

## **AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria, as a developing nation requires a change in her nature of employment. The oil sector alone can not solve the unemployment problem and this call for diversification of the economy. Functional agriculture and agricultural education programmes will help in expansion of the agricultural sector and enhance job creation in excess of job demand by the populace. This paper highlighted the role of agricultural education in sustainable agricultural production and job creation and the role of agricultural education in youth and women / involvement in agriculture and job creation. Seven majors recommendations were made.

Unemployment is of growing concern today primarily because of population expansion in recent decades which is faster than job creation and because a larger percentage of the population, principally women, seeks employment now than at any time in the past. The inadequacy of jobs and the resulting poverty are among the most pressing social problems in the world today. There is need to understand the causes of the employment problem and the ways of eliminating it. Agriculture remains the biggest private savailable to them are too weak to sustain and enhance the utilization of their potentials. It is well known that Nigeria is a blessed nation with vibrant natural resources such as vast

expanse of land, water, forest, favourable climate in addition to vast crude oil deposits. All these should provide enabling environment for boosting her agricultural potentials. Despite this noble advantage, the issue of food security, poverty and youth unemployment has been a recycling problem over the years. The first goal of the Millennium Development goal is to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The target is to “halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day; and half between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people suffering from hunger” (Sachs, 2004).

In line with the above Millennium Development goal, the government of Nigeria seek for ways of solving the problem of food inadequacy and youth employment in this millennium. This paper stresses the need for the government to go back to the traditional discipline-oriented training in Agriculture, forestry and agribusinesses with agricultural education as the tool for job creation and poverty alleviation. This paper highlights the importance of sustainable agricultural production; youth and women involvement in agricultural production and agribusiness enterprises to actualize job creation with agricultural education as the base.

### **The Role of Agricultural Education in Sustainable Agricultural Production and Job Creation**

Agricultural education constitutes an important component of national strategies if the Education for All (EFA) goal is to be achieved (EFA, 2000).

Agriculture is the main-stay of the economy either as pure subsistence or semi-commercial farming. It is a general knowledge that majority of the subsistence farmers are poor people, living in the rural areas and are faced with constraints such as lack of knowledge, skills and information about what to produce and how to produce them to earn more money. Agricultural education has been recognized as an important instrument that can be used to foster development.

The role of agricultural education in poverty alleviation by creating employment opportunities for the rural dwellers in the nation cannot be overemphasized. A functional agricultural education becomes a handy tool for sustainable agricultural production and job creation as majority of the target rural populace, who have basic knowledge of agricultural production could be provided with innovation skills and training on modern methods of farming (modernizing agriculture). This will eradicate poverty through increased production thus ensuring that there is enough food for all people at all times. In addition, farmers access to knowledge, improved seeds and other relevant information that will make them to produce high quality crops that attracts good sells in the market will be made available to them through agricultural education and extension programmes.

These will encourage farmers by increasing their income which will help them produce more and good quality food

for the teeming population (Ibrahim, 2005).

Income from sales of farm produce will enable farmer's access other important necessities of life such as health and education needs of their children among others. More jobs will be generated in agriculture and agricultural-related activities such as transportation, storage, processing and marketing of agricultural products just to mention a few.

### **The Role of Agricultural Education in Youth and Women Involvement in Agriculture and Job Creation**

The role of Agricultural education in self-employment cannot be overemphasized. The nation, Nigeria is faced with youths and women unemployment due to the past trend in the national education policies, which concentrates on literacy development. Little attention was paid to skill training for the youths and adults.

With this troubling situation, agricultural education becomes an important tool for re-orientating the minds of the youth and adult men and women towards agricultural production. Providing relevant training and workable job options in agriculture and agriculture-related field for the unemployed able bodied youths, men and women inclusive will protect the integrity of the people thereby maintaining public peace in the society. It is rightly said that education of the youths is the bed for the development of a country.

Education in whatever form is aimed at modeling a child or the individual

into a better person relevant to his immediate environment. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without education. Development is a process where an economy undergoes social and economic transformation leading to a rise in the standard of living and access to basic amenities for all through knowledge. It is in recognition of above concept of development that agricultural education seeks to create more awareness to the people about the world of work. Agricultural education becomes a decisive instrument in increasing opportunities for women to participate in the work force and to improve their living conditions and social status. Women are responsible for half of the world's food production and agricultural education through adult education programmes is therefore a sure means through which gender equality and women empowerment can be achieved, as greater number of the rural women will gain access to job opportunities.

### **The Role of Agricultural Education in Agribusiness and Job Creation**

The role of agricultural education in agribusiness emphasizes research, higher education and capacity strengthening for the development of commercially viable systems and services including sustainable and environmental-friendly agricultural production. Agricultural education becomes the knowledge broker (professionals, extension workers, extension educators etc), which offers advisory services to the rural farmers and disseminates results of

new improved farming methods to the local farmers (Abad, 2010).

Realizing the potential of agriculture and agribusiness demands advancement of knowledge with regards to several factors such as the transfer and adaptation of known agricultural technologies in primary production and storage as well as developing innovations build on local understanding, enterprise development and business management; food processing and industrial organization; resource management; distribution channels, institutional arrangement and governance; information services, credit institutions; implementation of conducive policies etc. agribusiness becomes the centerpiece of any agricultural development programme because it is agribusiness which will stimulate investment, create the jobs, introduce innovations, adopt new technologies and identify new career opportunities thereby, attracting the youths. Agribusiness development is the most efficient way to achieve expansion in food production and job creation.

It is axiomatic that when the agricultural sector develops, society as a whole develops. As a general rule of thumb, a one percent growth in the agricultural sector of developing countries will result in a 2-3 percent growth in the economy as a whole. Thus, developing the agricultural sector in resource-poor countries holds promise of significant poverty alleviation by creating more jobs. Moreover, agribusiness development with

emphasis on facilitating market access for small farmers holds unique possibilities for the improvement of the livelihoods for the large group of rural poor people, who are too often trapped in subsistence agriculture and poverty.

### **Conclusion**

The development of the Nigerian nation is confronted with the problem of unemployment. Despite the huge deposit of crude oil in the nation, this problem cannot be solved. The greatest weapon of the nation to deal with unemployment problem once and for all times is the diversification of the economy towards an agricultural driven economy that will utilize the value of agricultural education to create more and sustain jobs for the citizens who are suffering from unemployment especially the youths. Sustainable agricultural production, youth and women involvement in agriculture and agribusiness enterprises are hoped to be the solution to this hydra-headed problem of unemployment that threaten development, safety, security and self-sufficiency of the nation.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the need for sustainable national development in Nigeria through agricultural education, the following recommendations which underscore the prospect of agricultural education for job creation are made:

1. The government of this nation should harness the abundant natural resources for additional training to

- be directed to the agricultural sector for job creation.
2. The government should develop a resolute commitment to diversify the economy, primarily to include agriculture through good agricultural education for job creation.
  3. Agricultural education should be incorporated into the education curricular at all levels of the educational system including the formal, informal and adult types of education.
  4. The rural communities should be encouraged to effectively participate in sustainable agricultural production by providing the needed infrastructural facilities such as accessible farm road networks, electricity and knowledge base through agricultural extension education.
  5. There should be a close collaboration between the research institutions, ministries and end-users of the research findings i.e rural farmers so as to obtain the most desired result which is increase in both quality and quantity of products.
  6. The various NGOs should provide the needed financial assistance and training as a necessary intervention in the agricultural sector by utilizing a multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary approach for job creation.
  7. The government should help to build and strengthen legitimate programmes such as young farmers' club using agricultural education to increase the country's agricultural productivity and job creation for the youths.

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