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Full Length Research Paper

Contributions of Unemployed Youths to Agriculture in Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria.

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The study assessed the contributions of unemployed youths to agriculture in Sardauna LGA of Taraba State, Nigeria. The specific objectives focused on the socio-economic factors of the respondents, examine the impact of agriculture to reducing unemployment syndrome and to identify the major constraints of unemployment. Data were collected from 95 respondents using multistage random sampling technique and analyzed by means of descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and chi-square. Results indicated that men (65.3%) were mostly affected by unemployment syndrome. Most (50.5%) of the respondents had non-formal education and were single. Farming was the major occupation of the respondents accounting for 75.8%. Chi-square result indicated significant impact of agriculture to unemployment. Age of individuals, education and farm experience shows significant influence to agriculture, therefore were considered strong determinants of unemployment to agriculture. These factors exhibited positive relationship at 1% and 5% respectively. Constraints identified were inefficient job opportunity, insufficient government assistance and high cost of agricultural inputs. It was recommended that provision of improved agricultural inputs at subsidized rate and intensification of research would improve the life of the unemployed youths in the study area.

Keywords: Unemployed youths, Agriculture, Sardauna Local Government Area, Taraba State.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for more than 60 percent of Nigeria's population. It plays a dominant role in any economy, like Nigeria. For instance in 2005, the sector gave employment to about 65 million persons and contributed about 41 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Though in relative terms, the percentage of dependence seems to have declined, but in absolute terms, more number of people is found to engage in agriculture. The reason for this trend is perhaps that secondary and tertiary sectors have not made much lead way in providing employment to the rising population. Youth's unemployment is a major issue for the government, policy makers and planners. Hence unemployment is a social problem particularly because of the effect it can have on a person's future.

Unemployment among young people is said to be the inability to develop and utilize the nation's manpower

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resources effectively especially in the rural sector (Fadayomi, 1992 and Osinubi, 2006). This concept bring about economic waste, human sufferings and is a main cause of poverty which further causes psychological problems such as frustration, depression, hostility, food insecurity and all manners of criminal behavior, resulting in general insecurity of life and property (Egbuna, 2001; Alahana, 2003 and Ayinde, 2008). Youths are negatively affected by all types of unemployment be it structural, seasonal, cyclical and frictional. Social and industrial factors of unemployment include the size of the youth population, shortage of job opportunities and technological revolutions. In the market place, unequal distribution of jobs is mostly among the young workers, and in poor economic conductions (Richard, 2003). Unemployment is largely determined by the uncertainty of products, resources and social influences. Individual factors associated with employment include academic, mechanical, and employability skill deficits. Others are race, age and sex discrimination. The rate of unemployment seems to rise to more than 50percent among members of minority groups, high school drop outs, and youths in economically disadvantaged areas. It has destabilizing consequences both on the society and to the individuals, and affects the economy in terms of GDP. In Nigeria today, farming still remains the major source of employment of the majority of the youths and adult population (Olutunji, 2002). Its productivity is most important especially in the urban centers (Yusuf, 2002). The ultimate goal of Nigerians' agriculture is to attain self sufficiency in all the sub-sectors of agriculture as well as the realization of the structural development of the rural areas and its overall socio-economic transformation (Musa, 2011). However, decadence of food insecurity in Nigeria today has in one way been attributed to inefficient distribution network of youth unemployment for food production, there by culminated to the threatening of the economic advancement of the third world nations (Ezedinma et al; 2005).The menace of unemployment has increasingly been recognized as one of the socio-economic problems of economic development in many developing countries of the would including Nigeria(Curtain,2000). Studies have shown that youths perform most of the agricultural activities because of their energetic abilities and strength. But agricultural production in Nigeria (Sardauna Zone in Particular) is still not boosted and productivity seems to be below average. This study therefore, aimed at

Assessing the contribution of Unemployed youths to agricultural production in Sardauna Area of Taraba State. More specifically to:

i. Describe the socio-economic attributes of the respondents.

ii. Examine the significant impact of agriculture to reducing unemployment predicament.

iii. Influence of youth social activities to agriculture.

iv. Identify the constraints of unemployment to agricultural production

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Sardauna LGA of Taraba State. The area is lies between latitude 6º 30' and 7º 15' to the North and longitude 11º 30' to the South. It covers an area of approximately 1, 808.59km^2. The study Area is bounded on the North by Gashaka LGA, to the south by river Donga, and to the East by the Republic of Cameroon. It also shares boundary to the west by Kurmi LGA. Most of the tribal spread within the area includes Fulani, Mambilla, kaka, Panso, Kambu among others. The study area has a population of about 102,790 people (NPC, 2006). And about 80 percent of the populations are engaged in agriculture. The area has mountainous vegetation characterized with short grasses and much artificial forest scattered all over the place. Temperate crops such as tea, coffee, pea, banana, plantain, irish potatoes, pepper, pineapple as well as vegetables (*Kumbi*) are grown on the plateau.

Data Collection and Sampling Technique

Data were mainly collected from primary sources through structured questionnaire which were administered to the target respondents (unemployed youths).A sampling frame of 660 youths and multistage random sampling technique for the study. The first stage was the selection of the three districts (Nguroje, Gembu and Mbamnga).The selection of six wards from the 11 wards was the second stage. Finally, the third stage was the drawing of 100 respondents from the selected wards to whom questionnaires were distributed. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and Multiple regressions (OLS) analysis were used to analyze the data obtained for the study.

The Chi-Square (X^2)

The Chi-square was employed to test the hypothesis and examine the significant impact of agriculture to unemployment. The model of the chi-square was presented as follows:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where:

X^2 = Chi- Square computed

F_o = Observed frequency.

F_e = Expected frequency.
$\sum$ = Submission sign

The expected frequency (F_e) was calculated using the relationship as follows:

$$F_e = \frac{RT \times CT}{Tn}$$

Where:

F_e = Expected frequency.
RT = Row total
CT = Column total
Tn = Total number of observations.

Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyze the socio-economic characteristics influencing the respondents contributions to agriculture.

The model is explicitly stated as:

$Y = F(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, U)$.

Where Y = Youths contribution to agriculture proxied
X_1 = Age of Individual (Years)
X_2 = Sex (dummy; male=1, female=0)
X_3 = Marital Status
X_4 =Formal schooling (years)
X_5 = Farming Experience (Years)
X_6 = Frm Size (ha)

Four functional forms were experimented for the study. They include linear, exponential, cob-Douglas and semi-log. Selection of the semi-log function as the lead equation was based on the magnitude and appropriateness of signs of the estimated regression coefficients, standard errors of the estimates and magnitude of the coefficient of multiple determinations. They are explicitly sated as thus:

Linear function. 5

$$Y = B_o + B_1X_2 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5L_nX_5 + B_6L_nX_6 + U \quad - \quad (2)$$

Exponential function.

$$L_nY = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5L_nX_5 + B_6L_nX_6 + U \quad - \quad (3)$$

Semi-log function.

$$Y = B_0 + B_1L_nX_1 + B_2L_nX_2 + B_3L_nX_3 + B_4L_nX_4 + B_5L_nX_5 + B_6L_nX_6 + U \quad - \quad (4)$$

Double-log function.

$$Lny = LnB0 + B1LnX1 + B2LnX2 + B3LnX3 + B4LnX4 + B5LnX5 + B6LnX6 + U \quad (5)$$

The selected variables (X_1, X_2, -------X_n) were each expected to have a positive causal relationship. They were included in the model to determine the extent to which each explains the extent of contribution by the youths to agriculture.

B_i - B_4 are parameter to be estimated
B_0 = Constant
L_n = Natural logarithm (i.e logarithm to base e)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents.

The result of this study (Table1) indicates that majority (65.3%) of the unemployment youths were males, while 34.7% were females. This means that men are the most unemployed than females. This could be due to preferential treatment given to women than men in-terms of offer of collar job opportunities. Age brackets of the respondents shows that 71.6% are within the ages of 31-40 years. This indicated that the category of these ages limits face challenges of being employed by both government and private agencies. Hence, they are at their youthful ages. About 12.6% were between the ages of 18-30 years, 6.3% 41-50 years while only 9.5% were above 51 years. It was also revealed that 71.6% were single, 16.8% were married and 7.4% and 4.2% were both widowed and divorced respectively. The educational status of the respondents indicated that 50% had non-formal education, 24.2% attended primary education, 22.1% acquired secondary education and only 3.2% attended tertiary level. This means that about half of the respondents are literates but no job. It is advised that good level of education help people (especially youths) to be more productive. This is because educated youths have the capacity to understand new methods of farming and could make positive contributions to agriculture. A person with higher education acquire more information and to that extend could be better in life and produce better output. The study further found that predominantly (75.8%) of the respondents have farming as their major occupation, 18.9% engages in trading, 3.2% and 2.1% were found to actively participate in fishing and other businesses respectively. Findings also revealed that 61.1% had farming experience of about 1-10 years. 22.1% had 11-20 years experience, 14.7% had 21-30 years farming experience while 11.6% had over 31 years. It is observed that experience influences decision making in relation to risk aversion in any business. Majority (88.4%) of the respondents had farm size of less than or equal to 2 hectares, about 11.6% had above 3 hectares. This means that the unemployed youths are small scale farmers. They need to be supported with incentives such as loan to significantly intensify production.

Test of Hypothesis.

The result of the chi-square indicates that there is

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Economic Characteristics (n=95).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	62	65.3
Female	33	34.7
Age (years):		
18 – 30	12	12.6
31-40	68	71.6
41 – 50	06	6.3
51 and above	09	9.5
Marital Status		
Married	16	16.8
Single	68	71.6
Widowed	07	7.4
Divorced	04	4.2
Educational Attainment:		
Non formal Education	48	50.5
Primary Education	23	24.2
Secondary Education	21	22.1
Tertiary Education	03	3.2
Occupation:		
Farming	72	75.8
Fishing	03	3.2
Trading	18	18.9
Others	02	2.1
Farming Experience (Years):		
1-10	58	61.1
11-20	21	22.1
21 – 30	14	14.7
31 – Above	02	2.1
Farm size (Hectares):		
Less than 1	38	40.0
1-2	46	48.4
Above 2	11	11.6

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 2. Result of the Chi-Square:

Chi – Square	Value	P. value	D.F	Decision
X^2 Calculated	0.6068	0.05	2	H_o :Rejected .
X^2 Tabulated	0.1030			

Source: Analytical result, 2011.

significant impact between unemployment and agricultural production since the calculated value (0.6068) is greater than the tabulated value (0.1030). This necessitates the rejection of the hypothesis there by accepting the assertion that there is significant impact relationship between the contribution of unemployment and agriculture in the study area. The result (Table 2) therefore revealed that agriculture has impact on the unemployed youths.

Table 3. Semi-log Analysis of Youths Social Activities to Agriculture

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Errors	T. Values
Constant	3.6771	0.3083	11.930***
Individual Age (X_1)	1.0933	0.0863	12.670***
Gender X_2	0.1188	0.07821	1.520NS
Marital Status X_3	0.0556	0.0448	1.240NS
Educational Status X_4	0.1016	0.0384	2.650***
Farming Experience X_5	0.03749	0.0162	2.320**
Farm Size X_6	-0.0736	0.0812	- 0.910NS
R^2	66.3% (0.663)		
R^2 (adj)	64.1% (0.641)		
F-value	31.41***		

Source: Analytical result, 2011.
*** Significant at 1%
** Significant at 5%
NS: Not Significant.

Socio-economic Characteristics influencing Youths Contribution to Agriculture.

Multiple regression result (Table3) revealed that age significantly influenced the youth's contribution to agriculture. The others were educational level and farming experience. Multiple determination (R^2) was 0.663. This means that about 66% of the variation in agricultural production by youths is accounted for by the variation in the independent variables ($X_1 – X_6$) used for the analysis. The remaining 37% may be attributed to variations in other factors not included in the model. Three among the six variable used were positive and jointly influence agriculture significantly. This result agreed with that of Sulumbe, *et al., (*2010) that age, family size and income were positively related to output and significant at 1% level. Also, the three variables (Age, educational status and farming experience had the expected signs indicating that advancement in these attributes would lead to increase in productivity. The coefficients of Age (X_1) and educational status (X_4) of the respondents were positive and significant at 1% level. The positive coefficients mean that unit advancement in these variables, under static condition of other explanatory variable result in increased output level. This result is in accord with Shehu, *et al.,* (2009) that increase in farm size implies that more inputs would be needed and subsequently more output expected. The coefficient of farming experience (X_5) was also positive and significant at 5% level. The positive coefficient is in conformity to the apriori expectation and signifies that as the years of experience increases, the output also increases.

Constraints of Unemployed Youths Contribution to Agriculture

The major problems confronting the youth unemployment to agriculture identified in the study area (table4) inadequate training, skills and experience, inadequate government assistance, high cost of agricultural inputs and inadequate access to research and extension services. Inadequate training, skills and experience (23.9%) was also identified as the problem of unemployed youths to agricultural development. Where lack and inefficient knowledge is experienced, productivity seems to be hampered. Inadequacy of government assistance was yet another problem of youth unemployment in the area (22.1%). This could be attributed to the existing policies of non-supportive contents which hampered agricultural production. Abubakar, *et al.,* (2005) stressed that, following government withdrawal of fertilizer subsidy in 1997, price of fertilizer has continued to increase. In the same vein, withdrawal of fuel subsidy of 1st December, 2012 caused a lot of hardship to the masses in terms of increase in prices of commodities. This could as well affect the contribution of the youths to agriculture. Inadequate information on

Table 4. Major Constraints of Unemployment to Agriculture.

Major Constraints*	Frequency	Percentages (%)	Rank
Inefficient Employment Opportunity	54	25.4	1
Inadequate training, skills and experience	51	23.9	2
Inadequate government assistance	47	22.1	3
High cost of agricultural inputs	32	15.0	4
Inadequate support on research and extension	29	13.6	5
Total	**213***		

Source: Analytical result, 2011. *Multiple responses.

research and extension services delivery system was also observed as one of the major constraints of youths (13.6%) among the respondents. Research has confirmed that effort on increasing agricultural production and productivity are greatly hampered by lack of vivid comprehension of the specific needs of the people, including the youths.

CONCLUSION

The study manifested that unemployed youths contribution had played a greater role in the up-liftmen of agriculture, this can significantly help them to be self employed, and can have great impact on them by providing income towards improving their wellbeing and their standard of living. Youth's contribution towards food production would also provide food to the teeming population and can reduce food insecurity of the nation. It is also important to note that socio- economic variables such as age, educational level and farming experience could significantly influenced the youth's contribution to agriculture. Obviously youths need to put more effort to further increase agricultural productivity. This gab can be corrected by the provision of efficient extension services, educational training, and subsidization of farm inputs. Youths need to be educated on some fundamental technical skills which would at least enable them to plan and appraise their self employed activities in the study area. It is therefore recommended that youth's unemployment problem and their living conditions can be improved if involved in agriculture, given credit facilities with little or no string conditions by commercial institutions (either public or private). This would aid in increasing the scope of their self employed activities.

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