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Factors influencing youth in family farming: A study from southern India

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Abstract

By 2050, the world's population is projected to reach 9 billion, with youth (aged 15 to 24) making up roughly 14 % of this total. In India, 68 % (0.90 billion) of the population live in rural areas and 28 % (0.35 billion) of the population is under the age of 24. According to World Bank research, by 2050, half of the Indian population would live in cities and the proportion of employment in farming is predicted to decrease from 58.2 % in 2001 to 25.7 % by 2050. On the one hand, agriculture is a crucial activity to fulfil the rising food demand, while labour is in short supply. On the other hand, the youth unemployment rate is rising. The fact that young people today are losing interest and confidence in agriculture and allied activities is alarming. Two fundamental challenges arise due to a lack of effort by policymakers and development actors, including failure to map the competency profile of today's youth, engage them in discussions and consider their desires and aspirations both of which have led to negative opinions of agriculture as a profession. This study is aimed to explore the factors which influence youth in family farming. The study followed a qualitative research method using a grounded theory approach, as there was a dearth of information about the involvement of youth in family farming. This study has defined youth within the age group of 15 to 30 years due to their involvement in agriculture after their education, especially in India. The data were collected from 60 farming families in Coimbatore and Erode districts of Southern India, divided into two groups based on youth involvement in their family farming or not. Data collection was done on five dimensions including psychological, socio-cultural, technological, infrastructural, and economic contexts. The findings indicated that the aspirations of youth in family farming vary depending on socio-economic factors, environmental motivation, and innovative attitudes. The study compiled the challenges and constraints faced by youth in family farming, which include lack of access to technologies, financial resources, and social stigma.

Keywords: Agriculture, family farming, grounded theory, qualitative, youth