



## Study on Factors Responsible for Shifting of Rural Youth from Agriculture to other Occupation

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**In India, rural youth are the precious human assets who can play an important role in the development of agriculture and other allied activities. In this situation now it is widely felt that potential rural youth are mass shifting from rural areas to neighboring cities for gainful employment opportunities. The present study has been formulated with the key objective to identify the factors responsible for the shifting of rural youth from rural areas to neighboring cities. The study has been conducted in Coimbatore district with a sample of 120 rural youths. Difficult to run their daily life due to inadequate income from agriculture, unemployment, under employment, poverty, small land holdings and low production, non availability of inputs in required time and labour problem were the major push factors. Employment opportunities, high income, availability of good infrastructure facilities and lower risk from natural hazards were the major pull factors.**

**Key words :** Agriculture, Push and pull factors, Rural youth, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu

Rural youth involved in agricultural activities starts from sowing to marketing. In addition to agriculture, they are also involved in allied activities like dairy, fisheries etc., There are also possibility to involve rural youth in areas like input management, seed processing, fertilizer application, farm mechanization, protected cultivation, precision farming, post harvest management, value addition, quality assurance, food safety, marketing, information communication technology, advisory services etc., which have lot of scope of providing self employment opportunities. Hence, it is the time to make the youth as job providers rather than job seekers. Though lot of opportunities are available for development of rural youth, because of wide spread illiteracy in rural areas, lack of proper guidance, lack of interest and confidence and leadership skills leads to poor participation of rural youth in agriculture and allied activities. Similarly most of the parents are not interested to involve their children in agriculture. Some time they feel that doing agriculture is inferior than other occupation. So youth find it little more attractive and remunerative to go to these areas. Moreover now a days considering the growth of industrial sector there is great scope for remunerative employment opportunities and hence youth are attracted towards industrial sectors.

Anamica (2010) found that majority of the low income level (93.33%), small land holdings (86.66%), debtness (83.09%) and lower wages (34.44%) were the major push factors reported by the migrants. Frequent crop failure due to aberrant monsoon (23.33%) and discrimination or inequality (13.33%) also acts as push factors. Unemployment or lesser employment (11.11%) also acted as push factor for

less proportion of respondents.

Anamica (2010) found that among pull factors, better standard of living (87.33%) and higher wages (68.89%) were the predominant pull factors expressed by the migrants. The other factors like better infrastructure facility (25.56%) and better social linkage (23.33%) were reported by a considerable percentage of respondents. Work with less drudgery and safety and eco friendly environment were reported as pull factors for 20.00 per cent and 10.00 per cent of respondents, respectively.

In the light of the above, the present study has been formulated with the key objective to identify the factors responsible for the migrating behaviour of rural youth from agriculture to other occupation. In Tamil Nadu such trend is widely felt in Coimbatore district and several researches also confirm their trends. Hence, Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu was selected for the study purpose.

### Material and Methods

Coimbatore district was purposively selected as the study area since it is one of the agriculturally potential areas in Tamil Nadu. And also it is the third largest and most industrialized city. More than 25,000 small, medium and large scale industries, textile mills and factories are available in Coimbatore. Apart from this, the rural youth changed their mind set from employing into professions other than agriculture. The rural youth think that income from agriculture is insufficient and unreliable in meeting their present needs. Coimbatore district consists of twelve blocks and out of these, Annur and Karamadai blocks were purposively selected. Totally 120 respondents were

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selected from the above study area by employing simple random sampling method. Percentage analysis was used to study analyze the data. Also for the study the push and pull factors were initially identified based on the review of literature and discussion made with experts, experienced behavioural scientists, farm scientists and local rural

youths. The identified push and pull factors were refined and finalized after the pilot study.

### Results and Discussion

The results related to push and pull factors responsible for the migration behaviour of the rural youth are given in Table 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their push factor**

Push factor for shifting	No*	Percentage	Rank
Unemployment and under employment in rural areas and poverty	83	69.16	II
Lack of remunerative price for agricultural commodities in the market	46	38.33	VII
Lack of institutions for higher education	39	32.50	VIII
Small land holdings and low production	77	64.16	III
Difficult to run their daily life due to inadequate income from agriculture	90	75.00	I
Conversion of agricultural lands into plots	16	13.33	XI
Labour problem	61	50.83	V
Burden of loan	10	8.33	XII
Lack of remunerative non agricultural jobs in rural settings	31	25.83	IX
Lack of infrastructure facilities	25	20.83	X
Drought and scarcity of water	55	45.83	VI
Non availability of inputs in required time	68	56.66	IV
Mean		41.73	

\* (n=120) \*Multiple response

#### Push factors

It could be observed from the table 1 that majority of the respondents (75.00 per cent) in the study area expressed that they were paid lower wages for the agricultural work like land preparation, sowing, planting, weeding and harvesting, which is not sufficient to run their life. This might be the major economic push factor, which leads to shifting. This findings are in line with the findings of Seetharaman (1987). Further, about seventy percentage of the respondents stated that the prevalence of tremendous unemployment and under employment issues have forced them to move to non agricultural activities.

It is felt that the introduction of labour saving machineries are vastly responsible for such trend. Similar findings were observed by, Ramasubramaniam (2003) in a different magnitude, where the foremost push factors were, unemployment and lesser employment (87.33 per cent) followed by frequent crop failure (84.50 per cent).

More than half of the respondents had (64.16 per cent) small land holdings and with this available land they could get only low production. Due to population growth, land become a scarce commodity and it gets divided among the family members generation after generation, resulting in fragmentation of land holding, which leads to low production. This might be one of the reasons for shifting from agriculture.

Majority of the respondents expressed that non availability of inputs in the appropriate time

(56.66 per cent) and lack of information from the government about the input supply, which affects the crop cultivation. This leads to poor involvement of rural youth in farming. During the peak season, labour availability for agricultural operations is the major problem as expressed by 50.83 per cent of the respondents. Hence, this might be one of the push factor for shifting from agriculture to other occupation. Nearly half of the respondents (45.83 per cent) expressed that frequent drought and water scarcity in the study area leads to failure of crop and finally financial loss to the respondents. Hence, the respondents ranked it as the sixth push factor. The farmers raise different crops with available resources and with all difficulties, but the products, are not sold in the market for good price, which leads to poor income as stated by 38.33 per cent of the respondents.

While overseeing the educational level of the respondents it was found to be higher literacy level. However, respondents need for higher educational facilities to enrich their knowledge for better job might be one of the push factors as felt by 32.50 per cent of the respondents for shifting. Lack of industries, factories and value added units in the study area is one the push factors for the 25.83 per cent of the respondents shifting their mind set for want of jobs and better income. Due to the increase in population, the basic infrastructure facilities and living conditions become worsened in rural areas, which tends the youth (20.83 per cent) to diversify their occupations. Now a days, cultivable agricultural land is being converted into plots due to, urbanization and land

becomes, scarce commodity, which was expressed by 13.33 per cent of the respondents to continue their life in agriculture. Some of the farmers in the study area expressed that they availed agricultural loans and they are in a position to repay the amount might be the push factor for a meager percentage (8.33 per cent) respondents.

**Table 2. The distribution of respondents according to their pull factor**

Pull factor for shifting	No*	Percentage	Rank
High income	74	61.66	II
Higher level of educational facilities	37	30.83	VI
Lower risk from natural hazards	55	45.83	IV
Employment opportunities	79	65.83	I
Better social life and standard of living	43	35.83	V
Availability of good infrastructure facilities	68	56.66	III
Mean		49.44	

\* (n=120) \*Multiple response

Majority of the respondents (61.66 per cent) are involved in differential occupations, which had given more income generation and better standard of living is another reason for shifting from agriculture. Availability of infrastructure facilities such as hospitals, schools and marketing facilities attracted 56.66 per cent of the rural youth for shifting. In order to overcome the severe water scarcity existed in the study area, rural youth tend to escape from agriculture and also stated that less risk was involved in the non agricultural jobs (45.83 per cent) might be one of the pull factors for shifting. Better jobs and high income ultimately attracted rural youth towards better social life and standard of living might be one of the pull factors for 35.83 per cent of respondents. Lack of educational facilities in the study area is one of the push factor, which primarily attracted 30.83 percent of the respondents to get more educational opportunities and facilities through shifting. Similar findings were also reported by Ramasubramanian (2003) who stated that the foremost pull factors were higher income (87.33 per cent) and better standard of living (54.92 per cent). The overall analysis showed that the mean value for pull factor (49.44 per cent) was more compared to push factors (41.73 per cent). Hence, the pull factor considerably contributed more for shifting from agriculture to other occupations.

### Conclusion

The prime channels for the agricultural information for rural youth are their families and relatives. Hence, the transfer of technology machineries should be strengthened in rural social system to focus on rural youth. There is a need for a holistic approach to educate the young farmers with all the necessary skills required to succeed as agricultural entrepreneurs. This helps the rural youth in gaining confidence and empowerment which will facilitate the young people to continue in farming activities. Rural youth have expressed the need for separate

### Pull factor

It could be inferred from table 2 that majority of the respondents (65.83 per cent) expressed that lot of employment opportunities are available in the non agricultural sector, which provides livelihood security. This might be the one of the pull factor for shifting.

guidelines to avail services from financial institutions and credit organizations. Encouraging the rural youth to avail credit facilities and proper training to reimburse the amount in time could facilitate, the rural youth to do agriculture in a profitable manner, there by, it could be possible for the rural youth to continue in farming.

Establishing community computer centres with internet facilities are the foremost requirement in the villages to access the worldwide information. such as price forecast, pest and disease forecast, weather forecast and crop management.

Establishment of machinery hub on custom hiring will help rural youth to reduce cost of cultivation, which will facilitate involvement in farming related activities. Prompt guidance of extension officials will help the rural youth to have regular updated information. Rural youth are to be provided with adequate skill training on vocational agricultural activities. They have to be provided with entrepreneurial skills to promote young rural entrepreneurs in the next few years.

With the development patterns and future projections on urbanisation, the growth of manufacturing and agricultural development, it is very likely that internal migration in India, both temporary and permanent, will persist and grow. This will transfer populations from rural/agriculture to urban/non-farm areas and occupations. However, new policies must be implemented to secure the status of the migrant workers and ensure that benefits are distributed evenly (Deshingkar, 2006). Priorities should include reducing the costs and risks faced by migrants; ensuring that entitlements to state services are portable; facilitating migration through transport and information policies; facilitating remittances; improving accountability and transparency in labour markets; and raising awareness of and enforcing labour rights (Deshingkar and Anderson, 2004; Wiggins and Deshingkar, 2007).

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