

## Role of Youth in Rural Development

**Radhika Kapur\***

*Pedagogy and Organizational Culture in Nursery Schools, Delhi University, New Delhi, India*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Radhika Kapur, Pedagogy and Organizational Culture in Nursery Schools, Delhi University, New Delhi, India.

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### Abstract

Rural development in India is vital for the overall progress of the country. In rural areas, there have been many aspects that need to be focused upon, such as generation of jobs and employment for the people, construction of houses, schools and educational institutions, medical and health care facilities, agriculture, industries, nutritional requirements, focusing upon the skill development of the people and facilities such as electricity, energy, water, gas and cooking equipment. For the welfare of the rural people, these areas need to be focused upon, for the effective development of these areas the role of youth is required. In this research paper, what is the significance of the role of youth in rural development has been underscored. The main areas that are highlighted in this research paper are, identifying youth, youth participation, impediments to youth participation, the demand for the role of youth in rural areas, youth labor markets in rural areas, and an assessment of the role of youth in rural development. Thus, it can be understood that the role of youth has been imperative in the case of rural development, provided if the youth wholeheartedly contributes and works with zest and enthusiasm.

**Keywords:** Youth, Rural Development; Participation; Skill Development; Labor Markets

### Introduction

The concept of youth has been defined by researchers as the period in an individual life that begins from the end of childhood and entry into adulthood. The individual has reached the age of maturity, but yet to acquire the complete rights and duties of adult life, like marriage and earning of livelihood both for self and for one's family. In the case of rural development and particularly agricultural development, youth constitute the compelling force; the mind-set of the youth is cultivated in such a manner that they prove to be productive, especially when they have developed this objective to bring about rural development. The main reason being that youth has number of characteristics which when cultivated and nurtured prove to be invaluable towards agricultural and rural development. Youth associations have got involved in number of activities such as planting of crops, community farming, construction of village squares, contribution in enhancement and application of science and technical methods, energy conservation, construction, biotechnology and employment generation for the rural masses [1].

The standard of living of the rural people depends upon factors such as food and nutrition level, health, education, housing, recreation and security. Agriculture is of extreme importance and is considered to be particularly important for the rural people. The youth populations are engaged in the utilization of recommended farm inputs and technologies, they are involved into research activities

to find new and innovation techniques and ideas that may be beneficial for rural development [1].

### Identifying youth

Young people are innovative and creative in problem solving and in finding solutions: they are the key to helping communities in meeting their subsistence needs, improving the security of the people and even acquiring control over their own lives. Nearly, 50% of the world's populations are youth and children. There are 1.2 billion 15 to 24 year old in the world and one billion reside in developing countries. Young people constitute a high and a peaking portion of the world's population; they represent challenges as well as opportunities for development. The youth can lead to economic development as well as the social development of their communities and society. The participation of the youth in development has the following advantages: [2].

1. Strengthens the people's abilities to satisfy their own necessities.
2. Prevents and reduces vulnerabilities to economic, social and politically unstable environments.
3. Promotes possession and sustainability of contributions.
4. Assists in entering the target communities and building up trust and social capital.

Youth participation

The term ‘participation’ has several meanings; contribution, inputs, involvement, sharing, membership and partaking. There have been four main areas about participation; information-sharing, in this case, individuals are informed in order to facilitate collective and individual action. Consultation, individuals are consulted, they provide ideas and suggestions, they interact with an organization and takes account of their feedback. Decision Making, youth participate and get involved in decision making, which may be individual or joint with others, decision making may be on specific issues of a policy or a project. Initiating action, youth are involved in the commencement of any kind of accomplishment [2].

In working with young people, and valuing them as assets: as advisors, colleagues and stakeholders is crucial if development policies are to be truly representative and effective. Youth participation: the active, informed and voluntary involvement of people in decision-making and the life of their communities both locally and worldwide are vital if this is to be achieved. In ascending order of responsibility, young people can participate in development as beneficiaries, partners and leaders [2].

Young people’s participation is about far more than gathering their views in surveys or listening to limited numbers of representatives. Formal consultation and dialogue is useful to the extent that it a) directs decisions; and b) authentically represents a body of judgment and understanding. However, it should be part of a process whereby young people progress to greater rights and responsibilities such as citizenship; from being the objectives of outreach, to being actively engaged in the planning and implementation of development interventions. Ultimately, organizations and individuals highly committed to youth participation may want to proceed to a position of a management, where youth are working with older adults, and are becoming development professionals or leading political actors themselves. This is a key aspect of the empowerment process at the core of youth-led development, which always acknowledges the importance of local contexts and cultural values and practices [2].

The Demand of the Role of Youth in Rural Areas

There have been various areas that demand for the role of youth, these have been stated as follows:

- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is stated to be the main occupation in the rural areas and this occupation requires extensive research, production, utilization of science and technology, cropping, irrigation and many more functions. Youth people who are well educated and possess efficient knowledge of how to implement agricultural activities assist in the development of agricultural activities. Making use of technologies in the agricultural sector, implementing extensive research is the work of the youth [3].

- **Small-Scale Industries:** In rural areas, besides agriculture, there have been setting up of small scale industries which require workers, there has been role of youth in the development of skills of the workers, who are not educated so that they can acquire jobs in industries and make a living. Employment in industries requires skills and expertise, therefore, the skill development amongst the rural masses is essential, especially amongst the women so that they can acquire jobs.
- **Skill Development:** It is stated that development of skills and expertise of the people is essential for a sector to progress and develop. Whether an individual is able to read or write but skill development is imperative for progression. Skill development is in various areas such as operation of machines, manufacturing of goods, sports, music, usage of technology, computers and so forth. Skills and talents amongst the rural masses lead to the development of the country.
- **Education:** Educational institutions are essential to develop amongst the rural areas; education enables an individual to seek a living for himself, an educated person can accomplish himself. There has been encouragement of education amongst the rural masses by establishing educational institutions, and providing education free of cost. Every individual should be granted admission, irrespective of one’s age and socio-economic background so that they acquire literacy and live a meaningful life.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Every individual in rural areas longs for employment, have a job, and have some kind of work so that they can sustain their living. The youth people are contributing towards generation of employment opportunities for the rural masses; whether they work in the agricultural sector, industrial sector, production, manufacturing, own small tea stalls, sell beedis and other products and so forth.

Youth labor markets in rural areas

The growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) over the past fifty years is completely associated to a diminishing agriculture sector and an augmentation in the comparative size of the industrial sectors. This relationship has been understood in the context as a signal of industrializing economies involved in a transmittable process. However, there is no significant connection between GDP growth, labor force participation and unemployment, as one might have expected. This seems to indicate that decreasing labor force participation and increasing unemployment, particularly among women and youth, are structurally implanted phenomenon fundamental to the developing economies with developing industrial and service sectors [4].

Declining labor force contribution among youth can be explained by a greater number of years spent in schooling and the greater structural complication of labor markets in countries with higher levels of development. Higher levels of interest make achieving an equivalent between labor supply and labor demand more difficult, often resulting in an increase in levels of temporary employment and periods of unemployment between graduation and finding

stable employment. Competition for limited employment opportunities are revealed in the constantly higher unemployment rates in urban than rural areas and the longer labor market evolutions of youth [4].

With decreasing levels of unconditional poverty and increasing levels of education, people are also likely to be less motivated to accept certain unappealing jobs at the bottom end of progressively more fragmented labor markets. In other words, it could be stated that in middle-income countries more people can manage not to work and, in particular, graduates from middle-income backgrounds may prefer not to work than to do jobs which they may see as undignified, precarious or culturally objectionable. This is most strongly reproduced in the very high unemployment rates and dissatisfaction among young graduates, especially among young women [4].

Still, it is important to note that there have been countries that have not yet reached the middle income level and that lower income countries sustain a dualistic economic structure that unites a small formal segment with a large non-formal segment. As a result, the employment problem apparently is not in high unemployment but in high incidence of under-employment veiled in self-employment and casual wage employment outside the formal segment. The poor are characteristically those who remain outside the formal segment and work as self-employed and casual wage laborers especially in rural areas [4].

An assessment of the role of youth in rural development

Youth are taking an active part in the development of the rural areas, the poverty stricken people and the socially depressed people in rural areas are dependent upon others for their welfare. There has been classification of the following activities that should be implemented for the development of the poor [5].

- **Agricultural Programs:** Copious activities can be undertaken under the agriculture sector; the jobs/works like distributing planting materials, cattle, poultry, minor irrigation, free medical care for cattle's, safe drinking water for animals etc, seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and cropping.
- **Health Programs for Humans and Non-humans:** Housing, shelter, pollution free environment, clean drinking water for animals, medical facilities, regular health check-ups and camps will assist in improving the health conditions of the humans as well as non-humans.
- **Community Development Programs:** The community development programs like adoption of villages for progress, ethical support during flood and famine period, contribution of food and drinking water during floods and famines, welfare and training programs for the rural youths, housing projects, repair and renovation of houses and so forth will gratify the basic requirements. The main

program like training programs for the rural poor will hold the youths from rural migration. These types of training programs may also be extended for the rural women, so that self-sustenance among this community can be realized.

- **Human Resource Development Programs:** The personality development programs, skill development programs, educational programs, integrated development projects require the involvement of youth and these will enable the rural people to overcome the conditions of poverty and depression and earn a better livelihood.
- **Trade and Industrial Promotion:** Rural masses are skilled at manufacturing and producing products such as handi-crafts, fabrication works, wood works, beedi rolling, agarbathi manufacturing, printing press and so forth. They are keen to always look out for ways for the promotion of their trade and industries, therefore, youth population do participate in assisting the rural people in promotion of their goods.
- **Government Support:** The government, central, state and local support is imperative at all the levels of rural development. Micro-financing and implementation of monetary transactions are necessary for the rural masses to be aware of so that they are able to effectively manage their finances. The role of youth is imperative in making them aware, guiding them and assisting them in case of any problems or difficulties.

Impediments to Youth Participation

There have been occurrence of impediments in the participation of youth and these are stated as follows: [2].

- **Poor Education and Training:** Education systems often fail to prepare young people adequately to participate in decision-making. They do not develop the necessary analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving through participatory, active learning. In some cases, young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making without ensuring that they receive adequate training or access to the appropriate information that would enable them to make informed decisions.
- **Weak Infrastructure:** In many countries, young people lack direct access to institutional systems and structures within governments, the media and private and civil society sectors. This severely impedes their ability to advocate for their rights. In the rare cases where young people have been able to influence or make decisions, barriers within complicated infrastructure have tended to limit implementation. This destroys young people's confidence and trust in such mechanisms.
- **Inequality and Exclusion:** Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of particular groups of young people is a big challenge within the youth sector, even for youth organizations. Creative mechanisms, such as the use of radio to reach out to rural illiterate youth in particular, must always be strived for and reviewed.

- **Cost:** It is mistakenly argued that involving young people in decision-making at all levels is more expensive than involving adults. The positive financial consequences of allowing young people to determine something that may have an impact on their own lives and others, and may be more eagerly accepted or practical are regularly overlooked.

Discussion

Youth are the young people that are skilled, possess efficient knowledge and capabilities and overall they possess the enthusiasm to work and accomplish something good. The youth who are involved in rural development, have adopted this area as their field and all the areas in rural development such as construction, education, employment generation, industries, agriculture, skill development, electricity, energy, water, require development and youth have been effectively involved. The youth are involved in various activities, but there are certain impediments on the way of their participation such as insufficient knowledge and information, weak infrastructure, cost and inequality and exclusion. The points of high and low factors may prove to be discriminatory and these verify the occurrence of barriers and impediments in the task of the youth. The participation of the youth intends to help build and control young people as assets. It has been extended through an inventive process led by young people, which itself has strengthened their aptitude to participate and lead. The challenges and the negative stereotypes of youth and reveals how young people can absolutely give to development in four operational areas: organizational development, policy and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

This subject aims to increase the understanding of the growing significance of, and better potential for the youth participation in development observation and to discover key issues and approaches. But it goes beyond the expression and style of many document advocacy research areas; which simply argue for a focus on youth participation. Rather, this research provides information on how to actually work with youth at a practical operational level in respect of policy and programming. It does this through the provision of capable and hopeful practice case studies and their associated resources, and a number of quality standards that will help organizations get started. When youth are involved in a practical and an operational level, rural development within the country would certainly take place in an effective manner and prove to be advantageous for the entire nation.

Conclusion

The role of youth in bringing about development of the rural communities have been regarded significant. In rural communities, the various areas in which the demand for rural participation has been encouraged are in agriculture, small-scale industries, skill development, education and employment opportunities. These are as are in an under-developed state and improvements need to be

made in them. The rural individuals are mostly employed in the agricultural sector. Apart from the agricultural sector, the other areas in which they are employed are small-scale industries. Hence, the youth contribute in bringing about improvements in the infrastructural facilities and promote empowerment opportunities among rural youth to meet better livelihoods opportunities. There has been classification of the activities that should be implemented for the development of the poverty stricken, deprived and economically weaker sections of the society. These are, agricultural programs, health programs for humans and non-humans, community development programs, human resource development programs, trade and industrial promotion and government support.

There are occurrence of various impediments within the course of participation of youth. These are, poor education and training, weak infrastructure, inequality and exclusion and cost. When the youth possess the skills and competencies and they aim to bring about improvements in rural communities in various areas, then they are required to put into operation the measures and strategies to bring about rural development. Research has indicated that rural individuals in most cases do not even possess the basic literacy skills. Therefore, emphasis is put upon establishment of schools and training centers to develop the basic literacy skills and generate information in terms of other academic concepts as well. In some cases, youth make visits to the homes of the rural individuals and assist them in the development of educational skills. In most cases, individuals migrate to urban areas and acquire education. Upon completion of their education, they return to their homes and render an effective contribution towards well-being of their families and communities. Therefore, it can be stated that acquisition of education and employment opportunities have enabled youth towards promoting rural development.

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