

Youth in Agriculture for Attracting the Next Generation of Farmers

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INTRODUCTION

The farming industry is central to the provision of food security, sustainable growth, and poverty reduction. Nevertheless, it is more and more threatened by the aging population of farmers and the lack of interest among young people in agriculture as a profession. With over 60% of the population in nations such as India working in agriculture, but with only a fraction being young people, the industry requires a generational makeover. Bridging this gap is vital for a food-secure and economically stable future.

Why Youth in Agriculture Matters

1. Demographic Dividend

Youth represent a significant portion of the global population. According to the UN, over 1.2 billion people are aged 15–24, the largest youth population in history. Harnessing this demographic potential is essential for agricultural transformation.

2. Innovation and Technology Adoption

Youth are more receptive to innovation, ICTs, and sustainable approaches. Their involvement injects new energy into farming, promoting the utilization of advanced methods like precision agriculture, drones, artificial intelligence, and hydroponics.

3. Climate Action and Sustainable Agriculture

Climate change imperils agricultural production. Youth are more sensitive to the environment and can spearhead efforts in climate-resilient farming, organic farming, and agroecology.



Source: Daily Excelsior

Challenges Faced by Youth in Agriculture

In spite of the promise, several obstacles stand in the way of youth involvement in agriculture:

1. Perception of Farming as Unprofitable and Labor-Intensive

Agriculture is seen as a last option occupation, characterized by poor returns, backbreaking work, and unpredictability because of weather and market instability.

2. Absence of Land and Credit Access

Young budding farmers also lack access to land, capital, and inputs required to establish farming businesses. Land tenure regulations and inheritance make things more complex.

3. Restricted Agricultural Education and Extension Services

Curricula of agricultural education tend to be antiquated, with few vocational training programs available. Extension services scarcely focus on needs related to youths, and accessing information and advice is challenging for young farmers.

4. Peer Pressure and Urban Migration

Young people are enticed by city lives and career opportunities, thus being drawn out of rural lands. The craving for improved standard living and societal prestige renders off-farm work more attractive.

Strategies to Attract Youth into Agriculture

To render agriculture attractive and sustainable for the youth, integrated, multi-sectoral strategies are required. The following are some of the main strategies:



Source: Krishi Jagran

1. Modernizing Agricultural Education

- Reforming agricultural courses in schools, colleges, and vocational institutions to incorporate modern, practical, and entrepreneurial content.
- Introducing agricultural entrepreneurship as a career option.
- Encouraging agribusiness management, digital agriculture, and environmental sustainability in the curriculum.

2. Encouraging Agri-Tech and Digital Agriculture

- Utilizing mobile apps, drones, remote sensing, and IoT to transform farming.
- Promoting youth startups in agritech, fintech, and e-commerce platforms to sell farm produce.

- Training programs in precision farming and data-driven agriculture.

3. Financial and Land Access Reforms

- Government-sponsored loan schemes and grants for young farmers.
- Group farming models, leasing of land, and cooperative farming to facilitate land access problems.
- Setting up agri-incubation centers offering mentorship, capital, and land for pilot projects.

4. Youth-Led Agribusiness Incubation

- Establishing incubation hubs in agricultural universities and rural regions.
- Facilitating innovations in food processing, value addition, organic agriculture, and supply chain logistics.

- Matching youth with angel investors and crowd funding platforms to fund agribusiness.

5. Strengthening Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

- Enhancing road infrastructure, internet connectivity, and rural electrification.
- Establishing rural marketplaces and cold storage facilities to provide improved returns to farmers.
- Promoting village knowledge centers and digital literacy initiatives for young farmers.

6. Policy and Institutional Support

- National policies giving emphasis to youth in agriculture development plans.
- Youth agricultural cooperatives and organizations.
- Youth-friendly modules within extension services and farmer training.

Case Studies and Success Stories

1. Digital Green, India

A tech-based NGO trains village youth to make short videos showing innovative agricultural practices that are disseminated within communities. This enables wide adoption and engaging younger minds into the practice.

2. YIAP (Youth in Agribusiness Programme, Africa)

A highly replicable program offering business development support, market access, and financial capital to young agripreneurs.

3. Rural Youth Hubs (Philippines)

Government and NGO-supported youth-led initiatives providing training in sustainable agriculture, marketing, and agro-tourism.

The Role of Media and Awareness

Positive media representation of farming, social media campaigns, documentaries, and reality shows based on successful young farmers can motivate others. Portraying agriculture as an

innovative, noble, and profitable industry is necessary to alter societal perceptions.

CONCLUSION

Engaging young people in agriculture is not only a choice but a must. With the proper policies, education, technology, and support systems, agriculture can be a desirable and sustainable profession for the future generation. Investing in young people today secures food, rural wealth, and climate resilience for the future. It's time to rebrand agriculture and enable young people to own their agricultural future.

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