



MORINGA SEEDLING RAISING: A TOOL FOR WEALTH CREATION AND YOUTHS EMPOWERMENT IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The success of agricultural practice or training in any country can be considered as a key factor of the country's growth, wealth creation, youth's empowerment and technological development. For a country to achieved food sufficiency, its agricultural sector must play a vital role. A country like Nigeria which its population is rapidly growing, youth engagement into Moringa seedling for skill acquisition is very vital. The paper focused on problems of youth unemployment, level of youth unemployment in the north eastern Nigeria, implications of poor socio-economic status, Moringa science-proven benefits, Moringa seed economics and marketing value, agriculture as a source of employment and wealth creation. It was recommended that, Nigerian youth should equip themselves with basic knowledge of Moringa seedling raising for youth employment and wealth generation which can be achieved through research, training, seminars, conferences and workshops organized by the government and other stake holders of the education and agriculture and the higher institutions of learning should provide Moringa entrepreneurship training centers across the country.

Keywords: Moringa Seedling, Wealth Creation, Youths Empowerment

Introduction

Agricultural education is a programme and training given to an individual aim to develop the student scientific understanding of theoretical, practical skills and the manipulative ability necessary for self-employment in a particular occupation in agricultural industry such as agronomy, animal husbandry, poultry farming and aquaculture fishery (Ruth 2019), This literal meaning of agriculture is link to all the level of education, starting from primary, secondary, tertiary, nomadic and adult education.

Youth unemployment refers to the segments of the labour force ages of youth from 15 years and above without work, but available for seeking employment (Agricultural Development Project 2011) The World Bank (2010), Millennium Development Goal (2005 NR) and United Nation Development Programme (2009 NR) showed a great concern on the massive youth unemployment with poor socio-economic stand in a country like Nigeria that has a verse land open for agriculture.

To reduce youth unemployment through Teaching and learning of agriculture it is necessary to have materials/facilities for

teaching which must be provided, more especially for the practical aspect. Davis, (2011) posits that, agricultural science has among others the following specific objectives:

1. Stimulate creativity,
2. Promote cultural heritage,
3. Make youth productive and self-employed individuals,
4. Creates wealth to the teaming unemployed youth and the community.

Youth as leaders of tomorrow, represent the future hope of every country and are the driving force of every developed country. In Nigeria, youths constitute 65 percent of the population and Literacy rate of the youth ages 15-24 was reported at 75.03 percent in 2019 (world Bank 2019). In view of these important roles that the youth are expected to play, it can only be achieved if they are given the opportunity and empowered through active involvement in manipulated skill and training in agricultural sectors (Sharma, 2010). The level of retrenchment of workers in many sectors as a result of privatization and globalization increases the number of unemployment everywhere.



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Therefore, there is need to develop the youth through self-employment in the near future so that they can live and work meaningfully on their own in the society especially in this era of economic meltdown (Agrifin 2012). Nigeria's Youth Unemployment Rate hits 33.5% by 2020 (Premium Times, 2020).

In Nigeria, the unemployment rate is measured in the number of peoples' activities looking for a job everywhere as a percentage of labour force. One of the critical challenges facing Nigeria economic development (wealth) at the moment is the rising unemployment. According to Omolabake (2019) the rising spate of unemployment in the country has continued to elicit concerns from all sides, especially as it threatens Nigeria's effort to be among the 20 largest economies of the world by year 2020. The global rate of about 60% of any country's population are youths, translating to about 95 million out of 160 million Nigerians (NPC 2006) are youth.

According to Andem, Aniedi & Okon, (2015) there are about 64 million able body human beings without means of any livelihood which is mind boggling. These numbers of unemployed youths who come out every day looking for how to survive by all means necessitate them to involve in violent, and criminal act that constantly threaten the security of the populace (FAO, 2013). Agriculture and agro-trainings contribute an individual's personal development, wealth creation, moral discipline; and other necessities.

Agriculture can also help individual to reduce poverty to the barest minimal by providing them with skills and knowledge to raise their productivity potential and generate income. This is because the knowledge and skills gain by the youths is a source of countries and individual economic growth and social development. For that an optimum agricultural training at all levels of education is necessary so that before graduating the students will acquire maximum skills and technical knowhow that will make them to sustain their living morally, socially and economically.

Problems of Youth Unemployment

Statistic shows that, unemployment among youth is increasing among nations and Nigeria in particular, where in six states of the

north eastern part of Nigeria has reached more than 60% (Biu 2019). Nowadays, being a graduate from university or secondary school even with high grade levels is not enough to ensure rapid employment. This could be due to lack of particular skills, mismatches between education and need in labour market, lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem and of course structural lack of working places (Bunus, 2012).

At present, Nigeria's population is estimated to be over 200 million, ranking seventh in the world, with young people forming larger part of its citizenry. Available statistics in Nigeria showed that, nearly a quarter of the population is out of work and 28 percent is unemployed. For young people aged 15-35, the figure is grim: 55.4 percent of the male without work Aljazeera (2019). The unemployment figure in Africa presently stands at about 32 percent with youth unemployment calculated to almost 60 percent in Nigeria omolabake (2019).

Frequency distribution of some of the factors causing youth unemployment include fast population growth, rural to urban migration and lack of employable skills and experience among the youth are predominantly factors to blame among other variables Samson & Adeniran (2019). The author further stressed that, With the exception of security issue, power (electricity) and infrastructure, youth's unemployment is the biggest problem facing the zone and nation at large.

Unemployment is the root cause of poverty, youth's restiveness, gangsterism, robbery, kidnapping, assassinations, vanderlization and political thuggery. A large number of boys and girls graduate from secondary schools, year in year out, out of which majority are dropped since they cannot afford to further their education in tertiary institution, due to the high expenses of higher institution these days.

Youth unemployment has adverse effects on the families and drawback our educational system, parent is frustrated at seeing their wards turn into criminals and prostitution because of the unemployment. The growing negative impact of high unemployment rate among the youth within Nigeria particularly in the North Eastern zone are worrisome as we get close to the target date of 2015 by the millennium development Goals (MDGs). Therefore, there are so many challenges that



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were not been tackled up to now. High unemployment rate among youth within North East zone especially secondary school graduate has negative effect on our country's growth and development.

Some of these un-wholesome effects are increasing in political unrest, economic instability, drug abuse, crimes, rampant sexual harassment and increase insurgence of Boko Haram. Before now, secondary school graduate can get jobs and generates income that can sustain their lives before furthering to higher institutions. These could be as a result of poor functioning of vocational and technical schools in the zone, which will drill the youth to become self-reliant individuals by establishing their own firms or workshops where they can be making some income and remain useful to the society they live in. Ogbamu (2011) The sustained high rate of long term youths' unemployment have a number of negative effect on societies as follows

1. Society failing to take advantage of the human resources to increase their productivity potential at a time of global transition.
2. It may stop violent and intractable political affairs.
3. Minimized the intergenerational poverty transmission.
4. Reduces wealth creation in the area.

Level of Youth Unemployment in the North Eastern Nigeria

Some of the demographic indices have not spoken well about the north-eastern part of Nigeria because of the large illiteracy level of the people, high population control, drug abuse and trafficking, recurrent ethnic crisis, higher rate of youth unemployment and religious crisis among others Chioma (2020). In the face of social vices in all manners in the north east that are threatening entrepreneurship environment in the country, full engagement of the youths becomes a must and non-negotiable. According Ngige (2019), Nigeria has implemented about 14 unemployed focused-programme since 1972 till date.

The growth and development of any country depends on its youths which if well-developed could increase the Gross Development Product (GDP) of such nation. Achieving this assertion however depend on

the investment that goes into human and social development in the nation, the greatest challenge in Nigeria is that, the backward trend in term of unemployment in the north eastern part of the country continues to grow Zuhumnab (2018), schools (higher institution) enrollment and jobs creation do not increase significantly and simultaneously, it creates problems for societies and parents, since, the idle youthful mind leads them into crime and political vanguard (Okechukwu, 2010).

According to William, (2011) if the increase in the level of youths' unemployment persist, it could melt the development of the north east despite the high level of insecurity in that area. One of the banes of youth unemployment particularly secondary school graduate in north east is also lack of access to finance and micro credit facilities and land ownership.

Even though Nigerian government has shown some seriousness in a programme call SURE-P, that serve as micro credit empowerment scheme to graduates in the north east and Nigeria at large, there is still a failure on the part of the youths, this is because they misused the resources Robinson (2019). Against this backdrop, there is an urgent need for the government and private sectors to put in place a renewed vigor to drive the process of unemployed secondary school graduate in the north east.

Some of the agricultural programmes in Nigeria were National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Agricultural Extension Programmes (2020), Agricultural Programmes Development (ADPs), FADAMA Programmes, Farm Settlement Scheme (FSS), Green House, Root and Tubers Expansion Programme, community based agricultural and rural development programme, anchor borrower programme, rural finance institutions building programme, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), National Economic and Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). N power and SUREP Programme and more FAO (2019).

Secondary School Graduate involves themselves into so many crises most at times, this is based on the stage of tumultuous (adolescent) they are, in collaboration of



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redundancy. There is no doubt that Nigeria is faced with serious political and developmental challenges such as corruption, terrorism and environmental issue. Behind them are issues of jobs creation that dwell the zone, in which the effect could make the youth to be idle, indeed unemployment, is a socio economic problem which successive government had fails to address to date. Madukwe (2008) the curriculum for secondary schools up to university across the nation seems outdated and does not prepare youths to be self-reliant individuals and indeed the globalized market place of new technologies.

Implications of Poor socio-economic status

What can young people do to increase their wealth, and employability? How are they going to find jobs? How are they going to present themselves in the labour market? These are some of the questions which youths are looking for answers. Inwachukwu (2012) reported that, despite the fact that the level of youth unemployment is sky rocketing, millions of jobs in developed countries are unfilled, but in a Nigerian context, both the southern and northern part young graduates have limited jobs opportunities.

Nigerian youthful population should be a formidable advantage to the economy if well harnessed. In addition to constituting a dynamic work force to produce goods and services for the nation, they should also make up the entrepreneurial class to drive the economy.

The youth should be encouraged by creating the right environment to enable them turn their imagination into creation of new product and improvement of existing ones. In developed countries there are many people that are millionaires within the age of 20 – 22 years. Ademu, (2010) added that, our youth can perform such feats if given the right courage and atmosphere to explore their talents through hard work and creativity; Youths are not painful assets to waste. A society that plays with its youths there no doubt is playing with its destiny, because they are the foundation on which the nation is to be built upon.

Agriculture as a Source of Employment and wealth creation

The direct benefit of any vocational agricultural programme is for the youth's employment. Youths in north-east, should be trained to acquire competencies needed to lay a solid foundation for their future. Findley, (2009) highlighted that, agricultural science at all level is design to help the individuals to acquire and develop skill knowledge and attributes necessary for self-reliance or self-employed. Agricultural science is a sub-field of education which contributes to the reduction of unemployment and national development. The NERDC (2009) curriculum for agricultural science, stress on the need for practical training on poultry production, fishery, small ruminant production (fattening) and bee keeping.

Vocational education creates awareness among Nigerian youths for the need of skill acquisition in vocational disciplines, the secondary school graduates should learn a trade which does not requires much manipulative; they also learn practical skills necessary for agriculture, commercial and economic development (Modebelu, 2013). Professional stereotyping of white collar jobs has also affected those that are willing to venture into traditional employment streams like arable farming, fishing, animal production, crop production and poultry keeping etcetera thereby increasing youth restiveness.

Government should encourage self-employment through entrepreneurship beyond political opportunism that characterized youth (men and women) programmes across the nation. Over 150 000km² of arable land, 13,000 km² of water and almost 7 agricultural institutions could be found in the north eastern part of Nigeria. It has good weather condition with abundant rainfall and sunshine throughout the year. The land is fertile and has different ecological zone to grow different types of plants and rearing of animals. The entire zone has a large and healthy population of which about 60% is made up of youth under the ages of 18 to 39 years (Obibuaku, 2012).

Considering the practical knowledge expected to have by the graduates, a graduate can use a small amount of capital to set a business in horticultural garden in a small area, where a number of seedlings can be



raised and sold which serve as source of income. So every secondary school graduate that acquired the skills will independently set his small or medium scale entrepreneurial and many will be employed, also level of unemployment will be drastically decline.

Moringa raising, marketing and economics value

Raising moringa seedling is simpler and faster than raising any economic tree. Germination rate of moringa seed yielded up to 95% under favorable condition (Sanusi 2014). Moringa seeds have no dormancy period, so they can be planted as soon as they are mature and they will retain the ability to germinate for up to one year. In less than two years a moringa seedling can grow in to a tree and start producing leaves, thereafter produces flowers which later bear seeds. Moringa trees will produce flower and fruit annually and in some regions twice annually. During its first year, a Moringa tree will grow up to five meters in height and produce flowers and fruit. Left alone, the tree can eventually reach 12 meters in height with a trunk 30cm wide. Within two years a tree will yield 400-600 pods annually and a mature tree can produce up to 1,600 pods. With these characteristics of Moringa plant, within a shortest possible time a youth can developed a business that can makes him a labour employer not labour seeker.

Compared with cocoa, cashew, and other cash crops, the price of moringa is far better. "Farmers should store seeds in well-ventilated sacks in a cool, dry, and shaded area (Sanusi 2014). Moringa seeds have both international and local market values. Since the introduction of Moringa, the price has been on 50 per cent increase annually because of new research and development of the usefulness in wealth creation among village youths. 2015 to 2016 price jumped from N50 per kg, which is N500, 000 per ton to 200 per kg, which is 2 million per ton. It is a verifiable fact that a kilogramme of the seeds is sold for about N1000 and above to net buyers recently, who in turn sell to exporters at a higher rate. Poor varieties and inadequate inputs would give an average of one metric tonnes (1,000kgs) of seeds per hectare in a year (Animashaun 2013).

Conclusion

Moringa seedling production is a highly profitable income generating venture that could create wealth to the unemployed youths and reduce their dependency rate. To end unemployment and poverty in north-eastern Nigeria, Moringa seedling production need to be adopted to successfully tackle level of unemployment and restiveness at the same time produce more food for our country, raw materials for industries and more products for exportation. For that agriculture can generate as much jobs as possible to the teaming youth. Today, production, processing, marketing, and distribution of Moringa and its Products are all acknowledged as part of employment generation ventures for the youth.

Recommendations

1. Nigerian youth should equip themselves with basic knowledge of Moringa seedling raising for youth employment and wealth generation which can be achieved through research, training, seminars, conferences and workshops organized by the government and other stake holders of the education and agriculture.
2. The higher institutions of learning should provide Moringa entrepreneurship training centres across the country where improved training on Moringa production techniques are provided to the teaming unemployed youths.

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