



## MITIGATION OF MIGRATION THROUGH PERSUASION OF YOUTH TO CONTINUE IN FARMING PROFESSION

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### ABSTRACT

The youth of today are the adults of tomorrow and responsible for future. But during last one decade, rural India witnessed the continuous migration of rural to urban areas. This situation is very serious and alarming and migration of rural youth created a vacuum in the villages. Further, migration has caused a big impact on the availability of labor for various farm operations which is also weakening the agriculture sector and it will continue, we will face the biggest threat in terms of food security. Migration will be one of the major policy concerns of the twenty-first century. Government will need to develop sound migration policies and practices. Properly managed migration can contribute to prosperity, development and mutual understanding among people. Migration streams (during the last decade) rural to rural migration within the country 53.3 million and rural to urban migration 20.5 million but urban to rural migration is only 6.2 million. The National Commission on Farmers (2004-06) stressed the need for attracting and retaining educated youngsters in farming. The National Policy for Farmers placed before Parliament in November 2007 includes the following goal: “To introduce measures which can help to attract and retain youth in farming and processing of farm products for higher value addition, by making farming intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding”. We are currently deriving very little demographic dividend in agriculture. On the other hand, the pressure of population on land is increasing and the size of the average farm holding is dipping below 1 hectare. Farmers are getting trapped in debt and as real estate rates continue to rise, the temptation to sell prime farmland for non-farm purposes is growing. Over 45% of farmers interviewed by the National Sample Survey Organization want to quit farming. Under these conditions, India needs major effort at social engineering, involving Gram Sabha across the country, to affect a small-farm-management revolution. For this special programmes will be needed for women and young farmers and packages of technology, services and public policies will have to be delivered in an integrated manner to persuade educated youngsters to stay in village and take agriculture as profession and help them shape the future of India’s agriculture sector.

**KEY WORDS:** rural India, migration, farm products, special programmes, farmers.

### INTRODUCTION

During his recent visit, US President Barack Obama pointed out that India is fortunate to have a youthful population with over half the population of 1.2 billion being under the age of 30. Of the 600 million young people, over 60% live in villages. Most are literate. Gandhiji considered the migration of educated youngsters from villages to towns and cities as the most serious form of brain drain adversely affecting rural India’s development. He therefore stressed that we should take steps to end the divorce between intellect and labour in rural professions. The National Commission on Farmers (2004-06) stressed the need for attracting and retaining educated youngsters in farming. The National Policy for Farmers placed before Parliament in November 2007 includes the following goal: “To introduce measures which can help to attract and retain youth in farming and processing of farm products for higher value addition, by making farming intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding”. We are currently deriving very little demographic dividend in agriculture. On the other hand, the pressure of population on land is increasing and the size of the average farm holding is dipping below one hectare. Farmers are getting trapped in debt and, as real

estate rates continue to rise, the temptation to sell prime farmland for non-farm purposes is growing. Over 45% of farmers interviewed by the National Sample Survey Organisation want to quit farming. Under these conditions, how are we going to persuade educated youngsters, including farm graduates, to stay in villages and take to agriculture as a profession? How can youngsters earn a decent living in villages and help to shape the future of India’s agriculture sector? It will take a three-pronged strategy. We must:

1. Improve the productivity and profitability of small holdings through appropriate technologies and market linkages.
2. Enlarge the scope for the growth of agro-processing, agro-industries and agri-business.
3. Promote opportunities for the service sectors to expand in a manner that will trigger the technological and economic upgradation of farm operations.
4. Yuva kisans or young farmers can also help women’s self-help groups, manufacture and sell the biological software essential for sustainable agriculture. These would include bio fertilisers, bio pesticides and vermiculture compost production.

5. The Farmers training Centres and Krishi Vignana Kendras should continuously train the farm youths and persuade them to stay in village and continue farming profession.

This chapter will try to provide some answers. It aims to look at some of the root causes of rural underdevelopment and to outline some of the approaches that have been successful in the promotion of youth employment. It concludes that skills and jobs are not enough. Initiatives for rural youth employment must include elements of empowerment for youth and mechanisms to promote a sense of achievement and self-worth among young people through continuous training and persuasion programs to retain youths in villages and make them to continue their agriculture profession.

#### **Employment Security and Harnessing the Youth Power in India – A critical Analysis**

Unemployment and underemployment are one of the main causes of poverty and deprivation, and often led to social unrest, at times threatening political stability and peace. And, this linkage will be even stronger with the rising expectations and aspirations in the global village. It is increasingly obvious that the economic entitlement, as eloquently emphasized by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, is the key to food, economic and social security. Creation of jobs for all is not a question of possibility. It is a question of necessity and effective action. "As freedom has finally been recognized as an inalienable. As enunciated in the millennium goal, all nations must strive to achieve "food, health, education and jobs for all". A paradigm shift in attitude and approach is required for accomplishing the above goal. It is often seen that generally those who primarily depend on agriculture or their employment, trade income and overall livelihood, are relatively more food insecure and economically vulnerable. Thus, a two-pronged approach is called for alleviating the problem. Firstly, agriculture must be rendered more productive, competitive and ruminative. Secondly, the agriculture economy and agricultural education and skill development should be diversified, upgraded and adjusted to enhance employment security. Mass production by masses and not by machine should be the approach in labour-surplus developing countries to promote rural poor's prosperities. India must create 100 million new jobs in the short and medium term to overcome the unemployment crises. The population "bulge" reveals that India has perhaps the largest youth mass in the world.

The unprecedented progress in science, technology, democratization and partnership building has already proven the efficacy of compressing the time scale of development and present still greater moments for creativity. We must capture these uncommon opportunities for promoting job-led economic growth, rooted in the principles of ecology, equity and sustainability in order to livelihood security

As experienced in China and several other East and South East Asian countries, effective Action Plan and its implementation for improving employment security is fundamental to our fight against hunger and poverty. In India, agriculture must lead this movement. Promotion of small enterprises, skill up gradation marketing

improvement, expansion of services, development and promotion of exports under the WTO regime, creation of innovative organizational and management capacities and improved commercial systems in the market place, extending basic education especially in rural areas and particularly to girls dissemination of information and making full use of the newly established Kisan Call Centers, increased velocity and ease of money and other transactions and employment planning by identifying new and untapped growth and employment potentials in agriculture, allied and other industries, export and services must receive high priority in the national planning and deployment of resources.

Realizing the implications of Agreement on Agriculture for developing countries like India under WTO on broad clauses of market access, aggregate measure of support and export subsidy and dominating role of developed countries in subsequent negotiations in the five ministerial conferences, Government of India has initiated steps to protect the interest of farming community in general and small and marginal farmers and landless labourers in particular. The launching of toll free call centres to resolve the day to day problems of farmers, extension of agricultural technology through separate agricultural T.V. channel, reduction in interest rate for agricultural credits, packages being promoted by NABARD for self-employment by agricultural graduates through agri-clinics and agri-business centres, subsidized farm income insurance scheme with special benefits for small and marginal farmers, development of commodity specific agri-export zones and establishment of National Commission on Farmers etc. are some steps taken by the Government in the recent past.

#### **Causes and consequences of Migration**

Internal displacement owing to political causes, including secessionist movements; identity-based autonomy movements; local violence, such as caste disputes and riots fuelled by religious fundamentalism and environment and development induced displacement. While the World Refugee Survey puts the total number of Internally Displaced Persons in India at 507,000, the Indian Social Institute in Delhi puts the figure at 21.3 million in its global survey of IDPs. Environmental changes and natural disasters such as floods and droughts have been reasons for displacement, affecting the populations of both flood-prone areas and excessively dry regions. Advanced technologies in the agro and fishing sector have grossly depleted natural resources thus forcing most male members in the agro and fishing communities to migrate.

#### **The Pitfalls of Migration**

In the case of most intra-state and inter-state unskilled and semi-skilled migrants, migrant laborers run high risks of exploitation for they are exposed to large uncertainties and lack access to information and knowledge, thus making it very difficult for them to switch jobs in case of dissatisfaction with the current employer. Because of their option-less situation, these labourers lack bargaining power and thereby fail to negotiate reasonable pay scales and fair working conditions with the contractors. Most migrants live in open spaces; make shift shelters or illegal settlements, which lack the basic infrastructure and access to civic amenities. They have no local ration cards which

can provide them their food at subsidized rates through the Public Distribution system. Since the migrants are mobile, their children have no access of facilities or access to schooling. They do not come under the purview of either the local government or the NGO programmes for they do not belong to that particular region. So citing the problem of monitoring, most agencies leave them outside the scope of development intervention.

In India, labour migrants are largely found in the developed states, the traditional migrant-receiving states,

typically, coming from underdeveloped regions of the country and being comprised primarily of the most marginalized sectors of society, namely the Tribal's and the Scheduled Castes (SCs). These migrants are entirely without legal protection or social security. They are "invisible", and are not acknowledged and are denied access even to basic amenities in most of the cases. They have no identity in the places where they live and no voice in the places they have left behind.

**TABLE 3: Intra & Interstate Migrants**

Migration	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
<b>Intra-state Migrants</b>			
Rural to Rural	60.5	41.6	68.6
Rural to Urban	17.6	27.1	13.6
Urban to Rural	6.5	8.6	5.6
Urban to Urban	12.3	18.3	9.7
Unclassified	3.1	4.4	2.6
<b>Inter-state Migrants</b>			
Rural to Rural	26.6	20.7	32.7
Rural to Urban	37.9	44.7	30.9
Urban to Rural	6.3	6.1	6.4
Urban to Urban	26.7	25.9	27.5
Unclassified	2.6	2.6	2.5

Migration is a positive phenomenon and if regulated and managed properly can reap in benefits for both the sending and receiving regions. In Kerala, for example, migration has recently led to a considerable reduction in unemployment. Remittances are the main benefit of international migration, providing scarce foreign exchange and scope for higher levels of savings and investments. The remittances of India's Diaspora have over the past 30 years financed much of India's balance of trade deficit, have thus reduced the current account deficit and have even led to wealth and asset creation. According to Brunson McKinley, Director General of IOM, "Migration will be one of the major policy concerns of the twenty-first century. In our shrinking world, more and more people will look to migration – temporary or permanent – as a path to employment, education, freedom or other opportunities. Governments will need to develop sound migration policies and practices. Properly managed migration can contribute to prosperity, development and mutual understanding among people".

Drought diminishes dietary diversity and reduces overall food consumption, and may therefore lead to micronutrient deficiencies. In Gujarat, India, during a drought in the year 2000, diets were found to be deficient in energy and several vitamins. In this population, serious effects of drought on anthropometric indices may have been prevented by public-health measures (Hari Kumar *et al.*, 2005). A study in southern Africa suggests that HIV/AIDS amplifies the effect of drought on nutrition (Mason *et al.*, 2005). Malnutrition increases the risk both of acquiring and of dying from an infectious disease. A study in Bangladesh found that drought and lack of food were associated with an increased risk of mortality from a diarrheal illness (Aziz *et al.*, 1990).

Drought and the consequent loss of livelihoods is also a major trigger for population movements, particularly rural

to urban migration. Population displacement can lead to increase in communicable diseases and poor nutritional status resulting from overcrowding, and a lack of safe water, food and shelter (Choudhury and Bhuiya, 1993; Menne and Bertollini, 2000; del Ninno and Lundberg, 2005). Recently, rural to urban migration has been implicated as a driver of HIV transmission (White, 2003; Coffee *et al.*, 2005). Farmers in Australia also appear to be at increased risk of suicide during periods of drought (Nicholls *et al.*, 2005).

#### **Climate extremes and migration**

In Asia, migration accounts for 64% of urban growth (Pelling, 2003). Total population, international migration and refugees in Asia and the Pacific region are currently estimated to be 3,307 million, 23 million, and 4.8 million, respectively (UN-HABITAT, 2004). Future climate change is expected to have considerable impacts on natural resource systems, and it is well-established that changes in the natural environment can affect human sustenance and livelihoods. This, in turn, can lead to instability and conflict, often followed by displacement of people and changes in occupancy and migration patterns (Barnett, 2003).

Climate-related disruptions of human populations and consequent migrations can be expected over the coming decades. Such climate-induced movements can have effects in source areas, along migration routes and in the receiving areas, often well beyond national borders. Periods when precipitation shortfalls coincide with adverse economic conditions for farmers (such as low crop prices) would be those most likely to lead to sudden spikes in rural-to-urban migration levels in China and India. Climatic changes in Pakistan and Bangladesh would likely exacerbate present environmental conditions that give rise to land degradation, shortfalls in food production, rural poverty and urban unrest. Circular migration patterns, such

as those punctuated by shocks of migrants following extreme weather events, could be expected. Such changes would likely affect not only internal migration patterns, but also migration movements to other western countries. Food can be produced on currently cultivated land if sustainable management and adequate inputs are applied. Attaining this situation would also require substantial improvements of socio-economic conditions of farmers in most Asian countries to enable access to inputs and technology. Land degradation, if continued unchecked, may further exacerbate land scarcities in some countries of Asia. Concerns for the environment as well as socio-economic considerations may infringe upon the current agricultural resource base and prevent land and water resources from being developed for agriculture (Tao *et al.*, 2003b). The production losses due to climate change may drastically increase the number of undernourished in several developing countries in Asia, severely hindering progress against poverty and food insecurity (Wang *et al.*, 2006).

### EXTENSION APPROACHES TO IMPROVE THE FARMING CONDITIONS

**1. Finance:** When we finance the farmers we need to provide finance to the entire family, for the entire cash flow, not only for the short-term but also for long-term purposes by taking care of all the requirements of the farmers. Agriculture financing should not be an exercise in achieving the targets somehow without real conviction about why we should be lending. If the lending has to be viable or sustainable, it has to be done in a holistic manner, catering to all the needs of the farmers. One example in this regard is financing the repayment of the usurious loans taken from the informal sector. Some people do talk of bringing the money-lender back into the system as they provide almost round the clock credit facility even though at a higher cost. Near 24 x 7 holistic service from the formal system is possible now if the innovative BC/BF models of delivery channels are optimally integrated with the traditional brick-and-mortar branches. Given the available and emerging ICT solutions, including the emerging possibilities in mobile phone-linked banking, transaction cost of providing near doorstep financial services to the rural population can become very low.

**2. Allied Activities:** Vulnerability of the farmers to yield and income fluctuations is mitigated if we give not only crop-related finance, but also for allied activities which provide a cushion to the farmer. Allied activities provide an important source of supplementary income to the small

and marginal farmers and women in the rural areas. Besides the nutritional impact on the population, given the increasing demand for milk, price of which has been going up sharply, there is tremendous scope for financing mulch cattle. It must be recognized that India has one of the largest livestock population in the world. The livestock sector contributes over 4 per cent to the total GDP and about a quarter of the GDP originating from agriculture and allied activities. Such allied activities, like mulch animals, linked with the cold-chain can provide a daily cash flow to the farmers. This would protect the farmers from the vulnerability of cyclical volatility arising out of price and yield risks in crop cultivation.

**3. Extension:** Extension and research support is very important. One main reason why during the green revolution production and productivity increased was that a lot of banks had vast pool of young and committed agricultural extension officers. While working in some areas of Andhra Pradesh, I have seen some banks providing a lot of extension support to the farmers. For example, Indian Bank had established clusters under which the hub branch having one or more field officers/experts would cover six/seven branches. Given the poor state of governmental extension services, the bankers' own initiatives are very critical. One obvious choice could be leveraging agri-clinics financed by banks and linkages with agricultural university and Krishi Vigyan Kendras. As there is a large potential to bridge the yield gap, it is essential that research and extension support is extended by banks, governments, private sector and others in the public-private partnership (PPP) model, if our focus is on increased production, productivity and prosperity in agriculture.

**4. Risk Mitigation:** A lot of issues have been raised in the context of risk mitigation for the rural lenders. One area on which we may try to focus is to go on a mission mode to form the Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) for agricultural financing as the SHG groups have been successfully tried in the non-formal sector. Through the group-lending model of JLGs, risks can be mitigated to a great extent. With the federated structure, they will have the advantage of aggregation. There are other forms of innovations in organising the small and marginal farmers like the Producer Companies which would help in aggregation in procurement of inputs, extension services and marketing, thereby increasing the viability of the small farm households.

**TABLE 4:** Comparison between Growth in Population and Food Production

Year	Population (Lacs)	Increase in Population over the period	Increase in Production over the period (000Tonnes)	Population/ Production Ratio	Requirement for Increased Population (000Tonnes)	Surplus (000 Tonnes)	Deficit (000 Tonnes)
1950-51	17.95	-	-	-	-	-	-
1980-81	32.70	14.75	280.00	1.20	155.0	35.00	-
2010-11	72.41	39.71	317.09	1.8	680.95	-	435.99

Inference that can be drawn from the above Table 4 is that the against 2.5% increase in Population annually, the Food-Grain Production increased by just about 1.7%. So, there is a need to attract farm youth towards farming profession to increase food grain production to feed our growing population.

### Orientation of agricultural extension programs towards youth attraction to farming

In order to improve employment prospects for rural youth there needs to be investment in agricultural extension services which focus on the young.

Such extension services should:

- Target young farmers;
- Encourage parents to give land to school leavers.
- Set up agricultural credit schemes to help young people.
- Acquire livestock, equipment and other productive assets of their own.
- Encourage food production in order to increase food security.
- Transmit effective and appropriate ideas and methods in agriculture.
- Employ as many school leavers as possible, with on-the-job training.
- Establish incentives, so that some young workers may eventually become Para- professional extension agents.
- Provide leadership and organisational skills training.

A study of Agricultural extension services in a poor region of Brazil showed the responsiveness of youth to innovations for improved productivity. When extension workers were permitted to customize their programs to meet the specific needs of farmers, better results ensued. Farmers had more say about their requirements, and extension agents found greater job satisfaction.

## **AGRI- ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A WAY TO ATTRACT FARM YOUTH TOWARDS AGRICULTURE**

### **1. Make microfinance more readily available to suitable rural youth.**

Often business start-up costs are the major obstacle preventing rural youth from creating their own employment opportunity. Youth often do not have sufficient capital of their own to invest in a business. However, credit is seldom available or sufficient for rural youth. Rural youth, in particular young women, are unlikely to be given loans by mainstream banking and credit institutions as they are considered to be too high a risk. But given the right support, these youth enterprises can succeed and loans will be repaid. Start-up costs are often very small and loans for these small amounts need to be more readily available to rural youth.

The Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) in India is an example of an organization that provides support, including micro-finance, for underprivileged youth in order that enthusiastic and innovative youth have the opportunity to set up or develop their own businesses. See the “Success Stories” section below for examples of rural youth who have succeeded with the help of BYST. Resources such as the BYST are available to rural youth if they know where and how to find them. Publications such as “The group saving resource book” published by FAO’s Rural Development Division, offer rural and youth groups a source of information on ways to strengthen their capacity to accumulate productive capital for on and off-farm employment and business opportunities.

### **2. Bring the informal economy into the mainstream economy.**

Jobs in the informal economy are characterized by low and irregular incomes, long working hours and poor working environments, as well as by being unstable forms of employment often with few prospects of advancement. And since many of the employed rural youth work in the informal economy, any savings or assets they hold cannot

be turned into capital. Businesses they own are not legally and formally recognized, their property may not be built on land to which they have legally-accepted property rights. In the informal economy, without a business license or permit, it is hard to borrow or to sell a business as a going concern even though an established business, no matter how small, is an asset. This can act as a disincentive to opening new businesses. If informal businesses are brought into the mainstream economy, employment conditions can be regulated. And if businesses shift into in the formal economy young entrepreneurs can then access reasonable sources of finance and can buy and sell businesses more easily.

### **3. Provide training and support networks and encourage cooperation**

Young people have limited life and work experience, business networks and cash-flow management skills so are restricted in their ability or interest in entrepreneurship. Also, fear of failure and of the stigma attached to that failure, is a strong disincentive to start one’s own business. Youth also have few role models and are subject to age discrimination.

### **4. Mobilizing rural youth for agricultural development**

The Thanat Samkhee Club, a rural youth organization in Thailand, has been successful in mobilizing and training rural youth and has enabled creation of employment and income-earning opportunities in the Thanat sub-district. Other youth organizations can emulate Thanat Samkhee’s successes by following their approach, summarized as follows: Ensure community support and participatory decision-making. Community members facilitate group activities by providing venues for meetings and acting as trainers so youth groups need to collaborate with the community. Learn by doing and share knowledge. ‘Learning by doing’ is an effective means of training and sharing of knowledge and skills enables all group members to benefit. Income-generating activities will succeed if they provide benefits to the club and the community.

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