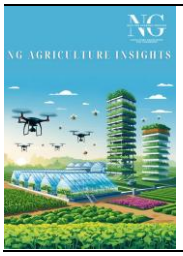

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Attracting Youth towards Agriculture through Agripreneurship: Challenges and Extension Opportunities

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A B S T R A C T

The combination of business with agriculture, known as agripreneurship, has become a popular means of encouraging young people to work in agriculture, enhancing rural lives and advancing sustainable food systems. Due to poor salaries, high risks, labor intensity and restricted access to land, financing, technology and training, many young people view agriculture as unappealing despite its crucial economic role. Concurrently, new possibilities for youth-led agricultural enterprises are being created by global trends including digitalization, climate-smart agriculture, rising demand for high-value foods and creative financing options. This article examines the chances and difficulties for young people to engage in agripreneurship, emphasizing structural, environmental and socioeconomic limitations. By bridging the gaps between research, technology and practice, it highlights the changing role of extension services in assisting young agripreneurs through business advising, digital training, mentorship and market connections. In order to maintain youth-led businesses, the research also looks at policy, finance and ecosystem assistance, such as youth-friendly land laws, blended finance systems, incubators, accelerators and market infrastructure. Agriculture may become a viable, successful and contemporary job for young people if barriers like land availability, startup funding, skills, market connectedness and risk management are addressed. In addition to producing revenue, agribusiness improves rural communities, boosts value chains, decreases urban migration and encourages innovation. This underscores the necessity of youth-focused, regionally specific approaches to unlock a new era of rural wealth.

Keywords: Agripreneurship, Youth Participation, Agricultural Extension, Rural Development, Entrepreneurship

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1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is becoming more and more conducive to business; it is no longer only about subsistence or legacy farmwork. "Agripreneurship," which combines entrepreneurship with agriculture, is revolutionizing the production, processing, marketing and consumption of food. Encouraging young people to see agriculture as a practical, lucrative and contemporary career option is crucial for nations with sizable rural populations and aging farm demographics (Ray et al., 2021). Young people may boost rural economies, increase productivity and hasten the shift to sustainable agricultural practices because of their enthusiasm, technological know-how and willingness to take chances. However, a lot of young people find agriculture to be unappealing. Agriculture is still perceived as a risky, low-paying, and labor-intensive industry. This impression coexists with actual obstacles, such as poor rural infrastructure, regulatory frameworks that have traditionally favored large-scale commercial actors or urban employment and restricted access to land, finance, markets and training (Mizik et al., 2025).

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Simultaneously, new opportunities have been generated by global trends such as digitization, climate concerns, demand for high-value and sustainably produced goods and creative finance. Agripreneurship is allowing new business models that may make agriculture lucrative and interesting for young people, including as farm-to-table social businesses, precision farming and app-enabled advising services (Rana et al., 2024). Examining the obstacles young people face as well as the roles that extension services, financial actors and legislators may play is necessary to comprehend how to convert these chances into long-term youth involvement. The demands and motives of young people vary, including those of new graduates, returning migrants, part-time agricultural laborers and rural entrepreneurs. Therefore, practical training, mentorship, access to startup funding, market connections and technology adapted to local agro-ecological circumstances are all necessary for successful agripreneur projects. Extension programs serve a crucial role in bridging the gap between farmers and research. However, extension has to change from a top-down, expert-driven approach to one that supports entrepreneurship by providing legal advice, digital skills, market data, business planning, and quality control (Kademani et al., 2024). Collaborations between universities, youth groups, private sector incubators and extension agencies may build ecosystems that help agripreneurs navigate the precarious early phases of a business.

2. CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

A number of obstacles prevent young people from starting and maintaining agricultural businesses. One of the main obstacles is land access to young people are frequently discouraged from purchasing or renting productive property due to growing land costs, fragmentation of holdings and inheritance patterns. Young people are similarly excluded from the capital and credit markets; start-up and working capital are hard to come by due to a lack of collateral, short credit histories and lenders' risk aversion (Barman et al., 2023). Gaps in skills are also important. Many young people lack or are unable to get local training in the areas of agronomy, business management, digital tools, post-harvest handling and food safety requirements, all of which are necessary for modern agribusiness. Another issue is market access. Young producers frequently find it difficult to connect with consumers, negotiate contracts, or fulfill the volume and quality standards required by formal value chains. Road, cold chain and storage infrastructure deficiencies exacerbate these issues and raise post-harvest losses. Motivation may be further diminished by social and cultural norms that inhibit entrepreneurship or place a higher priority on non-agricultural occupations (Das & Pal, 2023). Last but not least, production risks are increased by climatic unpredictability and environmental degradation and risk-mitigation tools like crop insurance or indexed weather insurance are still immature or unavailable to many young farmers (Bhutia et al., 2024). These combined challenges create a perception and frequently a reality that agriculture is too risky and unrewarding for youth seeking viable livelihoods.

3. OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRIPRENEURSHIP FOR YOUTH

Despite obstacles, agripreneurship is appealing due to its many prospects. Mobile phones, satellite data, inexpensive sensors and digital markets all reduce transaction costs and increase information availability, making technology a crucial facilitator. In order to help small producers grow, startups and platform companies are increasingly providing input supply, extension-as-a-service and direct market access (Vardhan et al., 2025). Niche goods, branding, packaging and value-added processing may significantly boost profits and generate non-seasonal jobs. Regenerative agriculture, agroforestry firms and the manufacturing of botanicals and biofertilizer (Mounika et al., 2022) are examples of climate-smart agribusinesses that address both environmental concerns and consumer demand for sustainable goods. When created fairly, contract farming and out-grower programs give youth-run businesses reliable markets and technical assistance. Effect investors and grant-makers are drawn to social entrepreneurship models that mix income with social effect (e.g., youth-run processing units that employ local women), opening up blended funding sources. Fintech technologies and crowdfunding are making it easier for small agribusinesses to get financing. The model describes how the species are distributed in an ecological community including the most abundant and rare species (Mounika et al., 2022). Additionally, entrepreneurs may access investor networks, prototyping space and mentorship through incubators and accelerator programs aimed at agritech and rural enterprises. These ecological changes, together with growing customer demand for high-quality, traceable food, provide young people with practical ways to turn their ideas into successful agricultural businesses.

4. ROLE OF EXTENSION SERVICES IN PROMOTING YOUTH AGRIPRENEURSHIP

Extension services need to change from traditional advising positions to ones that support

entrepreneurship. Agripreneur-focused extension includes business development, market connection facilitation, regulatory assistance and digital literacy whereas traditional extension concentrates on production practices. Along with technical innovation, training programs should cover business strategy, costing, quality control, packaging and marketing. In addition to facilitating relationships with private incubators and universities, extension officers may serve as matchmakers, connecting young people with local processors, input suppliers and financing partners (Kumar et al., 2024). Reach is increased via digital extension platforms, which offer scalable training through farm management applications, chat-based advice and brief video courses. Young entrepreneurs run field-based demonstration farms that serve as live labs where peers may test concepts and establish credibility. The growth gap will be further reduced by funding methods that enable extension to provide seed grants or connect young people to microfinance.

5. POLICY, FINANCE, AND ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT FOR YOUTH AGRIPRENEURS

Reforms in finance and policy are crucial. By allowing youth-friendly land leasing regulations, tax breaks for rural businesses and expedited microbusiness registration procedures, policy may level the playing field. Reliable demand is produced by public procurement laws that reserve contracts for small or youth-run businesses. Finance innovation is essential because it lowers entry barriers through outcome-based grants, blended finance, micro-leasing for machines and guarantee programs. Microloans for creditworthy young people can be made possible by digital identification and credit-scoring developments that use transaction histories and mobile payments in place of traditional collateral (Li, 2024). Ecosystem builders offer investor connections, prototype facilities and mentorship through incubators, accelerators and innovation centers. Interdisciplinary solutions are promoted by market infrastructure investment educational institutions and private sector players. These include youth-focused entrepreneurial contests that provide seed money and mentorship, internships with agribusinesses and vocational programs linked to market demands.

6. CONCLUSION

Sustainable food systems, rural development and youth employment are all made possible by agripreneurship. Together, land availability, funding, skills, markets and risk must be addressed to make agriculture appealing. Reoriented extension services are essential, moving toward digital training, market facilitation and business consulting. To lower startup risks, digital platforms and incubators may offer prompt advice, networks and mentorship. Opportunities for young agribusiness owners are increased by supportive policies including targeted procurement and youth-friendly land regulations. Relevance and sustainability are ensured via youth-co-created and context-specific techniques. All things considered, agripreneurship has the potential to turn agriculture into a vibrant area for creativity, revenue, and rural leadership.

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