



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE THROUGH
PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH INTEGRATED TRAINING FARM PROJECT
IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA***

LATOPA ABDUL LATEEF AYINDE

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By

LATOPA ABDUL LATEEF AYINDE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

May 2016

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the glory of the almighty ALLAH, Subhanau Watahaala, and to the following people;

- My late mother, Hajia Zainab Onikepe Latopa who died when I was on this study
- My late father Alhaji AbdulKareem Ayinde Latopa, died in April 1983
- My beautiful and wonderful wife, Habibat Arinola Latopa
- My Children, AbdulKareem, AbdulLateef, and AbdulSalam
- My brother Babatunde Latopa and family.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE THROUGH
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By

ABDUL-LATEEF AYINDE LATOPA

May 2016

Chairman : Sharifah Norazizan Syed Abd Rashid, PhD
Faculty : Human Ecology

Youth empowerment in agriculture has become a strategy to address the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria which The United Nations Development Program report shows is one of the worst in Africa sub-Sahara at 37.7%. The much sought after white collar jobs and over dependent on oil business that generates quick returns on investment are no longer available. As a result, the Government has embarked on youth empowerment in agriculture programs at the National, State, and Local Government levels to tackle the overbearing unemployment rate to reduce crime, and youth restiveness. However, years after some states in Nigeria embarked on youth empowerment projects in agriculture, there are indications that the rate of youth participation in the youth empowerment in agriculture programs is declining. The decline was attributed to the interplay between the youth empowerment in agriculture programs and the process of participation which has contributed to the persistent unemployment rate.

With this background, this study was designed to explore and understand through obtaining qualitative information from informants on how youth empowerment in agriculture is achieved through youth participation in the Youth Integrated Training Farm (YITF) project in Kwara State Nigeria. Qualitative case study approach was adopted for the study with multiple methods of data collection which includes interviews, observation, documents, and focus group discussions (FGD).

Findings revealed that the process of youth participation in the youth empowerment in agriculture project in YITF involves nine stages which lead to youth empowerment in agriculture in economic, social and psychological dimensions. However, the 9th stage which is empowerment incentives (startup capital) was not fully met and therefore, contributed to the decline in youth participation. Findings also show that, apart from the implementers and the Zimbabwean farmers, the roles and contributions of the stakeholders in the youth empowerment in agriculture in YITF were not impressive. The study revealed that the factors that are responsible for the decline in youth participation in the youth empowerment in agriculture

include the youth mindset, government induced, environmental and other youth empowerment projects in Kwara State. However, it was found that the youth empowerment in agriculture project has impacts the youth directly by rekindling their interest in agriculture business, improves their capacity to create wealth, and change their attitudes from disoriented to oriented. Indirectly, the youth empowerment in agriculture project has contributed to a reduction in youth unemployment, youth truancy and crime rate in the state.

The study concludes that youth are empowered in agriculture individually and as groups in terms of capacity building through their participation in the YITF project but not fully empowered in terms of meeting the project objectives. This was as a result of the government inability to meet the 9th step of the process of participation which affects the rate of youth participation and vision of the project *to groom a new generation of commercial farmers*. However, the project contributes to youth self-efficacy in agriculture in Kwara State through job creation and job opportunities in agriculture business. The youth empowerment in agriculture in YITF project faces some barriers in the participation process which resulted in discouragement in the project, lack of trust in government and subsequently, the decline in the youth participation. Recommendations were gathered from the informants as key players on how to tackle these barriers so that achieving youth empowerment in agriculture through youth participation will be enhanced.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMERKASAAN BELIA DALAM PERTANIAN MENERUSI
PENYERTAAN DALAM PROJEK LATIHAN PERTANIAN BELIA
BERSEPADU DI KWARA, NIGERIA**

Oleh

ABDUL-LATEEF AYINDE LATOPA

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Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia

Pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian telah menjadi satu strategi untuk menangani kadar pengangguran belia yang tinggi di Nigeria dimana laporan Program Pembangunan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu menunjukkan salah satu yang terburuk di sub-Sahara Afrika dianggarkan sebanyak 37.7%. Rebutan pekerjaan kolar putih dan kebergantungan kepada perniagaan minyak yang menjana pulangan singkat atas pelaburan tidak lagi didapati. Oleh itu, Kerajaan telah melaksanakan program pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian di peringkat kebangsaan, negeri dan kerajaan tempatan, bagi menangani kadar pengangguran yang melampau bagi mengurangkan jenayah dan ketidaksabaran belia. Walau bagaimanapun, tahun-tahun selepas beberapa negeri di Nigeria memulakan projek pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian, terdapat tanda-tanda bahawa kadar penyertaan belia dalam program-program pemeriksaan belia semakin berkurangan. Pengurangan ini disebabkan oleh interaksi antara program pemeriksaan belia dan proses penyertaan yang telah menyumbang kepada kadar pengangguran yang berterusan.

Dengan latar belakang ini, kajian ini direka untuk meneroka dan memahami menerusi mendapatkan maklumat kualitatif daripada informan mengenai bagaimana pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian dicapai menerusi penyertaan belia dalam projek Latihan Pertanian Belia Bersepadu (YITF) di Kwara, Nigeria. Pendekatan kajian kes kualitatif telah diguna pakai untuk kajian ini dengan pelbagai kaedah pengumpulan data termasuk temubual, pemerhatian, dokumentasi dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus (FGD).

Dapatan utama kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa proses penyertaan belia dalam projek pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian di YITF melibatkan sembilan peringkat yang membawa kepada pemeriksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian melalui dimensi ekonomi, sosial dan psikologi. Walaubagaimanapun, peringkat sembilan iaitu insentif pemeriksaan (modal permulaan) tidak dipenuhi oleh itu, menyumbang kepada penurunan penyertaan belia. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa, selain daripada kumpulan pelaksana dan petani Zimbabwe, peranan dan sumbangan

daripada pihak berkepentingan dalam pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian di YITF tidak memberangsangkan. Oleh itu, kajian menunjukkan bahawa faktor-faktor yang bertanggungjawab untuk penurunan penyertaan belia dalam pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian termasuk pemikiran belia, didorong kerajaan, persekitaran dan projek pemerksaan belia lain di Kwara. Walau bagaimanapun, didapati bahawa projek pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian mempunyai impak kepada belia secara langsung dengan menyemarakkan minat mereka terhadap perniagaan pertanian, meningkatkan keupayaan mereka untuk membina kekayaan, dan mengubah sikap mereka daripada tidak mempunyai hala tuju kepada mempunyai hala tuju. Secara tidak langsung, projek pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian telah menyumbang kepada pengurangan pengangguran belia, gejala ponteng dan kadar jenayah di negeri ini.

Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa belia diperksakan dalam bidang pertanian secara individu dan secara berkumpulan dari segi pembinaan keupayaan menerusi penyertaan mereka dalam projek YITF, tetapi tidak diperksakan sepenuhnya dari segi memenuhi objektif projek. Hal ini adalah berikutan daripada ketidakupayaan kerajaan untuk memenuhi langkah sembilan proses penyertaan yang mempengaruhi kadar penyertaan belia dan visi projek untuk melatih generasi baru petani komersial. Walau bagaimanapun, projek ini menyumbang kepada efikasi sendiri belia dalam bidang pertanian di Kwara melalui pewujudan pekerjaan dan peluang pekerjaan dalam bidang perniagaan pertanian. Pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian di YITF menghadapi beberapa halangan dalam proses penyertaan yang membawa kepada kehilangan semangat dalam projek, kekurangan kepercayaan pada kerajaan dan seterusnya, penurunan dalam penyertaan belia. Cadangan telah dikumpulkan dari informan sebagai pemain utama dalam menangani halangan ini supaya pencapaian pemerksaan belia dalam bidang pertanian menerusi penyertaan belia dapat dipertingkatkan

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACGS	Agriculture Credit Guarantee Scheme
AEC	Adolescent Empowerment Circle
CBARD	Community-Based Agricultural Rural Development program
CBN	Central Bank OF Nigeria
CCD	Center for Community Development
CFLI	Canadian Fund for Local Initiative
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COA	College Of Agriculture
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Program
DFID	Department For International Development
DFRRI	Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure
EEM	Educational Empowerment Model
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FM	Farm Manager
HND	Higher National Diploma
IDA	International Development Agencies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFS	Integrated Farm Scheme
ILO	International Labor Organization
KWASU	Kwara State University
KWABES	Kwara Bridge Empowerment Scheme
KWADP	Kwara Agriculture Development Program
KWSG	Kwara State Government

LEED	Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
MANR	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
NACB	Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank
NAFPP	National Accelerated Food Production Program
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Program
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
ND	National Diploma
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Government Association
OAYEP	Osun State Agricultural Youth Empowerment Program
ODD	Off-taker Demand Driven
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFN	Operation Feed the Nation
SEEDS	State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
SIDA	Sweden International Development Agency
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SSA	Senior Special Assistant to the Governor
SSG	Secretary to the State Government
TPM	Transactional Partnership Model
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

YEP	Youth Empowerment Program
YITF	Youth Integrated Training Farm
YITFC	Youth Integrated Training Farm Center
YITFP	Youth Integrated Training Farm Project



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This section contains information about the foundation of this study and briefs on the procedures adopted, the contentions and the ways to address them. The chapter will discuss the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims, and objectives, the significance of the study, scope, definition of terms and the organization of chapters.

1.2 Background of the Study

Youth Empowerment in agriculture through youth participation in empowerment projects in Nigeria is a response to the current unprecedented high rate of youth¹ unemployment which was about 80% and 10% underemployed (Dike, 2009). Agriculture was the primary source of revenue to Nigeria before the discovery of petroleum in 1963. Before the civil war in 1967-70, Nigerian economic pattern indicated that agriculture was the base for export earnings because it represented 66% of foreign exchange. It rose to 73.4% in 1968 when the activities of the oil sector were put to a halt because of the civil war (Richard, 1978). Nigeria had only three regions then; Northern, Eastern, and Western regions. There was sufficient food production with an unemployment rate of about 5.0% (Morawetz, 1977).

Nigerian leadership abandoned agriculture after the discovery of crude oil in 1958 and exploration started in 1960 (Babatunde, 2010). Petroleum became the primary revenue source for the country. Despite this natural resource endowment and being the sixth largest oil exporter and eighth largest deposit of natural gas in the world, Nigerian economy had not been impressive (Soludo, 2006). In the first decade of independence (1960 – 2000) the average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 4% (Isiaka Badmus & Ogunmola, 2010). The oil wealth could not push for socio-economic development for Nigeria due to poor leadership and high rate of corruption in the government and public service. The situation became worse during the period of military rule that lasted for thirty years (Adebayo & Ojo, 2012).

This situation was the first condition that triggered the government to refocus the country to agriculture empowerment with a view to mobilizing the redundant civil war soldiers who were mostly youth for food production (Iwuagwu, 2012). The refocusing to empowerment in agriculture was primary to salvage the country from insufficient food production that resulted from the abandonment of the agricultural sector and the fall back of post-civil war on the economy of the country. It, therefore,

¹ Youth is defined by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as people within the ages of 15-35. In this study, youth are people between 15-39 years.

became imperative for the government to introduce different agricultural development programs.

Obasi (2013) disclosed that the first attempt in 1972 was to boost the agricultural sector by launching the National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP). The idea behind this project was to increase the productivity of farmers, improve their incomes and standards of living. This was to be achieved through an innovative combination of research and technological improvement, extension, and agro-service delivery (Obasi, 2013). He further stressed that the project was unsuccessful because it only favored the politicians and the technocrats, thereby sidelining the rural people that were supposed to be the primary beneficiaries.

As the shortage of food persisted, and importation of food increased, the campaign for agriculture was renewed in 1976 with the introduction of Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (Nzechi, 2006). The project was also aimed to reduce importation of food by increasing local production and training the local farmers on how to use the modern agricultural equipment. However, it failed because of the lack of sustenance in agricultural policy and inadequate supply of fertilizer to the major users, couple with over-centralization of implementation, Nzechi (2006) concluded. Richard (1978) also added that the failure of OFN was impatience for the long wait for a return on investment, unlike the quick return in the oil sector. He argued that “the drive for easy and rapid wealth greatly contrasts with the rigor of farm work and the corresponding lack of interest in long-term productive investment by the Nigerian private entrepreneur” (pg.25).

It is important to mention that all the agriculture programs from 1972 to 1985 were intended to attract the people to farming, increase local food production and reduce the dependence on crude oil. However, there was no specific program for the youth as a vital sector in the refocus programs probably because; the prevailing challenges were considered as general problems. As at the time the ‘get money quick’ syndrome was discovered as one of the factors responsible for poor response to the agriculture programs, some Nigerian youth had preferenced their career in white collar jobs (Ekpu, 2009). Therefore, one may agree with Adebayo and Ojo (2012), who described OFN program of 1979 as another change of name. It implies that the structure, policies and operations of all the programs were the same except the name tags that only symbolized the change of government.

As at 1985, the effects of the failures in the various programs had begun to show significant effects on the employment rate and the youth were most affected (Njoku & Ihugba, 2011). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) report of 2005, these effects were compounded by the reduction in workforce as ordered by the World Bank to her borrowers. That was the first period that the youth was specifically captured in the government empowerment programs (Isiaka Badmus & Ogumola, 2010).

Akpan (2010) stressed that an attempt was made to encourage youth participation in agriculture production, processing, and various vocational training in 1985. Accordingly, the federal government of Nigeria established National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, and the agency was passed into law in 1989 by the Employment Act, 1989. NDE was set up to provide vocational training for the youth and exposed them to all available job opportunities (Omoruyi & Osunde, 2004). The main aims were to address youth unemployment as a matter of urgency by designing innovative programs that will provide training for youth farmers irrespective of education qualifications. Emphasis was made specifically on self-employment in the area of agriculture production and marketing (Njoku & Ihugba, 2011).

As part of the project in 1987, 'better life program' was created to empower the women folks especially female youths in the rural areas through skills acquisition and health care training. Akpan (2010) added that 'People's Bank' and 'Community Bank' were established in 1989 and 1990 respectively to ensure sustainable empowerment for the beneficiaries of these programs. The Banks were set up to provide credit facilities to the low-income earners and youths that practiced agricultural production and other micro-enterprises, particularly in the rural areas. Later in 1992, 'Fadama Project' was initiated to boost food production and sufficiency and to engage the youths to become self-sustained (Adebayo, 1999).

Since 1999, the government has designed various youth empowerment programs in agriculture as a result of the alarming rate of youth unemployment (Ajani, Mgbenka, & Ona, 2015; Idoko, 2014). The youth empowerment programs were introduced from the Federal level and replicated at the state and local government levels. For example, The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was introduced in 2004 by the federal government. The program was designed among other things to empower unemployed youth by creating jobs through "bottom-up approach" and participate in the Youth Employment Scheme (YES). The same objectives were pursued at the state level through the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and at the third level of government through the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS), (UNDP, 2004.). As a result of this, some states in Nigeria introduced capacity building projects for youth empowerment in agriculture. For example; Youth Empowerment Scheme (Project YES) of Niger State (Ohize and Adamu, 2009); Osun State Agricultural Youth Empowerment Program (OAYEP), (Ogunremi, Ogunremi, & Faleyimu, 2012), Integrated Farm Scheme (IFS) in Akwa Ibom State (Akpan, 2010), Youth Integrated Training Farm Project in Kwara State (Alabi, 2010)

Youth Integrated Training Farm (YITF) project was established by the Kwara State Government in 2005 in line with the SEEDS program to empower the youth population through participation in the agriculture project. The project was designed to create employment and build the youth capacity in various aspects of farming and farm management to meet the vision of the government to establish new '*successive-generation of commercial farmers.*' This idea was also to keep the youth out of streets, reduce the menace of youth restiveness and other anti-social vices. The state

governor Dr. Bukola Saraki stated the vision during the launching of the project in August 2005;

I dream of a day when graduates of accounting or banking and finance would prefer to own and run their farm rather than seek banking jobs. A day when young men and women who hold degrees in engineering or any other degrees in farming, not because they have options, but because they regard farming as a more lucrative enterprise.

I dream of a young man or women in jeans and T-shirt walking into a bank with his laptop. Moreover, on his computer, he can make a cash-flow analysis and another business argument to demonstrate the profitability of his farming ventures.

The YITF project has existed for over 10 years and has recorded successes and also faces challenges over the years. Table 1.1 shows information about the project from inception.

Table 1.1 General Information on the Youth Integrated Farm (YITF) project

Batch	Year of participation	Name of cooperative society for each batch	Number of trainees	Capacity building outcome	Empowerment Incentives allocation	(output) Active farmers
1.	2006 – 2008	New Generation Commercial Farmers	93	93	93*	19
2.	2009 - 2010	New Face Cooperative Group Farmers	64	64	64*	11
3.	2010 - 2011	Real Image Commercial cooperative Farmers	74	74	74*	14
4.	2011 – 2012	Harmony Commercial Farmers	90	90	None	07
5.	2012 - 2013	Unique Commercial Farmers cooperative	97	97	None.	12
6.	2014 – 2015*	Excel Commercial Youth Cooperative Group Farming Society	68	Still on	Still on	Still on
TOTAL			418	418	231	63

Source: Fieldwork, 2014; *The 6th batch was still undergoing the program as at the time of field study.

Despite the government efforts at the federal and state levels, evidence have shown that the youth empowerment programs in agriculture have underperformed and therefore, the unemployment rate persists. Nigeria has over 67 million unemployed youth out of the population of 167 million people (NBS 2011). According to UNDP (2012) in a publication titled; ‘The African Economic Outlook 2012’ with the theme: Promoting Youth Employment; jointly published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (UNECA); the United Nations Development Program, (UNDP); the African Development Bank Group; and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development(OECD), Nigerian unemployment rate has

increased in the last eight years from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2012. (See Figure 1.1)²;

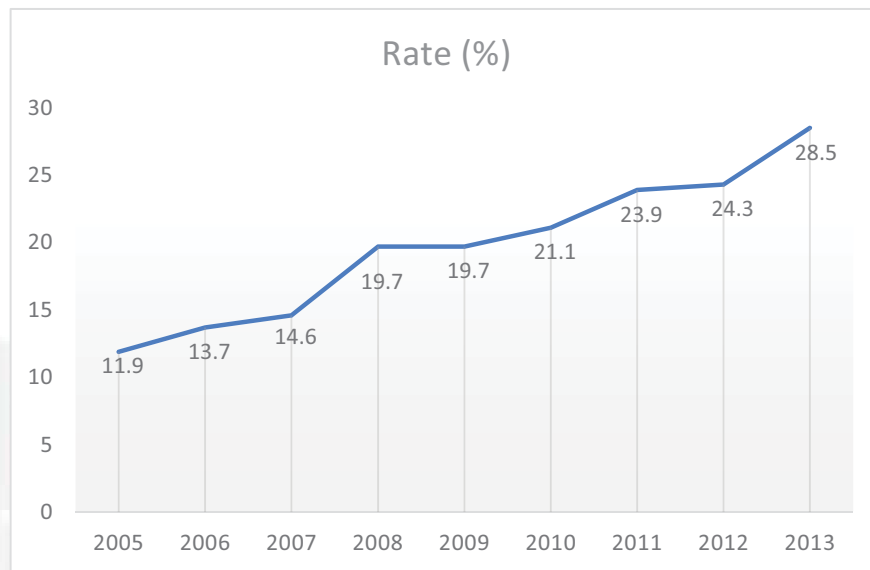


Figure 1.1 Unemployment rate in Nigeria from 2005 – 2013

Source: General Household Survey Report/NBS/CBN Surveys 2014.

Such increase indicates that one out of four Nigerians is unemployed. The report also indicates that Nigeria has one of the worst youth unemployment rate in Africa sub-Saharan which stands at 37.7%; this also indicates that 2 out of 5 Nigerian youths are unemployed.

In Kwara State also the rate of youth unemployment may not be different from what is applicable in the Nigerian society as a whole due to some salient factors that are associated with preference for white collar job (Akpan, 2010). Figure 1.2 shows that in the last ten years, the youth unemployment in Kwara State began to rise from 2.9% in 2005 to 17.5% in 2007.

² Unemployment has increased to 28.5% in 2013 and projected to reach 30.0% by 2014 if the situation remains.

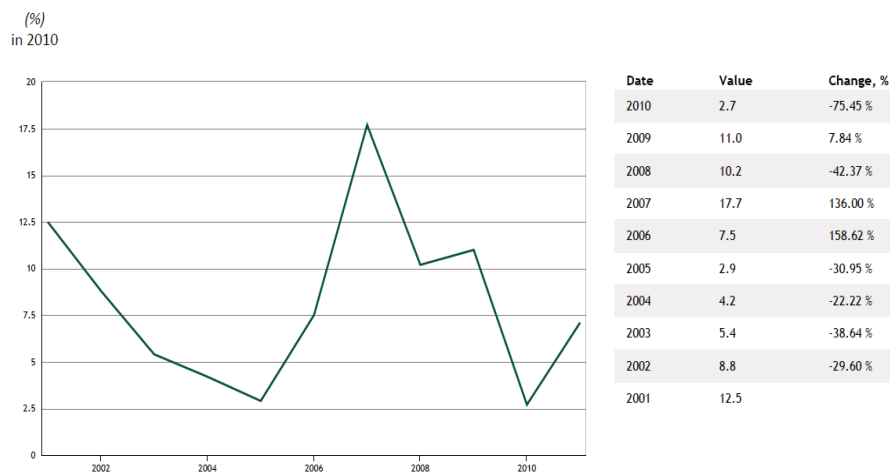


Figure 1.2 Unemployment Rates in Kwara State 2001-2010
Source: *National Bureau of Statistics (2012)*

From 2007, it declined to 10.2 in 2008, rose again to 11% in 2009 and 2% in 2010. It is important to note that Kwara State government established the YITF empowerment project in 2005 but enrolled the first batch of youth in 2006. Looking at the rate of youth unemployment in Figure 1.2 from 2005 to 2011 and the rate of youth enrolment in the YITF as shown in table 1.1 from 2016 to 2013, it appears there is a relationship between the rate of unemployment and the rate of enrolment in the YITF project. This kind of relationship indicates that there are more to the problems of the phenomenon of youth empowerment projects than inadequate funding, family influences, and rural-urban migration as identifies in the previous studies (Echebiri, 2005; Olayiwola, 2005; Adekunle et al., 2009; Akpan, 2010). These studies did not look at the interplay between youth empowerment and youth participation within the context they exist. Rather the two constructs youth empowerment and youth participation were investigated independently (Oguremi, et.al 2012; Adekunle, et.al 2009; Ifenkwe, 2010; Sarah et.al 2010). Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by consolidating these previous studies through qualitative inquiries with a view to understanding the real life situation of the case under study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of this study, the earlier agriculture development and empowerment program from 1972 to 1985 contributed to improve food production, livestock and fish production, farm mechanization, river basin projects, national food production program, agro-services and water resources. Also, loan schemes were made available to small and large scale farmers through the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (NCGS), commercial banks, and Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) (Adeyemo, 1984). However, the failure of these programs was attributed to change of government from one military to the other, corruption, sabotage, management failure etc. (Adeyemo, 1984; Isiaka Badmus & Ogunmola, 2010; Nzechi, 2006; Obasi, 2013). These reasons were based on quantitative information with no strong emphasis on participation as an important

factor in achieving empowerment. Therefore, the studies could not identify other factors that are associated with the real life situation through an understanding of human behavior, experiences, and feeling that influence youth empowerment in agriculture through the process of participation. This gap is the concern of this study and in-depth understanding underpinning the phenomenon will be adequately addressed.

Also from 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic government, there has been an increase in the youth population, increase in the unemployment rate and other social vices (NBS, 2012 & NBS/CBN Surveys 2014). A look at table 1.1, for example, shows that there have not been an increase in the enrolment of youth into the YITF project beyond 98 for about 10 years despite the yearly proposed 100 youth. Instead, enrollment had been unstable and decreasing to 68 in 2014. It is important to state that, since the project is for 12 months duration of training and skill acquisition, by 2014, the number of empowered youth from the YITF is expected to be at least 900 not as low as 418 which is about 50% as shown in the Table. This confirms the claims that there is reduction / decline of about 65% youth population increasingly deserting agriculture for white collar jobs (Oboh & Sani, 2009). Studies on youth empowerment on agriculture have posited that the causes of the decline and failures of the programs include rural - urban migration particularly among the youth population in search of better income, friendly environment, social amenities, infrastructure, and education (Echebiri, 2005; Olayiwola, 2005).

Arguably, if agriculture becomes less attractive to the youth that constitutes manpower with increasing unemployment rate despite various youth empowerment programs in agriculture (e.g YITF) there is a need to search further for the causes of the problem. In the light of this, this study will focus the search lens to the internal and external factors that constitute barriers within and outside the youth community at the YITF as the beneficiaries through a real life situation (Njoh, 2002).

Further to internal and external factors, youth empowerment through participation is a process and an outcome that involves various stakeholders like the government, parents, institutions, financiers etc. (Commonwealth, 2005). It is observed that previous studies did not investigate the influences and contributions of the stakeholders as important contributors in youth empowerment and participation programs because of their expertise in capacity building and project evaluation.

Based on the arguments above, the following were identified as inadequacies from the previous studies;

- The previous studies did not investigate the process of participation in the youth empowerment programs to know the dimensions of empowerment achieved in any existing agriculture capacity building project (e.g. YITF). Therefore, the impacts of participation, strength and weaknesses of the program within the social setting were not established. (Cargo, 2003; Nzechi, 2006; Adekunle et al., 2009; Badmus & Ogunmola, 2010; Akpan, 2010).

- The studies were based on experiments and surveys thereby lacking in-depth knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study within the context it exist, thereby limiting the volume of information on intangible causes of decline in youth participation in agriculture empowerment programs (Echebiri, 2005; Olayiwola, 2005; Peter et al. 2012; Akpan, 2010; and Adekunle et al. 2009).
- These previous studies did not capture the role of stakeholders in the youth empowerment programs to know their contributions and possibly extract their views and synchronized with the views of the youth on how to tackle the barriers affecting the projects. (Idoko, 2014; Echebiri, 2005; Olayiwola, 2005; Adekunle et al. 2009; Akpan, 2010; Sarah et.al, 2010; Peter et al. 2012; Obasi, 2013).

As a result of these gaps, this study was focused on exploring and understanding through obtaining qualitative information from informants on how youth empowerment in agriculture is achieved through youth participation in the YITF project in Kwara State.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above statements, the following research questions are developed;

1. How does the process of youth participation in the youth empowerment in agriculture project of YITF lead to the dimensions of empowerment?
2. How has the youth empowerment in agriculture through youth participation in the YITF empowerment project impacts the youth?
3. As an important factor in the youth empowerment process, how have the stakeholders contributed to the youth empowerment in agriculture project of YITF?
4. Despite the establishment of youth empowerment in agriculture programs over the years, why there is still incidence of decline in youth participation in the youth empowerment in agriculture project at the YITF?
5. Based on the experiences and diverse views of the informants, how can the barriers found in youth empowerment in agriculture through participation in the YITF project be overcome?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it bridges the gaps between the existing literature on the youth empowerment and youth participation in agriculture phenomenon. It presents the real life situation of the processes involves in the youth empowerment in agriculture and the issues associated with participation as a means of achieving empowerment. The barriers to participation and causes of withdrawal from participation were determined through the experiences of participants to show those intangible factors that influence the inner minds of the youth in this regard. This brings into limelight those factors that are militating against achieving youth

empowerment through agriculture, understanding the strength and weaknesses and how to tackle them.

Furthermore, the study is important to the body of knowledge because it contributes to the conceptual views on empowerment and participation as important principles in community development and the interplay between them and other supportive constructs. With the use of inductive techniques of investigation, other inherent factors that influence the interactions of empowerment and participation are identified as contributions to the existing ones. Therefore, the academic community, researchers, community development practitioners and institutions will find the findings of this study as rich research materials for further studies in this field. In addition to that, the study exposes inherent factors that hinder achieving youth empowerment through the process of participation as a diversion from the common language of 'inadequate' or 'lack of' that are frequently used in this case. The study also establishes a base for developing a hypothesis that may provoke further studies on the subject matter.

Similarly, this study is of significance to the political leaders and administrators of youth development to appreciate the benefits of involving the youth in agricultural development projects as beneficiaries, partners, and leaders. It will also enable them to understand the need for involving key stakeholders in youth empowerment programs as a way to achieve a positive sustainable result. This study facilitates the importance of decentralization through the distribution of power that enhances a leveled playing ground in development. The political leaders and administrators will be re-oriented by the findings to appreciate social interaction and understanding of the needs of the people rather than wishes of the government. In summary, the study will inform the policy makers on the causes of the declining in participation in youth participation in agriculture empowerment project and the need to formulate workable policies that will promote agro-business and motivate youth participation.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Studies on empowerment and participation are wide in contents and contexts as ingredients of community development. Therefore, they cannot be totally captured in in this study considering the coverage and resources that are required. On this note, this study focused on youth empowerment and youth participation in agriculture at the Youth Integrated Training Farm (YITF) project in Kwara State.

This study is purely a qualitative research with single case study approach and therefore, limited by coverage and generalization. The study was by this approach restricted to the Youth Integrated Training Farm, Kwara State, Nigeria. The investigation covered the period from 2006 – 2014. As a qualitative study, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to similar projects because of the uniqueness of human nature. However, the findings and results can be used as a buildup to further studies by readers as the case may be

1.7 Definition of Terms used in the Thesis

1.7.1 Capacity Building

Capacity building is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and training with the view to achieving control of one's life and attain development objectives over time (UNDP, 2006). Therefore, capacity building in this study is made up of three components; physical (money and material resources); human capital (knowledge, skills, & experience) and social capital (trusted relationship with people) (Putnam, 2000).

1.7.2 Youth

Youth is defined and categorized by different organizations and countries. National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Youth Development in the 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Pegged youth within 15 – 35 years. In the case of this study, youth is people within the age of 15 – 39 years.

1.7.3 Youth Empowerment

Empowerment is the ability to gain control of economic, social, and psychology powers in life as an individual youth or a group of youth. Such abilities will be achieved through capacity building programs that will enable skill acquisition and training to the powers (Jullian Rappaport, 1985; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Matthew Morton & Paul Montgomery, 2010). Therefore, youth empowerment in this study is the process and outcome of youth development through capacity building program with a view to achieving socio-economic and psychological powers.

1.7.4 Youth Participation

Participation is the process by which the stakeholders influence development initiatives and decisions through shared control of activities that affect them (UNDP, 2006). Youth participation is the process of involving young people in the activities that lead to mastering their abilities, their lives and their community through capacity building as beneficiary, partners and future (Cecilia Luttrell et al. 2009; 2006; Lynne, 2008).

1.8 Organization of Chapters

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The content of each chapter is summarized as below;

The first chapter is the general introduction to the study. It explains the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims, and objectives of

the study, the scope, and limitations of the study, the significance of the study and definition of key terms. Also, this chapter states the gaps in the previous studies which this study fills accordingly. Lastly, the chapter is summarized to indicate all issues discussed.

In chapter two, the study discusses the literature that is related to the studies to indicate the justification for the study and to explore other views on the subject matter. The conceptual views of the basic constructs and other supporting concepts are discussed. The conceptual framework of the study is developed around the concepts to indicate the workings of the research questions that the study is set to answer. Participation and empowerment in agriculture are also discussed given the influences of agency and structure on these two constructs as well as the challenges of youth and agriculture projects. The chapter ends with the summary of chapter two.

Chapter three is the research methodology. It explains the method and approach adopted to investigate the subject matter. Since the study was designed for qualitative investigation method, the researcher is the main instrument for data collection. However, the methods used for the collection of data which includes in-depth interviews, observation, documents, audio-visual and Focus Group Discussion are explained. Other related research protocols that are required in qualitative research are adequately presented in this chapter. The chapter also ends with a summary.

Chapter four is the description of the area of study. It is meant to acquaint the readers with the characteristics of Kwara State, economic endowment, population, administration, human development and productivity. Also, it discusses the social setting of the Youth Integrated Training Farm Center, which is located at Malete village. The idea is to carry the reader to the venue through a thick description of the area and to inform them about the emergence of the case study, operations structure of, achievements and challenges, and the facilities that are available in the study area. This will give the readers an insight into the establishment of the area from far.

Chapter five contains presentations of findings and discussions to show in descriptive form, how the responses from experiences, views, and feelings of the informants answered the research questions. These opinions and responses are discussed in line with the data gathered from the field to show the outcome of the study in general. The researcher makes the presentation more in verbatim to display the extent of the exploration of the analytical content of the data. A section is provided in this chapter to debate extensively on the results of findings. The chapter also ends with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter six summarizes the thesis and the findings; conclusions were drawn, implications on the concepts, body of knowledge and policy makers were discussed in the final context, and recommendations were provided as a pointer to future researchers on the subject matter.

1.9 Summary of Chapter One

This chapter presents the foundation and direction of this study by tracing the issues that lead to the need for youth empowerment in agriculture through participation in the YITF project in Kwara State. The problem statement was developed from the background of the study which gave room for the formulation of the research question and subsequently the aims and objectives of the study. The scope of the study and limitations were also presented to indicate the boundaries while the significance of the study to the concepts, academics, policy makers, and the society was highlighted. Lastly, an organization of the chapters is presented to show brief contents in each chapter.



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