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Decisive Factors of Employment Vulnerability of Rural Youth in the Hills of Uttarakhand, India

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author RG designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author SKK managed the analyses of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Youth is a precious segment of the population as they play quite a significant role in development. Youth unemployment has risen dramatically. Vulnerability increases more in the agriculture sector due to disguised employment. Reasons behind employment vulnerability may vary in different situations which need to be identified for unemployment mitigation. Hence, it is essential to understand the factors responsible for employment vulnerabilities among rural youth. The present study was conducted in the 10 villages of Almora and Pauri Garhwal districts of Uttarakhand state in India. Data were collected from 210 rural youth (15-24 years) through the pre-structured interview schedule. The study revealed that 51.43 per cent of the respondents belonged to young age group, 58.10 per cent were female and most of them were educated up to higher secondary level. Regarding the relationship, education, size of landholding, media ownership and change-proneness had a significant relationship with employment vulnerability of rural youth. The study will help development functionaries to frame suitable policies and programmes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, India has a large youth population which reflects national potential in front of the world. There is over one billion youth (aged 15-24) in the world, eighty-five per cent of them live in developing countries and about 50 per cent of the youth population in developing countries live in rural areas [1]. One hundred and forty-eight million youth across the world was found to be illiterate, and 75 million were unemployed in the year 2011 [2]. Unemployment and poverty remain pervasive among rural youth who faces numerous challenges to achieve and maintain their livelihood. In the developing world, high youth unemployment represents lost potential for national economic transformations, and high numbers of economically frustrated youth may contribute to social instability [3].

Youth unemployment rate is generally observed to be higher than adult unemployment in developing nations [4]. With the volatility of local economies in an era of recurrent global economic crises, the vulnerable position of youth within labour markets may become more solidified as they are often not the priority in the agenda of policymakers. If youth unemployment is not addressed, the youth will remain a risk factor concerning the economic and political stability in countries around the world. As a consequence of the economic crisis, youth unemployment has risen dramatically and become a particular cause for concern. International Labour Organization is also trying to resolve these crises by acting to tackle the youth employment problems through a multipronged approach that geared towards employment growth and decent job creation [5]. The World Programme for Action for Youth provided an international framework for general policy, practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. This programme addressed three priority areas of youth development, youth for the global economy, youth in civil society and youth for well beings.

Youth is the precious segment of the population as they play quite a significant role in development. Youth population in India is 460 million, out of which 333 million are literate. Youth unemployment has risen (10.60 per cent) dramatically, around 40 per cent of the youth population is vulnerable regarding employment

[6]. It was also recognized that the major causes of a high youth unemployment rate are lack of employability skills, lack of access to resources (land and capital), lack of focus of the existing programs in the informal sector and agriculture, lack of apprenticeship schemes, negative attitude of the youth towards work especially in agriculture, lack of comprehensive employment policy and negative cultural attitude such as gender discrimination [7]. The highest youth unemployment rate can also be attributed to slower economic growth, small formal labour markets, high population growth rate, lack of sufficient experience and skills, lack of decent work, availability of rigid education system, rural-urban migration, limited social networks and limited access to capital support systems [8].

Youth can be economically strengthened through formal and informal employment opportunities, education, vocational training and market needs [9]. The choice of education can help to shape young people's preferences about career, and their thinking about these choices will affect employment opportunities. Healthcare facilities require immediate access to adequate and consistent care that respond to their illness by primary healthcare services. Emotional health support services should be available to be happy and optimistic about life. Young peoples' aspirations and expectations regarding the work as well as specific behavioural characteristics associated with youth have a significant influence on their engagement with employment. Beliefs and attitude can also shape employment outcomes. About the perceptions and expectations of youth, the unemployment rate tends to be much higher than those of adults [10]. In many countries, unemployment is usually high among youth with a high level of education. One reason for this type of situation is the failure of economies to create jobs that match their level of education.

After going through various researches, age, gender, caste, education, medium of education, family size, family type, marital status, occupation of head of the household, size of the landholding, total family income, mass media exposure, media ownership, extension contact, social participation, cosmopolitaness, change proneness, occupational aspiration, achievement motivation and risk preference were taken as independent variables of the research and

employment vulnerability of rural youth was taken as the dependent variable for the study.

1.1 Researchable Questions

To what extent socio-economic characteristics of rural youth affect the employment vulnerabilities?

What are the factors influencing employment vulnerabilities among rural youth?

Looking after the previous issues that have been studied and researchable questions which have been raised, the following objectives are framed for study.

1.2 Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of rural youth.
2. To find out the relationship between socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of rural youth and employment vulnerability.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy of the procedure. Analytical research design has been adopted for the study to assess the respondent's profile and make a critical evaluation of the facts related to employment vulnerability.

2.2 Sampling Technique

Locale and selection of districts: Uttarakhand state has been taken as a locale of the present study. Uttarakhand has thirteen districts and two divisions. Out of which district Almora from Kumaun division and district Pauri Garhwal from Garhwal division was selected purposively. As there is absolute decline in population in these districts during the period 2001-2011 (registering a negative compound annual growth of 0.13 and -0.14 respectively). The reason behind the selection of the districts was that these two districts have a major problem of migration of youth.

Selection of blocks: One block from Pauri Garhwal district and one block from Almora

district have been selected by using simple random sampling.

Selection of villages: Five villages from each block were selected purposively as these villages have a large number of households. Khothla, Bhaiskot, Gwad, Ujjvalpur and Markhoda from Khirsu block of Pauri Garhwal district and Shail, Chhana, Dhari, Ghursu and Sunaula from Hawalbagh block of Almora district were selected for the study.

Selection of respondents: Whole rural youth population (male and female) between the age of 15-24 years were selected purposively (census method) who are permanently residing in the village and available at the time of investigation.

2.3 Instrument

Research instrument is the device used to collect the data. A comprehensive and detailed interview schedule consisting of structured as well as open-ended questions was developed for collecting relevant information from the respondents.

2.4 Analysis of Data

Statistical methods such as mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, multiple linear regression, and t-test was used to treat the data for meaningful interpretation.

2.5 Hypothesis of Research

H₀- All socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of rural youth are not related to employment vulnerability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Sample Characteristics

Findings of the study revealed that 51.43 per cent of the respondents belonged to the young age group and the majority were female (58.10 per cent). It was found that majority (78 per cent) of youth had educational qualification up to secondary level and the majority was studying in Hindi medium. 38.57 per cent of the respondents belonged to small family size and majority from nuclear family (52.86 per cent). Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 94.29 per cent youth were unmarried. Further, it was found that most of the youth (41.43 per cent) had

agriculture and allied activities as the main occupation of the head of the household and owned cultivable land. Data revealed that 54.76 per cent respondents belonged to APL category. It was also found that majority of respondents had the medium level of media ownership (69.52 per cent), mass media exposure (67.62 per cent), cosmopolitaness (65.24 per cent), change proneness (64.29 per cent) and achievement motivation. Further, it was found that majority of the youth had the low level of extension agency contact (74.29 per cent), social participation (60 per cent), occupational aspiration (53.33 per cent) and risk preference (45.72 per cent). This indicates that very few youth in the study area were contacted outside environment and developmental issues. However, they are enthusiastic to accept change and new practices (Table 1).

3.2 The Relationship between Characteristics of Rural Youth and Employment Vulnerability

The results of the analysis of the relationship between socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics and employment vulnerability of rural youth are given in the Table 2. It was found that age, gender, caste, medium

of education, family size, family type, marital status, occupation of head of the household, total family income, mass media exposure, extension contact, social participation, cosmopolitaness, occupational aspiration, achievement motivation and risk preference had the non significant relationship with employment vulnerability of rural youth. Other variables such as education ($r=0.166$), size of land holding ($r=0.177$), media ownership ($r=0.483$) and change proneness ($r=0.153$) had a significant relationship with employment vulnerability of rural youth. This finding is similar to the finding of the study conducted by [11]. where it was found that media ownership had a significant positive relationship with employment vulnerability of youth.

Further, it was found that the majority of respondents were having the education above the secondary level, which signifies that youth and their family were aware of about the importance of education in employment generation. Their capabilities, however, may not be used fully due to lack of vocational education at school level and unavailability of an educational institution in study area so that there was a need to introduce vocational education in school curriculum. The skills and capacities that

Table 1. Characteristics of the Rural Youth

Sl. no.	Variables	(Majority)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young (17-22 years)	108	51.43
2.	Gender	Female	122	58.10
3.	Caste	Schedule Caste & Schedule Tribes	86	40.05
4.	Education	Above secondary level	172	81
5.	Medium of education	Hindi	168	80.00
6.	Family size	Small (up to 4)	81	38.57
7.	Family type	Nuclear	111	52.86
8.	Marital status	Unmarried	198	94.29
9.	Occupation of head of household	Farming	87	41.43
10.	Size of land holding	Up to 20 nails	69	32.86
11.	Total family income	APL	115	54.76
12.	Mass media exposure	Medium (6-12)	142	67.62
13.	Media ownership	Medium (2-3)	146	69.52
14.	Extension contact	Low (up to 1)	156	74.29
15.	Social participation	Low (up to 7)	126	60.00
16.	Cosmopolitaness	Medium (2-3)	137	65.24
17.	Change proneness	(medium (2-3)	135	64.29
18.	Occupational aspiration	Low (up to 12)	112	53.33
19.	Achievement motivation	Medium (up to 22-25)	153	72.86
20.	Risk preference	Low (up to 20)	96	45.72

Table 2. Correlation between socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics and employment vulnerability of rural youth

Sl. no.	Variables	The coefficient of correlation (r)	t _{cal}
1.	Age	0.089	1.288
2.	Gender	0.035	0.505
3.	Caste	0.020	0.288
4.	Education	0.166**	2.811
5.	Medium of education	-0.038	-0.548
6.	Family size	0.003	0.043
7.	Family type	0.106	1.537
8.	Marital status	-0.027	-0.38
9.	Occupation of head of household	0.091	1.317
10.	Size of land holding	0.177**	2.593
11.	Total family income	0.021	0.302
12.	Mass media exposure	-0.110	-1.596
13.	Media ownership	0.483**	7.955
14.	Extension contact	0.111	1.610
15.	Social participation	0.085	1.230
16.	Cosmopolitaness	0.100	1.449
17.	Change proneness	0.153**	2.232
18.	Occupational aspiration	0.118	1.713
19.	Achievement motivation	0.033	0.476
20.	Risk Preference	0.055	0.794

**** At 0.05 per cent level of significance**

t-value at 0.05% level of significance (df=208)= 1.9803

reside in youth and that are put into productive use can be a more important determinant of employment as compared to any other resources. Agricultural land was fragmented in the areas. It can also be concluded that nowadays mass media ownership has increased in rural areas which may lead to greater social changes and awareness. It was observed that the youth were using different media for various purposes such as education, information seeking and entertainment. They were very enthusiastic towards change so that they can adopt new practices faster than elder people. This study supports earlier studies [12] which indicate that receptivity and responsiveness were more in the younger group and they were open to new ideas. Other factors such as decision making of the rural youth, their leisure time activities, motivation, financial support from their parents were also the matter of concern towards employment vulnerability among rural youth.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study can help to provide an in-depth understanding of employment vulnerability among rural youth in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand and can be utilised to design strategies accordingly to encourage youth toward

self-employment. The findings can also be utilised in developing an understanding of the internal and external factors which shape the career of rural youth regarding self-employment. The findings will be useful to prioritise the thrust areas of research and identify the most vulnerable factors affecting employment options for rural youth. The findings will also help the extension policymakers to frame training programmes for rural youth regarding employment opportunities in hills of Uttarakhand and other areas. In-depth qualitative studies on factors that reduce employment vulnerabilities among rural youth can be undertaken to gain a better understanding of issues at field level.

5. CONCLUSION

Today, India has the largest youth population in human history, they reflect national potential and represent lifeblood of the nation. Unemployment and poverty remain pervasive among rural youth who faces numerous challenges to achieve and maintain their livelihood. 40 per cent of youth population is vulnerable regarding employment. The realistic causes of employment vulnerability may be social, economic, psychological, administrative, etc. Hence, it is important to understand decisive factors affecting the employment vulnerabilities among rural youth.

The study indicates that education, size of land holding, media ownership and change proneness had a significant relationship with employment vulnerability of rural youth. This study will help the planners to frame policies for youth.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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