



Barriers & Opportunities For Kandi Area's Youth

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Abstract:

Youth are the nation-builders, whether they belong to rural or urban areas. However, there is a significant difference between them: youth in rural areas struggle more compared to their urban counterparts due to numerous constraints. For instance, in the Kandi area of Hoshiarpur, Punjab, many rural youths opt for a career in the Army after completing their 10+2 education. Notably, Hoshiarpur is one of the most highly educated districts in Punjab, with a literacy rate surpassing that of other districts. Despite this, approximately 75% of villagers are still engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Unfortunately, due to various constraints, they are not pursuing entrepreneurship opportunities. Entrepreneurship is a viable solution to curb the migration of rural youth to urban areas by providing them with opportunities, improving their standard of living, and contributing to village development. Rural entrepreneurship also generates job opportunities for youth, which is essential for their economic empowerment. Numerous opportunities are available in rural industrialization for individuals passionate about becoming entrepreneurs. Passion, therefore, is a crucial requirement for entrepreneurship. The government is currently offering various opportunities to rural youth, such as skill development programs and technical knowledge programs at no cost. A prime example of successful rural entrepreneurship is the management of KMS College of IT and Management. The management team, hailing from a rural area, has established KMS

College as a leading institution in Dasuya, offering technical courses to youth that foster their future perspectives as entrepreneurs. Furthermore, rural entrepreneurship has the potential to promote sustainable development, reduce poverty, and enhance the overall quality of life in rural areas. By leveraging resources, such as local materials and traditional skills, rural entrepreneurs can create innovative products and services that cater to both local and global markets.

Index Terms - Constraints, Entrepreneur, Kandi, Industrialization, Literacy, Rural Development, Sustainable Growth, Youth Empowerment.

Introduction

The Kandi area, located in the rural regions of Punjab, faces unique challenges and opportunities that significantly impact its youth. Despite its rich cultural heritage and natural resources, the youth in Kandi Area Hoshiarpur often grapple with limited access to education, employment, and social services. The barriers they face—ranging from economic constraints to inadequate infrastructure—hinder their personal and professional growth. However, amidst these challenges, there exist numerous opportunities that, if harnessed, can empower the youth and contribute to the overall development of the region. These include emerging sectors like digital literacy, community-driven initiatives, and government programs aimed at youth empowerment. This study explores the key barriers and opportunities that shape the lives of Kandi's youth, with the goal of identifying sustainable solutions to foster a brighter future for them and their communities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is descriptive in nature and adopts a qualitative approach to gather in-depth insights into the experiences and challenges of rural youth, specifically focusing on the barriers they face in their entrepreneurial pursuits. This method provides flexibility, allowing for the exploration of personal stories, perspectives, and nuanced experiences that are difficult to capture through quantitative methods. By employing open-ended interviews, the study facilitates a deeper understanding of the complex factors that influence rural youth's decision-making and attitudes toward entrepreneurship.

Convenience sampling was utilized to select respondents from two districts, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur, based on accessibility and relevance to the research focus. From each district, two blocks were randomly chosen, and two villages were selected from each block, resulting in a total of eight villages. In-depth interviews were conducted with 137 rural youth, including both male and female participants, aged between 18 and 30, from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This approach ensured a broad representation of the rural youth population and enabled the identification of common barriers across different village settings.

The primary aim of the data collection was to identify and explore the constraints and challenges faced by rural youth in their entrepreneurial journeys. This includes economic, social, and infrastructural barriers, as well as psychological factors such as lack of confidence or awareness of available resources. Additionally, the study sought to understand the coping strategies employed by rural youth and the support systems they rely on, such as family, government schemes, or community networks. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to, ensuring that all participants were fully aware of the purpose of the study and their rights throughout the data collection process.

Constraints

1. Limited Access to Quality Education: Many youths in the Kandi area struggle with inadequate educational facilities, low-quality teaching, and limited access to higher education opportunities, which hinder their ability to develop essential skills for the workforce.
2. Economic Hardship: High levels of poverty and limited job opportunities make it difficult for young people to access the resources they need for personal and professional development, including career training and higher education.
3. Inadequate Infrastructure: Poor transportation networks, unreliable electricity, and limited internet access can impede the youth's ability to learn, connect with the outside world, and engage in skill-building activities.
4. Limited Vocational and Skill Training: A lack of focused vocational training programs means that youth are not equipped with the practical skills needed to pursue alternative career paths or entrepreneurial ventures.
5. Social and Cultural Barriers: In some cases, traditional norms and gender expectations limit the freedom and opportunities available to youth, especially young women, curbing their ability to explore diverse career or educational avenues.
6. Underdeveloped Local Economy: With the absence of thriving industries or businesses in the region, youth face fewer job prospects, forcing many to migrate to urban areas or remain in low-wage, informal work.
7. Limited Exposure to Modern Career Paths: Many young people in the Kandi area have limited exposure to modern career options, such as those in technology, business, or creative industries, which stifles their ambitions and career possibilities.

Opportunities for Kandi Area's Youth:

Despite facing several challenges, the youth in the Kandi area are positioned to benefit from a range of emerging opportunities that could significantly improve their socio-economic prospects. These opportunities include:

1. Digital Literacy and Technology: With the increasing availability of mobile phones and internet connectivity, digital literacy has become an essential tool for education and employment. Youth can tap into online courses, remote work, and entrepreneurial ventures, which can bridge the gap between rural areas and the global economy.
2. Government and NGO Programs: Various government initiatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer programs aimed at skill development, education, and financial support. These programs often

focus on creating job opportunities, improving vocational training, and promoting youth-led community projects.

3. Agriculture and Sustainable Practices: Given the agricultural nature of the region, youth have the opportunity to engage in modern farming techniques, agri-business ventures, and sustainable practices that can contribute to food security and environmental sustainability while generating income.

4. Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses: The growing interest in supporting local businesses presents an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to start and grow small businesses, whether in retail, services, or tourism. This can boost the local economy and provide employment opportunities for others in the community.

5. Community and Social Empowerment: Youth-led movements and community organizations play a crucial role in tackling local issues. By engaging in social work and volunteer efforts, young people can develop leadership skills, create positive change, and foster a sense of unity and belonging.

6. Cultural and Creative Industries: The rich cultural traditions of the Kandi area provide a unique foundation for youth to engage in the arts, crafts, music, and tourism sectors. These industries offer avenues for creativity, cultural preservation, and income generation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the youth of the Kandi area face a complex array of constraints that significantly impact their potential for growth and success. Economic hardships, limited access to education and vocational training, inadequate infrastructure, and social barriers create an environment where young people struggle to realize their full potential. However, despite these challenges, there are substantial opportunities that can be leveraged to empower the youth and facilitate positive change. Digital literacy, government and NGO programs, agricultural innovation, and entrepreneurship offer pathways for the youth to break free from traditional limitations and contribute meaningfully to their community's development. Addressing the constraints while maximizing these opportunities will require a collaborative effort between local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the youth themselves. By fostering an environment of support, education, and innovation, the youth in Kandi can overcome barriers and become key drivers of sustainable regional growth.

References

Note: Physically visit and observe the above

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