

Poultry production in Nigeria: exploiting its potentials for rural youth empowerment and entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Sustainable rural development cannot occur without rural youth empowerment for entrepreneurship. In the face of the current staggering level of youth unemployment in Nigeria, there is the obvious need to seek for ways of empowering the youth for sustainable development. Poultry keeping stands as resource that can generate employment for millions of Nigerian youths in rural and peri-urban areas as entrepreneurs, skilled and unskilled workers. This paper through a review of literature examined the importance of poultry and explored how it can be exploited as a panacea for youth unemployment through entrepreneurship. It explores the potentials of it and shows the way the potentials of poultry can be harnessed for all youth empowerment programmes. It recommended that government, big farms, international and national corporations, should be involved in youth empowerment programmes through youth entrepreneurship in poultry production. Banks and other financial institutions should be mandated to assist the youth with soft loans in cash and kind through the provision of poultry infrastructure so as to make poultry farming attractive to the youth. A well-funded poultry extension advisory service need to be established to ensure the sustainability of the youth empowerment/ entrepreneurship poultry programmes across the country.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Poultry, empowerment, unemployment

La Production avicole au Nigéria: exploiter ses potentiels pour l'autonomisation et l'esprit d'entreprise des jeunes ruraux



Résumé

Le développement rural durable ne peut que se faire sans l'autonomisation des jeunes ruraux pour l'esprit d'entreprise. Face au niveau actuel stupéfiant de chômage des jeunes au Nigéria, il est évident qu'il est nécessaire de chercher des moyens d'autonomiser les jeunes pour le développement durable. L'élevage de volailles est une ressource qui peut générer des emplois pour des millions de jeunes Nigériens dans les zones rurales et périurbaines en tant qu'entrepreneurs, travailleurs qualifiés et non qualifiés. Cet article, à travers un examen de la littérature, a examiné l'importance de la volaille et exploré comment elle peut être exploitée comme panacée pour le chômage des jeunes par l'entrepreneuriat. Il explore les potentiels de celui-ci et montre comment les potentiels de la volaille peuvent être exploités pour tous les programmes d'autonomisation des jeunes. Il a recommandé que le gouvernement, les grandes exploitations agricoles, les entreprises internationales et

nationales participent à des programmes d'autonomisation des jeunes par l'entrepreneuriat des jeunes dans la production avicole. Les banques et autres institutions financières devraient avoir pour mandat d'aider les jeunes avec des prêts à taux doux en espèces et en nature par la fourniture d'infrastructures avicoles afin de rendre l'élevage avicole attrayant pour les jeunes. Un service consultatif bien financé de vulgarisation de la volaille doit être mis en place pour assurer la durabilité des programmes d'autonomisation des jeunes et d'entrepreneuriat de la volaille dans tout le pays.

Mots clés: L'autonomisation, l'esprit d'entreprise, chômage, L'élevage de volailles

Introduction

The domestication of birds such as chicken, ducks, quails, turkey, and geese with the intent of rearing them for meat, egg production as well as using their products such as faecal droppings and feathers in industries as natural unprocessed materials is known as poultry farming (Stiles, 2017). The rearing of birds originated many years ago, which emanated by collection of their eggs and young ones from their natural habitat which later resulted into domesticating them as farm animals with people. Cockfighting was initiated through rearing of chickens as well as taming of quails for their songs but were later ensnared and brought up as reared birds for consumption (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2017; Chakraborty, 2018). Poultry production can be subdivided into three distinct parts named small, medium and large scale (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015). These are also otherwise known as backyard, semi-commercial and commercial (Omiti and Okute, n.d.; Rieke, 2017; Rimi, *et al.*, 2017). The country's standing poultry population is at present 180 million birds, a substantial increase from about 151 million birds (Onwualu, 2011; FAO, 2018) most of which are domiciled in the southern part of the country either in semi-intensive farms or intensive ones (FAO, 2018). Egg and meat production are the two major divisions of poultry production (United States Department of Agriculture – USDA, 2018) although other divisions exist such as chick

production, point of lay production, feed production, poultry tools and equipment production in addition to poultry processing and marketing (Compassion in World Farming - CIWF, 2019). Although globally, as at 2011 and 2016, over 50 billion poultry birds and 66 billion poultry birds were produced across the world respectively (Foraminifera, 2012; Qualman, 2018); these numbers had dropped to 23 billion birds by 2018 due to the more recent outbreak of avian influenza (H5N1 and mutated strains) in China which affected 13.6% of the world's poultry supply during the year 2016 in addition to the effect of ongoing poultry consumption by the human population (Chatziprodromidou, *et al.*, 2018). The nutritional benefits derived from poultry products such as animal protein, minerals, fat-soluble vitamins, carbohydrates, pigments, fluids, and cholesterol is attributable to its relevance as the world major source of food (Dilger, Schroeder and Moseley, 2016). Most poultry houses in rural settlements of the country are substandard and handled by less competent farm operators who are not favourably disposed to using relevant or new approaches to managing poultry production efficiently and thus affecting poultry yield adversely (FAO, 2018). This constituted the major reason why European countries have usually had a higher yield in their poultry production and consumption than less developed countries across the world especially Africa and Asia (Augère-Granier, 2019; Ritchie and Roser, 2019).

Other reasons include climate change, ineffective resource management and inadequate provision of capital and operating credit (Science Communication Unit, University of the West of England, Bristol, 2013; Rojas-Downing, *et al.*, 2017; Ricke, 2017). It has been estimated that by 2030, the demand for poultry products across the African continent will increase by 60% especially in Nigeria, its largest market (World Economic Forum, 2019). Currently, present consumption across the continent is almost 100 million tonnes respectively for both poultry meat and egg products while in Nigeria, 192.69 MT is consumed annually (Ritchie and Roser, 2019). A society where adults and younger ones are inspired to take charge of how they live their lives is known to exhibit youth empowerment (Ile and Boadu, 2018; United Nations Development Programme – UNDP, 2020). These set of people are known to take concrete steps that will enhance their access to available resources which would improve their values, beliefs and attitudes as well as their standard of living (Ile and Boadu, 2018). Youth empowerment can be actively enhanced by engaging the adults in youth empowerment programmes which aims at enhancing their standard of living (Dominique and Dominique, 2014). Poultry business has been the most demanding section of animal rearing as regards farm products in Nigeria which offers great potentials for sustainable development in youth empowerment programmes (Ajani, Mgnbenka, and Onah, 2015; Price, 2019). Consequently, literatures reviewed showed that 0.2% of Nigeria's aggregate meat demand is met by the poultry industry while the rest is supplied by such segments of the livestock market such as cattle production, rabbitry, and grasscuttery. This revealed a wide deficient gap in comparison to that of European countries which is characterised by large supply infrastructures and abilities

(World Economic Forum, 2019). The aforementioned is as a result of Nigeria's poultry production industry which has its own share of challenges. These challenges stem from exorbitant price of raw materials used for animal feed production; although, this issue is a general concern in every part of the world (Ahmed and Mohammed, 2015; Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015). This challenge is further accentuated by the following: inadequate local production of corn, soya and chicks; inadequate number of youths who are the actively growing population involved in the poultry production business; poorly funded and staffed existing or moribund extension services to train and give advisory services to youths engaged in poultry production and the scourge of diseases and pests (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015). Others are poor infrastructure such as roads which hinder the easy movement of trucks which carry the feed and other inputs to the farms located in remote rural areas where the poultry farms are located for effective distribution of inputs and for taking the stock produced to market; poorly coordinated marketing channels; unsupported insurance policy by the government; delayed allocation of land; poor utilization of economies of scale as majority of poultry in Nigeria is still in the hands of small scale operators; existence of varying degrees of technology because the size of farms vary from small- to large-scale (Adeyonu, *et al.*, 2016; Butler, 2016; Derbe and Nachimuthu, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2019).

As at 2018, the annual poultry meat consumption of four important African economies including Nigeria was 176,287.266 MT (Nigeria), 1.1 million MT (Egypt), 10,922.46 MT (Ethiopia), and 1.95 million MT (South Africa) – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2019) and World Bank, WB (2020) which is quite moderate

in the light of Ritchie and Roser (2019) report that Nigeria consumed 192,689 MT, Egypt (1.2 million MT), Ethiopia (73,931 MT) and South Africa (1.76 million MT) during the same period. However, whichever is used, Nigeria still has a long way to go although production and consumption levels have been increasing prior to the period. This means that opportunities still abound for increased and improved production and consumption of poultry products in the country and the youth have a great part to play in it since they are the largest demographic segment of the country at present and they are agile, strong and more healthy than the now aging current population of poultry farmer in the country.

Importance of poultry and poultry products

The industry also provides raw materials to some industries as well as serve as a take up industry for other industries such as animal health industries (Omiti and Okuthe, n.d.). Furthermore, according to Darre (n.d.), the poultry industry also provides economic support and development effect on the tourism sector as well as the fashion industries. Specifically, however, the poultry industry is relevant to human lives and human living as follows: **food provision in the form of the supply of protein, vitamins, minerals, and oils; industrial uses such as in the production of vaccines, fertilizers and animal foods.** Furthermore, the hospitality industry relies on it for the supply of feathers for display and comfortable luxury mattresses, pillows and cushions as well as in the agricultural industry in the production of organic fertilisers. Lastly, it provides affordable meat for the nation's populace especially those in urban areas (Wahyono and Utami, 2018).

Aspects of the poultry industry relevant for youth empowerment

The aspects of the poultry industry relevant

to youth empowerment due to their ease of commencement and availability of factors of production includes Broiler Farming which involves the production of fast growing bird breeds (4 - 7 weeks) for meat consumption using production methods such as the deep litter system, cage and feed system or the semi-intensive method (Nwandu, *et al.*, 2016); Egg Production which involves raising birds specifically for the sales and supply of eggs using good production practices (Lieshout, Touray and ITC Cosultants, 2017; Nordhagen And Klemm, 2018); Feed formulation, production and sales which involves the production of high quality poultry feeds for local farms based on each farmers requirements and poultry breed needs (Olugbenga, *et al.*, 2015; Swain, 2016; Alhotan, 2016); Sales and Marketing which involves obtaining poultry products such as broiler chicken, eggs, faecal waste, feeds, Day Old Chicken, Point of Lay, etc. from production centres (e.g. mills, farms, and hatcheries) and selling to farmers, retailers and final consumers (Simonič, Dumičić, and Žmuk, 2016); Value Addition which involves the processing of poultry products/by-products into ready to eat or utilize products such as roasted fried chicken, chicken soup, fried/boiled/scotchedeggs, bread-egg sandwiches, grilled chicken, and chicken barbeques, turkey kielbasa, chicken nuggets, ginger lemon chicken drum sticks, and honey garlic marinated chicken wings (Barbut, 2015); Agrotransportation which involves providing specialized transportation services to poultry farmers including movement of live and processed poultry products between farms and from farms to consumers/retailers (Aldridge, 2019). In summary, the sector is an appropriate sector for the creation of jobs, employment and startups since it has capacity for both Small Number Take-Up and Large Number Take-Ups in the country (Wahyono and Utami,

2018).

Challenges affecting youth participation in poultry production

According to Njenga, *et al*, the challenges affecting youth participation in agriculture including poultry production includes poor mindset about the sector, poor access to factors of production, income fluctuation and seasonality, poor infrastructures, the labour-intensivity of the sector. Other challenges include: development and empowerment politics, problems of tradition, the effect of climate change, poor parental, family and societal view of agriculture generally (although fast changing), use of less effective production methods, and poor government policies (Ajani *et al.*, 2015).

Exploiting the potentials of poultry for youth empowerment-the way forward

The Nigerian government should: incorporate poultry production into its current Agricultural Development Plan at all level (Nwaobialas *et al.*, 2016); poultry production seminars and workshops targeting the youth should be organized regularly ((Dumas *et al.*, 2016) Specialised Youth Entrepreneurial Poultry Financial Support Initiativ, Nnamdi and Ekumankama, 2018);should be introduced where the country's youths can be given loans/grants of up to a million naira for starting and managing their farms successfully (Timi and Adaigho, 2015; Adeyonu *et al.*, 2017; Chioma, 2017); cooperative farms should also be engaged so that the benefits of economies of scale can be adequately utilized and therefore reduce business failure rates. (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015; Obasi, 2015); more support should be offered to those who would like to go into poultry value addition and processing (Barbut, 2015); as well as the re-training and continuous training of extension agents in the country on new developments in the sector so as to ensure the success of the initiatives

recommended (Olumide-Oyaniyi and Ajayi, 2019).

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, poultry production has a lot of obvious profitability, employment and empowerment potentials for youths. Therefore it is recommended that various youth empowerment programmes being carried out by government and non-governmental organisations should incorporate poultry production as a way to achieve sustainable youth empowerment and development. Concerted and sustainable efforts should be made by extension agencies to organize training programmes for youths on improved poultry technologies at cooperative levels. Credit facilities should also be made available to youths in cash and kind.

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