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Participation of School Dropout Teenage Rural Youth in Selected Agricultural Activities

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to determine the participation of school drop out teenage rural youth in selected agricultural activities. The study further explored the relationship between the selected characteristics of the respondent and their participation. The locale of the study was two villages of Trisal upazila under Mymensingh district. To measure participation in selected agricultural activities, Participation Index (PAI) was computed to determine the rank order of 46 participation items. The PAI could range from 0 to 400. The Participation Index (PAI) of 46 items related to agricultural activities indicated that indices of two items were above 300 in rank order which were 'harvesting of field crops (309)' and 'storing of crops (301)'; 3 items were above 200 namely 'weeding of field crops (252)', 'seedbed preparation of field crops (223)' and 'seed sowing of field crops (204)'. The first twenty activities in rank order were mostly related with crop and few livestock activities. The overall participation of school drop out teenage rural youth in selected agricultural activities revealed that largest proportion (69%) had low participation. Out of 10, 8 independent variables namely age, education, agricultural knowledge, physical health, participation in activities during leisure time, family income, assets owned by parents and participation mindedness for non-farm activities had significant positive relationships while length of drop out was negatively correlated with the participation of school dropout teenage rural youth in selected agricultural activities.

Keywords: *Participation, agricultural activities, school dropout, rural youth.*

Introduction

Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has achieved some partial success in its quest for economic and social development. But yet there is a long way to offer the vast population a reasonable standard of living and social uplift. There remains yawning gaps in economic growth with very poor rural people. Poverty alleviation and employment generation for the vast segments of the population, especially the youngs, have hardly been a success (Mia, 2002). Demographic pressure coupled with the development of capital-intensive agriculture in Bangladesh drives many of her young people from the villages to towns. The problems and frequent unemployment among the youth reflect disjointedness of a society. Youth bear the main brunt of economic crisis and unemployment (Touraine, 1991).

Bangladesh has been a land of young people who dwell mostly in rural areas and live within agricultural environment. Bangladesh accounts nearly 160 million people with 826 people live in per square kilometer. Nearly half of the population of Bangladesh belongs to 0 to 15 years of age category and nearly three-fourths 0 to 35 years. However, individuals aged 15-29 constitute 29 percent of the total population (BBS, 2010).

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The majority of the dropout teen-youth in rural areas do not have the opportunity to develop their skill and have little access to formal and non-formal educational facilities. Socially, youth of Bangladesh are often vaguely identified as a separate group and not recognized as a distinct economic group. But they constitute a significant part of the mainstream of development in Bangladesh. In rural homes a village young boy of 10 years, generally becomes a part of the family labour force. The transition from child labour to youth labour is hardly noticed. But the teenage youth have special economic needs and have many direct and indirect economic and, participation in household activities (Anwar, 1996).

The Department of Youth Development expanded its programmes to 470 upazilas of the country and gave priority to motivation, literacy, skill development training and micro-credit delivery to rural youth. About fifty thousand young men and women received entrepreneurial training (Anonymous, 1998). The member of residential training centres for livestock, poultry and psiculture increased from 21 to 64 to cover all districts.

In view of the urgent need of organizing and developing drop out teenage rural youth extension programmes and to have an understanding of the school dropout teenage rural youth, the study has been undertaken keeping the following objectives: to determine and describe the participation of school dropout teenage rural youth in selected agricultural activities; to determine and describe the selected personal, social, economic and psycholigical characteristics of rural youth; and to explore the relationship between the selected characteristics of the school dropout teenage rural youth and their participation in selected agricultural activities.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two villages namely Dugulia and Baniadhala of Trishal upazila under Mymensingh district. The poverty of the poor families and the unemployment situation of the school dropout teenage rural youths have led the researcher to undertake these villages as locale of research. The two selected villages had 114 school dropout teenage rural youths families with 129 school dropout teenage rural youths. At first, about 78% school dropout teenage rural youth families (family having at least one school dropout teenage rural youth) were selected from each selected village by proportionate random method. Then, one school drop out teenage rural youth was selected from each selected family (random method also used to select a youth when a family was having more than one youth). Thus 90 school dropout teenage rural youths were selected from 114 school drop out teenage rural youth families, which constituted the sample for the research. Many factors were likely to influence the participation of school drop out teenage rural youth in agricultural activities. For selection independent variables, the researcher undertook few visits in the locale of research to have an understanding of the respondents, their parents and the environment. Along with the experiences of visit related documents were reviewed, formal discussing were made with the experts and finally 10 characteristics (5 personal, 1 social, 3 economic and psychological) were selected as independent variables. The characteristics were age, education, length of drop out, agricultural knowledge, physical health, participation in activities during leisure time, family farm

size, family income, assets owned by parents and participation mindedness for non-farm activities. Considering all these realities and in accordance with the objectives of the study, participation in agricultural activities was finally selected as dependent variable.

After experiencing from the respondent's of locale of research, a list of 46 agricultural activities related to field crop, vegetables, fruits, livestock, fisheries and tree plantation were selected in which the school drop out teenage rural youth had participation. To measure the participation of 5-point Likert rating scale was developed and designed with 5 kinds of responses, which were regular, quite regular, occasional, very low and not at all and the corresponding scores were 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively. Each respondent was asked to indicate his participation in one of the five responses and check mark was put accordingly against each activity. Score of participation of a respondent in 46 activities could range from 0 to 184. To have an insight into the participation of school drop out teenage rural youth in selected activities firstly, frequency distribution and rank order of each agricultural activity was done by developing Participation Index (PAI). Then, overall participation of the respondents in selected 46 agricultural activities was done by developing suitable categories based on the scores of participation. A carefully designed interview schedule was used in collecting data to determine the participation in selected agricultural activities and the 10 selected characteristics of the school drop out teenage rural youth. To find out the relationships between independent and dependent variables co-efficient of correlation (r) was computed.

Findings and Discussion

Overall Participation of School Dropout Teenage Rural Youth in Selected Agricultural Activities

Score for participation of school dropout teenage rural youth in overall agricultural activities was obtained by adding his scores for participation on 46 agricultural activities (shown in Table1).

Table 1 Classification of school drop out teenage rural youth according to their participation in selected agricultural activities (N=90)

Range		Categories of participation	Number	Percent	Mean	SD
Observed	Possible					
12-117	0-184	Low (12-46)	62	69	40.59	21.26
		Medium (47-82)	25	28		
		High (83-117)	3	3		
		Total	90	100		

Being dropout at teenage, youth may not achieve a trend of doing regular activities that generate income in the family. Further, parents cannot quickly decide in what direction they would engage their youth in income earning. As a result these young people hang about their future and go for intermittent participation in activities of the parents' farm or home. This social and psychological situation of the youth and

their parents is very unfavourable for worthy participation in activities. Hence, nearly three-fourths of the teenage rural youth seem to (69 percent) have low participation in activities. Youth those who are little older may be found in medium participation and number of youth in high participation is low.

Selected Characteristics of School Dropout Teenage Rural Youth

The study result depicted in Table 2 revealed that the proportion of 'middle teen' was found higher (50%) in comparison to 'early teen' (26%) and 'late teen' (24%) and majority of them (47%) had mid school level education with medium (59%) length of drop out and medium (43%) agricultural knowledge, but their phsical health was good (59%).

They belong to very small (85%) farm size with low (80%) family income and low (74%) family assets. Nearly three-fourth of the youth had low (72%) participation mindedness for non-farm activities and about half of them had low (53%) participation in activities during leisure time.

Table 2 Summary description of independent and dependent variables showing category, classification, measurement, weights, range and score

Characteristics	Scoring Method	Possible score	Observed score	Categories	Respondents (N=80)		Mean	STD
					No.	%		
Independent Variables								
Age	Actual age in years	13-19	13-19	Early teen (13-14) Middle teen (15-17) Late teen (18-19)	23 45 22	26 50 24	16.11	1.81
Education	No. of years of schooling	-	0-10	Low schooling (1-3) Medium schooling (4-7) High schooling (8-10)	37 42 11	41 47 12	4.5	2.17
Length of drop out	No. of years of leave from school	-	1-11	Early (1-3) Medium (4-7) Late (5-11)	16 53 21	18 59 23	5.59	2.53
Agricultural knowledge	Knowledge test score	0-60	11-49	Poor (11-21) Medium (22-33) High (34-49)	38 39 13	42 43 15	24.66	7.9
Physical health	Test score on physical condition	5-83	38-59	Poor (38-44) Medium (45-52) Good (53-59)	3 34 53	3 38 59	52.76	4.01
Participation in activities in leisure time	Scaling score	0-39	10-27	Low participation (10-15) Medium participation (16-21) High participation (22-27)	48 32 10	53 36 11	16.03	3.96
Family farm size	Scoring in hector	-	0.026-2.55	Very small (0.026-0.8) Small (0..81-1.6) Marginal (1.61-2.55)	76 11 3	85 12 3	0.45	0.44
Family income	In taka (thousand)	-	19.315-124.62	Low (upto 58) Medium (59-94) High (95 and above)	72 13 5	80 14 6	47.38	20.99
Assets owned by parents	In taka (thousand)	-	10.9-158.8	Low (upto 60) Medium (60.01-110) High (110.01 and above)	67 17 6	74 19 7	46.25	31.53
Particpation mindedness for non-farm activities	Scaling score	0-27	2-16	Low mindedness (2-6) Medium mindedness (7-11) High mindedness (12-16)	65 22 3	72 25 3	5.78	2.42

Participation of School Dropout Teenage Rural Youth in Selected Agricultural Activities

Participation Index (PAI) of school drop out teenage rural youth in 46 items of agricultural activities ranged from 2 to 309 against a possible range of 0 to 400 (shown in Table 3).

Table 3 Participation distribution of school drop out teenage rural youth according to their participation in selected agricultural activities

Items of participation	PAI	Rank order
Harvesting of field crop	309	1
Storing of crop	301	2
Weeding of field crop	252	3
Seedbed preparation of field crop	223	4
Seed sowing of field crop	204	5
Irrigation	181	6
Support arrangement for creeper vegetables	159	7
Weeding of vegetables	158	8
Marketing of poultry and poultry products	152	9
Rearing of milking cow	144	10
Application of fertilizer in field crop	137	11
Irrigation and shade management	112	12
Transplanting	111	13
Marketing of fruits	104	14
Grazing of cattle	103	15
Ploughing by draft power or power tiller	95	16
Seed sowing of vegetables	91	17.5
Tank preparation and management	91	17.5
Vaccination of livestock	86	19
Fish feed application in the pond	77	20
Harvesting of vegetables crops	76	21
Application of fertilizer in vegetables	67	22
Spraying insecticides	62	23[a]
Sowing and transplanting	62	23[b]
Milking	62	23[c]
Marketing of fish and dry fish	60	24
Cleaning of cattle shed	58	25
Pit preparation and fertilizers application	53	26
Production of quick growing plants in homestead	48	27
Goat rearing	33	28
Preparating and repairing nets	32	29
Plantation of valuable timber yielding plants	29	30
Pigeon rearing	26	31
Rearing of hybrid poultry	22	32
Seedbed preparation for vegetables	20	33.5
Dry fish production	20	33.5
Producing and selling of fish fries	19	35
Preparation of balanced feed for poultry	17	36
Preservation of fish and dry fish	15	37
Application of insecticides	11	38
Storage of fruits	10	39
Beef fattening	9	40.5
Integrated psiculture	9	40.5
Production and selling of livestock feed	8	42
Collection and preservation of seeds	4	43
Seedbed preparation in fruits	2	44

PAI of two agricultural activities were above 300, 3 above 200, 10 above 100, and 31 below 100. Based on the PAI, top ten activities were i) Harvesting of field crops (309)' ii) Storing of crops (301)' iii) Weeding (252)' iv) Seed bed preparation of field crops (223)' v) Seed sowing of field crops (204)' vi) Irrigation (181)' vii) Support arrangement for creeper vegetables (159)' viii) Weeding of vegetables (158)' ix) Marketing of poultry and poultry products (152)' and x) Rearing of milking cow (144)'. Production and selling of livestock feed (8)' Collection and preservation of seeds (4)' and seedbed preparation fruits (2) had the lowest three PAI respectively. First 8 agricultural

activities in rank order are related to crop cultivation and 9 and 10 activities related to livestock. The activities found in rank order from 11 to 20 also reflect the dominance of crop and, livestock to some extent.

Relationships between Independent and Dependent Variables

Table 4 showed that out of 10 possible correlations, 8 were statistically significant. Age, education, agricultural knowledge, physical health, participation in activities during leisure time, family income, assets owned by parents and participation mindedness for non-farm activities of school drop out teenage rural youth were significant positively correlated with their participation in selected agricultural activities.

Table 4 Summary of correlations between independent and dependent variables

Independent variables	'r' Values
Age	0.336*
Education	0.236*
Length of drop out	-0.005
Agricultural knowledge	0.600***
Physical health	0.256*
Participation in activities during leisure time	0.610***
Family farm size	0.105
Family income	0.445***
Assets owned by parents	0.437***
Participation mindedness for non-farm activities	0.538***

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability
** Significant at 0.01 level of probability
*** Significant at 0.001 level of probability

Among the ten variables it was found eight variables statistically significant where, two variables were insignificant. Among the significant variables some were showed highly positive relation like 'Agricultural knowledge, Participation in activities during leisure time, Family income, Asset owned by parents Participation mindedness for non-farm activities' was indicated significant at 0.1% level of probability. Then, three variables like 'Age, Education, and Physical health' was showed positive correlation and indicated significant at 5% level of probability. 'Length of drop out, Family farm size' these two variables was sowing insignificant relationship with the dependent variables.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of the study, it may be concluded that being young, the drop out teenage youth have often been neglected by adult family members. Although the teenage rural youth are not much inspired by their parents, but they are willing to undertake selected agricultural activities. These activities might be considered as contents to be included in Teenage Rural Youth Extension Programmes. The important factors responsible for participation of school drop out teenage rural youth revealed that comparatively higher aged teens with more agricultural knowledge, family income, assets owned by parents, participation in non-farm and leisure time activities would have more participation in agricultural activities. These factors need serious considerations while planning, organizing and executing Teenage Rural Youth Extension Programmes.

Drop out teenage rural youth live with massive poverty with low education, low income and without significant income earning activities. Being young, they are not given serious duties and responsibilities of their farm and house expecting some casual

activities. As a result, this potential client group has become a heavy burden to the parents and rural social system. In youth extension programmes and activities highly demanded and marketable vegetable crops of short duration and that can be grown with minimum land, labour and capital should be more emphasized for the teenage youth. The livestock, fisheries and family forestry should also include activities considering duration, cash and parent's economic situation. Youth do not own any property of parents. Hence, small credits for the youth would be needed to materialize their agricultural programmes and activities. Drop out teenage rural youth with small or marginal farm size for crop cultivation, and livestock and fisheries production should be given preference over others in Teenage Rural Youth Extension Programmes.

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