

Reduction of Unemployment in Nigeria through Agriculture (A Case Study of FCT Poultry Farming)

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Abstract— Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face Nigeria today and this can be reduced through agriculture, the study therefore aims to look into employment creation in Nigeria through agriculture (poultry farming), the general objective of the study was to examine the effect of Agriculture through poultry farming on self employment in the FCT, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the poultry farmers in the FCT; Identify the challenges faced by poultry farmers in the FCT; and to Suggest the way forward to promoting employment in Nigeria through poultry farming. So, this study focuses on exploring the poultry farming business as the way to create employment in Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, several books, journals and other sources of information were use to assess the level and nature of employment in Nigeria. The poultry farming was expressively discussed for easy understanding of those who intend to go for the business. The data was interpreted using descriptive statistics and likert type scale was used for the analysis of the study. Finally, the whole finding were summarize, recommendations were made which include Government and all relevant stakeholders should continue in their quest towards reducing unemployment in making sure that agriculture continue to grow and provision of credit facilities to finance poultry farming.

Index Terms— Unemployment Agriculture and Poultry Farming.

I. INTRODUCTION

In terms of employment, agriculture is the most important sector of Nigeria's economy, engaging about 70% of the labor force. Farming is often of the subsistence variety, characterized by simple tools and shifting cultivation. The economic benefits of large-scale agriculture are recognized. Large-scale agriculture, however, is not common. Despite an abundant water supply, a favorable climate, and wide areas of arable land, Effective land tenure reform and provision of training in development of agriculture related industries suitable for unskilled Nigerians could make poultry farming a more viable source of employment opportunities and building wealth for citizens. Also, Governmental organizations and landowners could be encouraged to make land available to poor Nigerians on a more equitable basis for agricultural related industries. Unemployment has been a problem in Nigeria, especially since 1980, when the nation's economy took a turn for the worse as world petroleum prices tumbled, the Nigerian currency became devalued, corruption became

rampant, and the population of Nigeria ballooned at a breathtaking pace (Akintoye, 2008).

Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in the 21st century. International statistics portray that industrial and service workers living in developing regions account for about two-thirds of the unemployed. (Patterson et al, 2006). According to Sharma et al. (2010), functional investment in all sectors of agriculture will help solve the problems of unemployment, hunger and poverty in the country. Traditionally, agriculture has been assumed to play a passive and supportive role in rural development. Its primary purpose was to provide rural employment, income and sufficient low-priced food. To a large extent, apart from playing an indispensable part in any overall strategy of sustaining rural households, agriculture has come to be regarded by economists as essential condition for economic growth and development.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The decline in agricultural production has brought terrible consequences which include skyrocketing unemployment rate, food crisis, inflation, corruption and poor attitude to work. In the last few years, Nigeria has consistently been featured on the negative side of the difference Human Development Reports in the world. These reports indicate that life expectancy in Nigeria has drastically reduced to 45 years; real income of most families has woefully reduced, unemployment is scandalously high. Nigeria is topping the list of countries with malnourished children and the quality of health and education services in the country has deteriorated beyond comprehension.

Poultry farming can be considered as an option in the face of unemployment as Nigeria is yet to meet the increase in demand for poultry as an alternative source of protein. Poultry farming is an economic activity that could lead to improved income and quality of life and it have a high protein and its contributory role to national economy cannot be over emphasized.

III. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

Unemployment

Gbosi (1997) defined unemployment as a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. In recent times, the definition of unemployment by the International Labor Organization states that "the unemployed is a member of the economically active population, who are without work but available for and

seeking for work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1990). (Douglason et al., 2006)

Unemployment in Nigeria

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2003) the national unemployment rate, rose from 4.3 percent in 1970 to 6.4 percent in 1980. The high rate of unemployment observed in 1980 was attributed largely to depression in the Nigerian economy during the late 1970s. Specifically, the economic downturn led to the implementation of stabilization measures which included restriction on exports, which caused import dependency of most Nigerian manufacturing enterprises, which in turn resulted in operation of many companies below their installed capacity. This development led to the close down of many industries while the survived few were forced to retrench a large proportion of their workforce. (Oduola, 2001) Owing to this, the national unemployment rate fluctuated around 6.0% until 1987 when it rose to 7.1 percent. It is worrisome to note that the current unemployment rate in Nigeria is high and was reported to be 19.7%, 20.1% and 21% in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively by the National Bureau of Statistic (NBS).

The Role of Agriculture in generating Employment

There is a clear direct relationship between Agriculture and Employment in Nigeria. In the rural areas, the rise in unemployment in the urban centres was mitigated by spaces available in Agriculture both in poultry farming and Crop production. Agriculture provided the platform for the absorption of the people who could not get job in the formal sector thus shielding the communities from the vagaries of unemployment but as more and more people return from the cities because they could not find jobs or lost their jobs, the spaces in Agriculture are becoming stressed as more spaces are not being speedily created to quickly absorb these new entrants.

Objectives of the study

General objective of the study was to examine the effect of Agriculture through poultry farming on self employment in the FCT, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- (i) Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the poultry farmers in the FCT;
- (ii) Identify the challenges faced by poultry farmers in the FCT; and
- (iii) Suggest the way forward to promoting employment in Nigeria through poultry farming.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. FCT is located in the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria together with Kogi, Nassarawa, Kwara, Plateau and Benue State. The FCT contain Six area councils: Abuja Municipal, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Bwari, Kwali and Abaji area councils where the study was conducted. Major seasons are the dry (November-February) and wet seasons (October – March). The climatic and soil condition of the study area favour poultry farming.

It was carved out in 1976 from parts of Nasarawa, Niger,

and Kogi states in the central parts of Nigeria. The territory is located just off the confluence of the River Niger and Benue River. It is bounded by the state of Niger to the west and north, Kaduna to the northeast, Nasarawa to the east and south, and Kogi to the southwest. It is lying between latitude 8.25 and 9.20 north of the equator and longitude 6.45 and 7.39 east of Greenwich Meridian. The FCT has a landmass of approximately 7,315 square kilometers of which the actual city, Abuja, occupies 275.3 square kilometers. Its natural resources include marble, tin, mica, zinc, lead tantalite and clay. FCT is governed by a Minister (appointed by the President) who heads the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA).

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire administered by using a simple random sampling technique to select 150 poultry farmers in the FCT, Nigeria. The researchers were able to retrieve 112 of it of which 103 was valuable for the analysis of the study.

Analytical Technique

- Descriptive Statistics
- Likert type scale

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Socio-economic characteristics of the poultry farmers in the FCT

Educational Level: 23% of the respondent had primary education, 32% had secondary education while 45% of the respondent had tertiary education. This indicate that majority of the poultry farmers in the FCT have Tertiary education and this show the level at which poultry farming has helped in providing job for graduate unemployed in Nigeria.

Sex: Result for sex of the respondents revealed that 64% of the respondents were male while 36% were female. This explains that men are more interested in poultry farming than the female.

Family size: Finding showed that 18% of the respondents had family size of 0 - 5 persons, respondents with 6-10 persons (32%) while 50% of the respondents had above 10 household size. This shows that majority of the respondents have large household size that can assist in their agricultural activities.

Age: 25% of the respondents were between the ages of 21 - 30 years of age, followed by 35% of the respondents who were between 31-40 years of age. 40% of the respondents were above 40 years age. This indicates that 60% of the respondents are below 40 and it indicates how agriculture through farming has really helped in reducing unemployment among the youths in Nigeria.

Challenges faced by poultry farmers in the FCT

The study identifies some major challenges been faced by poultry farmers as shown in Table 1 below:

Challenges faced by poultry farmers in the FCT	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Diseases infestation	54	52.42	6 th
Theft and insecurity	47	45.63	7 th
Inadequate water	43	41.74	8 th
Inadequate modern	78	75.73	1 st

poultry equipment			
Absence of Government help and guidance	57	55.34	4 th
Problem of getting reasonable price	69	66.99	3 rd
Fear of taking the risk of investing in poultry farming	56	54.37	5 th
Lack of Fund and poor access to capital for investment in farming	73	70.87	2 ⁿ d
Ineffective agricultural extension services	28	27.18	10 th
Inconsistency in agricultural policy	31	30.09	9 th

Majority of the respondents encounter the problem of inadequate modern poultry equipment, lack of fund, Problem of getting reasonable price and absence of government help as the major challenges been faced by poultry farmers in the study area.

Way forward to promoting employment in Nigeria through poultry farming

The study further suggests some ways in promoting employment in Nigeria through poultry farming as shown below:

1. Training for those interested in poultry farming
2. Provision of credit facilities to the unemployed who are interested in agriculture
3. Farmers should have contact of veterinary doctors and also practice personal hygiene
4. Adequate water in the poultry farm and surroundings
5. Development of agricultural policy to boost more employment
6. Sensitisation of the youth and unemployed on how lucrative poultry farming can be
7. Farmers should insure their farms as a way of handling risk
8. Use of Labor-intensive Technology by poultry farmers
9. Farmers should be security conscious to prevent theft
10. Poultry farms should be sited in proximity to water

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper shows the effect of poultry farming on employment in Nigeria and identifies the challenges faced by poultry farmers: the problem of inadequate modern poultry equipment, lack of fund, Problem of getting reasonable price and absence of government help as the major challenges been faced by poultry farmers. The study further proffer solutions to the challenges faced by poultry farmers to reduce unemployment in Nigeria which include: Development of agricultural policy to boost more employment, Use of Labor-intensive Technology by poultry farmers, adequate water in the poultry farm and surroundings and so on.

Agriculture should no longer be seen as an indirect ticket to poverty but as a means of getting rich and paying back into the society. Poultry farming, if properly embraced and funded will drastically help in reducing unemployment and poverty

in Nigeria.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the basic finding of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Government should be more consistent in agricultural policy
- (ii) Improvement in agricultural production by making land available to private and public organizations to set up poultry farms
- (iii) Investment in agricultural research by both government and private individuals
- (iv) Provision of incentives to farmers– via pricing, subsidy etc
- (v) Capacity building, by training the unemployed who are interested in agriculture on how to venture into it.
- (vi) Farmers should be encouraged on joining cooperative society to attract funding
- (vii) Provision of credit facilities to farmers
- (viii) Adequate security should be provided for farmers and their product

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