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Family and Community Support as Drivers of Youth Engagement and Welfare in Agricultural Entrepreneurship: A SEM-Based Mediation Framework

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Abstract
In rural India, agriculture is still a significant source of income, but recruiting and keeping young people in the sector is still quite difficult. In South Bihar, India, this study investigates the connection between youth participation in agricultural entrepreneurship and youth welfare and family and community support. The Social Cognitive Theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which together describe how social support can spur creative action and improve livelihood outcomes, serve as the foundation for this study. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather data from 397 young farmers in 17 South Bihar districts. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4 was used to analyse the data. According to the findings, there is a positive and substantial correlation between Family Support and Youth Engagement ($\beta = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$), whereas there is a relatively higher correlation between Community Support and Youth Engagement ($\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Youth Welfare and Community Support ($\beta = 0.170$, $p < 0.001$) and Family Support ($\beta = 0.180$, $p < 0.001$) were significantly correlated. Youth Welfare and Youth Engagement are most strongly correlated ($\beta = 0.520$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, the relationships between Family Support and Community Support and Youth Welfare are significantly mediated by Youth Engagement. 45.4% of the variation in youth welfare can be explained by the model. According to the study, social support is crucial, but it is more valuable when young people work in agriculture. The results have ramifications for families, rural communities, agricultural extension organisations, and legislators who are trying to encourage young people to pursue agricultural entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Agricultural entrepreneurship; Community support; Family support; Youth engagement; Youth welfare; South Bihar.

1. Introduction

The Indian agricultural sector continues to be a pillar supporting a large rural population, and is closely linked to employment, food security and household livelihoods (Kumar et al., 2026). At the same time the sector is facing a major generational challenge. Uncertain income, limited access to land and finance, physical labour, market risks and the social preference for salaried employment make traditional farming an unattractive career for many young people . Recent studies on youth in agriculture also indicate that even when young people are interested in agribusiness, they find it difficult to access finance, skills, market linkages and modern technology. Agricultural entrepreneurship can thus be a means of making agriculture more market driven, innovative and attractive to youth.

Young people can be involved in agriculture in many ways. They may be involved in crop or livestock enterprises, horticulture and fisheries, food processing and value addition, or agricultural inputs or services, or marketing and distribution (Kumar et al., 2026). In this respect agricultural entrepreneurship is wider than conventional crop cultivation. It involves identification of opportunities, investment of time and resources, managing enterprise, innovation, value addition and efforts to improve business performance. Research on agricultural entrepreneurship has increasingly recognised that entrepreneurship can improve farmers' skills and can have wider effects on rural communities (Dias et al., 2019).

The importance of social support is very high for young agricultural entrepreneurs. Unlike many urban businesses, rural agricultural businesses are often closely linked to family resources and community relationships. Family members can provide money, land, labour, advice, experience and emotional encouragement. Community members can provide social acceptance, information, networks and opportunities to work with farmer groups and local organisations. Studies on young entrepreneurs show that family social capital and emotional support can affect the range of activities involved in venture development (Edelman et al., 2016). Similarly, the social legitimacy of entrepreneurship in a region can affect entrepreneurial intentions and start-up

behaviour (Kibler et al., 2014).

These problems are very much true for South Bihar. The region has a strong agricultural base and a large rural population. But young people also face the problems of limited non-farm employment, migration, small landholdings and difficulties in accessing productive resources. In such a context, agricultural entrepreneurship could provide opportunities for income generation and local employment. But young people may need support from the people and institutions around them to stay involved in agricultural enterprises. Community-based initiatives in other parts of India (Dutta & Prasad, 2022) show that local institutions and communities can create new pathways for youth engagement in sustainable agriculture.

Although previous studies have researched youth involvement in agriculture, agricultural entrepreneurship, family support and social capital, only few have combined these ideas into a single empirical framework. Specifically, few studies have been done on the relationship between family and community support and youth well-being through the active participation of youth in agricultural entrepreneurship. This matters because the support in itself is not likely to improve welfare unless it is translated into productive action. Family may provide encouragement or financial assistance to a young person, but the potential for welfare benefits is more likely to result when that support enables the young person to manage and develop an agricultural enterprise.

Therefore, the present study is undertaken to explore the association of Family Support, Community Support, Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Youth Welfare of the young agricultural entrepreneurs of South Bihar. The study has four major goals. First it looks at the connection with Family Support and Youth Engagement. Second, it looks at the relationship between Community Support and Youth Engagement. Third, it explores the direct relationships between family support, community support and youth engagement and youth well-being. Fourth, it tests if Youth Engagement mediates the two Social Support forms and Youth Welfare relationships.

The study adds to the literature in three aspects. First, it introduces a social-support perspective to the study of youth agricultural entrepreneurship in a rural Indian context. Second, it sees Youth Engagement as a potential mechanism to link family and community resources to welfare outcomes. Third, it offers empirical evidence from 17 districts of South Bihar, a region that is important for agriculture but less visible in the international entrepreneurship literature. The study also has implications for the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction, food security, decent work and inclusive economic opportunities.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Social Cognitive Theory and Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

The study applies two complementary perspectives: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory describes behaviour as an interaction between the individual, their behaviour and their environment. The social environment can influence what people perceive they can do, the risks they are willing to take and the effort they put into an activity. Having the backing of family, sound advice and the nod of approval from the community can make entrepreneurship a more viable and more palatable option for young agricultural entrepreneurs.

A second perspective is provided by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. This perspective underscores the fact that livelihoods are affected by access to various forms of capital and by the strategies that people use to convert resources into livelihoods. Social relationships matter because they can open doors to information, support, knowledge and pooled resources. In the present study, social resources are considered as Family Support and Community Support, productive livelihood activity is considered as Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship and outcome is considered as Youth Welfare.

The suggested model is explained by combining the two viewpoints. Young people can be motivated to take action by support from their immediate surroundings. This is explained by social cognitive theory. A livelihood strategy can make use of available social resources, which could improve welfare. This is explained by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. As a result, the model forecasts social support's direct and indirect effects on welfare.

2.2 Family Support and Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

The family of a young entrepreneur is often the first place to look for resources and advice. Family support may be especially important in rural areas as agricultural production often involves family land, labour, equipment and experience. The young entrepreneur may also get emotional support from family members when facing uncertainty or a temporary business loss. This support can lower the personal risk involved in entrepreneurship and make it easier for people to stay involved.

Family relationships influence business possibilities and choices, according to research on family embeddedness (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Edelman et al. (2016) discovered a relationship between the extent of start-up activity among young entrepreneurs and family social capital and emotional support. This support in agricultural entrepreneurship may include

access to land, capital, agricultural knowledge, labour and advice. It can also strengthen confidence and commitment in the enterprise in trouble.

The paper focuses on young people already involved in agricultural entrepreneurship. Thus, Family Support is likely to be related not only to the decision to engage in agriculture but also to the extent of active participation in the management and development of an agricultural enterprise.

H1: Family Support significantly influences Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship.

2.3 Community Support and Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Community support is the social environment where a young agricultural entrepreneur works. It includes encouragement from local people, trust, access to networks, information and opportunities to work with farmer groups, co-operatives and other local organisations. Such relationships can be important as agricultural entrepreneurs often rely on local markets, suppliers, buyers, labour and information.

According to Kibler et al. (2014), start-up conduct and entrepreneurial goals might be influenced by the social legitimacy of entrepreneurship in a given area. Additionally, McKeever et al. (2015) stress the importance of social capital and community embeddedness for entrepreneurship. Community networks can help address rural isolation and facilitate knowledge sharing among young entrepreneurs. They can also offer social recognition, which is important since agriculture is sometimes seen as less attractive than salaried jobs.

Community support is therefore expected to motivate young agripreneurs to remain active, invest time and energy in their enterprises and look for ways to improve their business activities.

H2: Community Support significantly influences Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship.

2.4 Family Support, Community Support and Youth Welfare

Youth welfare is more than money. In this study it is used to refer to improvements in economic security, personal well-being and social recognition that young people associate with their agricultural enterprise. The literature on social support has long shown that supportive relationships can help people cope with stress and facilitate well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Thoits, 2011).

Family support may have a direct impact on welfare because family members may help young entrepreneurs overcome financial difficulties, provide labour, and share household responsibilities. Social relationships can help welfare by providing security, practical help, information, and a sense of belonging. Community support can also directly contribute to social inclusion, local recognition and access to useful information and networks. These benefits may accrue even before the young entrepreneur grows the company.

H3: Family Support significantly influences Youth Welfare.

H4: Community Support significantly influences Youth Welfare.

2.5 Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Youth Welfare

Agricultural entrepreneurship can be a vehicle for livelihood enhancement when young people are fully invested in their enterprises. Engagement means investing time and energy on the enterprise, taking part in management, remaining committed during tough times, getting deeply involved in enterprise activities, and striving constantly to improve performance. Such involvement can help young people to develop practical skills and have more control of income generating activities.

Research on agricultural entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurial activity can enhance skills, generate opportunities and effect rural communities (Dias et al., 2019). Studies on youth agricultural entrepreneurship also emphasise the necessity of training, enterprise support and access to resources for improving performance and sustaining youth participation. Young people involved in the management of agricultural enterprises obtain experience in planning, marketing, finance, technology and decision making. Such changes can improve welfare in economic and personal terms.

H5: Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship significantly influences Youth Welfare.

2.6 Mediating Role of Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Family and community support are helpful resources, but support does not automatically equate to better welfare. It is for use in productive activities. In this study we propose Youth Engagement as the mechanism that connects social support and welfare. For example, the worth of family financial help or advice may increase if a young entrepreneur uses it to improve the enterprise. Similarly, community information and networking may improve welfare if they allow the young entrepreneur to identify markets, adopt better practices or expand the enterprise.

This mediation argument is in line with the combined logic of Social Cognitive Theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Social support is an enabling environment and engagement is the behavioural response whereby resources are converted into livelihood activity. If engagement is an important mechanism we would expect significant indirect effects of Family Support and Community Support on Youth Welfare through Youth Engagement.

H6: Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship significantly mediates the relationship between Family Support and Youth Welfare.

H7: Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship significantly mediates the relationship between Community Support and Youth Welfare.

2.7 Proposed Conceptual Model

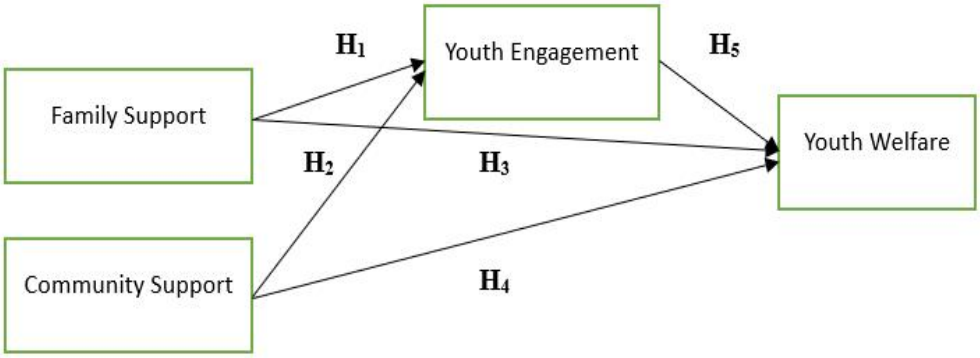

Figure 1: Proposed Model

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

Young agricultural entrepreneurs in the age range of 18 to 29 who were actively engaged in crop production, livestock, horticulture, fisheries, agro-processing, agri-input businesses, or related agricultural enterprises in 17 districts in South Bihar including Patna, Rohtas, Gaya, Nalanda, Bhojpur, Aurangabad, Buxar, Kaimur, Bhagalpur, Nawada, Jamui, Arwal, Banka, Jehanabad, Munger, Lakhisarai, and Sheikhpura were distributed using purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

The study does not claim to be representative of all youth in Bihar. The respondents were chosen based on their participation in agricultural entrepreneurship. The findings are thus to be interpreted as evidence of the linkages between support, engagement and welfare of this group of young agripreneurs.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

All constructs were measured with six reflective items. The scale is on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was constructed based on the literature and adapted to the context of young agricultural entrepreneurs. Family Support captured emotional, financial, knowledge and motivation support given by family members. Local encouragement, networking, information and trust were captured by Community Support. Youth Engagement was defined as the time and energy, active participation, commitment, deep involvement and continuous improvement in agricultural enterprise. Youth Welfare included economic, social and personal welfare.

To reduce response-pattern bias, the sixth item of each construct was written in a negative direction and reverse-coded prior to the SmartPLS analysis. Thus FS6, CS6, YE6 and YW6 were recoded such that a higher final score denotes greater support, engagement or welfare. Prior to the PLS-SEM analysis, reverse coding was done, therefore the positive outer loadings presented are on the correctly recoded indicators. The presence of reverse-worded items was used as a measure of response quality and not as a statistical test of common method bias.

The measurement basis was guided by family embeddedness and family support literature (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Edelman et al., 2016), social capital and community entrepreneurship literature (Kibler et al., 2014; McKeever et al., 2015; Putnam, 2000), engagement and entrepreneurial behaviour literature (Bird, 1988; Gartner, 1985; Schaufeli et al., 2002), and well-being and capability literature (Cummins, 1997; Diener et al., 1985; Sen, 1999). The items were adapted for the agricultural entrepreneurship context and not copied directly from any source.

3.3 Data Analysis

Smart PLS 4 was used to assess the data. Because the study is prediction-oriented and features a mediation model with several reflectively assessed latent variables, PLS-SEM was used. There were two primary phases of the analysis. Initially, indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were used to assess the measurement model. Second, collinearity, coefficient of determination (R2), effect magnitude (f2), model fit, bootstrapped path coefficients, and

indirect effects were all evaluated for the structural model. 5,000 resamples were used for bootstrapping.

The typical goals for measurement quality were outer loadings > 0.70, reliability values > 0.70, and AVE > 0.50. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity. For the structural model, the R2 assessed the explained variance, the f2 assessed each predictor's contribution, the VIF assessed collinearity, and the PLSpredict assessed out-of-sample predictive performance. Statistical significance was assessed using bootstrapped t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1. Respondent characteristics (N = 397).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20 years	59	14.86
	21–23 years	133	33.5
	24–26 years	141	35.52
	27–29 years	64	16.12
Gender	Male	256	64.48
	Female	141	35.52
Education	Up to 10th standard	30	7.56
	12th standard / Intermediate	116	29.22
	Graduate	183	46.1
	Postgraduate	57	14.36
	Other / Technical Diploma	11	2.77
Marital status	Single	226	56.93
	Married	171	43.07
Annual enterprise income	< ₹2,00,000	109	27.46
	₹2,00,000–₹5,00,000	185	46.6
	₹5,00,001–₹10,00,000	76	19.14
	> ₹10,00,000	27	6.8
Landholding	Landless / Leased	35	8.82
	< 1 acre	117	29.47
	1–5 acres	195	49.12
	> 5 acres	50	12.59
Family agricultural background	Yes	299	75.31
	No	98	24.69
Government support received	Yes	221	55.67
	No	176	44.33
Enterprise involvement	< 1 year	40	10.08

	1–3 years	156	39.29
	4–6 years	140	35.26
	> 6 years	61	15.37
Enterprise type	Crop production	102	25.69
	Dairy farming	86	21.66
	Horticulture & floriculture	72	18.14
	Fisheries & aquaculture	37	9.32
	Poultry farming	36	9.07
	Food processing / value addition	27	6.8
	Agricultural marketing / distribution	19	4.79
	Agri-input business	18	4.53

The profile indicates that the respondents were mostly young adults in the 21–26 age range and 46.10% were graduates. The great majority (75.31 per cent) were from agricultural families and 55.67 per cent reported some government support. Nearly half of the respondents had 1-5 acres of land, but a small group were landless or dependent on leased land. The two most common forms of enterprise were crop production and dairy farming. The profile shows that the sample comprised both traditional agricultural backgrounds and young people engaged in different agricultural and allied ventures.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

4.2.1 Indicator Reliability and Internal Consistency

First, the measurement model was tested for indicator reliability and internal consistency. The outer loadings of all 24 indicators ranged from 0.751 to 0.850. Thus, all retained indicators scored above the generally accepted level of 0.70. No indicator was removed because of low loading.

Table 2. Outer loadings, reliability and convergent validity.

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's α	rho_A	rho_C	AVE
Community Support	CS1	0.828	0.913	0.914	0.933	0.697
	CS2	0.833				
	CS3	0.829				
	CS4	0.836				
	CS5	0.835				
	CS6 (reverse-coded)	0.850				
Family Support	FS1	0.780	0.903	0.910	0.925	0.673
	FS2	0.804				
	FS3	0.838				
	FS4	0.840				
	FS5	0.834				
	FS6 (reverse-	0.823				

	coded)					
Youth Engagement	YE1	0.763	0.861	0.861	0.896	0.590
	YE2	0.785				
	YE3	0.767				
	YE4	0.760				
	YE5	0.765				
	YE6 (reverse-coded)	0.769				
Youth Welfare	YW1	0.751	0.866	0.867	0.900	0.599
	YW2	0.760				
	YW3	0.801				
	YW4	0.801				
	YW5	0.761				
	YW6 (reverse-coded)	0.770				

Composite reliability varied from 0.896 to 0.933, rho_A from 0.861 to 0.914, and Cronbach alpha from 0.861 to 0.913. Good internal consistency was shown by all values being above 0.70. The AVE values were higher than 0.50, ranging from 0.590 to 0.697. As a result, the constructs' convergent validity was similarly excellent.

4.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker criterion

	Community Support	**Family Support**	**Youth Engagement**	**Youth Welfare**
Community Support	0.835			
Family Support	0.002	0.820		
Youth Engagement	0.356	0.314	0.768	
Youth Welfare	0.356	0.344	0.637	0.774

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to evaluate the discriminant validity. According to the criterion, each construct's square root of the AVE, which is displayed in the matrix's diagonal, must be higher than its correlations with the other constructs. Table 3 displays the diagonal values for Community Support (0.835), Family Support (0.820), Youth Engagement (0.768), and Youth Welfare (0.774). The diagonal value was always higher than the correlations with the other constructs. There was enough discriminant validity between the four constructs, as demonstrated by the satisfaction of the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

4.2.3 Model Fit

Table 4. Model fit results.

Fit measure	**Saturated model**	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.046	0.046
d_ULS	0.648	0.648
d_G	0.182	0.182
Chi-square	415.604	415.604
NFI	0.920	0.920

The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) for the estimated and saturated models was 0.046. The

number is less than the cut-off of 0.08, which is typically regarded as a good model fit. The NFI was 0.920. These findings offer more evidence that the estimated model is adequate.

4.3 Structural Model Assessment

4.3.1 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. R^2 results.

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship	0.225	0.221
Youth Welfare	0.454	0.450

22.5% of the variation in youth engagement was explained by family and community support. This is a moderate level of explanatory power according to Cohen's general principles. A significant amount of explanatory power—45.4% of the variance in Youth Welfare—is explained by the whole model. The results show that the model can explain more about youth welfare than about youth engagement.

4.3.2 Effect Size (f^2)

Table 6. Effect-size results.

Structural path	f^2	Effect
Community Support → Youth Engagement	0.163	Medium
Family Support → Youth Engagement	0.127	Small to medium
Community Support → Youth Welfare	0.046	Small
Family Support → Youth Welfare	0.053	Small
Youth Engagement → Youth Welfare	0.383	Large

Youth Engagement has the highest effect on Youth Welfare (f2 = 0.383)). Youth Engagement is moderately influenced by Community Support (f^2 =.163). The direct effects of Family Support and Community Support on Youth Welfare are small, which suggests that much of the value of social support may be related to the engagement pathway.

4.3.3 Multicollinearity

Table 7. Inner VIF results.

Structural path	VIF
Community Support → Youth Engagement	1.000
Family Support → Youth Engagement	1.000
Community Support → Youth Welfare	1.163
Family Support → Youth Welfare	1.127
Youth Engagement → Youth Welfare	1.290

Internal VIF was between 1.000 and 1.290, well below conservative thresholds to consider collinearity problematic. Hence, multicollinearity does not seem to be a problem in the structural model.

4.3.4 PLSpredict Assessment

Table 8. PLSpredict results.

Indicator	Q^2_predict	PLS-SEM MAE	LM MAE	PLS-SEM – LM
YE1	0.136	0.630	0.631	-0.001
YE2	0.129	0.634	0.648	-0.014
YE3	0.137	0.639	0.653	-0.014

YE4	0.110	0.634	0.645	-0.011
YE5	0.137	0.632	0.644	-0.012
YE6	0.099	0.659	0.669	-0.010
YW1	0.129	0.652	0.666	-0.014
YW2	0.128	0.660	0.676	-0.016
YW3	0.173	0.625	0.641	-0.016
YW4	0.149	0.652	0.662	-0.010
YW5	0.158	0.640	0.657	-0.017
YW6	0.100	0.648	0.652	-0.004

All the values of Q2 predict were positive and varied from 0.099 to 0.173. Moreover, the PLS-SEM MAE was smaller than the linear-model benchmark for each indicator, although the difference for YE1 was very small. These results show that the model has a useful out-of-sample predictive power. The evidence is positive, but it is more appropriate to describe it as predictive capability rather than uniformly high predictive power.

4.3.5 Hypothesis Testing

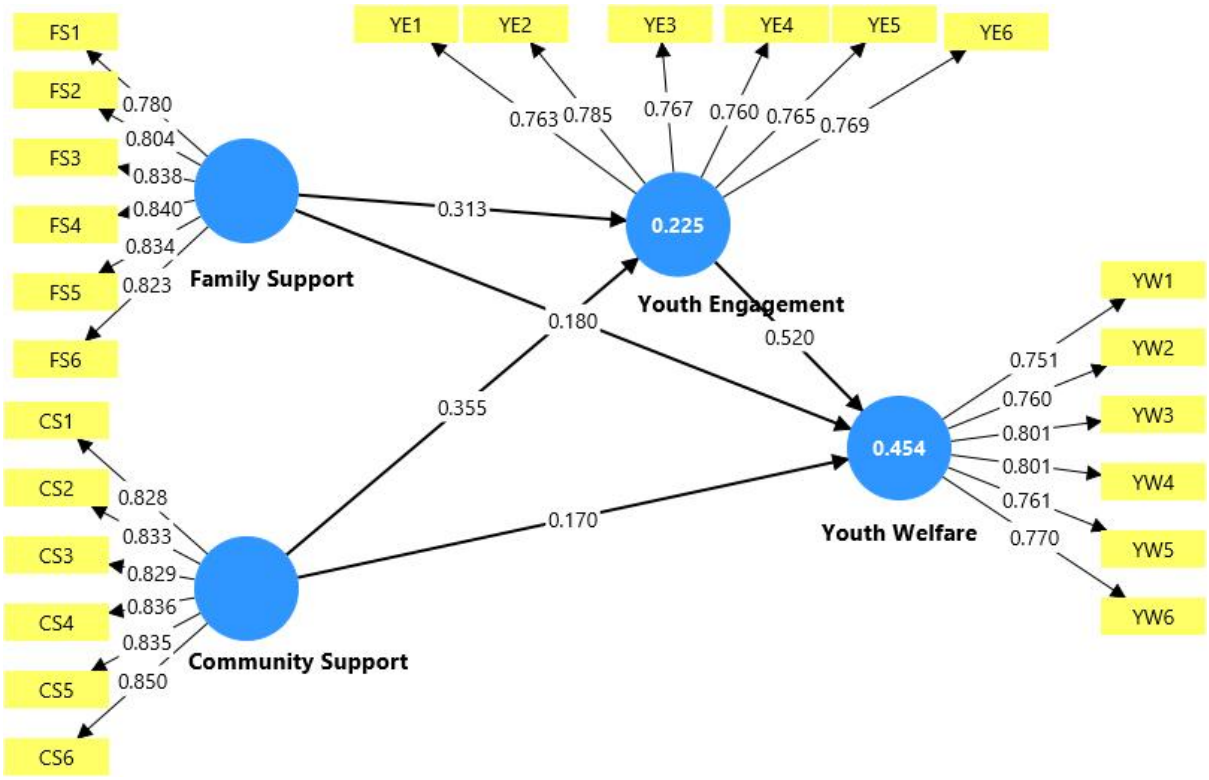

Figure 2: Structural Model

Table 9. Hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	p	95% CI	Decision
H1	Family Support → Youth Engagement	0.313	7.564	<0.001	[0.271, 0.431]	Supported
H2	Community Support → Youth Engagement	0.355	8.737	<0.001	[0.277, 0.436]	Supported
H3	Family	0.180	4.447	<0.001	[0.081,	Supported

	Support → Youth Welfare				0.245]	
H4	Community Support → Youth Welfare	0.170	4.134	<0.001	[0.103, 0.261]	Supported
H5	Youth Engagement → Youth Welfare	0.520	13.468	<0.001	[0.445, 0.597]	Supported
H6	Family Support → Youth Engagement → Youth Welfare	0.163	6.555	<0.001	[0.116, 0.214]	Supported
H7	Community Support → Youth Engagement → Youth Welfare	0.185	6.885	<0.001	[0.134, 0.237]	Supported

Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. All five direct paths were positive and significant at the statistical level. There were also significant indirect effects, with confidence intervals not containing zero. All seven hypotheses were thus supported.

4.3.6 Mediation Analysis

Family support had an indirect impact on youth welfare through youth engagement of 0.163 ($t = 6.555$, $p < 0.001$), while community support had an indirect impact of 0.185 ($t = 6.885$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally noteworthy and beneficial were the direct effects of community and family support on youth welfare. A complementing mediation is also suggested by the large direct and indirect effects' favourable direction. Based on the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect, the approximate VAF values are 52.0% for community support and 47.5% for family support. Thus, the relationship between social support and welfare is largely, but not entirely, explained by youth engagement.

5. Discussion

The focus of the study was to study the relationship between Family Support and Community Support on Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Youth Welfare among young agricultural entrepreneurs in South Bihar. The results support the model under consideration. In particular, the results indicate that social support is related to engagement and engagement is most strongly related to welfare.

The first hypothesis was confirmed. The relationship between Family Support and Youth Engagement was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$). This means that the more support young agripreneurs get from their families, the more likely they are to report greater involvement in their businesses. In a rural agricultural context, family support can be practical and/or emotional. Older family members' advice, access to family resources and encouragement during hard times may enable young people to continue working on their enterprise. This is consistent with the larger body of research on entrepreneurship that emphasises the importance of family social capital and emotional support for young entrepreneurs' startup endeavours (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Edelman et al., 2016).

The second hypothesis was also supported, and the coefficient for Community Support was slightly higher than the coefficient for Family Support ($\beta = 0.355$ compared to $\beta = 0.313$). This implies that the broader local environment might be especially important for young agripreneurs. Agricultural businesses do not go it alone. Young entrepreneurs need information on markets, access to other farmers, buyers and suppliers and sometimes support from farmer groups and local organisations. Community acceptance can also boost the social image of agriculture as a business. This finding is in accordance with studies demonstrating that the social legitimacy of entrepreneurship in a region can influence entrepreneurial behaviour (Kibler et al., 2014).

The third and fourth hypotheses showed that Family Support and Community Support had positive direct relationships with Youth Welfare. The coefficients were 0.180 and 0.170, respectively. These effects are

smaller than the effect of Youth Engagement on Youth Welfare, but still statistically significant. This implies that social relationships may contribute to welfare outside of the engagement pathway. Family support can act as a safety net during uncertain times of enterprise income, and community relationships can provide social recognition, information and a sense of belonging. These findings are in line with the broader social support literature that has associated supportive relationships with well-being and coping with difficult circumstances.

The fifth hypothesis was the strongest result in the model. Youth Engagement was positively related to Youth Welfare ($\beta = 0.520$, $p < 0.001$). The f 2 value of Youth Engagement was 0.383 which is considered to be a large effect . This means that what young people do in practice in their agricultural enterprises is of great importance for welfare. Having access to support may not be enough. Young people may have more opportunities to gain skills, earn income and build confidence by putting time and energy into the enterprise, being involved in its management, committing to it, becoming fully engaged and seeking to improve the enterprise. This finding lends support to the idea that active engagement of young people in agricultural entrepreneurship can be an important livelihood pathway for rural youth.

The main contribution of the study is the mediation findings. Youth Engagement has an indirect effect of 0.163 indicating that Youth Engagement significantly mediates the relationship of Family Support and Youth Welfare. It mediates also the effect of Community Support to Youth Welfare, with an indirect effect of 0.185. The mediation is partial (not full) as the direct paths were still significant . Family and community support seem to matter in two simple ways. They can directly contribute to welfare but also be more valuable when they help young people to engage actively in agricultural entrepreneurship.

It is also worth noticing that the indirect effect for Community Support is a little bigger. This is not to say that community support is always more important than family support in every setting. In this sample, community support showed a slightly stronger indirect association with welfare through engagement. This may indicate the importance of local networks, peer learning, market information and collective activities for young agricultural entrepreneurs. This finding can be further examined in future studies in larger, more diverse samples.

The results support the combined use of Social Cognitive Theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The findings support the view that the social environment can support behaviour and that social resources can be transformed to livelihood activity. At the same time, the study does not test the full psychological processes proposed by Social Cognitive Theory, such as self-efficacy. Thus, the theoretical contribution should be viewed as an application of these perspectives to the context of rural agricultural entrepreneurship, and not as a full test of either theory.

6. Implications

6.1 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings have a number of practical implications. First is that programs aimed at promoting youth agricultural entrepreneurship should not be focused solely on the individual young entrepreneur. Family members may have a strong influence on whether young people continue to invest time and effort in agriculture. Training programs could therefore include family awareness sessions that highlight the business opportunities in modern agriculture and the support young entrepreneurs require.

Secondly, community support has to be made better. Farmer Producer Organisations, cooperatives, self-help groups, youth groups and local extension networks can provide young entrepreneurs with an opportunity to learn from each other, exchange information and build market linkages. Recognition of successful young agripreneurs at the community level may also help enhance the image of agriculture as a viable business.

Third, agricultural extension agencies should provide both technical training and enterprise management support. Young people may need support not only in production but also costing, marketing, online resources, financial planning, branding and value addition The study reveals a strong relationship between Youth Engagement and Youth Welfare, suggesting that policies should be introduced to facilitate the ability of young entrepreneurs to remain active in their enterprises.

Fourth, access to finance remains an important issue. According to the profile of the respondents, a significant proportion of young entrepreneurs are engaged in relatively modest enterprise incomes. Hence, credit and enterprise-support programs should be linked with training, mentoring and market access, rather than provided as stand-alone financial assistance.

Finally local agricultural institutions and universities can play a stronger role in developing youth agribusiness incubation and mentoring programs. Such programs can help link young entrepreneurs with successful farmers, processors, buyers and financial institutions. Such an ecosystem could convert family and community support into sustained enterprise engagement.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The study adds to theory by incorporating social support and agricultural entrepreneurship and welfare in a single empirical model. First, it applies

Social Cognitive Theory to rural entrepreneurship, demonstrating that supportive social environments are associated with higher behavioural engagement. Second, it explains how social resources may be linked to livelihood activity and welfare by employing the Sustainable Livelihoods approach. Third, the mediation results suggest that engagement is not only an outcome of support, but also an important pathway through which support is associated with welfare.

The research also contributes to the literature by exploring an under-studied regional context. Much of the literature on entrepreneurship is situated in urban or developed country contexts. The evidence from South Bihar offers some reasons for taking rural social relationships into account in the study of agricultural entrepreneurship in emerging economies.

7. Conclusion

The study examined the role of Family Support and Community Support in Youth Engagement in Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Youth Welfare of young agripreneurs in South Bihar. Results indicate that both types of support are positively associated with Youth Engagement. Both also have important direct links with Youth Welfare. Most importantly, Youth Engagement has the strongest association with Youth Welfare and mediates significantly both support–welfare relations.

The findings suggest that financial assistance or technical training alone will not be sufficient to motivate young people to remain in agriculture. Young agripreneurs also need the backing of their families and communities and opportunities to utilise that support through active involvement in enterprises. Thus, a supportive social environment can be considered as a key element of a broader agricultural entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The study is based on the evidence from 397 young agricultural entrepreneurs of 17 districts of South Bihar. The findings cannot be generalised to all the youth in Bihar but provide useful evidence to understand the linkages between social support, entrepreneurial engagement and welfare in the rural Indian context. Future programs that combine family support, community networks, enterprise training, finance and market access may be better placed to make agricultural entrepreneurship a more attractive and sustainable livelihood option for young people.

8. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The study has a number of limitations. The data were collected from 17 districts of South Bihar, so the findings should not be generalised automatically to North Bihar, other Indian states or all rural youth. The model can be replicated in other regions in future research and compare results across states.

Secondly, the study used purposive and snowball sampling. The technique was useful for reaching young agricultural entrepreneurs, but it lacks the generalisability of probability sampling. In future studies we may use stratification or multi-stage probability sampling when an appropriate sampling frame is available.

Third, the study was cross-sectional. Thus, the results are statistical associations at a single time point and should not be considered proof of causality. Longitudinal studies could examine whether changes in family and community support are associated with changes in engagement and welfare over time.

Fourth, the study targeted four constructs. Future research could include entrepreneurial self-efficacy, access to institutional finance, use of digital technology, market access, extension contact, entrepreneurial passion, resilience and institutional support. Moderation analysis may also be used to examine if the strength of the relationship varies according to gender, type of enterprise, landholding or years of enterprise experience.

The measurement items were finally adjusted to the context of agricultural entrepreneurship. Although the measurement model was found to be reliable and valid, further validation could be obtained through confirmatory studies, qualitative interviews, and scale development with larger samples in future research.

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