. It is needed to replace the

older generation in order to enhance and strengthen future agriculture in the district. But the active participation of youth in agriculture is only possible if they have a positive attitude towards agriculture, which can be used as a means of livelihood.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are

- i) To analysed the socioeconomic characteristics of the youth in the study region.
- ii) To evaluate the attitude of youth and their involvement in agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

The samples were collected from four main social groups living in different

villages in the district. The 'Location Quotient Method' is used to examine the concentration of various social groups in the district. The core concentration mouzas of these four social groups were selected for the sample survey out of the 16 mouzas in the district. Three villages from each community, for a total of 12 villages representing these four social groups, were selected as sample villages from the core concentration mouzas. Ten respondents from each village were chosen using a simple random sampling technique. The age range of the respondents, between 15 and 30 years old, was taken into consideration. Using a precisely organised interview schedule, essential data on socio-economic variables, the attitude of youth towards agriculture, and their involvement in agricultural activities was collected. Data that was collected on a single youth from a single family was taken into consideration. As a result, 120 respondents in total were chosen for the study. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess the attitude of youth towards their involvement in agriculture. The collected data were processed statistically, analysed, and interpreted accordingly.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

From Table 1, it is seen that the majority of respondents (80 percent) were between the ages of 20 and 30. In terms of educational achievement, secondary-level youth in the district comprise the largest percentage of respondents (30.83 percent). The respondents with graduate degrees come in second with 26.67 percent of the total. About 40 percent of the respondents are students, and 14.17 percent identify as

working mostly in agriculture. 15 percent of young people are unemployed. The majority of respondents (55.83 percent) come from small families, and 67.5 percent of young people belong to nuclear families. In accordance with the marital status of the respondents, only 22.5 percent are married and 77.5 percent are single. It was also found that a significant portion of respondents come from agricultural backgrounds. Almost 71.67 percent of all respondents reported that agriculture is the primary source of household income. The study also finds that nearly 40 percent of young people live on less than one hectare of land.

Among the people of indigenous general groups, including other backward classes and indigenous Muslims, the percentage of youth who are illiterate or only have a primary education is totally absent. However, among the youth of the immigrant Muslim community, the percentages of illiterate youth and those with only a primary education are the highest (4.17 percent and 6.67 percent, respectively). The percentage of youth with graduate degrees is the highest (10.83 percent) among the youth of the indigenous general community in comparison to other communities, while the immigrant Muslim group has the lowest percentage (3.33 percent). Among the communities, there are not many young people with technical education. A significant proportion (10 percent) of respondents from the immigrant Muslim community selected agriculture as their occupation, while it was found to be very insignificant among the indigenous general group of youths. The proportion of students among youths belonging to the indigenous general group is the highest

(13.33 percent). For both the ST and SC groups, there are the same percentages of students (10.83 percent). The indigenous general group has a small family size,

while the immigrant Muslim community has a large family size. The occupation of all heads of families among all respondents is mainly agriculture.

Table 1: Characteristics of Rural Youth of different Communities Morigaon District, 2022

Sl. No.	Variable	Frequency					Percentage				
		Dist.	Gen	IM	ST	SC	Dist.	Gen	IM	ST	SC
1.	Age										
	15-20	24	7	5	7	5	20	5.83	7.5	4.17	2.5
	20-25	51	12	13	14	12	42.5	10	10.83	11.67	10
	25-30	45	11	12	9	13	37.5	9.17	10	7.5	10.83
2.	Education										
	Illiterate	9	0	5	3	1	7.5	0	4.17	2.5	0.83
	Primary	16	0	8	3	5	13.33	0	6.67	2.5	4.17
	Secondary	37	6	10	9	12	30.83	5	8.33	7.5	10
	Graduate	32	13	4	8	7	26.67	10.83	3.33	6.67	5.83
	Post graduate	17	6	3	5	3	14.17	5	2.5	4.17	2.5
3.	Occupation of the respondents										
	Service	21	7	3	5	6	17.5	5.83	2.5	4.17	5
	Business	6	1	3	1	1	5	0.83	2.5	0.83	0.83
	Labour	10	0	6	3	1	8.33	0	5	2.5	0.83
	Agriculture	17	1	12	2	2	14.17	0.83	10	1.67	1.67
	Student	48	16	6	13	13	40	13.33	5	10.83	10.83
4.	Unemployed	18	5	0	6	7	15	4.17	0	5	5.83
	Family size										
	Small (up to 4)	67	22	9	19	17	55.83	18.33	7.5	15.83	14.17
	Medium (5-8)	41	6	13	10	12	34.17	5	10.83	8.33	10
5.	Large (above 8)	12	2	8	1	1	10	1.67	6.67	0.83	0.83
	Marital Status										
	Married	27	4	12	6	5	22.5	3.33	10	5	4.17
6.	Unmarried	93	26	18	24	25	77.5	21.67	15	20	20.83
	Occupation of the head of the family										
	Labour	9	1	4	3	1	7.5	0.83	3.33	2.5	0.83
	Business	13	3	1	2	7	10.83	2.5	0.83	1.67	5.83
	Cultivation	86	20	23	22	21	71.67	16.67	19.17	18.33	17.5
7.	Service	12	6	2	3	1	10	5	1.67	2.5	0.83
	Land holding size										
	Land less	16	2	5	3	6	13.33	1.67	4.17	2.5	5
	Below 1ha	48	13	9	10	16	40	10.83	7.5	8.33	13.33
	1ha -2ha	35	8	11	9	7	29.17	6.67	9.17	7.5	5.83
	Above 2ha	21	7	5	8	1	17.5	5.83	4.17	6.67	0.83

Source: Data collected from the field and calculated

Attitude of youth and their involvement in agriculture

The attitude of youth and their involvement in agriculture was measured

by selecting a few positive and negative statements, and it is presented in Table 2. This table clearly shows that the statement ‘the use of modern technologies in agriculture is always profitable’ got the first rank with the highest mean score of 4.08. The statement ‘Modern technologies

motivate youth to pursue careers in the agricultural sector’ ranked in second place with a mean score of 3.86. It indicates youths may become involved if advanced technology is used to replace traditional agriculture and they feel modern agriculture is more profitable.

Table 2: Attitude of youth towards agriculture

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	Rank
1.	The educated youth should be involved in the agricultural sector	38	30	32	11	9	3.64	4
2.	There are several possibilities for employment in the agricultural sector	33	38	24	13	12	3.56	5
3.	The use of modern technologies in agriculture is always profitable	59	25	28	3	5	4.08	1
4.	Modern technologies motivate youth to pursue careers in the agricultural sector	56	35	11	11	7	4.02	2
5.	In order to ensure food security, youth need to be involved in farming activities	46	36	20	11	7	3.86	3
6.	Agriculture is a sustainable source of income for youths	19	41	22	27	11	3.25	7
7.	One can establish himself in society through farming	24	28	29	21	18	3.16	8
8.	Due to high production costs and low market prices for agricultural products, farming is no longer profitable	38	17	26	20	19	3.29	6
9.	Young people with low levels of education or who are illiterate tend to pursue careers in agriculture	27	15	33	24	21	3.02	10
10.	In farming, there are fewer chances for career advancement	24	15	34	24	23	2.94	12
11.	Farming is a labour-intensive profession that doesn't require a high level of education	24	17	36	23	20	3.02	10
12.	Society does not consider farming to be a respected profession	14	12	15	34	45	2.3	14
13.	Farming is not an appropriate career for highly educated youth	37	28	24	15	16	3.15	9
14.	One could be obliged to engage in farming if there are no alternatives for a job	23	15	33	25	24	2.9	13

Source: Data collected from the field and calculated

Table 3 shows that more than half of the youth (59.17 percent) have a neutral attitude towards agriculture as a means of livelihood. It is followed by 15.83 percent of youth who have a negative attitude towards agriculture as a means of

livelihood. 10.83 percent and 7.5 percent of youth have positive attitude and highly positive attitude, respectively, towards agriculture as a means of livelihood. Only 6.67 percent of youth have a negative attitude towards agriculture in the study

region. It is clear from Table 3 that there is an acute labour shortage in the agricultural sector, which will lead to major issues in the coming days. The low percentage of positive attitude among the youth is due to a lack of awareness about the livelihood opportunities in the agricultural sector. Besides, the high risk associated with

unpredictable floods and droughts, high production costs, insufficient returns from this sector, poor market prices of agricultural products, etc. also reduce the positive attitude towards agriculture. It is expected that the youth may choose the agricultural sector as a means of livelihood if such constraints are eliminated.

Table 3: Attitude of youth towards agriculture

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Very Negative	8	6.67
2.	Negative	19	15.83
3.	Neutral	71	59.17
4.	Positive	13	10.83
5.	Very Positive	9	7.5

Source: Data collected from the field and calculated

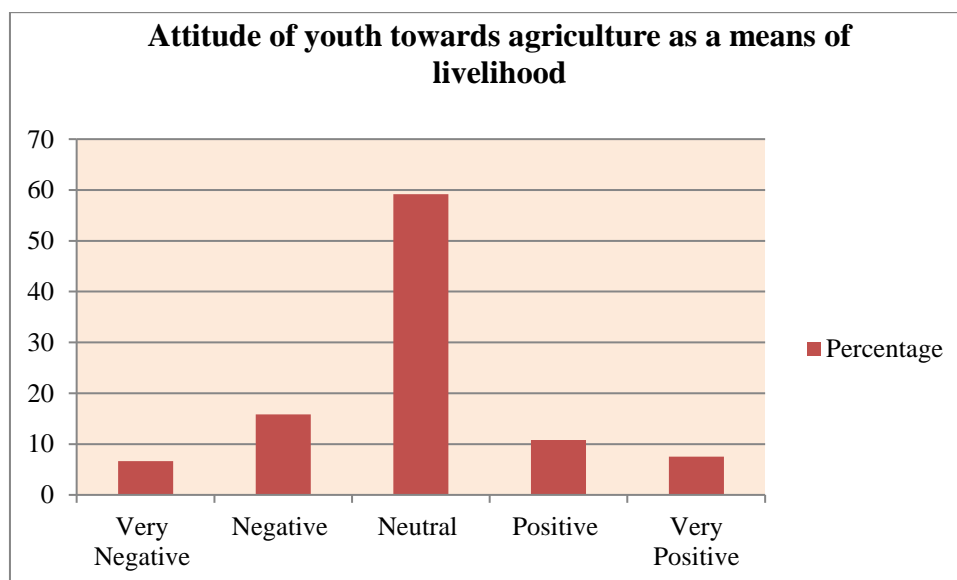


Fig. 1

Conclusion

The study has been concluded with the following findings and suggestions:

1. The socio-economic characteristics of youth have a significant impact on their attitude towards agriculture.
2. The capacity for decision-making increases as the education level of youth increases. As a result, the

youth decide to pursue another career possibility rather than farming.

3. The majority of youth firmly believe that using modern technologies in agriculture is always profitable; as a result, agriculture should be modernised to encourage educated youth to choose agriculture as a career.

Thus, it is necessary to involve the young generation in agriculture for the development of this sector. It is possible only through the use of modern technology in agriculture. The government should therefore take the necessary steps in this regard. Policymakers should take such types of measures that can motivate youth to become involved in the agricultural sector as a means of livelihood.

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