

## INVOLVEMENT OF LANDLESS RURAL YOUTH IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN THE SELECTED AREAS OF BANGLADESH

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### ABSTRACT

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The main purpose of this study was to determine landless rural youths' involvement in income generating activities such as vegetable cultivation, cattle and poultry rearing, nursery, social forestry and handicrafts and small business. Ninety respondents were selected through random sampling technique. Data were personally collected by the researcher, compiled and interpreted as per objectives the study. Most of the respondents had primary level education, low income and organizational participation. More than half of the respondents received training. In the income generating activities, most of the respondents were not regularly involved but they are interested in seed collection for vegetables cultivation, buying cattle from the market, seed and poly bag collection for nursery, exchange of professional information and receiving loan from Bank/NGOs. Various kinds of youth development organizations may take necessary measures to improve their technical skill, knowledge, experiences, so that they can live in as self-employed members of the rural society.

**Keywords:** Income generating activities, rural youth

### INTRODUCTION

The economic development of Bangladesh depends largely on the state of agriculture and the farming community. Hence, it is a valuable proposition to augment the knowledge and skills of rural youth who constitute the largest significant rural labor force. Young people are the future citizens of the nations and should be given high priority in national plans to bring into the mainstream of development process.

Increasing population and massive poverty in the rural areas have been a great threat to the development of Bangladesh. In the Bangladesh, total population and its density is 132.9 million and 901 per square kilometer respectively (BBS, 2004). About 76.61 percent of its total population lives in rural areas (BBS, 2004). The age group of 15-30 years nearly accounts for 32 percent of the total population (Anonymous, 2004). About 80 percent of these youth live in rural areas; roughly half of them belong to less-landed rural families and hardly have any employment and opportunity to develop their skill (Anwar, 2000). But yet there is a long way to offer the vast population a reasonable standard of living and social uplift. There remains yawning gaps in economic growth with very poor rural people. Poverty alleviation and employment generation for the vast segments of the population, especially the young, have hardly been a success (Mia, 2002). But utilization of rural youth's energy is a must for the socioeconomic development in the country. The rural youth's energy should be brought into operation in development activities like highly demanding improved vegetable cultivation, livestock and poultry rearing, fish cultivation, tree plantation etc. for making them self-employment and healthy citizens of the country.

The concept of youth has been defined as the period between late childhood and full adulthood. Youth are a group of human beings who have not yet acquired full rights and duties of adult life when skills and social potentials need to be acquired for gaining responsibilities and adult status.

The United Nations Organization defines youth as persons belonging to the 12-25 years of age group. But the definition of youth varies from country to country and is rooted in the biological and legal factors, as well as in socio-economic and politico-legal structures. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Bangladesh considers young people in the age category of 15-30 years as youth while Department of Social Welfare defines youths to include person between 16-25 years of age.

The youth, permanently living within rural families are known as rural youth. The rural youth, who belong to landless rural youth families having homestead and land up to 50 decimals have been termed as landless rural youth.

In view of the involvement of the landless rural youth, the specific objectives were to determine the selected characteristics of the landless rural youth belonging to the landless families and to assess the involvement of landless rural youth in income generating activities,

### METHODOLOGY

The study was surveyed in the two villages, namely Rakhal Buruze and Chandpur during February 2006 to April 2006. The two selected villages had 280 landless rural youth families with 294 landless rural youth. At

first, landless rural youth families were selected from two selected villages by proportionate random method. Then one landless rural youth was selected from each selected family. 90 respondents were selected randomly from 90 landless rural youth families which constituted the sample for this study. In order to collect relevant information, an interview schedule was developed considering the objective of the study. The researcher himself through personal interview collected data.

### **Measurement of variables**

**Involvement of landless rural youth:** in income generating activities was the dependent variables in this study; five major income generating activities were identified. Involvement was measured for five income generating activities. In addition involvements in each activity were classified into five activities. Involvements in each activity were measured on a 4-point scale and rated at 1-4 point ordinal scale. A score 4 was given when respondent regularly involved, and thus 3, 2, and 1 were given respectively when they moderately, rarely and not at all. For each of the activities, involvement of respondents was determined by summing the scores obtained by himself for the four concerned statement, while the composite involvement of an individual respondent was computed by adding together the scores obtained by his/her scores for all the five income generating activities. The expected range of scores of the involvement for each activity could range from 5 to 25.

**Age:** Age of a respondent was computed by asking direct question to the respondents. It was measured in terms of years from their birth to the time of interview. Since Bangladeshi rural people in many cases do not keep any record of their birth date, age was sometimes calculated based on arbitrary estimates and sign of physical maturity.

**Family size:** The number of individuals in respondent's family including him, wife, children, and other dependents constitute the family size. The family size has been categorized into small, medium and large.

**Education:** Respondent's education was measured by the year spent for schooling. For every year of schooling 'one' score was assigned. For example, if a respondent passed class VI, his score was 6 and so on. For illiterate the education score was given as '0'. A respondent who can sign his name only, his educational qualification was considered to one year of schooling and given a score of one.

**Annual income:** Annual income of the respondents was measured in Taka on the basis of total yearly income from agriculture, livestock, fisheries, poultry and others sources of their family.

**Organizational participation:** referred to the taking part in a formal organization by the landless rural youth in and around his village/block/union/ near places of upazilla, either as a general member or executive committee member or president/secretary. Participation score was computed as 0, 1, 2, and 3 against no participation, general member, executive committee member, president/ secretary of the committee in each organization.

**Training received:** Training received by the respondent was operationalized by the number of training received in terms of focus on different income generating activities. On the basis of training received, the respondents were categorized into four groups such as no training, one training, two training and three training and scores were assigned as 0, 1, 2 and 3 respectively

Qualitative data were converted into quantitative one whenever necessary. Data obtained from the respondents were transferred first to a master sheet, and then compiled, coded and tabulated for analysis and interpretation. Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) computer software was used for the analysis of collected data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Demographic characteristics of the landless rural youth***

For the analysis, age of the respondents was divided into three categories according to Rashid et al. (2001). Data contained in Table 1 revealed that the highest proportion of landless rural youth (43.3 percent) were in older youth aged categories as compared to 28 percent who were young youth and 27.8 percent of the respondents were youth.

The highest proportion of the respondents had small family compare to 30 percent medium while 23.3 percent of the respondents had large family. 43.3 percent of the respondents had medium income as compare to 28.9 percent high and 27.8 percent low. From the Table 1 it may be concluded that the majority of the respondents had low and medium income because of their unemployment, inadequate land, illiteracy etc.

The highest 53.3 percent of the respondents had low participation in different type of organizations while 28.9 percent and 17.8 percent had medium and high participation. Organizational participation could improve their

knowledge and perception but most of the respondents were involved in different type organization. Hence, there should be many kinds of organization for their interaction and to get new outlook which would help them to know different modern agricultural activities.

From the Table 1, it was found that 37.8 percent of the respondents received once training but 36.7 percent did not receive any training while 20 percent and 5 percent received two and three training respectively. It indicates that a large portion of the respondents get little opportunity to improve their knowledge, attitude and to use practices in changing their socio-economic conditions through income generating activities

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the landless rural youth

Criteria	Categories	Landless rural youth		Mean	Standard deviation
		Number	Percentage		
Age	Young youth (15-20)	26	28.9	24.166	5.008
	Middle youth (21-25)	25	27.8		
	Old youth (26-30)	39	43.3		
Family size	Small family (up to 4)	42	46.7	5.944	1.9508
	Medium family (5-7)	27	30.0		
	Large family (>8)	21	23.3		
Income	Low income	25	27.8	40486.6	7745.2
	Medium income	39	43.3		
	High income	26	28.9		
Organizational participation	Low knowledge	48	53.3	3.64	1.61
	Medium knowledge	26	28.9		
	High knowledge	16	17.8		
Training received	No training	33	36.6	0	0
	One training	34	37.8		
	Two training	18	20.0		
	Three training	5	5.6		

### Education

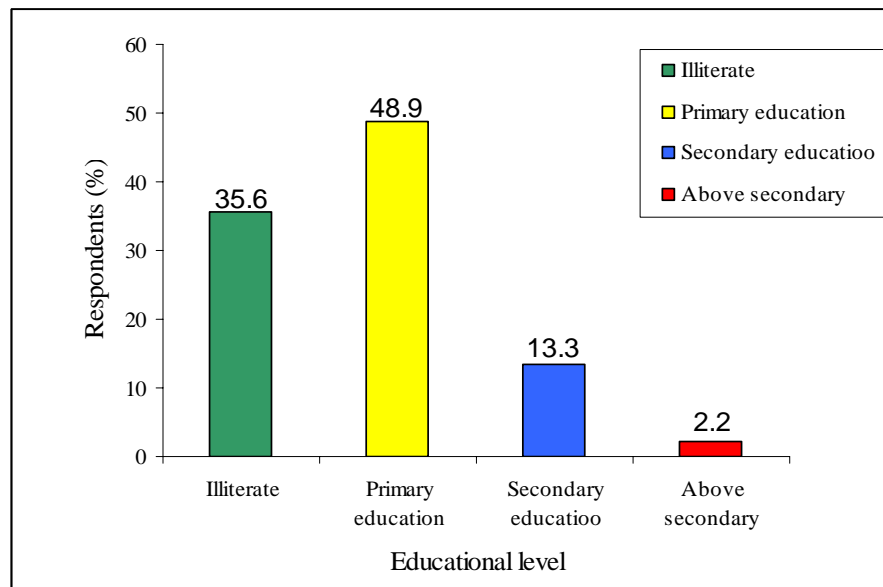


Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their education level

The Figure 1 showed that the highest 48.9 percent of the respondents had primary education followed by 35.6 percent illiterate, 13.3 percent had secondary education and 2.2 percent of the respondents had above secondary education. From the figure 1 it may be concluded that the majority of the respondents were illiterate and primary education.

#### ***Extent of involvement in vegetable cultivation***

Respondent's involvement in vegetable cultivation assessed by finding out their involvement in five different activities related to vegetable cultivation. As shown in Table 2, involvement of landless rural youth ranked first in seed collection followed by irrigation and intercultural operation. But more than half of the respondents did not involve at all in selling vegetable and near about 20 percent of them rarely involved in vegetable selling.

Table 2. Respondent's involvement in vegetable cultivation.

Activities	Extent of Involvement				Total scores	Rank order
	Regularly	Moderately	Rarely	Not at all		
Seed collection	32	30	12	16	258	1 <sup>st</sup>
Irrigation for vegetable production	10	43	31	6	237	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Intercultural operation for vegetable production	9	21	48	12	207	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Land preparation for vegetable production	8	15	41	26	177	4 <sup>th</sup>
Vegetable selling	9	17	17	47	168	5 <sup>th</sup>

From the Figure 2, it showed that only 15.11 percent respondents regularly involved in vegetable cultivation and 28 percent of them occasionally involved in vegetable cultivation.

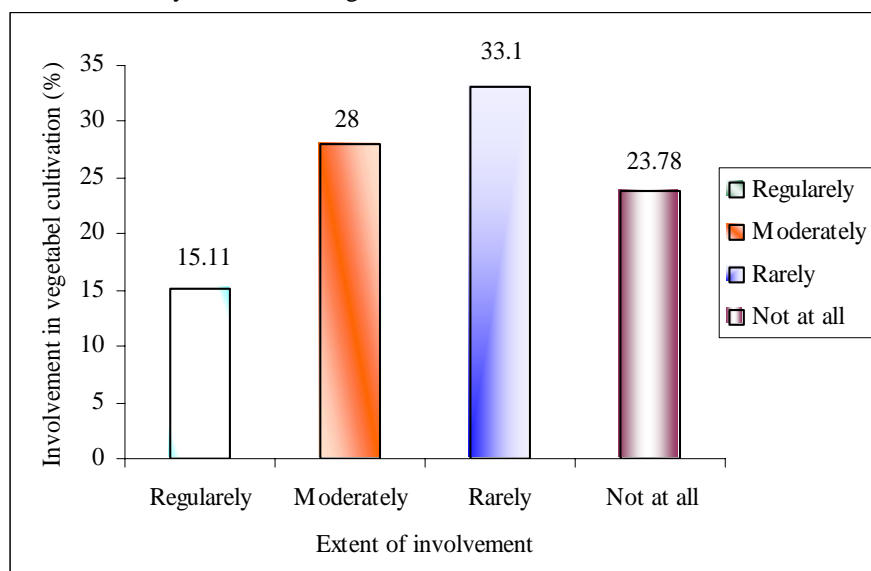


Figure 2. Extent of respondent's involvement in vegetable cultivation

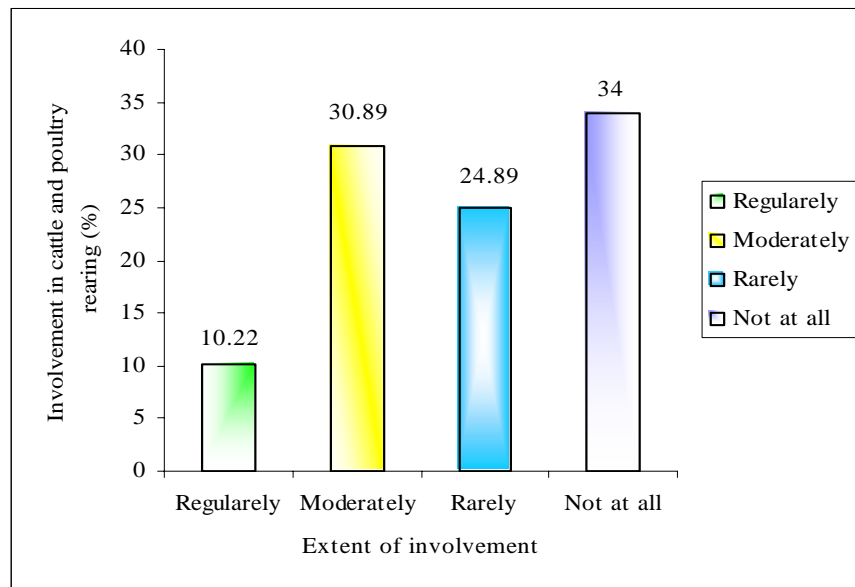
#### ***Extent of involvement in cattle and poultry rearing***

In cattle and poultry rearing respondent's involvement ascertained by their response in five different activities related to cattle and poultry rearing. Data presented in Table 3, indicated that, maximum respondents were involved moderately in different activities related to cattle and poultry rearing. But 55 percent of the respondents were not involved at all in vaccination regularly and near about 25 percent of them rarely involved in vaccination regularly.

**Table 3. Respondent's involvement in cattle and poultry rearing**

Activities	Extent of Involvement				Total scores	Rank order
	Regularly	Moderately	Rarely	Not at all		
To sell/buy cattle in/from the market	16	38	17	19	235	1 <sup>st</sup>
To feed on cattle and poultry	9	33	23	25	206	2 <sup>nd</sup>
To sell eggs and fowl in the market	12	28	22	28	204	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Taking care of chickens everyday	7	25	27	31	188	4 <sup>th</sup>
Vaccination regularly	2	15	23	50	149	5 <sup>th</sup>

From the Figure 3, it represented that only 10.22 percent respondents were regularly involved in cattle and poultry rearing where as 30.89 percent of the respondent was moderately involved in cattle and poultry rearing.



**Figure 3. Extent of respondent's involvement in cattle and poultry rearing**

#### ***Extent of involvement in nursery***

Among five different activities related to nursery respondent's involvement determined according to their response. The Table 4 represented that in the study area, involvement of the respondent ranked order first in seed and poly bag collection followed by management seedling and soil and organic matter mix for nursery bed. But 51.11 percent of the respondents were not involved at all in selling seedling in the market and 26.67 percent of them rarely involved in selling seedling in the market.

**Table 4. Respondent's involvement in nursery**

Activities	Extent of Involvement				Total scores	Rank order
	Regularly	Moderately	Rarely	Not at all		
Seed and poly bag collection	18	29	18	25	220	1 <sup>st</sup>
Management of seedling	7	26	36	21	199	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Soil and organic matter mix for nursery bed	3	30	24	33	183	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Shading and irrigation for nursery bed	3	25	25	37	174	4 <sup>th</sup>
Selling seedling in the market	1	19	24	46	155	5 <sup>th</sup>

Figure 4, represented that only 7.11 percent of the respondents were regularly involved in nursery raising and its management followed by 28.67 percent of them were involved moderately in nursery raising and its management.

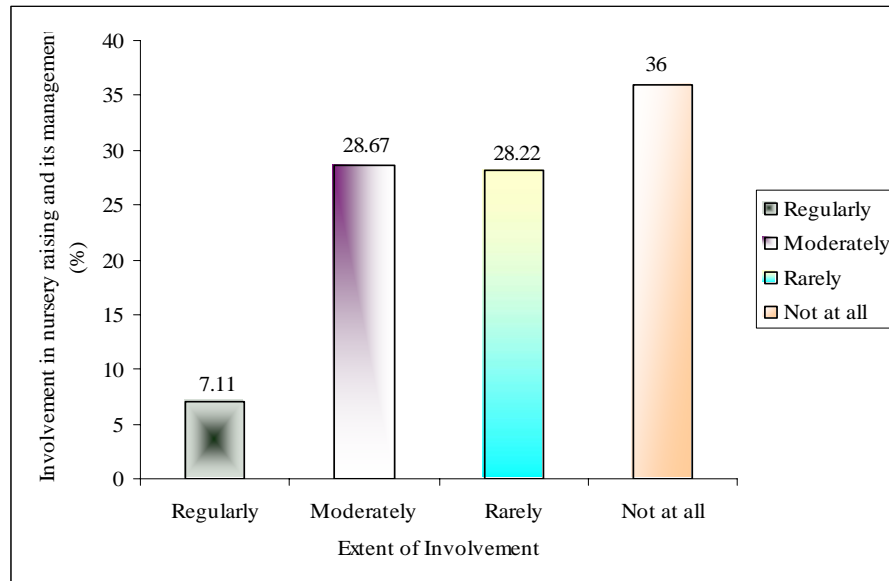


Figure 4. Extent of respondent's involvement in nursery

***Extent of involvement in social forestry***

In case of five different activities related to social forestry extent of respondent's involvement ascertained in accordance with their involvement. As shown in Table 5, indicated that, in the study area involvement of the respondents ranked order first in exchange of professional information followed by making pit and watering during seedling planting. But more than half of the respondents were not involved at all in receiving training from Forest Department.

Table 5. Respondent's involvement in social forestry

Activities	Extent of Involvement				Total scores	Rank order
	Regularly	Moderately	Rarely	Not at all		
Exchange of professional information	11	40	30	9	233	1
Making pit for seedling planting	3	24	28	35	175	2
Watering during seedling planting	0	16	37	37	159	3
Applying fertilizer after plantation	0	7	33	50	137	4
Receiving training from Forest Department	0	5	31	54	131	5

From the Figure 5 it might be concluded that only 3.1 percent of the respondents were regularly involved in social forestry and its management while 20.46 percent of them were involved moderately.

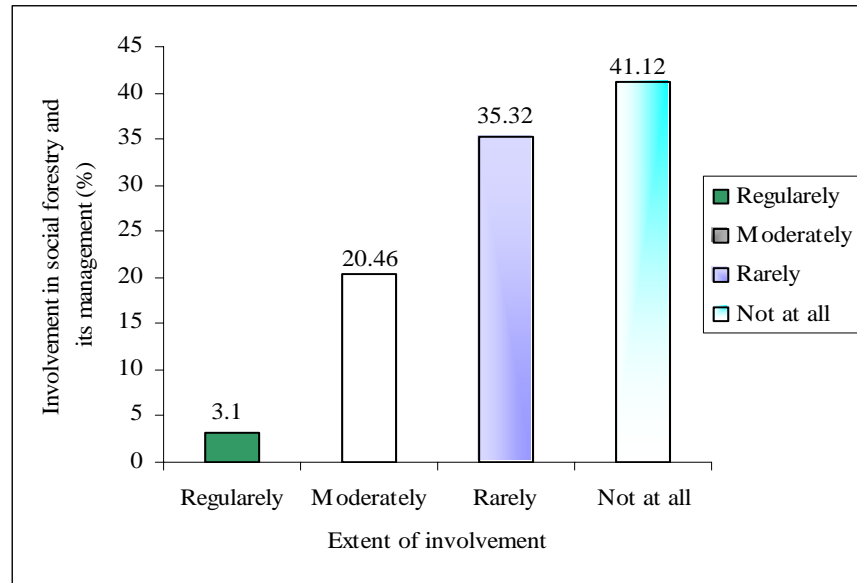


Figure 5. Extent of respondent's involvement in social forestry

#### ***Extent of involvement in handicrafts and small business***

Respondent's involvement in handicrafts and small business assessed by finding out their involvement in five different activities related to handicrafts and small business. From the Table 6 it may be concluded that involvement of the respondent ranked order first in receiving loan from the Bank/NGOs followed by selling the goods of any stationary small shops and carrying the goods from another places. But about one-third of the respondents were not involved at all in selling the handicrafts in the market.

Table 6. Respondent's involvement in handicrafts and small business

Activities	Extent of Involvement				Total scores	Rank order
	Regularly	Moderately	Rarely	Not at all		
Receiving loan from the Bank/NGOs	11	40	20	19	223	1
Selling the goods of any stationary small shops	19	14	13	44	188	2
Carryings the goods from another places	17	12	11	50	176	3
Making toy, doll, etc.	10	9	6	65	144	4
Selling the handicrafts in the market	4	16	5	65	135	5

The Figure 6 represented that only 13.56 percent of the respondents were regularly involved in handicrafts and small business while 20.22 percent and 12.22 percent were involved moderately and rarely respectively in handicrafts and small business.

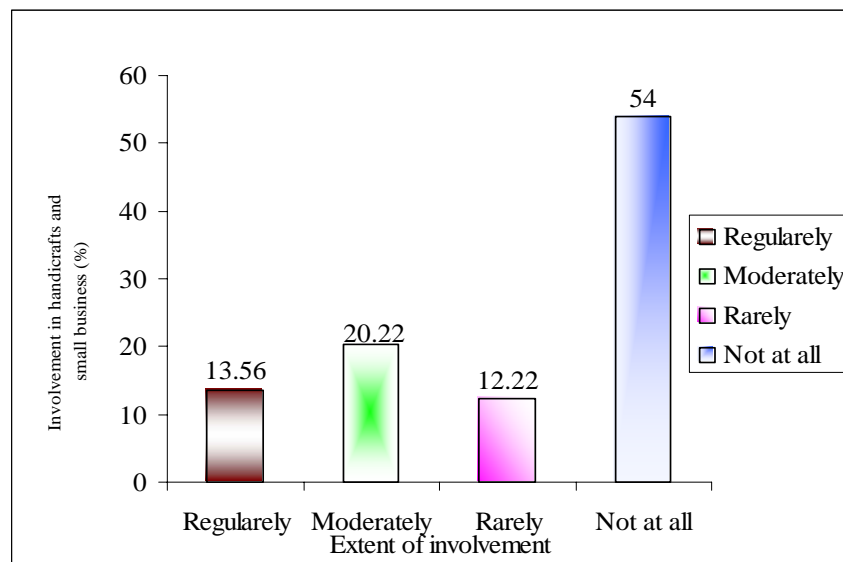


Figure 8. Extent of respondent's involvement in handicrafts and small business

### Conclusions

Finding of the study and the logical interpretation of their meaning in the light of the other relevant facts prompted the researcher to draw the following conclusion:

It was found that rural landless youth are involved to some extent in vegetable cultivation, cattle and poultry rearing, nursery raising and its management, social forestry and its management and handicrafts and small business. Among them, 41 percent of the respondents involved regularly and moderately in cattle and poultry rearing.

From the involvement of landless rural youth in vegetable cultivation and nursery, it may be concluded that youth are interested in seed and poly bag collection and intercultural operations

On the basis of involvement of landless rural youths in social forestry and handicrafts and small business, it may be concluded that youth are highly involved in exchange of professional information and receiving loan from the Bank/NGOs.

Findings indicate that about 46.7 percent and 51.1 percent of the respondents had small and nuclear type family. Thus, it may be concluded that respondents of these families are highly involved in different income generating activities in order to foster their family members as the main income earner.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the followings recommendations were drawn-

In the study area, most of the respondents did not regular involve in different activities. Therefore, arrangement should be made to organize landless rural youth under the extension program and youth development and other concerned programs and to impart non-formal education and training for making them as self-employed as well as satisfying members of the rural society.

The youth being the most energetic, dynamic, creative and innovative segment of the labor force, for which the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Youth Development (DYD), Department of Forestry and Environment (DFE) and other concerned organizations should be taken necessary steps to help them for their poverty reduction.

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