

Agriculture awareness among rural school going adolescents as per their socio-personal determinants

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Agriculture has always been a significant factor in the sustainability and development of human society. Unfortunately, the important role of agriculture as a foundation for a secure and durable civilization is not always apparent to those outside of agriculture. The present research was framed to study socio-personal characteristics and gender difference in awareness regarding agriculture among rural school going adolescents and to study the correlation of socio-personal characteristics and gender differences in awareness regarding agriculture among rural school going adolescents. A sample comprised of 120 rural school- going adolescents was purposively selected from two villages of Ludhiana district. Socio-economic status scale (AICRP) has been used to measure the socio-economic status of the respondent. Self- structured questionnaire was used to gather information regarding awareness level with respect to agriculture. Results revealed that awareness level of adolescent girls about agriculture was comparatively higher than their counterparts. Correlation analysis also found that there is no significant relationship in respondents' socio-economic characteristics and their awareness level regarding agriculture.

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A study by International Food policy Research Institute noted that while overall economic growth of India has been impressive since the start of reforms. This has not had a positive impact on rural poverty. Most analysis attributes the failure in reducing rural poverty to declining public investment in agriculture which provides a livelihood to 70 per cent of Indians (Facilitator Manual, 2011).

Agriculture has always been a significant factor in the sustainability and development of human society. Unfortunately, the important role of agriculture as a

foundation for a secure and durable civilization is not always apparent to those outside of agriculture (Boleman and Burrell, 2003). Specifically, younger generations of often see agriculture only in terms of narrow stereotypes- a farmer, a cow, and/or a tractor, with the stereotypical farmer only visualized as an old man that “wears bib overalls and chew[s] on straw”. This younger generation represents the future leaders of society (Boleman and Burrell, 2003), on whom we will depend on to support, regulate, and as advocate for agriculture.

“Agricultural literacy is important to the future of

our nation and the discipline of agriculture” (Frick and Spotanski, 1990). Majority of the people from agriculture in their daily lives, it is of utmost importance that best practices in agricultural education are identified so that agricultural literacy is maintained in coming generations. The methods used to present agricultural education to students can greatly influence students’ attitudes towards learning material (Okiror *et al.*, 2011). Riedmiller (2002) stated that the quality of or agricultural learning material is the single most important factor influencing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of youth learning about agriculture. Researchers emphasized on advantages of first hand experiences in agriculture. It creates significant increase in a student’s knowledge (Platt *et al.*, 2008).

Gaining insight into youth perceptions of agriculture allows researchers and educators to develop methods to better educate and inform youth about agriculture. Agricultural literacy is a critical need. The cultivating of agricultural interest among youth can ultimately lead to not only a more agriculturally aware society but also a workforce to support agricultural practices that allow society to thrive.

In the rural community across Punjab, the modes of agricultural production have certainly improved to an advanced level but they had failed to mark an impact on the cultural perspective of the rural masses (Tandon, 2000). In other words, economic development has brought all the indices of growth into the rural households. Indian Punjab is one such state which has shown above average rate of growth. This rate of economic development could not be sustained due to limited or negligible social development of the women in general and rural women in specific. In short as a result of the cultural constraint, low women participation at social and economic level, the rural women remains physically, economically, socially and psychologically dependent on men. Shakti (2013) reported that the Punjab state experienced increased agricultural output and rising rural incomes. As a result employment potential also increased in the first decade of the green revolution. Study further reported that non commitment to land reforms, misuse of natural resources, mal- practices in agricultural farming resulted in economic and social distress in Punjab and across the country. It is observed that limited technologies stagnating productivity levels, environment damage and lack of work because of

mechanization has led to social discord. All these factors have its manifestations in the form of suicides committed by farmers living in the villages of Punjab, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh states. Keeping in view the above scenario research is aimed at studying the agriculture awareness among rural school going adolescents as per their socio-personal determinants. The present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

- To assess the socio-personal characteristics of rural school going adolescents.
- To study the gender differences in agriculture awareness level of rural school going adolescents.
- To study the correlation of socio-personal characteristics with level of agriculture awareness among rural school going adolescents.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Sample selection:

A sample of 120 rural schools- going adolescents was purposively selected which means students who opted agriculture as one of their subjects. Two villages were selected with due permission from the District Education Officer, Ludhiana, the list of schools was procured. Villages were randomly selected and government school from each village was identified. Principals of the respectively schools were approached for preparation of list of the respondents.

Research tools:

- Self- structured questionnaire was used to gather information regarding awareness level with respect to agriculture.
- Socio-economic status scale (AICRP) has been used to measure the socio-economic status of the respondents.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 represents gender wise distribution of the respondents as per their socio-personal characteristics. In 9th class maximum number of respondents of both boys and girls (68.33) belonged to nuclear family followed by 31.66 per cent were belonged to joint families.

Father’s education:

In case of boys maximum (68.33) number of their

fathers were educated upto middle + high school followed by 25 per cent upto primary and 16.66 per cent were educated upto college + under graduate. In case of girls maximum (58%) number of their fathers' were educated upto middle + high school followed by 35 per cent upto primary and 5 per cent of father were found to be illiterate.

Mothers education:

In case of boys maximum (50%) number of their mothers were educated upto middle +High School

followed by primary (30%) and illiterate (15%). In case girls, maximum (48.33%) number of their mothers were educated upto middle + high school followed by 25 per cent were illiterate and 16.66 were educated upto primary.

Father occupation:

In case of boys 40 per cent of fathers were involved in agricultural and government service followed by 35 per cent were labourers and only 15 per cent of fathers were involved in caste occupation. In case of girls 38.33

Table 1 : Gender- wise distribution of respondents as per their socio-personal characteristics				
Sr. No.	SES determinants	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)	Total (n=120)
1.	Type of family			
	Joint	19 (31.66)	19 (31.66)	38 (31.66)
	Nuclear	41 (68.33)	41 (68.33)	82 (68.33)
2.	Father's education			
	Illiterate	1(1.66)	3 (5.00)	4 (3.33)
	Upto primary	15 (25.0)	21(35.00)	36 (30.00)
	Middle+ High school	41 (68.33)	35 (58.00)	76(63.33)
	College + Under graduate	2 (16.66)	1 (1.66)	3 (25.0)
	Graduate	1 (1.66)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.66)
3.	Mother's education			
	Illiterate	9 (15.0)	15 (25.0)	24 (20.0)
	Upto primary	18(30.0)	10 (16.66)	28 (23.33)
	Middle+ High school	30 (50.0)	29 (48.33)	59 (49.16)
	College + Under graduate	2 (3.33)	6 (10.0)	8 (6.66)
	Graduate	1 (1.66)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.66)
4.	Fathers' occupation			
	Unemployed	0 (0.00)	3 (5.0)	3 (25.0)
	Labourer	21(35.0)	23 (38.33)	44 (36.66)
	Caste occupation	9(15.0)	10 (16.66)	19 (15.83)
	Small business	24 (40.0)	20 (33.33)	44(36.66)
	Agriculture and Govt Service	6 (10.0)	4 (6.66)	10 (8.33)
	High Govt officer	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
5.	Mothers' occupation			
	Unemployed	43 (71.66)	38 (63.33)	81 (67.5)
	Labourer	9 (15.00)	15 (25.00)	24 (20.0)
	Caste occupation	0 (0.00)	1 (1.66)	1 (0.83)
	Small business	5 (8.33)	4 (6.66)	9 (7.5)
	Agriculture and Govt Service	3 (5.00)	2 (3.33)	5 (3.12)
	High Govt officer	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
6.	Caste			
	SC/ST	6 (10.0)	10 (16.66)	16 (13.33)
	Backward	10 (16.66)	16 (26.66)	26 (21.67)
	Upper caste	7(11.66)	7 (11.66)	14 (11.67)
	Dominant caste	37(61.66)	27 (45.0)	64 (53.33)

per cent of fathers were labourers followed by 33.33 per cent were involved in small business and 16.66 per cent were involved in caste occupation.

Mother occupation:

In case boys, majority (71.66%) of mothers were unemployed followed by 15 per cent were laborers and only 5 per cent were involved in agriculture and govt service. In case of girls, 63.33 per cent of mothers are unemployed followed by 25 per cent were labourers and only 1.66 per cent of mothers were involved in caste occupation.

Caste:

In case of boys maximum (61.66) number of boys belonged to dominant caste (SC) followed by 16.66 per cent belonged to backward caste and 11.66 per cent were from upper caste. In case of girls maximum (45%) number of girls were from dominant caste (SC) followed by 26.66 per cent belonged to backward caste. Only 11.66 per cent of boys belonged to upper caste.

Table 2 represents gender differences in awareness level of rural adolescents about agriculture. Results revealed that 90 per cent of boys and 100 per cent of girls of 9th standard had high awareness level regarding agriculture and agricultural practices. In 8th class 100 per cent of boys and 95 per cent of girls had high awareness level. In 7th class 70 per cent of boys and 80 per cent of girls had high awareness level. It is pertinent

to mention that though only few (10%) respondents belonged to agricultural background and majority had no land holding even then they had high awareness level. This may be attributed to the reason that all respondents opted agriculture as one of their optional subjects. This table shows that the awareness level of adolescent girls about agriculture is high as compared to the boys. Teachers reported that girls were more concerned and regular about their studies as compare to their counterparts.

Table 3 represents correlation between agriculture awareness and socio-personal determinants. With respect to gender, no relationship was found between agricultural awareness level and family type, education of father and mother, occupation of father and mother and caste. It was found that there is no correlation of agriculture awareness level with their socio-personal characteristics among boys and girls'

Conclusion :

The results revealed that awareness level of adolescent girls about agriculture was comparatively higher than the boys. Teachers reported that girls scored more in their studies as compare to their counterparts in all subjects in general and in agriculture subject in specific. Keeping in view the feedback of teachers it is recommended that girls who performed better in agriculture should be given skill oriented training in agriculture and allied fields. Correlation analysis found

Category	9 th Class		8 th Class		7 th Class	
	Boys n ₁ =20	Girls n ₂ =20	Boys n ₁ =20	Girls n ₂ =20	Boys n ₁ =20	Girls n ₂ =20
Low	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
Average	2 (10.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (5.0)	6 (30.0)	4 (20.0)
High	18 (90.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	19 (95.0)	14 (70.0)	16 (80.0)

9 th class	Family type	Education of father	Education of mother	Occupation of father	Occupation of mother	Caste
Boys	0.013	0.12	0.0032	0.062	0.00048	0.000025
Girls	0.06	0.07	0.0043	0.016	0.0012	0.051
8 th class						
Boys	0.16	0.041	0.029	0.004	0.0015	0.006
Girls	0.00078	0.0032	0.021	0.0116	0.00012	0.09
7 th class						
Boys	0.023	0.10	0.007	0.042	0.048	0.0068
Girls	0.0093	0.014	0.0042	0.134	0.079	0.041

that there is no correlation among respondents agriculture awareness level with respect to family type, education of father and mother, occupation of father and mother and caste.

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