AN ASSESMENT OF THE CHALLENGES OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME THROUGH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

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Abstract
This paper pointed out the different challenges associated with youth empowerment programme in Nigeria for sustainable development and self-reliance. In recent times, one of the surest ways of promoting and enhanced as sustained agricultural program in Nigeria, precisely is through the full involvement and active participation of the youths. Many parts of the world are faced with food shortage as a result of the growing population, while the

INTRODUCTION
Youth as define by Horns (2005) is a period of being young especially the time between childhood and maturity. However according to agriculture domain, the concept may be referred to as the physically and the economically active young person that can engage with any aspect of agricultural production as a carrier opportunity. One of the surest ways of promoting and enhanced as sustained agricultural program in Nigeria, precisely is through the full involvement and active participation of the youths.
of the youths. Many parts of the world are faced with food shortage as a result of the growing population, while the growing crises presents a challenge. There is an opportunity for youth who are the future leaders to take part in agricultural development through practical action so as to rapidly accelerate food production. It is recommended that the government should improve on the methods of reaching out to the youth, regardless of their ethics, cultural religious, geographical or political affiliation, by establishing good schools and scholarships opportunities and community recreation centers where they can spend their free time positively. It is also recommended that there should be greater investment on the human capital investment of youth. This implies that improvement in the education sector, employment opportunities and social services to directly address the most important problem and challenges of poverty and reduces crime rate among the youth.

growing crises presents a challenge. There is an opportunity for youth who are the future leaders to take part in agricultural development through practical action so as to rapidly accelerate food production. In Nigeria problem of poverty has for a long time been a cause of concern to government. Attention was initially focused on rural development and town planning as practical means of dealing with the problem August (2002). Youth in Nigeria suffer high unemployment due to lack of opportunities, physical and physiological activities resulting from challenges resulting from poverty and illiteracy. Some youths respond to this challenges by engaging in criminal or violence behavior while other suffer from despair and depression. The presence Nigeria government has passion and commitment to turn around agriculture through the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) which has special packages the youths and women living in rural areas with little or no access to job opportunity to earn a living. The federal government through the ministries of agriculture has developed programs to sustain the initiative.
However, more efforts on information dissemination awareness or creation about the programme are highly needed in order to enable young people and existing farmers to know about the programmes and participate for enhance agricultural productivity and poverty reduction. Agricultural production is the process of growing food crops (yam, beans, rice) or materials for industries (cotton, wool, and cocoa) especially in large quantities Ezeam (2002). According to the above definition, youth empowerment through agricultural production covered people between the age of 15–35 years with the ability authority to be involved with the growing of crops, rearing of animals so as to reduce the level of unemployment and crime rate among them. In other word, youth should be empowered on different areas of agricultural specialization to accommodate every interested youth based on the social and economic place of farming as well as climatic and environmental factors that may have influence on the choice project by any youth member, project may be organized around almost any form or home example feeding, care and management of farm animals, rearing of poultry or cultivation of vegetables, corns, potatoes or other crops. Finally, implementation of project like Young Farmers Club (YFC) can be established as a means of giving them control over their situation (lack of unemployment, high rate of crime, poverty).

**The Concept of Youth**

Young people in the developed world have been in subject of an enormous amount of research over the least 40 years, Wikipedia (2011). In general, it is assumed that young people constitute a separate and significance category of people as non-adult. A central and recurring theme in the studies is the problematic nature of being adult. Much of the literature about youth has inherited assumptions from developmental psychology about universal stages of development, identities formation, normative behaviour and the relationship between social and physical maturation. Yet very little work has been done to clarify the theoretical basis of this categorization based on age. From time this print has been made by youth researchers Wikipedia (2011). Allen (1968). Argued that the concept of
youth needed to be reassessed. The author pointed out that, it is not the relations between ages that creates change or stability in society, but change in society which explains relation between different ages, twenty years later, Jones took up the challenge, pointing out that the sociology of youth was yet to develop a conceptual frame work for understanding both the transitions young people pass through as they become adult and the different experience of young people from different social groups. The author argued that it is misleading to emphasize the qualities or otherwise of a youth since the young are neither a homogenous group nor a static one. Her conclusion was that most usefully conceptualized as an age related process.

The focus on youth is not on the inherent characteristics of young people themselves, but on the construction of youth through social processes (such as schooling families or the labour market) young people engage with these institution in specific ways in relation to historical circumstances. There is a growing awareness amongst contemporary youth researchers that focusing on youth as a process throw into question the very use of the universal team “youth” for example recently Liebau and Chisholm (1993) have suggested that European youth do not exist. Their print is that as nationally formed cultures and economics follow their own courses, young people in the different country and religions that makeup Europe negotiate very different circumstances from each other. They are shaped by both the material, objective aspects of the cultures and societies in which they grow up and by the ways in which they subjectively interpret their circumstances Liebau and Chisholm (1993).

Also focusing on the young people in European countries Wallace and Kova Cheva (1995), point out that the experience of youth is being destructed because the significant transition in life are less and less age related. They argue that transition are no longer associated with any age or with each other education, for example has become gradually disassociated from work, and leaving home is not necessarily a transition stage linked with marriage. However, the meaning and the experience of age and of the concept of youth processes of ageing is subject to historical and cultural...
processes. Onuekusi (2002) described youth as the period in an individual's life that runs between the end of childhood and entry into the world of work. According to Nigeria national youth development policy (2001), the youth compasses all young persons of age 18 – 35, who are citizens of the federal republic of Nigeria. Adebo (2005), has cited youth as the largest generation ever to enter the transition to adulthood. United Nations educational scientific and cultural organizational UNESCO (2000) defines as person between the age 15 and 24, ministry of youth and sport (2009) in her policy defines youth as individuals of 16 – 40. It proposes the formation of national youth councils and aims to meaning fully engage youths.

**Who are youth?**

Youth are seen as me of the groups that should be targeted to ensure that disarmament take place, they need to participate in this directly but can also influence others and there is talk of youth being trained as per educators. There is also mention of the need for opportunities for young people to be productively engaged. Youth are seen as a vulnerable group affected by the conflicted example they are faced with group education decreasing as a result of the conflict. Youth face difficult in recurring employment because of the ambiguous requirement of prior experience by employers. Also in other hand youths by definition have been regarded as that segment of the population form 18-35years. National policy of youth empowerment (1999) in Ofem and Ajayi (2008) who are characteristically active vibrant, daring and youth useful energies.

The development of the Nigerian Nation from pre-colonial to independent and post-independent era has been attributed to vital contribution of the youth. Despite their positive roles in national development they constitute the most critical and volatile segment of the society. The worsening economic situation in Nigeria from the austere period to the structural adjustment programme and post-structure adjustment programme era has threatened the collective psyche of the youth. Generally unemployment, lack of consistence policy framework for youth development, general economic hardship among others have thrown the
youth into jobless, agent of social vices and general idleness. As their condition worsen, they have been used as agent of political thuggery and general misadventure. More ever they have become the major agent in social conflict with divers and devastating consequences in the nation. As there negative and pervasive roles continue to impact on the economy, several strategies of youth empowerment have been evolved over time. The strategies have however yielded little or no results as their activities have consistently imposed serious threats to social security truncated economic activities and severe drainage of national income. The study, therefore, is aim at identifying the causes of youth restiveness. The strategies of youth and the effect of these strategies on conflicts resolution in the agricultural sector in Zaria local government of Kaduna state precisely.

The Concept of Youth Empowerment.
Everyone seems to be taking about youth empowerment these days, female empowerment, workers empowerment and youth empowerment are just some of the phrases that are flying around. What exactly does that empowerment mean and how can we apply the concept to their own life? The youth empowerment movement started in the 1960’s demand media (2010), when student at universities across the United States began to get involved in policies and protest on campus. Even earlier than that, campuses and students had played a large role in the civil rights movement and other political and social movements but for the first time youths and students began to be seen as political and social actors. In response to the Vietnam War, students protect and organizations sprung up, and students demanded the rights to be heard? Since those rebellions days, youth empowerment has claimed down significantly, but is continues to be an important part of childhood development and on essential phase of the transition to adulthood. Typically place during high school and college years, the transition is complained by increased involvement is student activities and growing dependence in making life choices and choosing a personal direction. At the same time young teens making that transition to adulthood learn to
make their own decisions and sick by them and hopefully to learn from their own mistakes. It is a time when young people begin to go out into the world on their own and to learn how to succeed on their own. Empowerment as defined by horns by (2005) as to give somebody the power or authority to do something or to give somebody more control over their own life as the situation they are in.

**How to Encourage Youth Empowerment Programmes.**

Because youth empowerment and personal growth are so important for young people to learn, the process should be encourage understood. During the difficult period of transition, young adults of ten have many questions and issues and parents and families should try to respond in sensitive way to the specific needs of the children. Demand media. (2010). One of the most command and beneficial ways to encourage personal growths and empowerment is to give young adults increased responsibilities in their own lives. An often school job, for example, can be a great way to teach a growing child about the important of time management, while giving them a chance to earn some personal money. Just as important as letting them the job is letting them take the money they earn for things they like Demand media (2010).

Secondary school revolve in their community and in the variety of books and hobbies. Anything room the school. Newspaper to drama club to a music group can teach your child valuable skills helping them explored their own interest. The best thing to do in these cases is often for a parent or family to show that they care about their child and to encourage them to explore on their own challenges and treating them with respect and dignity as they do so it likely to bring out a more responsible and respectful attitude in the child themselves. Also while giving, advice is a common desire by parent who want to apare their children the pain of making mistakes, often laming through trial and error is an integral part of growing and becoming self-employed (demand media 2010).

Finally children grow up and begin to set out on their own, through youth empowerment and increased self-direction, they should be encouraged and given positive feed-back, being a child is hard enough, especially in the
transition to adulthood and understanding and sensitive parents can be a major help in successfully making that transition (demand media 2010).

Challenges or Problems with Youth Empowerment Programme.
As child grow older and begin to set out on their own path and take change of their lives, it is common for problems to arise between them and their parents. Often, a rebellious phase accompanies issues of youth empowerment and a child may feel they need additional space from their family to grown in their own direction and under their own control Demand media (2010). More so, the economic hardship experienced in our society has made poverty and malnutrition to deeply penetrate the youth [one of the most vulnerable groups in any society]. They lack almost all the basic things needed for a standard living, such as meaningful employment, balance diet, good health care service, clothing, affordable education etc. when youth are passing through terrible experiences, such as low self-esteem, depression and other mental health issues, increased risk of sexual transmitted disease, homelessness, unsaved environment and lack of participation in decision making with little or no concern on the part of the government, there is tendency for high rate of crime. Youths are disproportionately susceptible to poverty in compassion with other age groups primarily because of the transition to adulthood, particularly in relation to the labour market. This study, therefore examined youth empowerment through agricultural production as a strategy of reducing crime in the society.

The Concept of Agricultural Production.
Agricultural business is a large scale farming enterprise, the practice of cultivating the land or raising livestock, [federal department of agricultural, 1862]. Agricultural is the art of science of cultivating the ground including the harvesting of crops and the rearing and management of livestock, tillage, husbandry etc. [en Wikipedia 4th march 2011]. Agriculture is the production of food and goods through farming. Agriculture was the key development that led rise of human civilization with the husbandry of domestic animals and plants (i.e. crop). Creating
food surpluses that engage the development of more densely populated [en Wikipedia 4th march 2011].

Agricultural production is primary sector of the economy which involves changing natural resources into primary products. Most products from this sector are considered raw material for other industries. Major businesses in this sector include agriculture, Aric- business, fishing and forestry [free encyclopedia 4th March, 2011].

Agricultural Production is the growing of field crops, fruits, nuts, seeds, tree nurseries (except those of forest trees), bulb vegetables and flowers, both in the open and under glass, and production of coffee, tea, cocoa, rubber and the production livestock and livestock products, honey, rabbits, fur-bearing animal [en Wikipedia 4th march 2011].

**Youth Empowerment through Participation in Agricultural Production.**

Young people account for a large percentage of Nigerians population figure, representing on important and dynamic force in the Nigerian society (skongan,1986)in olalye (2010) to develop and empower youth for community development participation, the government and other stakeholders(e.g NGO’S) most coordinate and organize youth empowerment programmed aimed at integrating them (the youths) into the crucial task of community development, implementation, effectiveness and impact of these programmes as affected by a number of socio-economic factors ranging from micro factors like family background to macro factors like state of the national economy world bank (1999)

Socio-economic factors can be accepted as those factors within an individual’s environment which affects his total wellbeing and which the individual has little or no control over

Socio-economic factors are external forces and determine the outcome of people’s lives (World Bank 1999) in Olalaye 2010. They can hinder or enhance youth empowerment in development programmes at all levels. The effects youth participation in agriculture activities and information and communication technology and determine the extent to which youth can
partake in developing their communities through cultural activities. They constitute the framework that determines the general outcome of youth behaviours and their influence on the society at large (World Bank 1994). Most of the socio-economic factors that affect the empowerment of youth in developing programmes are infrastructural facilities, working capital, and standard of education (Chigunta 2002). The empowerment of youth for community development approach enables practitioners to investigate reality with the poor; that is the working poor, the physical and mentally challenged, and the youth to help them confront the obstacles (Akinyemi, 1990).

Stakeholders of youth empowerment would need to appraise the situation of the youth in planning intervention programmes so as to address developmental needs at the community level (Ayana 2004).

**Prerequisite for Effect Utilization of Youth in Agricultural Production.**

One major question in empowering youths for agricultural production is: how should it be utilized to achieve the best result? It is almost certain that a “critical look at the situation first and then see what can be done approach”, is preferable. This may involve an approach where the whole youths situation is carefully analyzed. It could be called the “survey approach”. Thus, the success of the survey approach depends on the following steps.

1. **Determination Of The Political Background Of The Youths:** As the first step, it is important to find out what the youths and the political and the political decision makers really want, and how far their commitments are likely to go in relation to the provision of funds and progressive development of the programmes. Where youths are not within the focus of politics, it is often difficult to obtain political backing for any suggested programme. Interest of the youths, social and economic characteristics is imperative in youths empowerment. However, it is of interest to note that youth’s activities have political and economic implications. Hence great care should be taken in
deciding what is practicable, acceptable and sustainable by the youths Bayero (2010).

2. Surveys of The Youth Situation: Areas of interest and needs of youths are so numerous and vary from place to place. Hence, it is not sufficient to speculate from an office desk, what the needs of the youths may be. Research has shown that it is difficult to determine areas of empowerment and sustainability once that external sources of inputs have been withdrawn. Empowering youths on low inputs farm management practices becomes a sine quanon. Bayero, (2010).

3. Identification of High Priority Areas of Need: when the priority areas of empowerment are identified in terms of education, economic assistance, social assistance, recreation or other areas of activity, the presentation is made to the political decision makers for approval. Once this is obtained, the programme can be designed for the youths. Bayero, (2019).

4. Design Of Youth Programmes: competent professionals in different fields of farm management practice should now be consulted to help in designing the actual programme to meet each priority need of the youths professional personnel of different disciplines will be required even if the total effort is devoted to one large project, provided that the project is of interest to the youth and practicable in terms of cost and availability of resources. For instance, empowering the youths on low inputs farm management practices in the area of arable crop farming. Small ruminants production among others could help in actualizing goals (Bayero 2010).

5. Implementation of Programme: The more with which a programme is design, the better the changes of it being successful during implementation phase. This is because the needs and aspirations of the youths are all put into consideration. Bayero (2010).

In conclusion, it is generally accepted that the key is developing and empowering youths on agricultural production lies on selecting and
empowering youths on crops or livestock projects in which the resources for executing them can be sourced from the immediate environment to ensure continuity with the frequent change to government policies and programmes.

Bayero (2010) argue that the implication for identifying and selecting projects that are based on low inputs which can be sourced from the available human and material resources within the confinement of any youth in a rural setting entails availability and affordability all the time needed in order to sustain the youths farm projects now and in the near future. Therefore empowering the youths on agricultural production project will benefit youth members the following way.

i. Teach youths to be self-reliance, dependable and responsible.
ii. Give members pride and satisfaction of ownership.
iii. Help members learn new and better ways of farming and home makings.
iv. Give youths incentive to work and the feeling that they are useful members of their family and community.
v. Give members a way to enjoy the benefits of group agricultural programmes and projects.
vi. Give youths the feeling of being stakeholders and partners of development.
vii. Show parents and neighbours the value of these projects.

Conclusion
From the study it is thereby concluded that majority of the respondent agreed that youth organization will help in agricultural production which will promote the local farmer on using new method of farming. Likewise the level of adoption reduces poverty and increase food sufficiency in the locality. Also it had impact on their standard of living by opening opportunities for youth empowerment.

Recommendations
In line with the conclusion, the following recommendations were made;
- The government should improve on the methods of reaching out to the youth, regardless of their ethics, cultural religious, geographical or political affiliation, by establishing good schools and scholarships opportunities and community recreation centers where they can spend their free time positively.
- The study has equally established that government empowerment programmes should be restructured and should be centered on the participatory approach. This approach emphasizes the importance of involving the beneficiaries in all stages of the programme.
- It is also recommended that there should be greater investment on the human capital investment of youth. This implies that improvement in the education sector, employment opportunities, and social services to directly address the most important problem and challenges of poverty and reduces crime rate among the youth.

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