



YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN OYO STATE: PANACEA TO AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates involvement of youths in Agriculture in Egbeda LGA of Oyo state Nigeria. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and logit regression model. Most (35%) of the respondents have ages between 30-35 years, 53% have tertiary education, and 29% are involved in youth empowerment programme. Only 53% of the youths practice agriculture. Poultry enterprise (28.30%) recorded the highest participation while piggery (1.88%) recorded the least. Age (0.001), Knowledge of agriculture (0.010) and amount of credit (0.033) have positive and significant relationship with youths' participation in agriculture. Young farmers need to interact with older and more experienced farmers for higher productivity. Credit at low interest rates needs to be made available for youth who intend to practice agriculture most especially in the area of poultry production which is the most promising enterprise among the youths. Agricultural value addition and regular visit by agricultural extension workers will overcome low prices of produce and expose the youth farmers to new technology and techniques in agriculture. Youth empowerment program needs to be made available for all youth in both rural and urban areas.

KEYWORDS: Youths, agriculture, participation, logit, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Youth in a country exhibits the most active part of the population and the most important area of its productivity. This is why integrating this group of the population into the socio economic and political agenda or program is considered crucial for development initiative anywhere in the world. Nigeria's population is said to have reached about 167 million people in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics 2010). The National Population Commission (NPC, 2013) states almost half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 35 years of age. Unfortunately, as the population of youth increases, so does the unemployment rate increases. In fact, unemployed youths numbered about 11.1 million in 2012.

Agriculture contributes meaningfully to the economic development of countries in sub Saharan Africa. In Ghana for instance, agriculture contributes 22% of the GDP in 2013 (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). In Nigeria, agriculture engaged 70% of the population. Moreover, her natural endowments in production factors manifested in arable land, capital water and human resources go a long way in stimulating growth in the economy. However, the bulk of the production efforts in agriculture are still driven by aged farmers who presently make up the majority of the farming population (Adekunle et al 2009). These farmers, who are mostly illiterates, poor, risk averse, lethargic to embracing improved farming methods, operates a small-scale farming system that lacks the capacity suited for the development dynamics of modern agriculture. Their production efforts only suffice to meet the food needs of their family with little or no surplus to sell. Consequently, this has resulted in low production, implied in food insecurity, inability to meet the raw materials demand of industries and the unsteady poor contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP of Nigeria (Sanusi, 2010). Therefore, to facilitate sustainability in agricultural production there is the need to ensure a replacement of this ageing generation of farmers by young and energetic youths. Arokoyo and Auta (1999) stated that only the participation of people who are energetic, creative, inventive, productive, and devoted could bring about the expected development in agriculture in Nigeria. There is a lot of concern about engaging youth in agriculture practices, in many ways, young people are not

very much interested in continuing in agriculture because they don't see much prospect in the future of agriculture, they do not see agriculture as an active profession in the long run thereby leaving farming in the hands of smallholder farmers, who are quite aged. CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation) has a very strong program of supporting youth to get into value chains. One of the ways to do that is to involve the youth in training and give them the opportunity to access ICTs so that they can engage in value chain.

However, poor institutional framework to harness the potentials of youths in developing agriculture and the lack of luster practice of the traditional system of farming have been major banes to youth attraction and making a career in agriculture (Adebayo, 2006).

Successive governments in Nigeria have floated several agricultural programmes targeted at encouraging youths' participation in Agriculture. These programmes, which include Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) was rolled out in 2006 to generate employment for the youths and check the drift from rural to urban communities in search of jobs (NDPC, 2005). The NYEP was established to create opportunities for young people to acquire skills and training for life-long vocations with the most recent being the Youth employment in Agriculture programme. These youth empowerment programmes have however not translated into a warm embrace of agriculture by the youths. There is therefore the need to investigate what has been responsible for this lukewarm attitude towards agriculture by the youths. The study therefore looks into factors influencing youths attitudes towards agriculture in Egbeda local government of Oyo state.

METHODOLOGY

The study area is Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State. It has an area of 191 km² and a population of 281,573 at the 2006 census.

A multi-stage random sampling was employed for data collection. The first stage involves the selection of Egbeda local government using purposive sampling. In the second stage, 5 out of 11 wards in the Local Government were randomly selected and 20 youths randomly selected from each of the five wards giving a total of 100 respondents.

Descriptive statistics and Logit Regression model were used to estimate the determinants of youths' participation in agriculture.

Model Specification

The logistic regression model is specified as follows:

$$Y = \text{Ln} (P/1-P)$$

$$Y = \text{Ln} (P/1 - P) = b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2 x_2 \dots b_9 x_9 + e$$

Where: Y = Dependent binary variable (participate = 1, do not participate = 0), P = Probability of participating in agriculture, 1-P= Probability of not participating in agriculture, Ln = Natural logarithm function, b₀ = Constant, b₁-b₉ = Regression coefficients.

X₁-X₉ = Explanatory variables; X₁-Age (Years), X₂-Sex (Male = 1, Female =0), X₃-Marital status (Married = 1, 0=otherwise), X₄= Education (No. of years spent in formal schooling), X₅=Household size (No. of persons in the same household), X₆=Knowledge of agriculture (knowledge=1, 0=otherwise) X₇=Amount of credit (Naira), X₈= membership of YEP (member = 1, 0=otherwise), X₉= Employment status (employed=1, 0=otherwise) e = Stochastic error term, (P /1-p) = Odd ratio (odds in favour of participation).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-economic characteristics of Youths in Agriculture

Most (36%) of the sampled youths are within the age range 30-35 years while the least 29% are within 18-23 years which implies that the youth in the area are still in their active age. This agrees with the finding of Olaniyi and Adewale (2012). Majority of the respondents (53%) are females while the males constitute 47%. Most of the youths (53%) have university education including master's degree while the rest have at least primary school education in consonance with Agboola et.al 2015 who

asserts that attendance of formal schools and high level of literacy provide opportunity for enlightenment and exposure in various area of life which encourages understanding and adoption of an innovation among youth farmers.

Table 1. Socio economic characteristics of youths in the study area

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-23	29	29
24-29	35	31
30-35	36	36
Gender		
Male	47	47
Female	53	53
Marital status		
Single	57	57
Married	39	39
Divorced	3	3
Level of Education		
No education	0	0
Primary education	12	12
Secondary education	13	13
OND	15	15
HND	17	17
B.Sc	33	33
MSc.	10	10
Household size		
1-5	59	59
6-10	36	36
11-15	5	5
Occupation		
Yes	53	53
No	47	47
Youth Empowerment programme		
Involved	29	29
Not involved	71	71
Knowledge about agriculture		
Yes	82	82
No	18	18
Participation in Agriculture		
Yes	53	53
No	47	47
Access to loan		
Yes	25	47.17
No	28	52.83
Source of land		
Inherited	18	33.96
Rented	12	22.64
Bought	10	18.87
Communal	5	9.43
1&3	8	18.10
Source of credit		
Personal savings	18	33.96
Friends and family	15	28.30
Commercial bank	4	7.55
Cooperative society	6	11.32
Credit and thrift	6	11.32
Agricultural bank	4	7.55

Analysis of the sampled youths on the basis of enterprises presented in Table 2 showed that 28.30% and 1.88% are into poultry production and piggery enterprises respectively while about 24 % were into crop production enterprise. The high level of participation in animal production enterprise especially poultry enterprise might not be unconnected with high profitability and short gestation period.

Table 2: Distribution based on various farm enterprises

Farm enterprises	Frequency	Percentage
Cereal	8	15.09
Vegetable	5	9.43
Goat keeping	4	7.55
Poultry production	15	28.30
Fish farming	5	9.43
Horticulture	3	5.66
Cattle	2	3.78
Root crop	4	7.55
Snailry	2	3.77
Rabbitry	2	3.78
Piggery	1	1.88
Legumes	2	3.78
Total	53	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

Determinants of Youth Participation in Agriculture

The Logit regression result in Table 3 indicates that three explanatory variables significantly and positively influenced the participation of youth in agriculture. These variables are age, knowledge of agriculture, and amount of credit facility. The positive effect of age on youth participation in agriculture, which is in consonance with the finding of Sunday et.al (2015) and Akpan (2010), indicates that participation in agriculture increases with age. This indeed is the practical situation in Nigerian Agriculture. This trend does not portend future for agriculture in Nigeria because agricultural production will as it is now remain in the hands of the ageing farmers whose productivity and efficiency are relatively low. Involvement of youth in agricultural activities has the potential of reducing the problems of the ageing farm population and increasing youth unemployment and this calls for securing the interest and participation of young people in agriculture in the form of deliberate shift in policy, training and promotion that specially targets the youth. According to Naamwintome and Bagson (2013), this category of people are not only the productive backbone of every society, the major source of ideas and innovation, but also the main market for food consumption and very often the leaders and drivers of public opinion, public policy and action.

In the same vein knowledge of agriculture has direct relationship with youth participation in agriculture. Knowledge accumulation and application which is the main instrument in driving peoples' perception in the 21st century can increase skills in youths as a preparation to establish their own business. When this occurs, it increases the possibility of having more positive perception towards contract farming in consonance with findings of earlier studies by UNFPA (2006), FAO et al., (2009), Othman et al., (2010), Silva et al.(2009) and UN (2011).

Amount of credit, which has positive relationship with participation of youth in agriculture, is the third significant determinant. This is in line with a priori expectation about credit availability and agricultural productivity. Amount of credit is another motivating factor for youth's participation in agriculture as it boosts access to inputs. It is a very strong important factor needed to acquire or develop farm enterprise and its availability could determine the extent of youths' production capacity.

Table 3: Determining factors of youth participation in Agriculture

Y=participation	Coef.	Std. Err	Z	P> z
Age	0.1747	0.0546	3.20 *	0.001
Sex	0.2496	0.5423	-0.46	0.645
Marital status	0.1108	0.3370	-0.14	0.892
Education	-0.0027	0.1344	-0.02	0.984
Household size	-0.0110	0.0815	-0.14	0.892
Knowledge in agriculture	3.1538	1.2168	2.59**	0.010
Amount of credit	2.3159	1.0889	2.13**	0.033
Membership of YEP	-0.0851	0.4308	-0.20	0.843
Employment status	0.5960	0.4565	1.31	0.192

*Significant at $p < 0.001$, **Significant at $p < 0.05$

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Age, knowledge of agriculture and amount of credit are the significant determinants of youths' participation in agriculture. Credit, being a strong determinant of youth participation in agriculture, financial institutions should be encouraged even compelled by the apex bank to make credit available to youths that are into agricultural production at a relatively low interest rate. Youth's interest in agriculture should be given a boost by offering of scholarship to students that are studying any branch of agriculture in higher institutions as well as provision of infrastructure and social amenities in rural areas thereby discouraging migration of the youths to the city in search of non-existent white collar jobs.

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