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Attitudes of rural youth towards entrepreneurship a study in Birbhum district, West Bengal

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Abstract

Agripreneurship has considerable potential to generate employment, improve rural livelihoods, and encourage youth participation in agriculture and allied activities. The present study was undertaken to assess the attitude, knowledge and perception of rural youth towards agripreneurship and to examine their association with selected socio-economic, communication, psychological and behavioural characteristics. The study was conducted in Bolpur and Suri-I blocks of Birbhum district, West Bengal. A total of 100 respondents were selected randomly from four villages, namely Surul, Ruppur, Daranda and Sukhbazar. Data were collected through personal interviews using a pre-tested structured schedule during January to June 2023. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that the mean scores of attitude, knowledge and perception were 3.01, 1.57 and 2.83, respectively. Age ($r=0.409$) and scientific orientation ($r=0.448$) showed significant positive relationships with attitude, while land holding ($r=0.446$) was significantly associated with knowledge. Risk orientation ($r=-0.401$) showed a significant negative relationship with perception, whereas innovativeness ($r=0.422$) had a significant positive relationship. The findings highlight the importance of scientific orientation, knowledge enhancement, innovation and appropriate risk-management support for strengthening rural youth agripreneurship.

Keywords: Agripreneurship, rural youth, attitude, knowledge, perception, scientific orientation, innovativeness, risk orientation, agricultural entrepreneurship, rural development

Introduction

Agriculture continues to play a central role in the Indian economy and provides livelihood opportunities to a large proportion of the rural population. However, rural youth are increasingly seeking employment outside agriculture and migrating towards urban areas due to limited employment opportunities and inadequate income from conventional agricultural activities. This declining participation of youth in agriculture poses challenges for the sustainability and future development of the agricultural sector. In this context, agripreneurship can provide an important pathway for generating employment, improving rural livelihoods and promoting agricultural development.

Agripreneurship refers to the application of entrepreneurial approaches, innovation, calculated risk-taking, market orientation and improved management practices in agriculture and allied sectors. It provides opportunities not only in crop production but also in dairy farming, horticulture, fisheries, sericulture, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, food processing and other agribusiness activities. The growing demand for value addition, changing consumer preferences, technological development and expanding agricultural markets have further increased the scope of agripreneurial activities.

Rural youth constitute an important human resource for the future development of agriculture. Their attitude, knowledge and perception towards agripreneurship can influence their

willingness to adopt entrepreneurship as a career option. However, factors such as inadequate financial resources, fear of risk and failure, limited technical and managerial knowledge, insufficient market information and social constraints may discourage young people from starting agribusiness ventures. Government initiatives and entrepreneurship development programmes can therefore play an important role in providing financial, technical, managerial and institutional support.

Against this background, the present study was undertaken to assess the attitude, knowledge and perception of rural youth towards agripreneurship and to identify the factors associated with these dimensions. The study also seeks to identify major constraints faced by rural youth in pursuing agripreneurship and provide suitable suggestions for encouraging youth participation in agricultural entrepreneurship and rural economic development.

This version is suitable for direct submission in a research paper and can be further adjusted to match a specific journal's format or citation style.

Area of Study

The area of investigation of this study is situated in the state of West Bengal located in the eastern part of India. The State of West Bengal in eastern India has a unique social, cultural and ecological background, which influence the living standard and behavioural patterns of the people in many

ways. The area of investigation belongs to the Bolpur block and Suri –I block of Birbhum district.

Selection of the Respondents

Random sampling procedure was used for selection of respondents from the selected villages namely, Surul, Ruppur, Daranda, and Sukhbazar. 25 number of respondents were selected from each village. Thus, a total of 100 numbers of respondents were selected for the purpose of the study. The male head and female head were chosen for interview, this was done purposely for accurate collection of information.

Variables

Variables are age (x_1), education (x_2), marital status (x_3),

family type (x_4), farming experience (x_5), occupation (x_6), agricultural information media (x_7), land holding (x_8), annual income (x_9), extension contact (x_{10}), mass media exposure (x_{11}), scientific orientation (x_{12}), risk orientation (x_{13}), innovativeness (x_{14}) treated as independent variables and attitude towards agripreneurship (y_1), knowledge on agripreneurship (y_2), perception on agripreneurship (y_3) treated as dependent variable.

Statistical Tools

The statistical methods include Correlation, Regression Analysis, where applicable as per the characteristics of data.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variable with respect to Minimum, Maximum, Range, Mean, Standard Deviation of Values, Variance, and Coefficient of Variance

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	CV (%)
Age (x_1)	18.00	36.00	27.31	6.07	36.84	22.23
Education (x_2)	1.00	4.00	2.49	1.17	1.36	46.90
Marital Status (x_3)	1.00	2.00	1.47	0.50	0.25	34.12
Family Type (x_4)	1.00	2.00	1.51	0.50	0.25	33.27
Farming Experience (x_5)	1.00	4.00	2.68	1.09	1.19	40.70
Occupation (x_6)	1.00	6.00	3.53	1.73	2.98	48.89
Agricultural Information Media (x_7)	1.00	5.00	2.43	1.22	1.48	50.06
Land Holding (x_8)	1.00	4.00	2.66	1.20	1.44	45.09
Annual Income (x_9)	1.00	4.00	2.49	1.16	1.34	46.55
Extension Contact (x_{10})	1.00	5.00	2.87	1.47	2.17	51.38
Mass Media Exposure (x_{11})	1.00	5.00	2.86	1.34	1.80	46.89
Scientific Orientation (x_{12})	1.00	5.00	3.10	1.42	2.01	45.73
Risk Orientation (x_{13})	1.00	5.00	3.19	1.61	2.58	50.35
Innovativeness (x_{14})	1.00	5.00	2.84	1.50	2.26	52.90
Attitude (y_1)	1.00	5.00	3.01	1.45	2.09	48.04
Knowledge (y_2)	1.00	2.00	1.57	0.50	0.25	31.69
Perception (y_3)	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.47	2.16	51.97

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the selected independent and dependent variables, including minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, variance and coefficient of variation (CV). The findings indicate considerable variation among respondents across socio-economic, communication, psychological and behavioural characteristics.

The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 36 years, with a mean of 27.31 years and a CV of 22.23 per cent, indicating comparatively low variability. Education recorded a mean of 2.49 and a CV of 46.90 per cent, while marital status and family type showed moderate variability with CVs of 34.12 and 33.27 per cent, respectively. Farming experience had a mean score of 2.68 and a CV of 40.70 per cent. Occupation recorded a mean of 3.53 with a relatively higher CV of 48.89 per cent.

The first agricultural information media variable (X_7) recorded a mean of 2.43 and a CV of 50.06 per cent. Land holding and annual income showed mean scores of 2.66 and 2.49, with CVs of 45.09 and 46.55 per cent, respectively. Extension contact had a mean of 2.87 and a CV of 51.38 per cent, indicating considerable variability. The second mass media exposure variable (X_{11}) recorded a mean of 2.86 and a CV of 46.89 per cent. Scientific orientation, risk orientation and innovativeness recorded mean scores of 3.10, 3.19 and 2.84, respectively.

Among the dependent variables, attitude, knowledge and perception recorded mean scores of 3.01, 1.57 and 2.83, with CVs of 48.04, 31.69 and 51.97 per cent, respectively. Overall, innovativeness showed the highest variability (CV 52.90%), followed by perception (51.97%) and extension contact (51.38%), whereas age showed the lowest variability (22.23%).

Table 2: Coefficient of Correlation (r): Attitude (y_1) with 14 Independent Variables

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	'r' Value	Remarks
1	Age (x_1)	0.409	**
2	Education (x_2)	-0.057	
3	Marital Status (x_3)	0.091	
4	Family Type (x_4)	0.188	
5	Farming Experience (x_5)	0.105	
6	Occupation (x_6)	-0.120	
7	Agricultural Information Media (x_7)	0.032	
8	Land Holding (x_8)	-0.027	
9	Annual Income (x_9)	-0.154	
10	Extension Contact (x_{10})	-0.113	
11	Mass Media Exposure (x_{11})	-0.057	
12	Scientific Orientation (x_{12})	0.448	**
13	Risk Orientation (x_{13})	0.121	
14	Innovativeness (x_{14})	-0.129	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Relevance

The findings suggest that age and scientific orientation may be important characteristics associated with respondents' attitude. In particular, the positive relationship with scientific orientation indicates that respondents who are more oriented

towards scientific approaches may tend to possess a more favorable attitude. The findings provide a useful basis for identifying variables that require further examination through regression analysis.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis: Attitude (y_1) vs. 14 independent Variables

Sl. No.	Variables	Reg. Coef. B	S.E. B	Beta	t Value
1	Age (x1)	0.078		0.922	3.506
2	Education (x2)	-0.042	-0.034	0.001	-0.368
3	Marital Status (x3)	-0.004	-0.001	0.714	-0.014
4	Family Type (x4)	0.228	0.079	0.989	0.866
5	Farming Experience (x5)	-0.007	-0.005	0.389	-0.057
6	Occupation (x6)	-0.114	-0.136	0.955	-1.500
7	Agricultural Information Media (x7)	0.078	0.066	0.137	0.695
8	Land Holding (x8)	0.156	0.129	0.489	1.404
9	Annual Income (x9)	-0.231	-0.185	0.164	-1.959
10	Extension Contact (x10)	-0.040	-0.041	0.053	-0.446
11	Mass Media Exposure (x11)	-0.044	-0.040	0.657	-0.432
12	Scientific Orientation (x12)	0.377	0.369	0.667	3.891
13	Risk Orientation (x13)	0.051	0.057	0.000	0.625
14	Innovativeness (x14)	-0.057	-0.059	0.534	-0.640

R square: 53.14%

The standard error of the estimate: 0.4559

Relevance

The R^2 value was 53.14 per cent, indicating that the fourteen independent variables collectively explained 53.14 per cent of the variation in attitude. The remaining 46.86 per cent may be associated with factors not included in the present model and other unexplained sources of variation.

The standard error of the estimate was 0.4559, representing the reported degree of variation between observed and predicted attitude values.

Overall, the regression model indicates that the selected independent variables collectively had substantial explanatory value for attitude, with scientific orientation showing a particularly notable positive contribution based on the reported regression coefficient and t value.

Table 4: Coefficient of Correlation (r): Knowledge (y_2) with 14 Independent Variables

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	'r' Value	Remarks
1	Age (x1)	-0.069	
2	Education (x2)	0.071	
3	Marital Status (x3)	-0.032	
4	Family Type (x4)	0.038	
5	Farming Experience (x5)	0.060	
6	Occupation (x6)	0.127	
7	Agricultural Information Media (x7)	0.075	
8	Land Holding (x8)	0.446	**
9	Annual Income (x9)	0.106	
10	Extension Contact (x10)	0.019	
11	Mass Media Exposure (x11)	0.121	
12	Scientific Orientation (x12)	0.033	
13	Risk Orientation (x13)	0.065	
14	Innovativeness (x14)	-0.093	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Relevance

The significant positive relationship between landholding and knowledge suggests that respondents possessing

comparatively greater land resources may have greater opportunities or exposure related to agricultural information and practices. However, since the analysis is correlational, the result should be interpreted as an association rather than proof of a causal relationship.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis: Knowledge (y_2) Vs. 14 independent Variables

Sl. No.	Variables	Reg. Coef. B	S.E. B	Beta	t Value
1	Age (x1)	-0.007		0.197	-0.829
2	Education (x2)	-0.008	0.032	0.409	-0.194
3	Marital Status (x3)	-0.021	0.037	0.847	-0.222
4	Family Type (x4)	0.038	0.043	0.825	0.386
5	Farming Experience (x5)	0.022	0.062	0.701	0.488
6	Occupation (x6)	0.037	0.029	0.626	1.315
7	Agricultural Information Media (x7)	0.067	0.060	0.192	1.614
8	Land Holding (x8)	0.205	0.010	0.110	4.983
9	Annual Income (x9)	-0.013	0.020	0.000	-0.301
10	Extension Contact (x10)	0.012	-0.007	0.764	0.367
11	Mass Media Exposure (x11)	0.047	-0.035	0.714	1.242
12	Scientific Orientation (x12)	0.054	0.020	0.217	1.492
13	Risk Orientation (x13)	-0.001	0.037	0.139	-0.043
14	Innovativeness (x14)	-0.010	-0.390	0.966	-0.303

R square: 51.21%

The standard error of the estimate: 0.47592

Relevance: The R^2 value was 51.21 per cent, indicating that the fourteen independent variables collectively explained 51.21 per cent of the variation in knowledge. Thus, the model explains slightly more than half of the variation in the dependent variable.

The standard error of the estimate was 0.47592, representing the reported standard error associated with the regression model.

Table 6: Coefficient of Correlation (r): Perception (y₃) with 14 Independent Variables

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	'r' Value	Remarks
1	Age (x1)	0.047	
2	Education (x2)	-0.045	
3	Marital Status (x3)	0.000	
4	Family Type (x4)	0.023	
5	Farming Experience (x5)	-0.047	
6	Occupation (x6)	0.060	
7	Agricultural Information Media (x7)	0.013	
8	Land Holding (x8)	-0.039	
9	Annual Income (x9)	0.014	
10	Extension Contact (x10)	-0.024	
11	Mass Media Exposure (x11)	-0.058	
12	Scientific Orientation (x12)	-0.045	
13	Risk Orientation (x13)	-0.401**	**
14	Innovativeness (x14)	0.422**	**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis: Perception (y₃) Vs. 14 independent Variables

Sl. No.	Variables	Reg. Coef. B	S.E. B	Beta	t Value
1	Age (x1)	0.008	0.032	0.331	0.331
2	Education (x2)	0.046	0.037	0.377	0.377
3	Marital Status (x3)	0.126	0.043	0.457	0.457
4	Family Type (x4)	0.183	0.062	0.657	0.657
5	Farming Experience (x5)	0.039	0.029	0.302	0.302
6	Occupation (x6)	0.051	0.060	0.641	0.641
7	Agricultural Information Media (x7)	0.012	0.010	0.105	0.105
8	Land Holding (x8)	0.025	0.020	0.212	0.212
9	Annual Income (x9)	-0.009	-0.007	-0.069	-0.069
10	Extension Contact (x10)	-0.035	-0.035	-0.370	-0.370
11	Mass Media Exposure (x11)	0.022	0.020	0.202	0.202
12	Scientific Orientation (x12)	0.038	0.037	0.371	0.371
13	Risk Orientation (x13)	-0.357	-0.390	-4.115	-4.115
14	Innovativeness (x14)	0.396	0.405	4.231	4.231

R square: 51.21%

The standard error of the estimate: 0.47592

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that attitude, knowledge and perception are associated with different personal, socio-economic, communication, psychological and behavioural characteristics of the respondents. Age and scientific orientation were significantly associated with attitude, land holding was significantly associated with knowledge, and risk orientation and innovativeness were significantly associated with perception.

The findings indicate that improving scientific orientation, agricultural knowledge, innovation capacity, extension support and risk-management capability, along with strengthening access to agricultural information and productive resources, may contribute to better outcomes among respondents. The findings can therefore provide useful guidance for extension personnel, agricultural institutions and development agencies in designing more targeted and respondent-oriented interventions.

Recommendations

1. Strengthening Scientific Orientation: Promote scientific thinking through regular training, demonstrations, field visits and practical agricultural programmes.

Relevance

The results suggest that psychological and behavioural characteristics, particularly risk orientation and innovativeness, are important variables associated with perception. The positive association with innovativeness suggests that respondents with greater innovative orientation tended to have more favourable perception scores, whereas the negative association with risk orientation indicates an inverse relationship in the present dataset.

The R² value was 51.21 per cent, indicating that the fourteen independent variables collectively explained 51.21 per cent of the variation in perception. The standard error of the estimate was 0.47592.

Overall, the regression analysis indicates that risk orientation and innovativeness were particularly notable variables in explaining perception in the reported model, with risk orientation showing a negative contribution and innovativeness showing a positive contribution.

- 2. Improving Agricultural Knowledge:** Provide simple, practical and locally relevant information through farmer meetings, demonstrations, training and advisory services, irrespective of landholding size.
- 3. Improving Extension Contact:** Strengthen regular and timely communication between extension personnel and respondents for need-based agricultural guidance.
- 4. Promoting Innovativeness:** Encourage the adoption and experimentation of improved technologies through demonstrations, exposure visits, farmer field schools and practical training.
- 5. Strengthening Risk Management:** Provide training on farm planning, resource management and risk-reduction practices to support informed decision-making under uncertain conditions.
- 6. Strengthening Mass Media Communication:** Use television, radio, newspapers, mobile phones and digital platforms to disseminate agricultural technologies, schemes and market information.
- 7. Training and Demonstrations:** Organise need-based training and practical demonstrations to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and field-level application.
- 8. Exposure Visits and Peer Learning:** Promote visits to

successful farms and institutions and encourage farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing.

9. **Improving Resource Access:** Provide additional institutional and extension support to respondents with smaller landholdings.
10. **Strengthening Institutional Support:** Improve coordination among agricultural departments, extension agencies, educational institutions and development organisations.
11. **Participatory Extension:** Involve respondents in planning and implementing extension programmes to address their actual needs and encourage local knowledge sharing.
12. **Focus on Youth:** Utilise the potential of young respondents through digital agricultural information, practical training and innovation-oriented programmes.

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