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## Attitude and aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture and allied dimensions

**Nidhi Tikariha, ML Sharma and MA Khan**

### Abstract

The majority of women youth in India still reside in rural areas where agriculture still serves as the primary and inherited means of subsistence. Their ability to contribute to agriculture at their full potential has been overlooked. This sector faces additional barriers by virtue of gender, location and age related barriers. In this regard, present investigation was undertaken in four districts of Chhattisgarh state during 2022-23. Rural women having agriculture as their family occupation and aged between 15 to 29 years were considered and their attitude and aspiration has been studied. It has been found that most of the respondents (49.17%) had somewhat favourable attitude towards agriculture as an occupation. Most of women rural youth (72.92%) had low level of aspiration towards agriculture and allied dimensions.

**Keywords:** Women rural youth, attitude, aspiration

### 1. Introduction

The "breadwinner" concept is strongly associated with men, which has forced women to focus on agricultural work as supplementary earners since such jobs provide irregular pays. Within the agricultural sector itself, there is a gendered division of labour. Some jobs like weeding, threshing, and paddy transplanting, requiring limited physical strength, are associated to women due to patriarchal socio-cultural norms. Most of young women don't desire for agricultural-related occupations. The possible reasons for this may be lack of opportunity spaces due to gender-difference. Young women are affected to an even greater extent as compared to young men in various contexts such as access to land, credit and rights results in unfavourable attitude and no or low level of aspirations. As a result they prefer moving to urban areas, which appear more attractive. Overall agrarian distress affects farm households' socioeconomic status which negatively influence farmers as well as younger generation. They witness the risks and disappointments faced in farming occupation. They inherently start to develop unfavourable attitude and their aspirations to continue in farming weaken, due to intergenerational influence on aspirations influenced by contextual realities. In consideration with the importance of positive attitude of women rural youth so that they can aspire for future in agriculture, the present investigation was undertaken to determine the level of attitude of women rural youth towards agriculture as an occupation and their aspiration towards agriculture and allied dimensions.

### 2. Material and Methods

Present investigation was carried out during 2022-23 in four districts namely Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur and Rajnandgaon of Chhattisgarh state which were selected purposively because of highest rural female population. Rural women aged from 15 to 29 years and having agriculture as their family occupation were considered. Primary data were collected from 240 women rural youth from 24 villages using pre-tested interview schedule through personal interview method. The Ex-post-facto research design has been used in present investigation.

In order to measure attitude of women rural youth, scale developed by Shah (2019) [2] was used with slight modification. The attitude towards agriculture as an occupation has been conceptualized as composition of six different dimensions i.e. migration, economic, aspiration, technological, social status and work environment. Scale consisted of 29 statements with a 5-point continuum against each item comprising of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree with scores of 5,4,3,2, and 1 for positive statements and vice-versa for negative statements. Thus the attitude score on this scale can vary from 29 to 145. Respondents were categorized into four categories.

In order to measure aspiration of women rural youth, a four-point scale developed by Preethi (2015) [9] was used with slight modification.

The scale consists of 14 statements for studying aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture. The response was collected on a four-point continuum like no change, low, medium and high with assigned score of 0, 1, 2 and 3 for each item.

$$\text{Overall aspiration} = \text{Obtained score} / \text{Obtainable score} * 100$$

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Attitude towards agriculture as an occupation

Data regarding attitude of women rural youth towards agriculture as an occupation has been presented in Table 1. Most of the respondents (49.17%) had somewhat favourable attitude towards agriculture as an occupation followed by 26.67 percent of the respondents who had favourable attitude. About 22.08 percent had less favourable and only 2.08 percent of respondents had highly favourable attitude towards agriculture as an occupation. The probable reason of somewhat favourable to less favourable attitude might be that most women rural youth perceive agriculture as labourious, non-profitable and least lucrative enterprise.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards agriculture as an occupation (n=240)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Less favourable (from score 29 to 58)	53	22.08
Somewhat favourable (from score 59 to 87)	118	49.17
Favourable (from score 88 to 116)	64	26.67
Most favourable (from score 117 to 145)	05	02.08

#### 3.2 Aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture and allied dimensions

Aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture and

allied dimensions were collected, analyzed and presented in Table 2. Top three statements having maximum overall aspiration was found for ‘improvement in household material possession’ (17.01%) followed by ‘aspiration to enhance income’ (12.78%) and ‘acquiring additional knowledge on innovative agricultural practices (10.42%).

Dimension wise overall aspiration has been found maximum for economic aspiration with an overall aspiration of 42.53 percent (Rank I), followed by general aspiration with 21.11 percent (Rank II) and farming system aspirations with 17.18 percent (Rank III). The probable reason might be that, in the context of ever-increasing needs, generally the result of increased contact with urban areas, demands and comforts, youths want to change their lifestyle. Hence, this might have made them aspire for improvement in household material possession and economic aspirations. The overall aspiration was 28.03 percent.

The level of aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture and allied dimensions showed that most of women rural youth (72.92%) had low level of aspiration. Whereas, 23.33 percent had medium level and only 3.75 percent had high level of aspiration towards agriculture and allied dimensions. (Table 3). Low level of aspiration might be due to agrarian distress, resulting from climate variability and market uncertainty affects farm households' socioeconomic status, resulting in farmers' aspiration failure towards agriculture. Parents generally focus on educating their daughters and aspiring them for secure non-farm jobs and finding suitable marriage partners in non-farm employment. This discourages youth from aspiring towards careers in agriculture. Generally, there is a wide gap in the achievement of aspirations and majority of youth, especially young women end up working as helpers on their family farms.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to their aspirations towards agriculture and allied dimensions (n=240)

Sr. No.	Statements	Level of aspirations				Obtained score	Overall aspiration (%)
		No	Low	Medium	High		
<b>I</b>	<b>Farming system aspirations</b>						
	Aspiration to Practice Allied Activities in combination with agriculture	98 (40.83)	75 (31.25)	35(14.58)	32 (13.33)	241	4.78
	Enhancing crop productivity	105 (43.75)	24 (10.00)	49 (20.41)	62 (25.83)	308	6.11
	Enhancing agricultural implements' possession	199 (82.92)	14 (5.83)	11 (4.58)	16 (6.66)	84	1.67
	Aspiration to enhance number of livestock	181 (75.42)	40 (16.66)	14 (5.83)	05 (2.08)	83	1.65
	Occupational aspiration	156 (65.00)	20 (8.33)	50 (20.83)	14 (5.83)	162	3.21
	Aspiration of gaining expertise in post-harvest processing of products	225 (93.75)	11 (4.58)	4 (1.66)	0 (0.00)	19	0.38
	Storage facility related aspiration	213 (88.75)	12 (5.00)	5 (2.08)	10 (4.16)	52	1.03
<b>II</b>	<b>Economic aspirations</b>						
	Aspiration to increase land holdings	173 (72.08)	3 (1.25)	22 (9.16)	42 (17.50)	173	6.01
	Aspiration to enhance income	84 (35.00)	22 (9.16)	56 (23.33)	78 (32.50)	368	12.78
	Improvement in household material possession	33 (13.75)	40 (16.66)	51 (21.25)	116(48.33)	490	17.01
	Enhancing credit access for adopting agricultural innovations	174 (72.50)	0(0.00)	4 (1.66)	62 (25.83)	194	6.74
<b>III</b>	<b>General aspiration</b>						
	Acquiring additional knowledge on innovative agricultural practices	142 (59.16)	12 (5.00)	45 (18.75)	41 (17.08)	225	10.42
	Better access to market information/intelligence	178 (74.17)	19 (7.91)	12 (5.00)	31 (12.91)	136	6.30
	Aspiration for involvement in income-generating activities in group	205 (85.42)	02 (0.83)	06 (2.50)	27 (11.25)	95	4.40

**Note:** Values in parenthesis indicates the percentage

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents according to their level of aspiration towards agriculture and allied dimensions (n=240)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Low (up to 14 scores)	175	72.92
Medium (from 15 to 28 scores)	56	23.33
High (more than 28 scores)	09	3.75

#### 4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that, the attitude and aspiration of women rural youth towards agriculture has been found on lower verge. Therefore, this is the need of an hour to make agriculture more attractive and income-generating enterprise so as to develop positive attitude of women rural youths. They can boost Indian agriculture by focusing their creative energies on the acquisition of the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes. So that they achieve mental state of readiness and have aspiration to intrinsically step ahead towards agriculture.

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