



Reshaping the future of agriculture: A youth and social media perspective

Mohit Kumar, Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee, and Saravanan Raj

Introduction: Global population is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050. The number of young people (aged 15 to 24) is also expected to increase to 1.3 billion by 2050, accounting for almost 14 per cent of the projected global population. Most were born in developing countries in Africa and Asia, where more than half of the population still live in rural areas. Youth population (15-24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1%) of India's total population. Facebook, India's most popular social network has last reported to have more than 241 million (17.95%) monthly active users. While, Facebook and WhatsApp keep dominating the space, the growth of Google+ is interesting at a time when it is dismantling itself. Globally mobile is driving Facebook's growth and revenues. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the Republic of India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. The densely populated state located in the northern region of the Indian subcontinent has over 200 million inhabitants and youth population is (15-24 yrs) near about 41 million.

Locale of the study: Uttar Pradesh state was selected on purpose and the districts (Kanpur and Lucknow) were selected for the study based on the youth population.

Methodology: The study has analysed qualitative and quantitative data collected from 80 rural youths involved in farming or other related activities, while using individual interview method.

Findings: Majority (68.75 %) of the rural youths were interested in paddy and wheat cultivation, followed by inorganic farming, dairy, vegetable, floriculture, mango and potato, respectively.

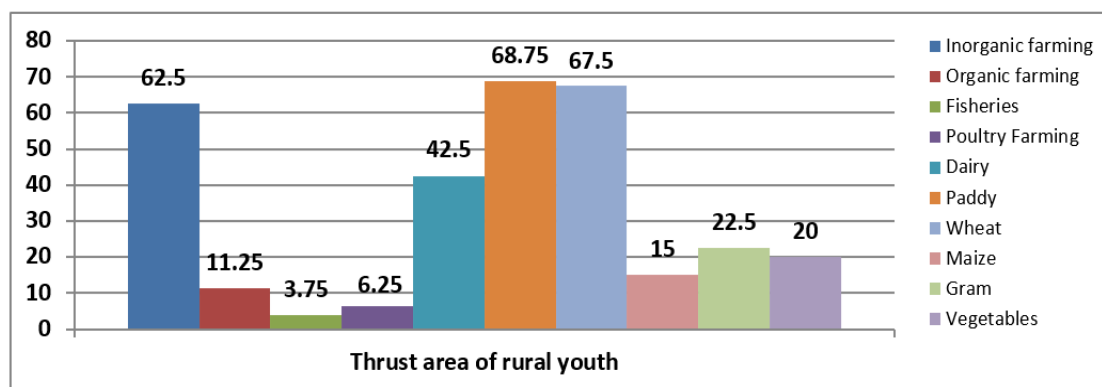


Fig. 1: Awareness level of rural youths about policy/programme (n= 80)

Fig. 2 shows the awareness level of the rural youths towards 'Youth in Agriculture' focussed programme/policies. Majority of the rural youths were aware about the Krishi Rin Mochan Yojna and Mukhyamantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna, followed by Skill India, Mukhyamantri Swarojgar Yojna and so on. Survey shows that there was a general lack of awareness about the programme/ policies focussing on the youths and agriculture.

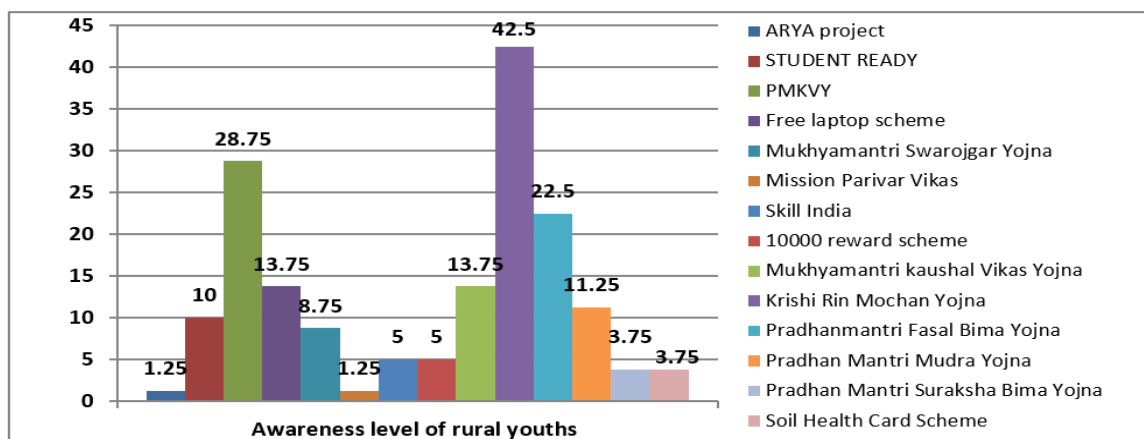


Fig. 2: Awareness Level of rural youth about policies and programmes related to agriculture (n=80)

Primary Source used by Rural Youths to Access Social Media: Fig.3 shows all the sources used by the rural youths to access social media. Majority of the rural youths were using feature phone which was a hurdle in frequent use of social media. For those who had smart phones, training was required for making better use of them in accessing required information through social media.

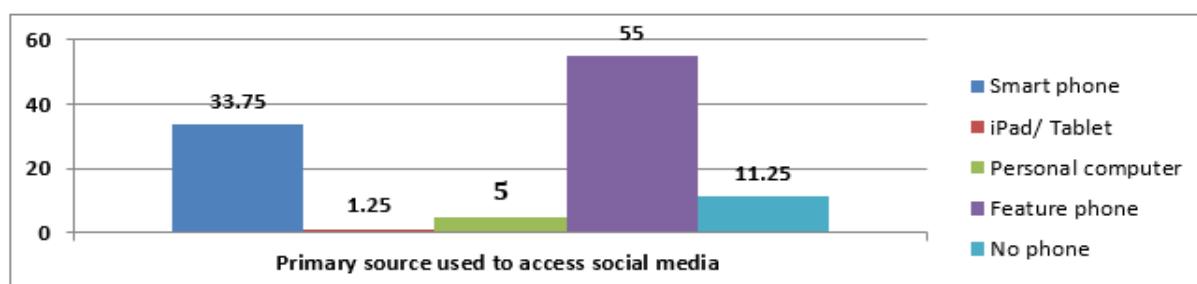


Fig. 3 Sources of social media access by rural youth (n=80)

Fig. 4 reveals that the majority of the rural youths were not involved in the any social media sites and majority of the rural youth were engage in social media sites only for the entertainment.

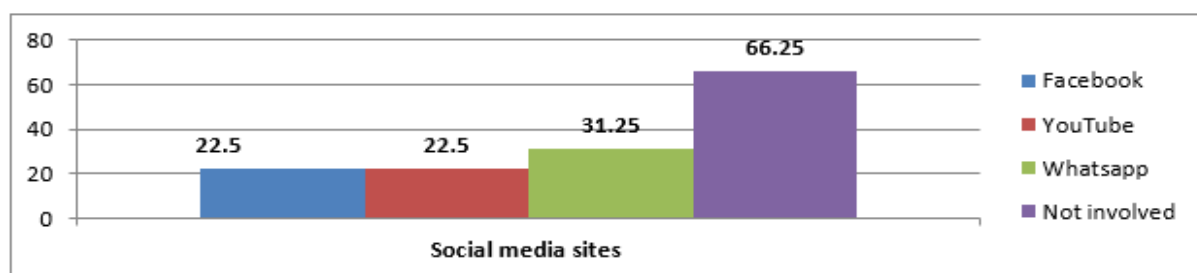


Fig. 4: Involvement in social media (n=80)

Table-1 indicates the training needs of rural youth on topics like seed treatment and nursery preparation. Being major agricultural operations, these should be urgently addressed by the appropriate authorities like SAMETI and line departments in agriculture and allied sectors.

Table 1: Training needs for the rural youths for the betterment of the farming

S. No.	Training needs	T. S	M. S.	R
1.	Seed selection	162	2.02	IV
2.	Seed treatment with chemicals	174	2.175	I
3.	Nursery preparation	170	2.12	II
4.	Fertilizer application	164	2.05	III
5.	Calculation of fertilizer dosage	158	1.97	V
6.	Identification of pests and diseases	154	1.92	VI

T.S. - Total Score, M.S. - Mean Score, R-Rank

Table 2: Challenges faced by youths in agriculture

S. No.	Constraints	T.S	M. S	R
1.	Lack of education	147	1.83	VII
2.	Lack of timely guidance by RAEO, ADO, to farmers	187	2.36	III
3.	Policies for youths/lack of number of focused policies	185	2.37	II
4.	Migration to urban areas due to unavailability of employment	193	2.50	I
5.	Decreased land holding size due to division of family	134	1.81	VIII
6.	Lack of training on modern agricultural technologies	154	2.08	VI
7.	Lack of awareness benefits of ICTs	160	2.31	IV
8.	Lack of alternative employment during lean period of agriculture	168	2.18	V

Table-2 shows that the major problem faced by the rural youth was migration and lack of youth focused policies, followed by lack of timely guidance by Agriculture Development Officers (ADOs), Village Development Officers (VDOs) and others.

Including agriculture in the school curriculum was the major suggestion given by the respondents, followed by strengthening higher education in agriculture. Agricultural education was perceived as a priority for practicing better agriculture by the respondents. Various suggestions as recommended by the respondents are discussed in table 3.

Table-3: Suitable strategies for overcoming the challenges and enhance the participation of farming youth (n=80)

S. No.	Suggestions	T.S	M. S	R
1.	Youth must be aware about agriculture through social media	166	2.27	IX
2.	Support from family members to adopt agriculture as a profession	162	2.18	XI
3.	Social inclusion of young farmers should be prioritized	167	2.19	X
4.	Loan procedure should be made easy	181	2.32	VI
5.	Availability of farm machinery at low price	195	2.43	III
6.	Loan should made available at no interest	189	2.42	IV
7.	Include agriculture in the school curriculum	210	2.62	I
8.	Strengthen higher education in agriculture	206	2.60	II
9.	Youths involvement in policy making	184	2.35	V
10.	Training should be given one time in a month to young farmers	174	2.25	VIII

(n=80)

Conclusion and recommendations: The study has observed that inorganic farming has been the major thrust area among the rural youths. It might be due to farming following green revolution has mostly been done inorganically which had gradually adversely affected the soil health. However, youth in farming felt that more demonstration of new technologies may be effective in improving the production, profit and sustainability of farming.

Besides, paddy and wheat crops have mostly been cultivated by the farming youth owing to the temperate climatic condition of the region. However, the study found that lack of awareness about the new

technologies/schemes/policies among the youth has been a major issue. The results of the study revealed that majority of the rural youths have not been involved in the use of social media as they use mostly only feature phones and are not aware about the usage of smart phones. The study further observed that both the farming and non-farming youth had inadequate access to trainings, guidance and exposure relating to the use and advantage of ICT gadgets and tools in farming. Training programmes related to the newer agricultural technologies is the need of the hour and the rural youth must have access to them. Similarly, training to the rural youths is also important pertaining to the cultivation of paddy and wheat. For this purpose the government may entrust the training to the KVKs, SAUs and NGOs, so as to effectively bring about the transformation in farming through the youth.

The government should promote adult education through creation of separate platforms by KVKs. More importantly, the policies with reference to agriculture should be strengthened so as to retain the youth who have been involved in farming out of compulsion. Government can distribute the Gram Panchayat land among the rural youth on lease, as it may be good way to attract youth in agriculture.

Complete report on 'Reshaping the future of agriculture: A youth and social media perspective' is available at www.manage.gov.in

Mohit Kumar is a MANAGE Intern and Ph.D Research Scholar at Chandra Sekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (mohitmayapur404@gmail.com)

Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee is MANAGE Fellow at National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, India (suchiradipta@hotmail.com)

Saravanan Raj is Director (Agricultural Extension) at National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, India (saravananraj@hotmail.com)

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in the document are that of the authors based on the research conducted and are not necessarily those of MANAGE or the officials interacted with during the study.



National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
(An organisation of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 500 030, Telangana State, India
www.manage.gov.in