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Problems faced by the Budding Agri-prenuers in the Cooch Behar district of West Bengal

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Abstract

In India youth constitute a numerically dominant potential and resourceful segment of the population. Agriculture sector is major employment provider, and contributes 16–17% of the GDP to our country economy. It is obvious that, entrepreneurship in agriculture is having a great scope for the young generation of our society. And they will only be interested if it becomes economically and intellectually attractive. The present study makes an attempt to find out the problems faced by the budding Agriprenuers. A total of 200 respondents were selected for the study from Cooch Behar II and Mathabanga II blocks of Cooch Behar district. The data was collected via structured interview Schedule and ranked using Mean Percentage Score (MPS). From the study it is known that Socio-Economic problems has appeared as the major problem followed by management and technical problems, financial and infrastructure problems and marketing problems. Problems faced by the budding Agri-prenuers can be overcome to some extent by promoting Agriprenuership as a career by Government and Educational institutes and also financial support is to be provided to some extent by the Government.

Keywords: Agriprenuership, financial and infrastructure problems, management and technical problems, marketing problems, socio-economic problems

Introduction

India is an agrarian nation with vast land available for farming, and a sizable portion of the population depends on agriculture and related industries. The agriculture industry has a significant potential to boost national GDP while also directly employing and supporting a sizable and vulnerable portion of society. Only when farming becomes both economically and intellectually appealing, younger generation will be interested in pursuing it as a career. The transformation of Indian agriculture into an appealing and lucrative business requires a move from agriculture to agribusiness. Even if some of the farm rural youth shift from primary agriculture production activities to secondary agriculture (processing, value addition) and agri entrepreneurship, the present level of agriculture production may not get affected at all (Singh *et al.*, 2019) [8]. It is imperative to seize the chance for agricultural entrepreneurship, which can in turn properly and permanently address the current issues related to agricultural production, profitability, and unemployment. These issues include rising unemployment, underemployment, slow growth in the agricultural sector, and the sector's inability to meet the needs of people's basic needs. From his study, Saxena (2012) [7] reported that the main issue facing by rural youth is that they do not view entrepreneurship as a viable career path. According to Bairwa *et al.* (2014) [2] the term Agriprenuership is synonym with entrepreneurship in agriculture and refers to agribusiness establishment in agriculture and allied sector. A job concept called agribusiness can help rural residents become financially independent. Kabir *et al.* (2012) [4] study in their study confirmed that most of the entrepreneurs have improved their socio-economic conditions through small-scale entrepreneurship. It has the ability to support a number of social and economic advancements, including the creation of jobs, the generation of money, eradication of poverty, and advancements in the areas of nutrition, health, and general food security in the economy at large.

Agripreneurship is both a chance and a necessity to increase output and profitability in the agricultural and related industries. A significant issue with Indian agriculture is that most farmers carry on the practises of their ancestors or neighbours because they view farming as a family tradition. Financial institutions should open a new window for operators of agricultural-based small businesses as a way to enhance the move towards commercialization of farming activities Kazungu (2014) [5]. Agriculture is a very diverse industry, and operations associated to it encompass a wide range of economic activities in addition to being a source of income. Agriculture must be viewed as an enterprise with a strong management foundation. Baliwada and Premavathi (2017) [3] found that inadequate marketing facilities was the severe one due to lack of wide range of market network in nearby production areas were the problems faced in starting Agripreneurship. Similar to any other business, there should be careful planning for the demand forecast, technology selection, resource inventory, requirement for outside inputs, skill level of the available human resources and their training requirements, infrastructure and services needed for carrying out various operations, and marketing. The first step in encouraging successful entrepreneurship in agriculture is to think and behave in this way. Abdullah and Sulaiman (2013) concluded that the decision on whether to be involved in agriculture entrepreneurship is not only confined to attitude, acceptance and knowledge but is also determined by the other factors such as family support, government support and the intensity of promotion by related government agencies and related authorities. Ray *et al.* (2020) [6] from their study stated that farm youth face severe constraints in terms of limited access to land ownership rights, lack of collateral for loans and limited involvement in policy-related aspects which were ranked top three hurdles for youth Agripreneurship. Because

of many challenges and issues involved in Agri-Entrepreneurship rural youth were lacking behind to start an Agri-enterprise, as a result present study was conducted on Problems faced by the Budding Agri-prenuers in the Cooch Behar district of West Bengal

Methodology

Cooch Behar district was selected purposively for the present study. Cooch Behar has a total of 12 blocks. From these 12 blocks, 2 blocks, i.e. Cooch Behar -II, and Mathabanga -II were selected purposively and from each block 2 panchayats were selected randomly. From each panchayat 5 villages were selected randomly. This leads to selection of total 4 panchayats and 20 villages. A total of 200 respondents (10 from each village) were selected randomly for the study. To know the problems facing by the rural youth on adoption of Agripreneurship structured interview schedule was developed with data gathered from the research reviews and in internet. All the problems were categorised into Socio-personal problems, Management and Technical problems, Financial and Infrastructure problems, Marketing problems and Miscellaneous problems. The score assigned to more severe, severe and less severe was 3, 2 and 1 to each category, respectively. Ranking to the each statement is given based on the Mean percent score. MPS (Mean Per cent Score) is the total score obtained by the respondents for that item, divided by the maximum obtainable score for the item and multiplied by 100.

$$MPS = \frac{\text{Total Obtained score}}{\text{Maximum obtainable score}} \times 100$$

Results

Table 1: Socio-personal problems facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

S. No	Problems	Obtained Score (Maximum obtainable Score -600)	MPS	Rank
1	Family is pressurising for job, not for agripreneurship.	547	91.17	I
2	Relatives not considering agripreneurship as a carrier option.	546	91	II
3	Socio-cultural rigidity do not support to establish agri enterprise.	450	75	VI
4	Agripreneurship is considered as low socio-economic status in our society.	456	76	V
5	Regional sentiments do not allow outsiders to establish and run Agri enterprise.	477	79.50	IV
6	Locality and endemic problems related with raw material, inputs and outputs.	482	80.33	III
7	Social politics.	435	72.50	VII

The above table shows that 'Family is pressurising for job not for agripreneurship' was the top most socio-personal problem perceived by the respondents and assigned first rank with 91.17 MPS, it may be because parents of majority of respondents were not able to take risk and are preferring job as it gives security and safety. The next problem perceived by graduates was relatives not considering Agripreneurship as carrier option and assigned second rank with 91 MPS. Locality and endemic problems related with raw material, inputs and outputs was assigned third rank with MPS of 80.33

because majority of agriculture products or inputs were produced seasonally and in certain localities. Regional sentiments do not allow outsiders to establish and run agri enterprise was assigned fourth rank with MPS of 79.50. Agripreneurship is considered as low socio-economic status in our society is assigned with fifth rank with MPS of 76. Socio-cultural rigidity does not support to establish agri enterprise with MPS of 75 and social politics with MPS of 72.5 was assigned with sixth and seventh ranks respectively.

Table 2: Management and technical problems facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

Sl. No	Problems	Obtained Score (Maximum obtainable Score -600)	MPS	Rank
1	Lack of knowledge about different aspects of Agripreneurship.	522	87	I
2	Non availability of specialized technical support centres for Agri enterprise.	491	81.83	III
3	Less utilization of capacity of staff.	457	76.17	VI
4	Inefficient management of staff and workers.	476	79.33	V
5	Workers have lack of dedication in achieving enterprise goal.	346	57.67	IX
6	Non availability of trained staff.	490	81.67	IV
7	Less number of visit / tours to various enterprises for exposure.	432	72	VIII
8	Most of the inputs and products of Agri enterprise are perishable in nature so require cold storage, transportation and other facilities.	449	74.83	VII
9	Quick transportation and legal formalities require for perishable Agri products and by-products.	496	82.67	II

The above data represents that Lack of Knowledge about different aspects of Agripreneurship with MPS of 87 was the mostly perceived management and technical problem, followed by Quick transportation and legal formalities require for perishable agri products and by-products with MPS of 82.67. Rank 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were assigned to Non availability of specialized technical support centre for Agri-enterprise with MPS of 81.83, Non availability of trained staff with MPS of 81.67 the result may be lack of proper training at ground level and also less number of training institutes in

their own village, Insufficient management of staff and workers with MPS of 79.33, Less utilization of capacity of staff” with MPS 76.17 which means actual production of enterprise is not up to the capacity of staff, Most of the inputs and products of agri-enterprise are perishable in nature so require cold storage, transportation and other facilities with MPS of 74.83, Less number of visit or tour to various enterprises for exposure with MPS of 72 and Workers have lack of dedication in achieving enterprise goal with MPS of 57.67 respectively.

Table 3: Financial and Infrastructure Problems facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

S. No	Problems	Obtained Score (Maximum obtainable Score -600)	MPS	Rank
1	High risk was involved in Agri-preneurship	542	90.33	III
2	No income security in Agripreneurship.	354	59	XII
3	Credit policies are Unfriendly.	459	76.50	VIII
4	Complicated and difficult in the loaning procedure.	443	73.83	XI
5	Lack of own money with entrepreneur.	508	84.67	IV
6	Less financial institutions for Agri-enterprise.	449	74.83	X
7	Lack of faith of financial institutions on Agri-enterprises.	328	54.67	XIII
8	High cost of land for establishing Agri-enterprise.	472	78.67	VII
9	Infrastructure facilities cost was high.	560	93.33	II
10	Raw materials and inputs cost was high.	570	95	I
11	Packaging material cost was high.	475	79.17	VI
12	Wages or cost of labour was high.	502	83.67	V
13	Non-availability of infrastructure like road facilities etc.	453	75.50	IX
14	Irregularity in supply of electricity.	258	43	XIV
15	Shortage of water.	221	36.83	XV

Data from the above table indicate that Raw materials and inputs cost was high with MPS of 95 ranked first followed by Infrastructure facilities cost was high with MPS of 93.33 ranked second. The rank 3 was assigned to High risk was involved in Agripreneurship with MPS of 90.33. Lack of own money with entrepreneur with MPS of 84.67 assigned 4th rank, Rank 5 was assigned to Wages or costs of labour was high with MPS of 83.67. Rank 6 was assigned to Packaging material cost was high with MPS score of 79.17. Rank 7 was assigned to High cost of land for establishing Agri-enterprise with MPS 78.67. Rank 8 was given to Credit policies are

Unfriendly with MPS of 76.50. Rank 9 was assigned to Non-availability of infrastructure facilities like road facilities etc. with MPS of 75.50. Rank 10 was assigned to less financial institutions for Agri-enterprise with MPS of 74.83. Ranks 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were assigned to Complicated and difficult in the loaning procedure with MPS of 73.83, No income security in Agripreneurship with MPS of 59, Lack of faith of financial institutions for Agri-enterprise with MPS of 54.67, Irregular supply of Electricity with MPS of 43 and Shortage of water with MPS of 36.83 respectively.

Table 4: Marketing Problems facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

S. No	Constraints	Obtained Score (Maximum obtainable Score -600)	MPS	Rank
1	Product certification is a time-consuming process.	501	83.50	I
2	Less numbers of distributors are available.	430	71.67	II
3	Lack of knowledge about demand area.	410	68.33	V
4	Product promotion cost was high.	353	58.83	X
5	High competition.	312	52	XI
6	Fluctuation in demand of product.	261	43	XII
7	Fluctuation in supply of raw material.	374	62.33	VII
8	Marketing problems due to seasonal product.	399	66.50	VI
9	Exploitation of entrepreneurs by middle man.	360	60	IX
10	Inefficient market information about price signals and forecasting.	424	70.67	IV
11	Limited reach to markets.	370	61.67	VIII
12	Rigid rules and regulations in marketing and business.	430	71.67	II

Above data reveals that out of all statements Product certification is a time-consuming process agency like Agmark, FPO, FSSAI etc. taking more time in product certification, Less numbers of distributors are available, Rigid rules and regulations in marketing and business were the top three problems ranked 1 and 2 with MPS of 83.5, 71.67 and 71.67 respectively. Ranks 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were assigned to Inefficient market information about price signals and

forecasting, Lack of knowledge about demand area, Marketing problems due to seasonal product, Fluctuation in supply of raw material, Limited reach to markets, Exploitation of entrepreneurs by middle man, Product promotion cost was high, with MPS of 70.67, 68.33, 66.50, 62.33, 61.67, 60, 58.83 respectively. Ranks 11 and 12 were assigned for MPS of 52 and 43 to High competition and Fluctuation in demand of product respectively.

Table 5: Miscellaneous problems facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

S. No	Problems	Obtained score (Maximum obtainable Score -600)	MPS	Rank
1	Problem of obsolescence of indigenous technologies.	358	59.67	II
2	Problems related to labour union.	342	57	IV
3	Complex legal formalities were involved in setting up Agri-enterprise.	379	63.17	I
4	Lengthy procedure for getting pollution clearance certificates and formalities.	344	57.33	III
5	Corruption at every stage.	324	54	V

Above data represents that Complex legal formalities were involved in setting up Agri-enterprise with MPS of 63.17 was expressed by majority of respondents and ranked first. The rank 2 was assigned to Problem of obsolescence of indigenous technologies with MPS of 59.67 and rank 3 was assigned to Lengthy procedure for getting pollution clearance certificates and formalities with MPS score of 57.33. Rank 4 and 5 were assigned to Problems related to labour union with MPS score of 57 and Corruption at every stage with MPS of 54 respectively.

Table 6: Overall Constraints facing by the Budding Agripreneurs

S. No	Problems	Obtained Score	MPS	Rank
1	Socio-Economic Problems	3393	80.79	I
2	Management and Technical problems	4159	77.02	II
3	Financial and Infrastructure Problems	6594	73.27	III
4	Marketing Problems	4624	64.22	IV
5	Miscellaneous Problems	1747	58.23	V

Maximum obtainable Score -4200, 5400, 9000, 7200, 3000
Above table shows that Socio-economic problems and management and technical problems were the majorly perceived problems by respondents and assigned with rank first and second with MPS of 80.79 and 77.02 respectively followed by financial and infrastructure problems with MPS of 73.27, marketing problems with MPS of 64.22 and miscellaneous problems with MPS of 58.23 were assigned third, fourth and fifth ranks respectively.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is the key to transforming a developing nation into a developed one. Agriculture offers several opportunities for entrepreneurship. The one of the ways to end rural poverty in India is through Agripreneurship. The rural young must therefore be inspired to pursue career in Agripreneurship, with support structures for training and maintenance offering all essential help. From the aforementioned research, it can be inferred that the main issues faced by respondents are socio-personal problems because the majority of respondents' families are not prepared to start an Agri- enterprise as it involves risk. An individual who is confident, risk bearer, honest, visionary and innovative can prove to be a right agri-entrepreneur.

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