

**TITLE PAGE**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE IN TIV LAND**

**BY**

**DOOSHIMA DORCAS ANONGO**

**BSU/SS/PhD/09/5196**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, BENUE STATE  
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## CERTIFICATION

We certify that this thesis titled, “**An Assessment of Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv Land**” by DOOSHIMA DORCAS ANONGO (BSU/SS/PhD/09/5196) meets the requirements for PhD dissertation in the department of Sociology, Benue State University, Makurdi.

### **Supervisor**

Rev. Fr. Prof. Wegh, Francis Shagbaor

Sign: .....

Date: .....

### **Head of Department**

Dr. Margaret Bai-Tachia

Sign: .....

Date: .....

### **Supervisor**

Prof. Tseayo, Justin

Sign: .....

Date: .....

*Having met the stipulated requirement, the thesis has been accepted by the Postgraduate School*

### **Dean, Postgraduate School**

Sign: .....

Date: .....

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work, and that all sources of information have been duly reported and acknowledged; and that this document has not previously in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic degree. I therefore take exclusive responsibility for its strengths and weaknesses.

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**DOOSHIMA DORCAS ANONGO**  
**BSU/SS/PhD/09/5196**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to the Almighty God who in His infinite mercies has kept me alive and sound to undertake this programme successfully.

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land of Benue State. The general objective of the study was to determine the present status of youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land. Other specific objectives were to identify the factors influencing youth involvement in agricultural production; the impact of such influencing factors on agricultural production; also, to identify government strategy or strategies to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production and suggest ways to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in the study area. Data for the study was gathered from respondents. The methodology adopted for this study was Focused Group Discussion (FGD) alongside the survey design. 324 respondents were covered with FGD, 400 copies of questionnaire were administered and 10 people were interviewed, making a total of 734 respondents. Findings revealed that youth involvement in agricultural production has declined in Tiv land due to the nature of the educational system which does not lay emphasis on practical agriculture, rural urban migration, poor harvest, inadequate agro-allied industries and infrastructural development such as good roads, potable drinking water, electricity particularly in the rural communities as well as wrong perception of youth about farming among others. Thus, declining youth involvement in agricultural production has negative impacts on livelihood and agricultural development in the state as agricultural production output is low. The government has put in place certain mechanisms to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production and to mitigate the negative impact of declined youth involvement in agriculture. These efforts are however not felt in the local communities due to the poor attitude of some government staff, politicians, and other factors. The research concluded that youth involvement in agricultural production has declined in Tiv land due to: the nature of educational system, rural urban migration, poor harvest, inadequate agro-allied industries and infrastructural development as well as wrong perception of youth about farming among others. The research therefore recommended that government and the private sector should encourage youth involvement in agricultural production. Rural infrastructural development is recommended to discourage rural-urban migration; and socialization process and the educational system should include practical agricultural knowledge and its benefits. Again, the youth should be assisted to have easy access to credit facilities, farm inputs and improved varieties. Revamping of the defunct agricultural shows as well as advocacy to the youth and the general public to appreciate the benefits and existing programmes of agriculture in Benue State are also recommended. Finally, government and the private sector should make available farm inputs such as tractors, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and so forth to make the youth and the people generally to be agriculturally productive.

## ACRONYMS

ACGSF =	Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund
ADP =	Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs)
BNARDA=	Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
BENSEEDS=	Benue State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
CBN=	Central Bank of Nigeria
FCAs =	Fadama Community Associations
Fadama I =	The National Fadama Development Project Phase one
Fadama II =	The National Fadama Development Project Phase two
Fadama III =	The National Fadama Development Project Phase three
FGN =	Federal Government of Nigeria
FGD =	Focused Group Discussion
FMAWD =	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development
FMYD =	Federal Ministry of Youth Development
FRN=	Federal Republic of Nigeria
FUGs =	Fadama Users Groups
GDP =	Gross Domestic Product
GR =	Green Revolution Programme
IFPRI =	International Food Policy Research Institute
LUA =	Land Use Act
MDGs=	Millennium Development Goals
NACB =	Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank
NAFPP =	The National Accelerated Food Production Programme
NAIC =	The Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Company
NBS =	National Bureau of Statistics
NFDP =	The National Fadama Development Project
NALDA =	National Agricultural Land Development Authority
NDE =	National Directorate of Employment
NEEDS =	National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
NPC =	National Population Commission
NYDP =	The National Youth Develop Policy

NYSC =	The National Youth Service Corps
OBOF =	Our Benue Our Future
OFN =	Operation Feed the Nation
RBDA =	River Basin Development Authority
T and V =	Training and Visit system
UN =	United Nations
USAID =	United State Agency for International Development
VEAs=	Village Extension Agents

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Agriculture occupies a central position in the economic and social well-being of many nations or its citizens (Amalu, 2002; Khunen, 2009). In the beginning of time, man got his food from hunting down animals in the forest, eating raw leaves and wild fruits or plants found in the forest (Bender, 1975). When man began to advance and to live in communities, he learned to domesticate animals and cultivate crops for food. Since then, agriculture has become a prominent feature in many societies. Agriculture plays a vital role in the economy of most nations, not only because it provides food for the feeding of the entire population of a country but also for the fact that it correlates and interacts with all other sectors of the economy of a country. A country is usually considered to be socially and politically stable if it possesses a very stable agricultural base (Amalu, 2002; Khunen, 2009). This is so because if a country is able to feed her citizens, then all the other sectors of the economy will be stable because there will be economic growth, and development in all spheres of human endeavour.

The positive impact of agriculture in a nation is very vast. It touches on economic growth, food security, poverty reduction, livelihoods, rural development and the environment. According to Amalu (2002), the significant roles played by agriculture in the social and economic life of Nigeria and Nigerians are:

- i. It provides food for the increasing population in the country.
- ii. It supplies raw materials to the growing industrial sector.
- iii. It constitutes the major source of employment for the population in the country.
- iv. It assists in generating foreign earning; and
- v. It provides a market for the products of the industrial sector.

Nigeria is evidently a nation blessed with good potentials that favour agricultural production. The fact that the country is blessed with enviable potentials in terms of vegetation,

climate and manpower suitable for great agricultural productivity is very obvious (Chikezie, Omokore, Akpoko & Chikaire, 2012; Ugwu & Kanu, 2012). It is, however, ironic that despite these potentials food insecurity and poverty have persisted in the country, while the country has been struggling unsuccessfully with various strategies for combating the two threats (Sarris, 2004; Yakubu, 2009; Nwachukwu, Agwu, Eze, Mbanaso, Onyenweaku & Kamulu, 2008).

The term agriculture is used in this research in its common parlance which includes production, research and training in fields of crops, forestry, fishery and livestock. The Nigerian agriculture manifests the typical symptoms of peasant agriculture. The farms are dominated by small scale farmers who are responsible for about 95% of total production. The livestock is in the hands of nomadic herdsman, poultry is still essentially the backyard type although a few commercial units are coming up. The fishing sector is also predominantly artisanal; very few motorized canoes are in use not to talk of fishing crawlers which are still very rare except those brought into our territorial water legally or otherwise by foreign industrial fishermen. Industrial forestry is only just beginning, over the years we simply exploited the bounties of nature and even failed to make adequate plans for early regeneration. The result of this easy attitude towards agriculture is low productivity in virtually all the subsectors (Ojo, Edordu & Akingbade, 1981, p.30).

A retrospective look into the Nigeria economy and its development reveals that agriculture was both the mainstay of the Nigeria economy and the leading foreign exchange earner. In the 1960s, agriculture accounted for well over 80 percent of the export earnings and employment; about 65 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 50 percent of the government revenue (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000). These contributions to the Nigeria economic growth has however declined over the years. The contribution of

agriculture to the GDP was about 50% in 1970 and 34% in 2003 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2003). In 2012, agriculture accounted for only 41 percent of the Nigeria's GDP (CBN, 2013).

Although agriculture remains a key component of Nigeria's economy, and currently contributes about 41% of the GDP, the sector has however, significantly underutilized its potential. This situation is clearly manifested in the very high food prices nationwide, food insecurity both at the household and national level culminating in increased food importation into Nigeria on yearly bases (CBN, 2013).

Statistics from International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in 2009 revealed that some major food items imported in Nigeria in 2005 were as follows: rice, 1,187,786 Metric Tons; wheat, 3,714,680 Metric Tons; maize, 17,668 Metric Tons and soybeans 23, 124 Metric Tons. These figures grew in 2007 to 1,216,962 Metric Tons; 7,795,100 Metric Tons; 687,000 Metric Tons; and 23, 124 Metric Tons respectively. Similarly, Sanusi (2012) noted that Nigeria spends ₦630 billion to import food annually. Out of the amount, N165 billion goes for wheat, N105 billion on fish, ₦75 billion on rice and N60 billion on sugars.

Evidently, the performance of the agricultural sector has not been encouraging particularly in recent years. This is because Nigeria is a net importer of food. For instance, the import bills for food and live animals were N147.38 billion in 2004; N260.33 billion in 2005; N293.07 billion in 2006; N269.68 billion in 2007 and N299.48 billion in 2008 (Eluhaiwe, 2010). The country has an annual population growth rate of 3.2 per cent (FRN, 2009) and registered an unprecedented 5.4 per cent rate of rural-urban migration (Eluhaiwe, 2010).

According to Nwankwo (1986), Nigeria is rated as the world number one importer of food. The country imports over N650 Billion in wheat, rice, sugar and fish in recent years (Sanusi, 2012). Nigeria's food imports are growing at an unsustainable rate of 11% per annum. At the current growth rates, Nigeria will be importing 17 Million Metric Tons by

2020 the equivalent of the entire exports of the 3rd largest exporter, Canada (Akinwumi, 2012). The Federal Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development noted that Nigeria is importing what it can produce in abundance and that import dependency is hurting Nigerian farmers, displacing local production and creating rising unemployment. Akinwumi concluded that import dependency is neither acceptable, nor sustainable fiscally, economically or politically (Akinwumi, 2012).

The un-impressive agricultural production in Nigeria persisted since the economic depression of the 1970's when crude oil earnings plummeted. With the failure of oil windfalls to turn the Nigeria economy around, it became necessary that agriculture must be taken seriously as it remains the next most important and potential sector to turn around the country's economy after oil (Eluhaiwe, 2010). One of the most important ways to encourage agricultural production therefore is by encouraging greater participation of the youth in the production process.

The National Youth Development Policy defined the youth as comprising all persons of ages between 15 to 35 years (Ega, 2004). The participation of individuals within such age bracket is needed for most economic development efforts in the country. This is essentially because apart from the fact that the youth constitute about one third of the population of Nigeria (Ega, 2004; Akinwumi, 2012), they are also essentially the repository of the labour power.

According to Okeowo, Agundiade and Odeyemi Okeowo (1999), the development of the agricultural sector of the Nigeria economy depends generally on the young people. This according to them is because a larger population of youths represents the link between the present and the future as well as a reservoir of labour. The current challenges in agricultural development are so demanding that only the participation of people who are energetic,

creative, innovative, productive and committed could turn the fortune of agricultural development around (Arokoyo, 1992; Mgbada, 2000).

In Nigeria, youth constitute over 60% of the population and 27% of the youth population are involved in agricultural activities (NBS, 2012). The male youth are, however, more involved in agricultural production, while their female counterparts seem to be more involved in locally processing and selling of products produced by their male counterparts. Thus, the youth involvement in agricultural production is very low in Nigeria particularly in Benue State. The steady involvement of youth in agricultural activities must be enhanced and sustained as a necessary endeavour for ensuring food security in Nigeria. In South West Nigeria, many youth engage in crop production, while their counterparts in riverine areas are mostly fishermen. The intrinsic interest of their counterparts in the far north is livestock rearing, while youth in the north central are mostly interested in crop production (Torimiro & Oluborod, 2006).

Youth in Nigeria have been found to be of considerable importance in agriculture due to their significant labour force as well as their tendency to be more open to new ideas and practices than the elderly farmers who often rely on the traditional methods of farming. The youth are more inclined to the scientific methods of farming since most of them have scientific knowledge. This makes the importance of youth involvement in agriculture more compelling (Ega, 1988; Aluma, 2004)

Youth have the potential to overcome some of the major constraints to accelerated food production in developing countries. This is due to their significant labour force as well as their tendency to be open to new ideas and practices than the older farmers (Daudu, Okwoche & Adegboye, 2009). Apart from that, Ega (1988) and Aluma (2004), concluded that reliance on indigenes knowledge for agricultural production in the Third World countries



would not lead to accelerated growth in agricultural production. So it becomes necessary for youth in the Third World countries to accelerate agricultural production.

The participation of youth in agriculture could accelerate food production. Initiation and execution of youth programmes in agriculture could contribute significantly to sustainable food production. Thus, it is important to develop the youth into future progressive farmers since they are the future of the society (Okwoche, Ager & Alegwu, 2012). Unfortunately, the youth are generally noted to be deserting the rural areas and migrating in large numbers to the urban centres in Nigeria in search of white collar jobs that are increasingly becoming scarce (Nnadozie, 1986; Adedoyin, 2005; Adewale et al., 2005; Ohajianya, 2005).

Ekong (2003) noted that the Nigeria youth who have the energy to take up agricultural production do not believe or have the knowledge that agricultural production can really be a profitable venture. Many scholars also observed that though youths have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture; most of them have strong apathy toward it (Jibowo, 1998; Adedoyin, 2005; Adewale et al., 2005).

In Benue State, participation of youths in agriculture has apparently been unimpressive particularly in recent years, leading to a decline in the overall agricultural productivity and food insecurity in the State. Lamenting this situation, the former Governor of Benue State Gabriel Suswam noted that people now have poor attitude towards agricultural production, and they have all taken to politics. According to Suswam,

Each and every man or woman now is a politician, and because they say they have become politicians they stopped farming. I went to a place and addressed them and said that, they should be farming those crops like beniseed, one guy asked me whether it is the beniseed I have been farming that I am looking like this... (Isa, 2008, p.22-23).

The above statement portrays the general negative mentality of the youth towards agricultural production currently in Benue State. It also portends a decline in food production

which corresponds with the decrease in youth participation in agriculture. The focus of the study is therefore on the status of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land, the factors influencing youth participation in agriculture, the impact of youth participation in agriculture on agricultural production, strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture, and how to encourage youth participation in agriculture for accelerated agricultural production in Tiv land.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ojeka, Effiong and Eko (2016) and Eigege and Coke (2016), have clearly stated that agricultural production in Nigeria is on steady decline since the discovery of crude oil. Nigeria was one of the world's most promising agricultural producers during its first decade of independence. Nigeria was not only agriculturally self-sufficient and food secured but it thrived in global markets as the world's largest producer of groundnut, palm oil, cotton and cocoa. In 1965, the agricultural sector employed 70 per cent of the labour force, export cash crops were responsible for 62.2 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange and 66.4 per cent of its GDP. Northern cities in Nigeria like Kano with its towering groundnuts pyramids, employed a large number of the Nigerian population particularly the youth and became regional economic hubs, emblematic of the Nigeria agricultural wealth due to the fact that the Northern cities were linked to the Southern ports like Lagos through extensive and reliable rail networks that fostered economic interdependence and regional integration (Ahungwa, Haruna & Abdusalam, 2014; Eigege & Cooke 2006). However, the Nigeria agricultural sector has lagged behind other sectors of the economy such as oil in recent times because the Nigerian Oil sector seems to provide quick and easy gains. Consequently, food produced in the country cannot serve the population (Ojeka, Efiang & Eko, 2016).

Dauda, Okwoche and Adegboye (2009), clearly pointed out that, for considerable progress to be made in agricultural production process, greater youth participation is a good

omen in the overall agricultural production process due to youth energies and inventiveness (The National Youth Development Policy 2001; Ekong, 2003). There is a general consensus among scholars and analysts that greater participation of youths in agricultural production process will turn the fortune of agricultural production process in developing countries like Nigeria and particularly in Benue state because the youth have the needed physical abilities to farm and the capacity to adopt innovations more than the old farmers (Ega, 1998; Okwoche et al., 2012). In fact, the status of Benue State as “Food Basket of the Nation” is becoming a joke due to consistent decline in agricultural products such as fruits, vegetables, tubers, and grains and since it appears that the youth who have the energy to take up agricultural production process do not seem to have this knowledge and the raw energy of some youth have of late been channelled into unproductive and sometimes criminal activities instead of channelling it to agricultural production thereby constituting a public as well as a sociological problem in the state.

The consensus among scholars and analysts is that majority of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue state will solve the problem of food insecurity is not just in Tiv land but in society as a whole. However, little or no constructive empirical study has been provided on the level of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue state. It is against this backdrop that this study is undertaken to launch an empirical investigation into the level of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land. The study would further seek to know the impact of youth participation in agricultural production and government strategies of involving youth in agricultural production with the aim of making recommendations that would improve youth participation in farming and sustainable agricultural production in Tiv land.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In the light of the foregoing, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study.

1. What is the level of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
2. What are the factors influencing youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
3. What is the impact of youth participation in agriculture in the Tiv land?
4. What is/are government strategy/strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
5. What can be done to encourage youth participation in agriculture for accelerated agricultural production in Tiv land?

### **1.4 The Objectives of the Study**

Generally, this study is an assessment of the level of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land. The specific objectives of the study are,

1. Examine the level of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.
2. Examine the factors influencing youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.
3. Assess the impact of youth participation in agriculture on agricultural production in the Tiv land.
4. Identify government strategy or strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.
5. Suggest ways to encourage youth participation in agriculture for accelerated agricultural production in the study area.

### **1.5 Research Assumptions**

This research is guided by the following assumptions:

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of youth participation and agricultural production in Tiv land.

2. Youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land lacks efficient capacity to provide household food security.
3. Government has no administrative mechanisms to encourage youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in various ways. First, it will serve to update data in the area of youth and national development. Further, it will help the government and policy makers to plan on how to improve on agricultural production not just in Benue State but the entire nation.

Theoretically, this study is significant in providing the basis for understanding the importance of youth in the social and economic development of the nation. Since the youth form the nucleus of labour force for many nations, their apathy to or alienation from the mainstream of productive activities could portend great dangers not just to agriculture but the entire socio-economic situation of a nation. The study is thus significant because its postulations are targeted at drawing the necessary attention towards greater integration of the youth into the socio-economic activities of the nation. Furthermore, any agricultural development strategy that tends to overlook the potential labour force of the sector in the execution of youths inventiveness will certainly not succeed.

Consequently, the study has contributed to the efforts being made by various stakeholders towards the reduction of youth unemployment in Benue State in particular and Nigeria at large. Since agriculture in Nigeria and particularly in Benue State has the capacity to absolve many youth because of the rich, fertile land and good weather conditions that favour agricultural production in the state. Furthermore, the solutions proffered against the possible factors responsible for declining youth participation in agriculture shall help the government and concerned individuals in the bid to rally round the people, particularly the

youth, to appreciate agricultural values and potentials, and imbibe farming as a noble profession to address the social menace of poverty and food insecurity in Benue State and Nigeria as a whole.

### **1.7 The Scope of the Study**

This study is three dimensional in scope: the academic scope, geographical scope and the duration scope. The academic scope of the study is targeted at examining the conceptual, empirical and theoretical frame work considering the youth as a potential labour force. The academic scope of the study centres on the status of youth participation in agriculture, factors responsible for youth involvement in agriculture, impact of youth involvement on agricultural production and ways to involve more youth in Tiv land in agricultural production.

The geographical scope of the study is the 14 Local Government Areas covering the Tiv speaking area of Benue State. Any consideration outside the above shall only be included if such provides greater understanding of the subject under investigation.

### **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

Terms used in this study may not express their conventional meanings found in dictionaries and encyclopaedias. The terms may however retain their usual meanings outside this work. But for the purpose of this research, the definitions given here may suffice.

**Youth:** The term youth according to Anger (2010), suggests early life of a human being, that is, the state or time of being young, especially the period between being young as a child and being fully grown. According to the National Youth Development Policy (2007), the youth comprise all young persons of ages 18-35 years. Ega (2004), defined the youth as comprising all persons of ages between 15-35 years.

However, the operational definition of the term youth in this study is the state in the lifetime of an individual whose age is between 18 - 35 years, in which his/ her young age has

accorded on him/her the advantage to the repository of energies and innovativeness to undertake societal activities generally and particularly farming.

The participation of individuals within such age bracket is needed for most economic development efforts in Nigeria because apart from the fact that the youth constitute one third of the population of Nigeria, they are essentially the repository of labour power especially the youth between the age brackets of 18 – 35 years.

**Youth Participation:** Youth participation refers to the engagement of youths in a given task using their available potentials. Youth involvement can be on full time or part time basis.

**Full Time Participation:** This entails a situation where the youth is a farmer and has no other form of engagement but farming is the only source of income and it is a primary means of livelihood. This does not mean the youth cannot be engaged elsewhere but because of his/her love for farming and the fact that farming is very important in the lives of most humans if not all.

**Part Time Participation:** Part time participation here entails where the youth has other engagements and farming is a secondary issue. These maybe civil servants, students and business men and women or artisans, who occasionally are involved in farming to supplement their income, some students are involved in farming during holidays but do not own farms but are used as farm-hands during holidays and anytime they are available and others may purposely sell their labour to off-set their educational bills. Youth involvement in agricultural production generally entails their involvement in the following ways:

- a. Supply of labour
- b. Donation of materials for agricultural production.
- c. Initiating agricultural projects.
- d. Giving financial support for agricultural production particularly in the rural communities (Ajayi 2006, p.109).

The government of Nigeria has attempted to stimulate the interest of the youth in agricultural production and processing since the late 1980s. In 1986, the federal government established The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to provide vocational training to the youth, and in 1987, The Better life Programme was created to empower women, especially female youths in rural areas through skills acquisition and health care training. In addition, the People's Bank and Community Banks were established in 1989 and 1990 respectively, to provide credit facilities to low income earners embarking on agricultural production and other micro- enterprises, with special consideration to youth engaged in agricultural production. In 1992, the Fadama programme was initiated to enhance food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty and create opportunities for employment for the youth in the rural areas (Adebayo, 1999; Adekunle, Oladipo, Adisa & Fatoye, 2009).

In 2008, the Ikwa Ibom state government initiated an integrated farming scheme for recently graduated agricultural students, and set up a micro-credit scheme for youths engaged in agricultural production and processing. Other state governments also initiated graduate and school leavers' agricultural loan schemes in an attempt to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production, empower those engaged in agricultural activities, and combat youth unemployment. Despite these incentives and expanding markets for primary and secondary agricultural commodities, the involvement of youth in agricultural activities has steadily declined in recent years (Adekunle et al., 2009). Consequently, there has been high current youth unemployment rate in spite of abundant agricultural jobs available particularly in the rural areas.

This work centres on issues related to youth participation in agriculture such as socio-economic characteristics of youth engaged in agriculture and factors hindering youth participation in agriculture which, according to Adekunle et al. (2009), revolves around economic, social and environmental factors. Those economic factors include inadequate



credit facilities, low farming profit margins, lack of agricultural insurance, initial capital and production inputs. Social factors include public perception about farming and parental influence which stimulates the youth to abandon agriculture. Environmental issues include inadequate land, continuous poor harvests and soil degradation.

**Agriculture:** The concept of agriculture has many definitions and conceptualizations which may have practical, scientific and legal meanings (Bareja, 2014). Aduayi and Ekong (1981) defined agriculture as the science and art of systematic production of useful plants and animals for man's use through concerted human management.

According to Abellanos and Pava (1987), the term agriculture is the growing of both plants and animals for human use. To Rubenstein (2003), agriculture is the deliberate effort to modify a portion of earth's surface through the cultivation of crop and the raising of livestock for sustenance or economic gain.

Rimando (2004), gave a practical and scientific conceptualization of agriculture as the systematic raising of useful plants and livestock under the management of man. According to Luckey (2012), agriculture is a practice that is used to sustain human life through the production and cultivation of nature with fibre, crops and livestock.

In legal terms, Philistine Agrarian Reform Law (1988), defined agriculture as the cultivation of the soil, planting of crops, growing of fruits and trees, including the harvesting of such farm products and other farm activities and practices performed by a farmer in conjunction with such farming operations done by persons whether natural or judicial.

Indians Agriculture Act (1947) defined agriculture as including horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming and livestock breeding and keeping. It is the use of land for grazing, meadows, osier, market gardens and nursery grounds; and the use of land for woods. It is also defined as purposeful work through which elements of nature are harnessed to produce plants and animals to meet human needs.

Bareja (2014) defined agriculture as the growing of plants and other crops, and the raising of animals for food and other human needs or economic gain. This definition sees agriculture as both an art and a science (it needs skill and is founded on scientifically verified facts) and thus includes specialized disciplines (The words “growing” and “raising” are descriptive of enterprise, activity or practice). It has two main divisions: plants or crop production, and its ultimate purpose is for food production. But it serves other human needs such as clothing, medicines, tools, artistic display and economic gain or profit. It is a biological production process which depends on the growth and development of selected plants and animals within the local environment.

Based on the above definitions, Bareja (2014) made the following conclusions:

- a. Agriculture is an enterprise or business activity or practice. It is synonymous with farming.
- b. The practice of agriculture is based on a systematized body of knowledge (science and requires skill(art)
- c. Agriculture often involves the cultivation of the soil to grow plants and the raising of animals for human needs. The words “crops” and “livestock” are also used. However, both words are special or technical terms. “Crops” should clearly mean plants (with the exceptions, as in mushroom) which are useful to man while livestock applies to both domesticated animals and poultry. However, cultivation, which essentially involves distributing the soil, does not apply to crop production using soil-less media, as in hydroponics.
- d. Agriculture is practiced for the purpose of producing food and other human needs such as clothing, shelter, medicines, weapons, tools, ornaments and indefinitely many more purposes. It is also practiced as a business for economic gain.

## **Components of Agriculture**

Agriculture has many components which, according to Aduayi (1981) and Murphy (1984), include:

1. Crop production
2. Livestock production
3. Forestry
4. Fishing

**Crop Production:** crop production is the planting, tending and growing of different crops for the use of man. In recent times, there has been quite an improvement in the production of crops, especially owing to the discovery and use of improved varieties and farm inputs as well as mechanized systems of farming. Crop yields have continued to increase due to the use of fertilizers and other agro-chemicals such as pesticides, fumigants, nematocides, and fungicides. Crop production may be carried out on subsistence level when the entire yield from the crop is intended for the direct use of the farmer and members of his family. Subsistence crop production is carried out on a small scale and is the most common form of agriculture in rural areas of Nigeria and other developing countries.

Crop production can also be carried out on a commercial level when it involves the growing and tending of plants for the purpose of generating cash profit. Peasant farmers are usually unable to cope with the requirements of commercial crop production. Commercial crop production is therefore practiced by a collection of persons in co-operatives, by business establishments or by governmental agencies.

Crops may be classified into trees, roots and grains. Tree crops include oil palms, banana, plantains, kola nut, cocoa, mango, orange, coconut trees. Tree crops are the dominant type of crops found in commercial crop production in sub-Saharan Africa especially in Nigeria. Some of the root crops produced in Nigeria are cassava, yam, cocoa-yam and

potatoes. Grain crops mostly cultivated in Nigeria include millet, sorghum or guinea corn, maize and rice. The roots and the grains mentioned above are the main crops mostly produced at a subsistence level by peasant rural farmers in Nigeria especially in Benue state. The size of yam farm a man owns in Tiv land determines his prestige and social status in the society. Crop production is the mainstay of the Tiv people of Benue State.

**Livestock Production:** Livestock production is the rearing and keeping of animals. Common examples of animals that are reared include sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, poultry and rabbits. There are several reasons why livestock production is carried out. First, livestock production is undertaken for economic reasons. Farmers operating at subsistence level may keep few animals such as goats and poultry for both consumption and economic gains so as to meet sudden needs for cash. Animals such as goats, poultry are sold by farmers to access health facilities, pay school fees of other children, buy clothes and so forth.

Some skilled persons in Nigeria are engaged in livestock production specifically for profit or commercial purposes. These may include such fields as piggery, poultry, cattle rearing, sheep and goats rearing. Animals and their products provide the richest proteinous food available for human beings. Apart from that, animals such as cattle provide hides and skin. Another reason why someone may take to breeding and rearing of animals is the social respect and prestige it confers on the owner. In some Northern parts of Nigeria and other West African countries, a man's wealth and social importance and prestige is determined by the number of cattle he owns. This is mostly pronounced among the Fulani cattle rearing communities. Religious practices also provide the basis for the production of livestock. Muslim communities put a lot of spiritual value on rams which are in very high demand and attract high prices during Muslim festivals and celebrations. Among the Yoruba of western Nigeria, dogs occupy a significant position in the worship of Ogun, the God of Iron. Livestock production may be undertaken for recreational and security reasons as horses are

used for racing and polo, dogs as guards in homes, and yet some animals are raised as pets. In Nigeria, 90% of livestock production is carried out in the northern part of the country. The reason for this is the geographical distribution of Nigeria. The Northern part is a plain vegetation area, whereas the southern part of Nigeria with its thick forests breeds tsetse flies that can lead to the infestation of the animals with deadly diseases. In Benue state, every household keeps domestic animals such as goats, poultry, and some households keep pigs for both food and economic reasons. In recently times, some people are engaged in poultry production in Benue state mainly for economic reasons but these are not many as compared to the southern parts of Nigeria

**Forestry:** - Forestry has to do with the development and exploitation of forest resources for the use of man. Some West African forest trees such as palm trees, rubber, baphia palms, etc, are very useful to man. Forestry serves a number of very important purposes. It provides us with timber and pulp for making paper. These products are derived from trees found in the forest such as Iroko and so forth.

Forest reserves keep and preserve wild animals such as antelopes, monkeys, elephants, snakes and so many other wild animals such that when tracked down by hunters, these provide valuable sources of protein, skin for making shoes, bags and other things. Forestry is an important source of government revenue because hunters and producers of timber have to obtain licenses from the government so as to extract the resources in forest reserves. Electricity poles are also got from trees in the forest reserves.

Forests are useful in control of wind, and erosion. In the savannah area where winds, can be violent and result in sheet erosion, forest reserves are encouraged to serve as wind breakers and trees can wedge water in times of heavy flooding by slowing down current of flood water thereby minimizing the damage done by water erosion. It is important to note here that forest reserves are disappearing from Nigeria particularly in central Nigeria and

Benue state. In the southern parts of Nigeria, there exist some forests but they are not as many as one would expect due to deforestation for timber, and bush burning.

**Fishing:** Fishing like forestry is an extractive activity. It is the process of catching or production and processing of fish and other amphibious animals for the benefit of mankind.

In West Africa, there are five main sources of fishing namely:

- a) Coastal and offshore waters
- b) Lagoons
- c) Rivers
- d) Lakes
- e) Ponds (pond owners usually by purchasing fish from commercial fish growers for stocking ponds. The fish are nurtured until they mature and are ready for sell).

In Benue state, fishing farming is not much. It is usually practiced by a few fish growers and pond owners scattered around Benue state.

**Agricultural Production:** Agricultural production is the process of growing crops and rearing of animals in order to generate food and/or cash. Iwena (2012) and Are, Igbokwe, Asadu and Bawa (2016) viewed that agricultural production is very important because a farmer may specialize in crop or animal production or specialize in either crop or animal production as a result of where they are settled, and that some farmers rear animals intensively and also engage in intensive crop production. The farmers that rear animals and raise crops are referred to as mixed farmers. As farmers become more specialized, they tend to produce alone or more specific crops or animals. Thus, one may seek of rice farmers, yam farmers, pig farmers, poultry farmers and so forth. This form of specialization will increase as farmers transform from subsistence to commercial production. Against, non-traditional crops and animals which are often referred to as exotic crops and animals become dominant as long as the price is good. Currently, farmers are engaging in snail rearing (snailery), must moon,

grass-clutter, honey bee (apiculture) fish (aquaculture), flower (floriculture), fruit trees (orctandry) and other horticultural productions.

According to Iwena (2012), and Are et al. (2016), agricultural production is important because of the following reasons:

- a) It helps in effective crop and animal management practices
- b) Agricultural production helps in the development of better planting and production materials for crops and animals or fish species, correct crops and animals
- c) It also ensures better production of both crops and animals
- d) It ensures optimum plant and animal population and promotes optimum harvesting periods.
- e) The science of agricultural production ensures the development of improved crop varieties and animal species
- f) Crop and animal pathology ensures healthy plant and animal production and management of diseases in both crops and animals.

**Farmer:** This refers to an individual who is involved in the production of crops and rearing/breeding of animals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews relevant existing literature on the subject of study. The review is carried out under the following sub-themes: conceptual review, level of youth participation in agriculture, factors influencing youth participation in agriculture, impact of youth participation on agricultural production, government strategy or strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture, recommendations for youth participation in agriculture for accelerated agricultural production, and theoretical framework.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

In this sub-section, the fundamental concepts of this study will be reviewed. The major concepts are: the youth, agriculture and agricultural production.

##### **2.1.1 Youth**

Youth has been defined by many authors and organisations. However, there is no universally accepted definition of the youth. The notion youth varies as much as there are scholars, writers, cultures and societies. The United Nations (2005), defines youth as all individuals aged between 15 and 24. The World Bank (2007), expands the definition of youth to include all young people aged between 12 and 24. Torimiro, Alao, and Fapojuwo (1999), on their part described youth as a group of young people between the ages of 13 to 30. Also, the Nigeria Second National Youth Policy (2009), describes the youth as all young males and females aged between 18 and 35 years, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The above definitions of youth are primarily anchored on the parameter of age bracket to define the concept. Yet being a youth may mean more than just age bracket. Youth do not just constitute an age cluster. The inherent characteristics sought after in the youth, and which can be universally agreed upon, are their potential energies and innovativeness. These notable features may be lacking in either childhood or adulthood. Perez-Morales (1996), noted that



no matter what the age range of years of the youth may be, the point is that anytime we talk and think about youth, it implies a group of young people in a society who have a lot of energy, new ideas, and new ways to see life and face problems.

One thing is clear, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood are blurry. Therefore, defining youth globally according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task. The age range often used by the United Nations and others are simply for statistical purposes. Apart from the statistical definition of the term “youth”, the meaning of the term “youth” has continued to change in response to fluctuating political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

Wiley (2009), noted that discussion of youth in farming goes beyond the kindergarten and younger aged group. The term ‘youth’ according to him also pertains to teenagers and university students, and even slightly beyond. In the context of our study here, “youth” is considered as the state in the lifetime of an individual whose age is between 15 and 30 years in which his or her young age has accorded on them the advantage to the repository of energies and innovativeness to undertake societal activities.

Of course, the notable and universally accepted fact about the youth is that they are full of energy, dreams, ambition, promise, enthusiasm and creativity. Creative thoughts always keep bubbling in them. Expectedly, they are to take over the roles performed by the adults thus perpetuating the culture and customs in the society. It is these distinctive characteristics of the youth that have been of great interest to this study.

In as much as the youth are generally noted to possess some advantages, physically and otherwise, this group is also faced with high levels of socio-economic uncertainty and volatility thereby becoming the most vulnerable segment of the population. They represent the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the nation’s population. If their potentials are properly harnessed, they could bring positive contributions

to the society. But if ignored they could create harm to the very society. Obviously, this category of people can be instrumental in changing the situation of declining agricultural production in Nigeria should their full potential be unleashed and effective participation be realized.

Increased participation of youth in agricultural activities will not only reduce lingering problems of food insecurity but also help reduce the danger of the ageing farmer population and increasing youth unemployment. In the context of this work, however, youth is a state in the life of an individual whose is between 18 to 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2009).

### **2.1.2 Agriculture and Agricultural Production**

Aduayi and Ekong (1981), believe that agriculture began as far back as the time of primitive man when he first began to select some of the useful plants in his surroundings and make deliberate efforts at promoting their growth. This is known to have taken place about 10,000 years ago. Aduayi et al. (1981), noted that no written records exist on the actual beginning of agriculture. Evidence, according to him, provided by archaeologists points to the fact that Egypt and Babylon were among the earliest centres of agriculture. The Nile river floods provided fertile sediments, which sustained the growth of grains and other important plants like flax and papyrus.

Agricultural techniques, new implements and new crops spread from place to place. Farming reached Sudan between 3,500 and 3,000 BC, the Sahara prevented the spread of Mediterranean agriculture southwards. However, in Niger Basin was an important agriculture centre as far back as 4,500 BC. Crops like millet, guinea corn, rice, sesame and cotton were widely grown in this area. Coffee is also known to have originated from Ethiopia, while crops like banana, taro and some varieties of yams were introduced from southern Asia to the horn of Africa from where they further spread south-wards to Kenya and the Congo.

Ploughing was practiced in China as a result of the trade in silk between China and other Asian and European people. Chinese Buddhist Monks are said to have started the drinking of tea around AD300-500 and the cultivation of this crop spread to several countries including Japan, Central Asia, Russia and Siberia. The British, during their colonization of India and Ceylon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century established tea plantations in these areas, thereby breaking the monopoly by China, and they later adopted tea drinking (Aduayi & Ekong, 1981).

Aduayi and Ekong (1981), also said that corn or maize is said to have originated from Mexico, cocoa, groundnut, and cassava from Brazil. After the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus and the subsequent colonization of that part of the world, new crops like tobacco, potatoes, and pumpkins were exchanged with other parts of the world for cotton, sugarcane, banana, yams, okra, wheat, oats, barley, citrus, grapes and other old world crops. West Indies has become the major producer of sugarcane, cocoa has moved its centre of production to West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana and Ivory Coast) while coffee production has shifted from Ethiopia and western Arabia to Java, Brazil, Malaya, and India. Thus, we see that, the growth of agriculture in the world has been fostered mainly by factors like military invasion, discovering of new lands, international trade and cultural diffusion.

### **The Nature of Agriculture in Tiv Land of Benue State**

Agriculture in Tiv land can be divided into two main categories, subsistence and commercial (Ortese, Adezua & Saror, 1999). In subsistence farming, the producer and his family consume the produce with very little or no surplus for sale or exchange. Agricultural production is said to be largely subsistence when it exhibits the following characteristics:

- i. The agricultural area is relatively isolated from the economic influence of the outside world. Such isolation may limit the inflow of scientific and technological ideas, with

the producers being satisfied with the provision of subsistence for all members of the group.

- ii. The land in the area belongs to the community and is allotted to individuals according to their immediate needs. Thus, farms are small and are usually scattered.
- iii. The farmers know very little about land improvement or conservation and do not specialize in what they produce. They also follow old traditional methods of farming and use simple, traditional implements.
- iv. The farmers are not price conscious, that is, their level of farm production is not determined by the current market situation, including prices of farm inputs and those received for produce, but rather dependent upon the weather and soil conditions.
- v. Apart from the fact that there are very few isolated areas in Tiv land today where farmers produce only for their family consumption, most of the above characteristics of subsistence farming can be identified in agriculture in Tiv land. The typical Tiv farmer, even when growing cash crops like cocoa, groundnuts, cotton or oil palm, depends primarily on his savings for the development of his farm. He cannot raise loans easily from banks or obtain credit, owing to his lack of adequate security. In extreme cases, he may resort to local moneylenders or enter into sharecropping arrangements whereby he shares his harvest with the money lenders or landlords in lieu of cash payment.

The use of animal power for farm work in Tiv land is limited to tsetse-fly free areas, in some parts of Northern Nigeria. Most Tiv farms are small family farms and members of the family contribute labour; hired labour also plays a minimal role.

Commercial farming or farming for market is scarcely practiced in Tiv land since it is very intensive, requires a relatively large capital investment, employs a number of people with specialized skills, and requires a great amount of managerial ability and alertness to

market situation. A great number of the commercial farms and plantations found in West Africa, Nigeria inclusive are owned by government corporations, research institutes, foreign commercial enterprises or private companies. Only very few individual farmers have enough capital to embark upon intensive commercial agriculture (Usuh, 2012). Where they exist, such enterprises like poultry and pigs production promise quick returns. Farmers growing tree crops such as cocoa, rubber, oil palm or orange, who operate individual farms may be regarded as commercial farmers. These farmers generally combine their commercial farming with subsistence farming and other non-farm work or business in order to survive commercially. Thus, the Nigerian agriculture is a combination of both subsistence and commercial farming

#### **Factors Influencing Agricultural Development in Tiv Land of Benue State**

A number of factors, according to Aduayi et al. (1981), combine to influence agriculture in any country or region. Some of these are ecological or environmental, including things like climate, natural and physical factors. There are also biological factors; some are social, including things like tradition and custom, isolation and ignorance. Others are economic factors which include the farmer himself, yet others are institutional factors.

**The Social Factors:** The factors in society itself which affect agricultural production are many and varied. Among these are the conservatism of farmers, that is, their unwillingness to change their old tried and trusted methods and accept innovations. Farmers cling to their customs and traditions in order to rationalize their rejection. For instance, most farmers in West Africa still believe in sacrificing to the gods for a good harvest and would attribute a poor harvest to improper appeasement of the deities. Some will not taste poultry raised in a poultry farm, as they say the meat is tender and tasteless. Aduayi et al (1981), avers that studies have shown that in some cases farmers do have genuine reasons to reject innovations. For example, among the yam growing Ibos of Eastern Nigeria, chemical fertilizers are not

incorporated into yam production because, they say, the tubers so produced are fat and watery and are thus very low in keeping quality compared with those grown without fertilizers. Such submissions, according to Aduayi et al (1981), should pose a challenge to researchers.

Another factor influencing the development of agriculture in West Africa is ignorance. Many farmers in West Africa are illiterates and have never travelled outside their immediate district. Thus, they are completely unaware of what goes on in other places. For instance, some of them may have neither heard of fertilizer nor seen tractors, or indeed any farm implement other than the hoe and cutlass or machete.

Another social factor affecting agriculture is the wrong attitude of people towards farming. Farming is generally looked upon as a poor man's occupation or one for illiterates; many farming parents do not wish their children to become farmers after them. Unless this negative attitude changes and farming is regarded as a profitable business, rural youths will continue to drift to towns in large numbers leaving farming to suffer.

Another social factor affecting agriculture in West Africa is the traditional system of property inheritance. It is difficult for people in some parts of West Africa to part with or negotiate their parcels of land inherited from their ancestors. Some even hold these pieces of land to be sacred and this behaviour can frustrate large scale agricultural projects requiring large acres of land. Such has been the experience of governments in the Eastern States of Nigeria in their efforts to rehabilitate oil palm groves.

**Economic factors:** Most farmers in West Africa are poor, especially those who do not produce cash crops. Agriculture requires a large amount of money for investment, and to operate in an economically profitable form, the farm has to be large and intensive. This means using more than just family labour and simple tools. It also means applying the latest farming techniques and gearing production to the market. However, most farmers in West Africa do not have enough capital to invest in large commercial farms. They depend on

family land and family labour since they are not willing to take undue risk in trying unfamiliar techniques. As they do not operate on a large scale, it is difficult for them to obtain bank loans.

**Institutional factors:** These are factors which are controlled by public bodies and organizations. They include extension services, government credit and loan institutions, processing, storage, and marketing institutions. The agricultural extension agency is responsible for the education of farmers. This entails showing them new techniques, varieties of crops and breeds of animals, and in assisting them to adopt them. However, most extension organizations are not adequately staffed and so each member of staff covers too large an area to create effective impact, while others take on so many things that they cannot be effective in any way.

The various governments in West Africa recognize the inability of local farmers to obtain commercial bank loans. In Nigeria for instance, a number of government Credit institutions have been established to assist farmers. There are the Agricultural Credit Corporations, the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank. However, it has been found that the farmer uses the cash loan he obtains from these institutions to solve his domestic and non-agricultural problems, so that he is unable to repay the loan. Sometimes the long process a farmer has to go through before obtaining a loan discourages a prospective borrower. Where assistance is given to a farmer in kind, that is in form of fertilizer, seedlings, pesticides and so on, these may not be delivered on time or not delivered at all due to hijack syndrome. Where it is delivered late; his work falls behind the season.

Proper processing, storage and marketing systems have been established only for cash crops in West Africa. The marketing or commodity boards are directly responsible for the crops, storage and marketing of such crops. No organized institution has so far been

established for the marketing of food crops, so that food prices are left to fluctuate with the seasons.

### **Agriculture in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, many people erroneously consider agriculture as the ugly sister of development and continually emphasise the wonders of industries. Yet, genuine development is progress in both spheres, such that a benefit in one area spills over into the other. The two complement rather than drain each other. The causes of stagnation of Nigeria agriculture are quite numerous and complex. The small farmer in the rural setting who is the source of the bulk of agricultural production in Nigeria is not better than what it was many years ago. The programme on rural electrification, rural water supplies, access road, health and education are still very thin on the ground in most parts of the country and farmers' tools and mode of operation have not changed. The most disturbing part of this problem is the fact that most construction and commercial sectors that are very meagre but seem to be paying higher wages and a better life in Nigeria leaving the aged and the women in the rural communities (Central Bank of Nigeria 2008: 41, Our Benue Our Future, 2009, and Our Collective Vision, 2015). In Benue state, the situation is becoming conspicuous.

Nwankwo (1986), posits that agriculture in Nigeria has been neglected. He notes that serious neglect of our potentially rich agricultural sector has placed severe strains on the economy. The simple fact of the matter is that even the most basic food stuffs are now imported. Nwankwo concluded that we are not living off the land but paying huge amount of money to foreigners for the privilege of not feeding ourselves. To import basic foodstuffs into Nigeria is nothing short of scandal. A country with a good climate and plenty of fertile land simply has no need to do so.

A clear reversal of policy is required. According to Nwankwo (1986), many of our present difficulties stem directly from taking over without any serious modifications of the



old colonial style of production and export. It is not enough to provide a few incentives and then wish for the best. Nwankwo suggested a dual strategy. Firstly, to increase the rate of productivity, we need a network of functional test centres to monitor and experiment with high yield crops. Again, there is need for more nutritional research to find out what is most healthy for the people. Secondly, to increase production itself, we need not only good community schemes which actively involve the rural population in decision-making and restore their lost dignity and confidence, but there is also the need for government ownership of large mechanized farms across the country.

In the previous years in Nigeria, the most shocking thing has been that any agricultural scheme launched usually makes food crisis more serious. For instance, despite the huge sums put into the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (1970-1975), Operation Feed the Nation (1975-1979) and the Green Revolution Programme (1979-1983), the solutions never materialized and the problems were simply aggravated. The challenge must be taken up by all: the government, individuals and groups. Short-term subsidies to establish foundations followed by long term investment to ensure high productivity are what is required. Self-sufficiency is a perfectly realizable goal.

It is clear that oil revenues must stimulate agriculture and reduce the strain on the economy. Oil and agriculture need to develop in a balanced way. However, the Nigeria economy has assumed the dangerous character of being mono-product based. Growth in the volume and value of petroleum exports after 1969 coincided with a sudden decline in agricultural exports (Kirk-Greene & Rimmer 1981, p.74). Oil became the cancer of agriculture and the source of many other diseases as well. When the international petroleum market coughs, the Nigerian economy catches cold.

Thus, Nigeria needs to develop a plan that is based on development consciousness – a plan that can quickly respond to changes in circumstances and be sensitive to economic

challenges and an integrated model which recognizes the complex interactions between the various strands of a scheme. These strands, which seem to be separate, are often intimately linked. For example, increased health care, which might appear like an unproductive cost could in fact be a sound investment if it has the effect of decreasing the number of productive days lost through sickness, and increasing the willingness of workers to work. If we ignore the role of development consciousness and the advantages of an integrated development strategy, we shall be fated to endlessly re-enact the farce of the last 46 years with each performance becoming more and more tragic (Ake, 1986)

Nwankwo (1986), also posits that, for any developmental approach or strategy to succeed, it must aim at involving community participation, increasing productivity and must seek to attain social welfare as well as industrial and agricultural sufficiency. It must be a process of development that leads to a healthier, better fed, and better housed citizenry who have access to education as well as equality and social justice in their economic life.

### **Classification of Agricultural Systems in Tropical Africa**

Tropical agricultural systems consist of traditional and modern farming systems dominated by shifting cultivation and nomadic herding. Shifting cultivation has been considered by modified in more settled land occupation as opposed to constant migration by the cultivators. Nomads continue to move with their animals, particularly cattle, sheep and goats in search of grazing areas. This has created a lot of conflicts in recent years between herdsmen and farmers particularly in Nigeria.

According to Youdeowei, Ezedinma and Ochapa (1986), intensive production of poultry and pigs is practiced and with the development of large irrigation projects in many parts of the tropics such as Nigeria and Sudan, large-scale arable farming of cereal and vegetable crops has gradually developed.

Tropical agricultural systems are in a state of transition resulting in changes from long to short or reduced fallow periods. There is a shift from:

- (i) Short fallow periods to permanent land use
- (ii) Low intensity to high intensity crops
- (iii) Rainfall to irrigation
- (iv) Natural grazing to cultivated forage
- (v) Natural regeneration of soil fertility through fallowing to intensive use of manures and fertilizers
- (vi) Manual to mechanized operations.
- (vii) Individual to communal or corporate farming.

These changes although gradual are likely to continue under the pressure of increase in human population which imposes a greater demand on food and other agricultural products. Rapid urbanization attracts labour away from agriculture and encourages intensity of labour. Technical progress has raised the demand for agricultural raw materials and changed the outlooks of farmers from subsistence to commercial production aimed at maximizing income. It is therefore important for farmers to evolve more advanced, highly capitalized and market-oriented systems so as to meet the demands of the time (Bede N.O, 1990).

The Nigeria agriculture exhibit characteristics of the traditional systems where labour is mainly manual, with most operations accomplished with simple tools such as hoes and machetes. Animal production systems in Nigeria involve small livestock that produce as manure, meat and cash in times of emergency. This type of traditional agriculture is labour/capital intensive (Clive, A.E et al, 1990).

According to Luckey (2012), agriculture is a practice that is used to sustain human life through the production and cultivation of nature with crops, and livestock. Agriculture has always been a significant factor in the sustainability and development of human society

(Frick, Birkenholz, and Machtmes, 1995). Unfortunately, the important role of agriculture as a foundation for a secure and durable civilization is not always apparent to those outside of agriculture (Boleman and Burrell, 2003).

Specifically, the present generation of children and youth often see agriculture only in terms of narrow stereotypes-a farmer, a cow, and/or a tractor (Blackburn, 1999), with the stereotypical farmer only visualized as an old man that "wears bib overalls and chews on straw" (Holz-Clause and Jost, 1995). Unfortunately, this group of children and youth represent the future leaders of society (Boleman and Burrell, 2003), the people, the society depend on for support; those who will have to regulate, and advocate for future agricultural production.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with about 140 million citizens going by the 2006 population census. More than half of this population are rural dwellers and are dependent on agriculture for survival. Agriculture does not only benefit the rural population but also supports the urban population in various ways (Oviasogie 2005; Ajibolade 2005). Thus, agriculture remains a crucial sector in the Nigeria economy, being a major source of raw materials as well as food and foreign exchange, employing over 70 percent of the Nigeria labour force, and serving as a potential vehicle for diversifying the Nigeria economy and enabling economic development.

Before the emergence of oil as Nigeria's dominant economic mainstay, the agricultural sector contributed over 60 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 90 per cent of exports (Lawal, 1997; UN, 2009). The Nigeria economy at that time could reasonably be described as an agricultural economy because agriculture served as the engine of growth of the overall economy (Ogen, 2003). From the standpoint of occupational distribution and contribution to the GDP, agriculture was the leading sector. During this period Nigeria was the world's second largest producer of cocoa, largest exporter of palm kernel and largest

producer and exporter of palm oil. Nigeria was also a leading exporter of other major commodities such as cotton, groundnut, rubber and hides and skins (Alkali, 1997).

The productivity of agriculture has since declined, with the share of agriculture in GDP falling from over 60 percent in the 1960s to 32.2 per cent in the period between 1975–1979, averaging 35 per cent between 1981 and 2006 (Adewuyi, 2002; CBN, 2003). In 2012, the average contribution of agriculture to Nigeria's GDP, was 41 per cent (CBN, 2013). Although agriculture currently contributes about 41% of the GDP it is obvious that the sector has significantly underperformed its potential. This situation is clearly manifested in the persistent high prices of food nationwide, food insecurity both at the household and national level culminating in increase food importation in Nigeria on yearly bases.

The fall of agriculture in export share has been very precipitous. From 1960–1970, the export crop subsector contributed 58.4 per cent annually on average to the total foreign exchange revenue. This declined to 5.2 per cent over the period of 1971–1985 and then further to 3 per cent from 1995–1999 (Olagbaju & Falola, 1996; Adewuyi, 2002). Similarly, the growth of output in the agricultural sector declined from 3.8 percent in the 1987–1990 periods to 2.2 per cent from 1992–1995 (Adewuyi, 2002). Between 1981 and 2003, aggregate agricultural production grew by only 5.4% (Muhammad-Lawal & Atte, 2006). As a result of this decline in output, Nigeria moved from a food sufficient country in the 1960s to a major importer of food in the 1980s (Fasoranti, 2006).

The estimated current 3.7 per cent food production growth rate cannot keep pace with the 6.5 per cent food demand fuelled by a high rate of population increase, moderately rapid income growth, and relatively high elasticity of expenditure for food (Egwuda, 2001; Mellor, 1988). For instance, in 2004, local demand of five million tons for rice far outstripped its local supply of three million tons, necessitating the importation of rice to meet the shortfall. The value of rice imports has continually increased over the years from \$60 million in 1990

to \$280 million in 2001, and drastically shots up to over \$1billion in 2008 (Akintayo, 2011). In recent years, Nigeria earned an unenviable reputation as one of the six largest rice importers in the world (Yusuf et al., 2009; Akinwumi, 2012). As with most other crops in Nigeria, rice yields were low, averaging about 1.8 tons of paddy per hectare, compared to national potential average of 3 tons per hectare for upland system and 5 tons per hectare for the lowland system (Akintayo, 2011). In general, food crop production in Nigeria is far below its potential in the country, while the demand for it is also greater than the locally produced supply.

Agricultural production in Nigeria has been faced with different problems in varying degrees since independence which has led to its palpable decline, over the years. According to Adisa (2011), the decline in agricultural production was because of low tariff on imported goods that favoured importation and the demand for labour in other sectors of the economy which encouraged migration of farm workers especially the youth from villages to towns and cities. He also noted that inadequate or non-availability of rural infrastructure hinders the growth and development of agricultural productivity and the entire rural areas in Nigeria. This situation, according to him, was also partly responsible for the continuous drift of the youth from the rural areas to urban centres in search of comfort zones for gainful employment and access to social amenities.

At present, agricultural production in Nigeria is characterized by rudimentary technology, challenges of weeds, pests and diseases, draught and erratic rainfall (in some agro-ecological zones) and a host of other debilitating factors (Nwaobi, 1990; Adisa, 2011). These factors culminate into poor yields, low produce quality and subsequent low income for farmers which, on the whole, become serious disincentives for the ambitious youth to venture into agriculture. Consequently, most farmers in Nigeria at the moment are engaged in only small scale and subsistence level of production (Oviasogie, 2005; Ajibolade, 2005).

The problems constraining the performance of Nigeria's agriculture have been elaborately discussed by many authors such as Njoku (1998), Olayemi and Akinyosoye (1989), Onyenweaku (2000), NISER (2001) and Manyong, Ikpi, Olayemi, Yusuf, Omonona, and Idachaba, (2003). The major constraints identified are summarized as follows.

**Resource constraints:** Among the problems of resource constraints in agricultural production is the issue of inadequate agricultural labour supply. Lack of agricultural labour supply in Nigeria arises from the increasing migration of able-bodied youths from rural to urban areas. The consequence of the massive migration of youths is seasonal labour shortage, especially at the peak periods of labour demand (during land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting). There is also the problem of low agricultural labour productivity. There is an increasing population pressure on land as well as a declining quality of land. Rate of land improvement is low because of the low rate of capital investment by the predominantly traditional farmers.

**Technical constraints:** Technical constraints include the high incidences of pests and diseases, inadequate infrastructure, dependence on unimproved inputs, and rudimentary technology. Others are inadequate extension services, an inefficient input supply and distribution system, and high environmental hazards.

**Socio-economic constraints:** The socio-economic problems that constrain Nigeria's agriculture include scarcity and high cost of improved farm inputs, inefficient marketing arrangements characterized by high marketing margins, lack of grades and standards, and lack of legally enforceable ownership and control rights over land which serves as a disincentive to investing in agriculture, and which arises from the lack of an appropriate land tenure system. Other socio-economic factors are inadequate extension services and credit facilities; low rate of growth in international demand for primary export commodities arising largely from competition with synthetic products; low income, elasticity of demand;

increasing food deficit and high dependence on food import arising from the disequilibria in national agricultural resource base, a largely traditional agricultural production system, and some domestic population dynamics.

**Organizational constraints:** Agricultural production is predominantly in the hands of a multitude of small-scale, unorganized farmers scattered across the country. Lack of organization, coupled with the dispersed nature of farm settlements, hinders the participation of farmers in agricultural and rural development. It particularly hinders the supply of extension services, farm credit, and other vital inputs to farmers.

In another perspective, Manyong et al. (2003) noted that in spite of the existence of a well-articulated agricultural policy document for Nigeria since 1988, the country has never established a systematic focus in her agricultural planning history that shows a conscious effort to purposely prioritize her agricultural development based on the generally identified components that constitute modern agriculture. According to them, normally, in terms of concentrating on the development of the various parts of the agriculture continuum, the government of Nigeria should have adopted a prioritization scheme in which, for some specified time periods, it would consciously emphasize on one or more of the priority areas.

The 2001 Rural Development Sector Strategy identified the following areas for immediate attention if agriculture in Nigeria was to make the desired impact on the lives of the people:

- i. Institutional restructuring and role reassignment in the agricultural extension subsector.
- ii. Agricultural technology development and natural resource management.
- iii. Physical and social infrastructural development.
- iv. Public intervention in specified areas of rural agriculture to measure effectiveness, and



v. Human capacity building in the agriculture sector (Manyong, et al. 2003).

Nwankwo (1986), observed that agriculture in Nigeria has been neglected. He asserted that the serious neglect of our potential rich agriculture has placed severe strains on the economy. According to him, despite the fact that Nigeria is endowed with a good climate and abundant fertile land, the high hopes of producing enough food to feed her growing population as well as supplying sufficient raw materials for industries has never materialised. Meanwhile, Ajibefun and Aderinola (2004) maintain that even the most basic foodstuffs are now imported into Nigeria in large quantities on yearly bases. Obviously, increasing reduction in production and productivity has continued to characterize Nigerian agricultural sector thereby limiting the ability of the sector to perform its traditional role in economic development.

Coming down to Benue State, evidence derived from various documents and reports such as *Our Benue Our Future*, (2009), *BENSEEDS* (2004), *Benue Advanced Plan*, (1999); have continued to show that the condition of agricultural production in the State is not different from the experience at the national level. Despite the fact that the agricultural sector holds great potentials for the Benue state economy, this potential is never meaningfully realised. The suitable ecology for cultivation of a wide range of crops and rearing of livestock as well as fish farming have not been reasonably utilised.

At the moment, the Benue State agriculture is characterised by negative features such as traditional practices of cultivation, processing and storage; low level of mechanisation; poor land management and high cost of inputs. These factors coupled with poor financial and technological support for the farmers have cumulatively resulted in poor per capita yields of the essentially small-holder farmers in Benue State. Consequently, agriculture production has appeared unprofitable and unattractive to most youths in Benue state (*Our Benue Our Future*, 2009; *BENSEEDS*, 2004; *Benue Advanced Plan*, 1999).

The several challenges against agricultural production in Benue State include chronic rural poverty, absence of industries, primitive farm implements, poor impact of government economic programmes and policies as well as misdirection and misapplication of government safety nets, poverty alleviation programmes; and chronic unemployment (Usuh, 2012; Our Benue Our Future, 2009; BENSEEDS, 2004; Benue Advanced Plan, 1999).

Lack of specialization has also been identified as a challenge against agricultural production in Benue State. According to Usuh (2012), there is a need to encourage our farmers to specialize in one or two areas of farming and to also educate them, especially the youth, on the need for working towards specialization such as root crops farming, livestock/poultry farming, citrus farming and juice production, rabbit and grass-cutter farming and bee farming. The current trend, as he observed, is that farmers in Benue State usually involve in cultivation of wide varieties of crops sometimes combining with livestock rearing. This lack of specialization of farmers, according to him, is also partly responsible for low level and poor yield of agricultural production in Benue State.

Furthermore, Usuh (2012), noted that the scattered pattern of settlement and traditional land tenure system in most communities in Benue State, particularly in the Tiv speaking area, is a hindrance to large scale farming. The provisions of Land Use Act, 1978 which vested all existing land in any state of the federation to the governor who has the legal duty of managing land for the overall benefit of the people is yet to be effectively exercised. This according to him is a great contributing factor towards disruption of agricultural activities in Benue State through incessant cases of land dispute in the various communities (Usuh, 2012).

Another problem of agriculture in Benue state is the sale of farm produce which is not organized. In the 1950s and even in the late 1960s, according to Usuh (2012), there were marketing boards which determined the prices of farm produce. However, in the late 1970s,

these marketing boards were scrapped because there was a feeling that the marketing boards were being used as agents to lower prices paid to the farmers. It was also felt that the farmers were better placed to determine the prices of their farm produce. However, the farmers were left at the mercy of economic forces of demand and supply, with the presumption that they were economically strong enough to negotiate higher prices.

Thus, the weak bargaining power of the farmers in Benue State was noted by Usuh (2012), as a serious disadvantage on agricultural production in the State. He noted that this situation tends to place the farmers at the mercy of agents locally called “Beranda”. These agents usually ensure that lower prices for farm produce are maintained so as to short change the farmers and resale to the principal buyers at higher prices. Thus, year in year out, farmers in Benue State continue to toil on their farms only to the benefit of the buyers while abject poverty persists and makes agriculture in the State unattractive (Usuh, 2012).

The challenge of cultism among the youth in Benue state is another problem to agriculture and the general society. This is so because the youth are easily being lured away from the path of rectitude by the urge to gain economic power without working for it (Usuh, 2012). The nature of educational practice in recent times in Nigeria has also left much to be desired, particularly in relation to promoting agricultural production. Most of the schools in Nigeria do not give priority attention to impacting practical agricultural knowledge to pupils/students. China provides a model in this regard. The government under Mao-Tse-Tung established an education policy which mandated schools to ensure that the students were developed not only intellectually, but also morally and physically and with relevant skills to provide for the needed labour force in all sectors of the economy of China (Perry and Perry, 1976).

Greater efforts are therefore required to be employed by all stakeholders to ensure that the youth are acculturated to embrace the spirit of hard work and the benefits of agriculture.

Expectedly, if the youth were to be encouraged for greater involvement in agricultural production in Nigeria and Benue State in particular, most of the noted constraints against higher production in the sector would be resolved through the youth energies, innovativeness and creativity. In the quest to revamp the fortunes of agricultural productivity in Nigeria, therefore, various intervention programmes were introduced over the years in the country. The major ones are briefly discussed below.

***a) National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)***

The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) was designed in the early 70s by both the Federal and state governments to accelerate the production of grains (maize, rice, guinea corn, millet, wheat, cassava and cowpeas). This programme was targeted at accelerating the production of these crops which are considered the major staple foods of Nigerians. It was believed that if such crops were produced in abundance, hunger and related food crisis would be addressed. The programme introduced high yielding varieties, fertilizers, agro-chemicals, storage and processing facilities, credit facilities as well as marketing outlets. In addition, extension services were also introduced. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the programme recorded initial success this success was short-lived. According to Williams (1981), this programme turned Nigeria agriculture into a permanent market for imported agricultural inputs.

***b) Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs)***

The idea of Agricultural Development Programmes is an offshoot of the concept of integrated agricultural and rural development. It started in 1972 in Northern Nigeria towns of Gombe and Gusau with two pilot projects assisted by the World Bank. This became necessary because of the need for the application of knowledge and skills in all the relevant areas of agriculture. This concept involves the provision of infrastructure such as roads, schools, and water supply in the rural areas at the right time in required quantity to farmers.

The ADP is the implementation organ of the state ministry of agriculture and natural resources. It is semi-autonomous and focuses on the small scale farmer. It adopts the integrated rural development strategy in its operations (Jibowo, 2005).

The success of the Gombe and Gusau projects encouraged other state governments to embark on more of such projects with the assistance of the World Bank. Since then, Nigeria has continued to witness agricultural development programmes of various dimensions. It is against this background that effective extension services have been established. The closest assistance ever realized by farmers in Nigeria have come from contact with various Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) and the extension agents working under the Training and Visit (T and V) system. The activities of ADPs in Nigeria spread over three thematic areas: provision of rural infrastructure, conducting worthwhile trainings on improved agricultural technologies and supply of farm inputs. Abbas (1985), observed that implementation of the ADPs was biased against the peasant farmers who were the original target beneficiaries.

**c) *The Nigerian Agricultural Co-operative Bank***

The Federal Government of Nigeria established the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB) Limited on the 24th of November, 1972 as an agricultural financing institution. The bank was primarily aimed at ensuring the availability and accessibility of credit facilities by farmers at appropriate times. One of the main targets of the bank was the promotion of accelerated agricultural production and rural development in Nigeria. This bank has however been criticized for not living up to the expectation of Nigerians (Mustapha, 2006). Up till this moment, one of the major challenges of agricultural production in Nigeria is lack of adequate, accessible, and affordable credit (Rhaji, 2008).

**d) *Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)***

In 1976, Operation Feed the Nation was launched to address the problem of rising food crisis, rural-urban migration and escalating food import bills. The OFN programme attempted to mobilize the general public to participate actively in agricultural production and ensure self-sufficiency in food production. The programme was meant to stimulate Nigerians to farming through several strategies. Some of these strategies included subsidized production inputs, increased bank credit to farmers, establishment of commodity boards and fixing of attractive prices for agricultural produce (Adelakun, 1986).

As lofty as the programme sounded, it could not achieve any meaningful result. This was due to several factors including selfish bureaucratic control, the urban-bias posture that characterised its implementation, heavy dependence on foreign capital and relegation of the poor peasant farmers to the background (Adelakun, 1986).

**e) *Green Revolution Programme (GR)***

The Green Revolution Programme replaced the Operation Feed the Nation of the Federal Military Government by the civilian government in 1979. This was an attempt to bring about radical changes in Nigerian Agricultural production and eliminate inherited food problems of successive governments. Large, medium and small-scale farmers received a number of incentives to boost their production levels during the implementation of the programme. Livestock and crop components were introduced while the research institutes were re-organized to make them more responsive to the need of the programme. This programme also recorded an initial success but it was not sustainable due to bureaucratic corruption (Williams, 1981; Manyong, *et al*, 2003).

**f) *National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)***

The National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) was established by the Federal Government in 1991 with the goal of making an optimal use of Nigeria's

abundant land and labour resources in a bid to attain accelerated national self reliance in food and fibre production. The programme generally aimed at moderating the problems of low utilization of abundant farmland, thereby increasing food production levels of farmers through expansion of farmers' farmlands. It was targeted to encourage farmers to plant above what they can consume, so that the surpluses can be sold at the local markets or exported to other countries for foreign exchange. Under the NALDA scheme, arable farmlands of between 30,000 to 50,000 hectares were developed in each State of the Federation (CBN, 1998; Nzirimo, 1996). Unfortunately this programme too failed to bring about the desired boost in food production in the country (Nzirimo, 1996).

**g) *River Basin Development Authority (RBDA)***

The existing abundant water resources in the country and its potential for increasing agricultural production prompted the establishment of River Basin Development Authority (RBDA). The scheme became necessary because of persistent short rainy seasons in many parts of the country which has continued to restrict cultivation to single cropping pattern as against the all year round (William, 1981).

Akindele and Adebo (2004), maintained that, the creation of River Basin and Rural Development Authorities in Nigeria was motivated by the desire on the part of the Federal Government to facilitate and accelerate the production of food crops and mobilise the rural agricultural population throughout the country towards increased food production. These were targeted to be achieved through construction of small dams and boreholes for rural water supply schemes, feeder roads and the provision of power for electrification schemes from suitable irrigation dams and other types of power stations under the control of the authority, and other rural infrastructural facilities.

After several years of establishment of the River Basin and Rural Development Authorities, the problem of food shortage has continued to linger on (Akindele and Adebo,

2004). Several writers such as Akindele and Adebo (2004) and Akpe (2010), observed that the failure of the Authority to achieve its goals was due, essentially, to over bloated responsibilities, corruption and financial mismanagement.

**h) *The National FADAMA Development Project (NFDP)***

FADAMA 1 (Phase one of the National FADAMA Development Project) was implemented from 1993 to 1999. The programme focused mainly on crop production and largely neglected support of post production activities such as commodity processing, storage and marketing. The emphasis was on providing tube wells, boreholes, and water pumps to farmers (Nkonya et al., 2008). The first National FADAMA Development Project was adjudged to be successful to some extent. However, there were some noted shortcomings from both design and implementation. After the first phase of the FADAMA project, the Federal Government of Nigeria requested approval from the World Bank for a follow up project, and this led to the establishment of the FADAMA II project between 1999 and 2004 (World Bank, 2003; Blench and Ingawa, 2004). The second National FADAMA Development Project sought to address the noted shortcomings in design and implementation of the FADAMA I. The goal of FADAMA II was to contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria (NFDP, 2007; Nwachukwu et al., 2008). The National FADAMA Development Project II (NFDP II) targets the development of small scale irrigation, especially in the low lying alluvial floodplains or "FADAMA". The programme intended to increase the productivity, income, living standards and development capacity of the rural communities (Second National FADAMA Development Project, 2004).

After the operational period of FADAMA II got expired in 2004, the third phase of the programme otherwise known as FADAMA III was commenced with similar objectives to the previous programmes. FADAMA III is a tripartite funded intervention by World Bank, the Federal Government of Nigeria and participating States. The programme is designed to



improve the capacities of beneficiary groups: the FADAMA Users Groups (FUGs) which were aggregated into FADAMA Community Associations (FCAs) in the states across Nigeria (Ike, 2012).

It is important to note here that all these agricultural programmes listed above (NFPP, ADPS, NACB, OFN, GR, NALDA, RBDA, NEDPI, II and II), from the early 70s to 2004 that were designed to make food supply adequate for all citizens by speeding up the production of major staple crops, only saw structural weakness as was manifested in the following ways.

- a. Inadequate capital allocation which manifested itself in shortages of extension staff, poor motivation of research works and inadequate publicity.
- b. The programmes were not geared towards the needs of small farmers who constituted the bulk of the Nigeria's farming producers.
- c. The pervasiveness of self interest and corruption in the higher echelons of Nigerian society.
- d. To add to the troubles of mismanagement, corruption, exploitation and lack of investment, the oil boom besides fuelling imports and depressing agriculture generally, massive exodus of rural workers deserted the land to urban centres away from agricultural production.

All these grand programmes, occasionally well-intentioned and honest efforts did little or nothing to prevent the steady decline of rural areas and the agricultural livelihood they depended on (Nwankwo, 1986, Iken 2012).

Generally, despite all the various programmes initiated to improve agricultural production in the country, there has not been any visible evidence to show that such has been achieved. Rather, hunger and food insecurity have continued to be on the increase culminating into large scale food importation into the country on yearly bases.

Taking a cursory look at all the agricultural programmes in Nigeria, it is not so difficult to note that none of the programmes gave specific consideration to the role of the youth in the sector. Yet, this is the group of people whose potential energies and innovativeness is expected to bring about the necessary impetus for greater agricultural productivity. The most pathetic situation in Nigeria is that after grappling with several policies and programmes to boost agricultural production in the country, food insecurity and poverty have remained the experience of an average household. Obviously, agricultural policies and programmes in Nigeria have not brought about the desired boost in productivity in the sector. Rather the country has continued to experience more pervasive food crises.

The case of Benue State in particular, is very pathetic. Usuh (2012) noted that the land is largely fertile, supporting a wide range of crops. The Benue River and its many tributaries retain large stocks of fish, while the savannah grassland is good for animal husbandry. Unfortunately, these fertile conditions are also sources of constant rivalry and tension between the pastoral Fulanis and the indigenous farmers (Tiv, Idoma, Igede etc) resulting in the destruction of farm lands, personal properties and sometimes even loss of human lives thereby plunging the State deep into food crises and poverty situation.

## **2.2 Level of Youth Participation in Agricultural Production in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, data on rural youth participation in agriculture are scarce (Ekong, 2003). The few studies available on food crops production have focused mainly on the parents of the youth, while the youth who constitute a large proportion of the production force are neglected (Ekong, 2003). Ekong, (2003), noted that the youth` in Nigeria who have the energy to take up agricultural production do not believe, or have the knowledge that agricultural production can really be a profitable venture. The situation as envisaged by this scholar means that even though the Nigerian youths do have the required agility to propel agricultural production, they lack the interest and knowledge to do so.

Similarly, Adekunle et al. (2009), observed that the involvement of the youth in agricultural activities in Nigeria has steadily declined in recent years. Olayiwola, and Oyeranti, (2005), noted that there is an increasing shortage of labour for agriculture in Nigeria occasioned upon a continuous rise in the migration of youths away from the rural areas, leaving the old men and women to carry out farming activities. This, according to him currently constitutes a serious threat to agricultural production in the country.

Evidence abound that there has been a steady decline in the percentage of farm labour supply in Nigeria (Agwu *et al.*, 2012; IFPRI, 2008; Eremie, 2002, Gebremedhin & Switon, 2001). Declining farm labour supply is compounded by the fact that the agricultural sector, with a few exceptions, has the worst poverty conditions (Ruben and van der Berg, 2001). Studies indicate that shortage in farm labour supply results in low farm productivity which eventually culminates in poverty among rural farming communities. This situation has been considered a major problem especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Gebremedhin and Switon, 2001).

Agwu et al. (2012), noted that since the mid-1970s, the pattern of population change has been characterised by a “rural exodus” and increasing urbanisation. Rural population declined as the young and able bodied men and women left to seek better employment prospects in urban areas. Those remaining formed an increasingly ageing population, with declining local services, particularly in agriculture, which is the primary occupation of majority of them. According to them the ageing of the rural and farm workforce, and the need to accommodate or reduce the flow of young people out of the countryside presents a serious challenge to the sustainability of agriculture and any rural economy. The age structure of the workforce, together with the level of participation by young people in many rural regions, raises important questions not just for sustainability of agriculture but also of the entire social and economic cohesion.

Consequently, Ekong (2003), emphasized that the urgent need to educate the youth in Nigeria to know the importance and prospects in farming and take to it with all seriousness, thereby increasing the farming population. Eremie (2002), stressed that the youth need to appreciate the role of agriculture, stay back in the villages where there are abundant resources and make the best use of the available resources in productive activities.

### **2.3 The Impact of Youth Participation in Agricultural Production**

Youth participation in agriculture can have both positive and negative impact, all depending on whether or not they are being sufficiently involved. Generally, throughout history, young people have actively played crucial roles to bring social, political and economic change to their societies. Young people are not just tomorrow's leaders but they are also active participants in shaping present socio-economic activities in their various societies.

Experience globally shows that engaging youth in neighbourhood, community and national development presents an opportunity to harness their energy, enthusiasm, skills, and innovative ideas to increase economic growth, foster social stability, improve civic participation, and ensure more productivity in the society (USAID, 2012). In its 2007 World Development report, the World Bank advocated that developing countries should take advantage of their "demographic dividend," which about half of it is made up of the youth, to accelerate economic growth and sharply reduce poverty (World Bank, 2007).

The USAID's Youth in Development Policy recognizes that young people are both individuals transitioning through life's developmental stages, and proactive actors in the development of their countries and communities. Thus, the policy advocates for conscious efforts to facilitate the design of programmes that better support the youth, helping them to become part of the solution to today's challenges (USAID, 2012).

Young people are key actors and a driving force for global development and peace. They are critical partners in the development of nations and their contribution to society must

be measured in terms of their productive pursuits of services for their community. The youth are thus Nigeria's foremost social capital and require proper assimilation into various development strategies (NBS and FMYD, 2013). The Nigeria Second Youth Policy is more lucid in emphasizing the importance of the youth in the society. According to the policy:

Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. Young women and men are, in particular, recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued possession of any nation or region. Without them there can be no future. They are the centre of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country (The Second National Youth Policy, 2009, p.1).

Obviously, the importance of youth participation in all ramifications of the society is not in contention in most views. At the thirtieth regular meeting of the conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean community, in Georgetown, Guyana, the Heads of Government noted that there was absolute need to draw the attention of young people for greater involvement in agricultural production (Suriname, 2012).

The necessity of increased participation by youth in agriculture production in the region, as noted by the conference and presented by Suriname (2012), was due to several reasons including the following:

- i. To address the problem of ageing farmer population in the region;
- ii. To address increased food importation;
- iii. To change the poor image and perception of persons involved in agriculture as only the old;
- iv. To increase employment opportunity to the youth particularly in the rural areas;
- v. Because of high percentage of the youth in the society;
- vi. To provide food security and

- vii. To provide productive alternatives for the engagement of youths to reduce crime and other social problems.

All the above stated reasons by the conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Countries as necessitating greater emphasis to involve the youth in agricultural production appears very much applicable in the context of Nigeria and Benue state in particular.

For instance, the issue of ageing farmer population is a great problem in Nigeria and indeed Benue state. Available evidence suggests an ageing farmer population in Nigeria, with an average age of 47 years and life expectancy at 47-50 years in 2008 (NBS 2008; Oboh et al., 2009). This, according to Kayode, and Ogunmola (2013), is dangerous to agricultural production especially when the generation of the current old and aged farmers who are the main food producers in the country would need to be replaced by the younger people who may be unwilling. They expressed fears that if the youths are not properly mobilized and motivated to participate in farming activities in their environment, the country is bound to be faced with great famine, penury and other social vices such as kidnapping and robbery attack in the near future.

Moreso, Kayode and Ogunmola (2013), argued that labour is the most important input in agricultural production because it is required in carrying out farm activities such as land clearing, ploughing, weeding, fertilizer application, pesticide application, harvesting and other farming activities. They maintained that the youth have vital roles to play in agricultural production, to provide the needed manpower. Similarly, Okeowo *et al.* (1999), observed that the youth have an undeniable role to play in agricultural production. This, according to them is because the population of youth represents the link between the present and the future as well as a reservoir of labour.

Youths are generally regarded as leaders of tomorrow. They are also a vital source of manpower for development and constitute a very significant work force in the communities (Ekong, 1998; Ommani, 2011). Consequently, if young farmers do not replace the ageing producers, the production of food within the country will definitely be in serious jeopardy in the soonest future.

Okeowo, Agunbiade and Odeyemi (1999), describes the Nigerian agricultural production as still being carried out through the use of physical strength, which declines with age. This, according to him, has been observed as one of the major constraints to agricultural production in Nigeria. Thus, it is imperative that the problem of ageing farmer population in Nigeria be addressed to facilitate sustainability in agricultural production and food security in the country and particularly in Benue State.

Nwachukwu (2008), asserts that the rural youth constitute the major resource base for any country especially in respect to the potentiality for agricultural and rural development. Moreover, the current challenges in agricultural production are such that only the participation of people who are energetic, creative and innovative can make desirable contributions to the development of the sector. Obviously the services of the youth are needed wherever hard work is needed.

No wonder, employers in all sectors of the economy demand for the youth because they are regarded as the most capable set of people due to their advantage of physical ability and mental agility. Agricultural activities demand diligence, dedication and commitment to yield the desired fruits. Therefore, the services of the youth are of great importance in Benue State.

The desire to address the problems of food insecurity and increased food importation has also emphasized the need for greater participation of the youth in agricultural production in Nigeria. Available statistics shows that annual food import in Nigeria has been very high,

particularly within the last decade. Nigeria import bill for food and live animals was N147.38 billion in 2004; ₦260.33 billion in 2005; ₦293.07 billion in 2006; ₦269.68 billion in 2007 and ₦299.48 billion in 2008 (Eluhaiwe, 2010). In 2009, food imports were as high as US\$3.99 billion a year, which is about ₦598.5 billion, in 2010 it was 630 billion (CBN, 2009; Sanusi, 2012).

Evidently, if these trends continue, the availability of food in the country will be dependent on foreign food production, making the country vulnerable to catastrophic events and other exogenous shocks that may have negative impacts on the general socio-economic situation in Nigeria. As a result, it is necessary to encourage increased food production in the country by increasing not just the number of producers but also those with the requisite agility to undertake the task effectively. The youth population is thus strategic to the success of these efforts to boost food production in the country.

Greater youth participation in agricultural production in Nigeria and Benue State is also imperative because of the need to change the poor image and perception that agricultural production is simply for the old (Ugwoke, Adesope and Ibe, 2005; Kayode, and Ogunmola, 2013; Paisley, 2014). According to Paisley (2014), young people are not interested in remaining in rural areas and taking up farming. Agriculture is rarely the first choice of even many of the youth who study it. Many people believe that agriculture does not have any prestige and young people who take it up as a means of livelihood are not considered successful in their communities.

Therefore, in order to encourage agricultural productivity in Nigeria, it is important to focus attention on the group of people who are the ideal catalysts for such a task. Obviously, the youth have greater propensity to adopt new ideas, concepts and technology which are all critical to changing the way agriculture is practiced.



Greater youth participation in agricultural production is also necessary because of the fact that agriculture provides huge employment opportunity for the youth particularly those in the rural areas. Proctor and Lucchesi (2012), observed that the prospects of rural youth finding decent work in many countries of the developing/emerging world, economy worlds, particularly in Africa and South-Central Asia, is limited. They acknowledged that issues of youth and youth employment are being raised in the international policy agenda; hence there is a low level of policy and investment intervention that focuses explicitly on rural youth and on youth employment opportunities in the agriculture and agribusiness sectors. Thus, they observed that agriculture holds huge potential to meet the aspirations of the youth for both future food security and employment.

Farm labour is a major source of employment for the rural labour force in Nigeria. However, evidence abound that there has been a steady decline in the percentage of farm labour supply in Nigeria. Declining farm labour supply is compounded by the fact that the agricultural sector, with a few exceptions, has the worst poverty conditions (Ruben and Van der Berg, 2001). Studies indicate that shortage in farm labour supply results in low farm productivity which eventually culminates in poverty among rural farming communities. This situation has been considered a major problem especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Gebremedhin and Switon, 2001).

The International Labour Organization (2010), report on Global Employment Trends for Youth states that: “today’s youth represent a group with serious vulnerabilities in the world of work. In recent years, slowing global employment growth and increasing unemployment, underemployment and disillusionment have hit young people the hardest. However, it is widely recognized that smallholder agriculture production in rural areas is among the most promising sectors for youth employment in majority of the developing countries (Bennell, 2010).

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2009) under the Second National Youth Policy acknowledged that young people are generally very energetic and are keen to take up challenges. Their involvement and full participation in the agriculture sector especially in the fields of research, training, production, preservation, processing and marketing of the produce of agriculture, forestry, livestock and fisheries will certainly provide great employment opportunities for them. Most certainly, given the many opportunities available in food production, agriculture can play a significant role in mitigating the unemployment situation of the youth particularly those in the rural areas.

The sheer numerical strength of the youth is also a necessary factor to encourage their increased participation in agriculture. The National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development conducted the “National Baseline Youth Survey” in 2012. From the survey, it was established that, the population of youths (15 – 35 years) in Nigeria was estimated to be 64,086,798 million (NBS and FMYD, 2013), which is 36.86% (i.e. more than one third) of the total projected population of 173,905,439 Nigerians (NBS and FMYD, 2013; NPC, 2009).

Increased productivity in the agricultural sector obviously depends on young people who comprise more than one third of the population in the country. The energy that youths possess and the high percentage of their population provide tremendous opportunities for increasing agricultural productivity in Nigeria.

Greater participation of the youth in agriculture is also a means to provide productive alternatives for the engagement of youths to reduce crime and other social problems. The NBS and FMYD (2013) survey on “National Baseline Youth Survey” found that the youth are dominant in criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, cultism, cybercrimes, drug abuse, prostitution, and human trafficking (NBS and FMYD, 2013). The availability of real income generating options in agriculture can offer opportunities of

preventing and indeed rehabilitating young persons who easily channel their energies towards crime as a way of survival.

Generally, the overall agricultural policy of Nigeria now is to harness all available resources to increase productivity and rural income (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2009). For effective and progressive agricultural production to take place, therefore, an active work force is required. This active group of people is indisputably the youth.

In the other perspective, insufficient involvement of the youth in agricultural production could portend great negative impacts on, not just the productivity of the sector, but also other socio-economic activities. Ukeje (2002), stated that lack of labour force was one of the major factors affecting productivity in the agricultural sector in Nigeria. According to him, attainment of higher productivity presupposes the availability of skilled labour force. However, he noted that the inadequacy of farm labour in Nigeria was one of the major reasons for high cost of production and decline in productivity of agriculture in the country. According to him, this labour shortage has been aggravated by a substantial reduction in the supply of family labour due to the persistent rural-urban drift of the youth.

Migration of young people from the rural areas at the same time can create greater burden on the farmers. For a farmer to cover the same area of land as when he or she had extra assistance, may become quite difficult if not impossible (Adewale, 2005). Akangbe *et al* (2005), in the study on “effects of youth migration on farmers’ agricultural production in Egbedore Local Government Area of Osun State” found that the family labour which the rural farmers solely depended upon was reduced thereby leaving farming in the hands of the aged with consequences of low productivity, high cost of production, reduction in annual income and a drastic fall in living standard.

The apathy of the youth towards agriculture has also resulted to mass unemployment and lack of sustainable livelihood activities among them (Breitenbach, 2006). This has further

led most youths into unwholesome activities in the society such as cultism, armed robbery, prostitution and street begging, (Sodique, 2006). With fewer youths into agriculture, the long-term future of the agricultural sector is indeed in great jeopardy. Of course, the poor state of agricultural productivity, which is facilitated greatly by youths' low interest in farming and rural-urban migration as well as lack of skilled labour force among others, has led to worsening Nigerian food deficit (NDE, 2006).

Muhammad-Lawal, Omotesho, and Falola (2009), undertook a study on the technical efficiency of youth participation in agriculture in Ondo State, South Western Nigeria. The study showed that efficiency differentials exist among youth in the programme. Furthermore, land, labour, herbicides and a number of methods for cutting cassava sticks were the major factors that affected output of youths' production in the programme. The study also showed that household size, years of participation in youth-in-agriculture programme, usage of extension information and level of education were the significant factors that accounted for the observed variation in efficiency among the participants. To achieve increased efficiency of production by the participants, the study recommended the need for farm expansion, increased access to herbicides and improved cassava cuttings as well as effective training for the participants.

Chikezie, Omokore, Akpoko and Chikaire (2012), conducted a study of the factors influencing rural youth adoption of cassava, recommended production practices in Onu-Imo Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. The results showed that the level of adoption of the recommended cassava production practices was high. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that credit should be made available to youth cassava farmers to enable them remain in business. Efforts should also be made to introduce modern processing equipment (technology) to cassava producers. This will go a long way to reduce wastage. Furthermore, policy measures that would guarantee increase in yield and farm income of the

rural youth involved in cassava production as well as provide cost effective inputs was recommended, as this will motivate them to engage in more agricultural production and improve rural livelihood and food security of the nation.

Bello, Madza and Saror (2011), carried out a study in Lafia Local Government Area of Nasarawa State Nigeria to examine rural youth involvement in rice production. The study revealed that youths in Lafia Local Government Area were rarely involved in rice production. The major factors affecting their involvement in rice production were years of experience, organization membership, access to credit, source of inputs/implements and extension contacts. The major constraints faced by youths who engaged in rice production were inadequate capital, inadequate storage facilities, inadequate farm lands, inaccessibility to information on farming practices and inadequate farm inputs.

The study therefore recommended that the young people involved in rice production should be helped and encouraged by relevant authorities through the provision of needed resources to alleviate the constraints identified in the study area. Youths involved in the programme of rice production should have access to micro-finance institutions and government should ensure more credit control of these institutions so as to enhance their capital acquisition requirements and to encourage greater participation of the youth in rice production in the area.

Adekunle, Adefalu, Oladipo, Adisa, and Fatoye (2009), undertook a study to unravel the constraints to youths' involvement in agricultural production in Kwara State, Nigeria. The major constraints hindering youth participation in agriculture were identified as inadequate credit facility, lack of agricultural insurance, poor returns in agricultural investment, lack of basic farming knowledge and lack of access to tractors and other farm inputs. The study therefore recommended the provision of credit facilities with less stringent procedures and

resuscitation of Agricultural Training Centres across the State to enhance youth's participation in agriculture.

Agwu, Nwankwo and Anyanwu (2012), conducted a study on determinants of agricultural labour participation among youths in Abia State, Nigeria. The study found that estimates of the determinants of agricultural labour participation among youths in the study area showed that the coefficients of education of the respondents, income from non-agricultural sources, occupation of the parents, education of the father, farm size and the rate of mechanization influenced agricultural labour participation among youths in the area. The study recommended that the cost of mechanization should be made affordable amongst other things to attract youths to agricultural participation.

Ugwoke, Adesope and Ibe (2005), carried out a study on "youth participation in farming activities in rural areas of Imo State, Nigeria: implications for extension". The results indicated that youths participated in a wide range of farming activities, such as bush clearing, cultivation, planting, weeding, harvesting, among others.

Also, the study found that there was a significant relationship between the level of participation and other variables of education, farming experience and farm size. The participants identified low capital, risk and uncertainty, drudgery, problem of land acquisition, among others, as the major problems that confronted youths' participation in farming activities in the study area.

It was therefore recommended, among others things, that youths should be given the right incentives by government to intensify their participation in farming activities. These include provision of soft loans, tractor hiring services, facilitating land acquisition, among others. The Extension Agency should also help to organize the youth into cooperative groups to facilitate their activities in agricultural production. Also, social amenities should be

provided in the rural areas to encourage young people to stay back and practice full-time and intensified agricultural production.

## **2.4 Global Overview of Youth Participation in Agricultural Production**

Te-Lintelo (2001), acknowledged that the importance of young people in the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole is irrevocable. This according to him is because young people make up the majority of the people in the developing world; they are the driving force of the *demographic dividend*: “where a larger workforce with fewer dependents can generate strong economic growth.” In Zimbabwe, Nyoni (2012), observed that the general perceptions held by young people, however, were that agriculture is for the uneducated or retirees and they find white collar jobs more appealing. He noted, however, that some young people were tending towards proactively creating their own ‘spaces of participation’ in the agro-economy rather than rely on or wait for specific government programmes and incentives. He advised that agriculture as a whole needs to be ‘re-branded to appeal to young people, to make them see it as an avenue of wealth-creation rather than a subsistence mechanism.

Nyoni (2012), also noted that a major problem faced by youths in agriculture in Zimbabwe pertains to access to capital. According to him, although banks have offered loans directed specifically at young people with reasonable terms, the facilities are mostly applied for by urban youth. They have easier access to information regarding these loans, are better placed to draw up business plans and provide other pertinent information (such as security and so on) than their rural counterparts. In addition, the majority of recipients of land in Zimbabwe under the land reform programmes were yet to receive title deeds to their lands, meaning that banks were reluctant to provide lines of credit to untenured farmers, particularly the youth. Even though many young people in Zimbabwe now have access to land, much still remains to be done to reach sustainable and effective support from the government. In

general, much of the positive achievements of young people in agriculture have resulted not from specific government policies, but rather from the entrepreneurship of the youth and finding avenues through which to empower themselves (Nyoni, 2012).

In the United States of America, Traxler (1990), noted that during the early 1900s, agriculture was a major aspect of life. The school year was determined around planting, cultivating, and harvesting schedules. School lessons were based around the topic of agriculture and most of all, youth had first-hand experience with agriculture. However, Boleman and Burrell (2003), observed that youth in the US today have limited knowledge about agriculture, many believing that milk comes merely from the grocery store rather than understanding that it comes from a cow. The youth are the future leaders of the nation, thus it is important for them to be knowledgeable about policies and factors that impact on food production and the environment related to agriculture (Terry and Lawver, 1995).

Boleman and Burrell (2003), lamented that in today's society in the United State of America, most families reside in urban and suburban communities. The majority of the public is now almost completely removed from agriculture in their daily lives. Among these groups are youth who will be the future leaders of the society. The United States, however, cannot afford to have citizens with little or no knowledge about agriculture since the sustenance of the nation itself relies on this all important sector (Law and Pepple, 1990).

Bi (2014), observed that agriculture has been the engine of accelerated economic growth, development as well as livelihood in Asia and the Pacific. Unfortunately, there is a rising trend of rural youth moving away from agriculture, including in China. He noted that with accelerating urbanization and industrialization, more and more of rural labour is migrating to urban areas. According to the annual statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2014), 268.9 million rural labourers, or 35.0 per cent of the total



employed labour force, migrated to urban areas in 2013, and about 60 per cent of the migrants were less than 40 years old.

A survey carried out by Zhu-Qizhen, (2011) in 10 provinces of China revealed that the average age of farmers was 57 in 2010, while another survey asking “who will plant in the next 10 years in your family?” found that almost none of the parents interviewed expect their children to be engaged in farming (Bi, 2014). The Minister of Agriculture of China, Dr. Han Changfu, indicated that “Most of those who migrate to cities were youth, 84.5 per cent had never been engaged in farming activities, and 93.6 per cent want to live in cities.” The question of “Who will cultivate the land?” thus, becomes a pertinent and challenging one for national food security across the globe (Zhu Qizhen, 2011).

In Venezuela, Wiley (2009), observed that due to lack of interest of the youth and their decreased population in rural regions, agricultural production has suffered serious decline. He noted that while Venezuela is one of the world’s largest oil exporters, it imports about 70 percent of its food even though the country was greatly endowed with rich agricultural land. Venezuela, according to him, is the only country in all of Latin America that is a net importer of agricultural products, rather than a net exporter.

## **2.5 Constraints on Youth Participation in Agriculture in Nigeria**

Generally, most communities in Nigeria are basically agrarian societies. Unfortunately, many young people who are working in this sector lack the necessary support to improve their productive capacity. Very often, they do not have access to land, credit as well as extension services, yet they are often quickly condemned for failure to meet up with societal expectations about them (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009; Alabi, 2004). Most young people do not have access to funding for agricultural purposes. They are usually not able to access finance from financial institutions because they do not possess the collateral acceptable to banks and other financial institutions (Afande, Maina and Maina, 2015).

Anger (2010), is of the view that the youth themselves have not done enough to demonstrate that they are serious to bring positive development in the society. Rather, they possess the get-rich-quick-without- hard-work mentality. As such, they easily take to criminal behaviours such as armed robbery, assassinations, political thuggery, drug abuse and prostitution. Most of the young people, according to him, lack focus and direction as well as discipline, and have become so uninformed, so ignorant and lazy. This according to Anger (2010), has painfully undermined the potentials of the youth for any meaningful development effort.

Blackburn (1999), observed that lack of knowledge about the benefits of agriculture can be a great contributing factor to young people's apathy towards agricultural production. He maintained that due to this lack of knowledge of agriculture, young people often see agriculture in a negative light; as a task only meant for the old.

Agriculture is not considered as being able to deliver the incomes and working conditions as well as the kinds of lifestyles young people need, expect and desire. Thus, agriculture is regarded as a poor person's activity (Afande, Maina and Maina, 2015). If agriculture is not able to deliver either the desired living standards or the prospects for upward mobility, then the likelihood of attracting young people or retaining them in the sector could be low.

The lack of knowledge on agriculture production in recent times by the youth was blamed on increasing numbers of the youth drifting from rural communities to urban communities (Reidel, et al, 2007). Notably, this migration not only denies the young people of interest in agriculture but also, very often, leads to increased levels of unemployment in urban areas and other social ills among the unemployed youth.

Chikezie, *et al.* (2012), argued that Western education could even be the very push factor chasing the young people out of agricultural activities. According to them, due to the

Western education that youths acquire every day, there has been a depletion of youthful labour force in agriculture in favour of white collar jobs in urban centres. This argument thus implies that the more the youth are educated, the more their apathy towards agricultural production increases. Consequently, there is a prevailing situation in Nigeria of mass rural-urban migration of young educated people in search of white collar jobs (NEEDS, 2004).

Wiley (2009), earlier observed that since the early 20th century, industrialization and urbanization have caused families and individuals alike to shift from farming as a mainstream profession to manufacturing and service oriented jobs. Such migration, according to him, has reduced both the population in rural regions and the quantity of farms.

The studies carried out by Olayiwola (2005) and Echebiri (2005), identified factors affecting rural-urban migration as well as youth participation in agriculture. These can be divided into push and pull factors. The push factors include poor physical infrastructure and social amenities in the rural areas, search for education and skills acquisition, and the absence of desirable job opportunities. The pull factors they identified include the perception of greater job opportunities due to the presence of industries or companies in cities. Other factors include a general dislike of village life, and expulsion from a rural community as a result of a crime or offence committed against the norms of the community. These studies indicated that these factors were the dominant reasons for rural youths increased involvement in non-farm activities and migration to urban areas. Similarly, Adepoju (1986) and Adebayo (1999), in separate studies noted that the rural areas in Nigeria were neglected with respect to the provision of social and economic opportunities.

Afande, Maina and Maina (2015), identified the dearth of infrastructure as one of the constraints to youth engagement in agriculture. According to them, rural areas are notably more deficient in physical and social infrastructure than urban areas, leading to movement of youths from the rural areas where agriculture is mostly practiced to the urban areas. Young

people are aware of lifestyles in other regions within their countries and globally. Afande, Maina and Main maintained that as long as urban areas offer a more attractive destination and lifestyle for young people, more youths will continue to leave the rural areas. Following this argument, the availability of good roads, constant electricity, recreational facilities, internet, potable water, affordable housing and qualitative healthcare in rural areas will go a long way in retaining youths in rural areas and improve their engagement in agriculture.

Adekunle et al. (2009), discussed the factors limiting rural youth involvement in agriculture under three major themes, namely economic, social and environmental factors. According to them, economic factors include inadequate credit facilities, low farming profit margins, and a lack of agricultural insurance, initial capital and production inputs. Social factors include public perception about farming and parental influence to move out of agriculture. Environmental issues include inadequate land, continuous poor harvests, and soil degradation.

## **2.6 Strategies to Encourage Youth Participation in Agricultural Production in Nigeria**

Since independence in 1960, successive Nigeria governments have initiated programmes and projects aimed at general youth development. These range from in-school education programmes for physical and mental development to out-of-school programmes aimed at shaping the character and behaviour of the youth. In-school programmes include the formation of clubs, encouragement of sporting activities and other out-door activities, with discipline instilling organisations such as Boys Scout, Girls Guide and Man O' War. Out of school efforts include facilitation of the emergence and development of voluntary self-help associations which contribute to community development, skills and vocational training programmes, competitive activities and cultural festivals. The National Youth Service Corps programme was also launched in 1973, to promote national unity and integration and expose

graduates of tertiary institutions to leadership roles and community development projects (FGN, 2009; Akpan, 2010).

The first attempt at making substantial efforts in terms of policy framework towards youth development was the establishment of the National Youth Policy in 1981 which was followed by the drafting of an inclusive social development policy for Nigeria in 1989. These two instruments provided the very first concrete steps towards general youth development in Nigeria. Regrettably, by the early 1990's these commendable efforts aimed at youth development started to suffer tremendous neglect. Besides, the policy attempts hardly provided a concrete framework for addressing the heightened problems confronting the youth particularly, relating to their continuous declining interest in agricultural production.

Thus, in the 1990's youth development came to be increasingly equated with sporting activities and competitions. Even then, these were not given the necessary policy and material support that they required. The issue of empowerment was hardly ever addressed. Consequently, by the late 1990's it had become evident that Nigeria youths were probably the most neglected by their government. This development created a huge gap in youth development in Nigeria.

Apparently, the realization of this situation led the Federal Government to embark on ways to revitalize the poor food situation by constructively involving youth in agriculture at secondary school level. This was done through the national policy on education which made practical agriculture a core subject at the primary and junior secondary school levels, and agricultural science as a vocational subject thereafter (FMAWD, 1989).

The successive regimes at the Federal Government level have introduced various agricultural development schemes with the aim of encouraging the youth and boosting food production and farmers' income through provision of agricultural infrastructure, inputs and effective extension work (Jibowo, 2005). Governments in Nigeria have come up with

programmes to stimulate young people's interest in agricultural production and processing since the late 1980s. In 1986, the federal government established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to provide vocational training to the youth, and in 1987, the Better Life Programme was created to empower women, especially female youths in the rural areas through skills acquisition and healthcare training (Akpan, 2010).

In addition, The Peoples Bank and Community Banks were established in 1989 and 1990 respectively, to provide credit facilities to low income earners embarking on agricultural production and other micro enterprises, with special consideration to youth engaged in agricultural production (Akpan, 2010). In 1992, the FADAMA programmes were initiated to enhance food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty, and create opportunities for employment for youths in the rural areas.

The poor state of agricultural productivity and low esteem of agriculture as manifested in rural-urban migration, youths' low interest in farming, lack of industrial firms to process agricultural products and skilled labour among others have led to worsening food deficit in Nigeria (NDE, 2006).

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2009) under the Second National Youth Policy states the following strategic interventions to ensure greater youth participation in agricultural production.

- i. Government at all levels should promote the involvement of young men and women in the agricultural sector (fisheries, livestock, forestry, processing and marketing of agricultural produce etc.)
- ii. Efforts should be made by government at all levels, and other stake holders, to provide necessary agricultural inputs such as extension services, land, credit etc in order to facilitate youth involvement in agriculture.

- iii. Efforts should be made to encourage the teaching of the science of agriculture at all levels of the educational system in the country.
- iv. Efforts should be made to disseminate knowledge on agricultural techniques and processes.
- v. Efforts should be made by government at all levels to finance, procure modern agricultural implements for the use of young farmers.
- vi. Efforts should be made to encourage research in the agricultural sector (FGN, 2009).

Nwankwo (1986), asserts that, for any development approach or strategy to succeed, it must aim at empowering the community especially the most active segment of the community (youth) for maximum participation and increased productivity. A process of development that leads to a well-disciplined youth, healthier access to educational system as well as equality and social justice in our economic life is thus the most desirable at the moment.

The Nigeria state should provide the opportunities for the youth to develop themselves fully, and these opportunities include the rights of the individual as contained in sections 33 to 43 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to enable them realize the best that is in them. Unfortunately, both the National Youth development Policies and agricultural policies in Nigeria and Benue state in particular have so far not made any substantial gain to encourage greater youth participation in agricultural Production all this while.

## **2.7 Optimizing Youth Participation in Agriculture**

Several authors have discussed various ways to ensure that youth energies and innovativeness are properly harnessed for agricultural production. Okiror et al. (2011), stated that the methods used to present agricultural education to students can greatly influence their attitudes towards the occupation. Similarly, Riedmiller (2002), maintained that the quality of

a school garden or agricultural learning material is the single most important factor influencing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of youth learning about agriculture.

Reasoning along these lines, Ricketts and Place (2005), expressed the importance of youth "learning by doing" and the belief of allowing learners the opportunity for self-discovery. Research has articulated the positive benefits of agricultural education programmes for individuals of various categories particularly the youth (Weigel, et al., 2002; Platt, et al. 2008).

Holz-Clause and Jost (1995), emphasized that gaining insight into youth perceptions of agriculture allows researchers and educators to develop methods to better educate and inform youth about agriculture. Effective agricultural literacy is thus a critical need in ensuring that the youth are encouraged to appreciate and participate in agricultural production. Holz-Clause and Jost (1995), noted that cultivating of agricultural interest among youth can ultimately lead to not only a more agriculturally aware society, but also a workforce to support agricultural practices that allow society to thrive.

Since youths are ill-informed and still continue to be involved in toilsome agricultural practices, in the midst of poverty and a stunted life, they would seek whatever seems to them the best way of sustenance, especially in other non-agricultural sectors in the cities and towns (Kayode and Ogunmola, 2013). Indeed, since the youth represent the future of any country, it is useful to impact them with the requisite knowledge not just to develop them into future progressive farmers but also to make them positive contributors to the general development of the society (Ajayi, 2006).

In another perspective, there is a growing understanding on the importance of bringing youth innovations right from policy-making processes. It is clear that young people must be part of the solution as they are facing the challenges that policies seek to address, and know the future they would like for themselves (Paisley, 2014).



Akinbile et al. (2006) noted that several efforts have been made over the years to discourage the negative phenomenon of rural-urban migration by youth. Unfortunately, these efforts did not yield any meaningful result that the condition of the rural people has not improved. He therefore emphasized that there is a great need for rural infrastructural development and youth empowerment to encourage the young people to stay and contribute to agricultural production and development of the rural areas in Nigeria. Okoye (1992), in like manner asserts that if the youth are mobilized and empowered, and encouraged to stay in the rural areas by providing them with basic amenities, they would most certainly contribute to agricultural production and the development of their communities.

Since the people of Benue State are predominantly farmers, there is the need to start an economic agenda based on agriculture, which entails the establishment of industries to serve as market outlets for the agricultural produce, employment opportunities for youth, in the long run, bring economic, political stability and peace in Benue State.

The introduction of irrigation system of farming will surely increase agricultural production. The problem, however, is that government is not aware that irrigation farming does not necessarily require large capital to embark upon. The government and stakeholders can adopt the method of damming small streams through the use of minimal mechanical efforts all over Benue State and end up with several small dams which may be a source of water for consumption during dry season. This system was adopted by various communities through the assistance of the agencies of Lower Benue River Basin Development Authority and Benue State Rural Development Authority, who constructed many earth dams. Unfortunately, this laudable achievement was allowed to die away, and again these communities were only concerned with providing themselves sources of water for domestic consumption during dry season and not for agricultural purposes (Usuh, 2012:15). However,

if the communities were encouraged, sensitized and educated on the possibilities of irrigation and fish farming, things would have been different today.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

Structural functionalism was adopted in this work because it proposed integration of all parts of the society to maintain social stability and progress. It is obvious that apathy of the youth; instead of proper integration into agricultural production portends great danger and a problem that requires urgent and appropriate steps to address.

### **2.8.1 The Structural Functionalism Theory**

An assessment of youth involvement in agricultural production in the Tiv speaking area of Benue State is explained in this study within the ambience of structural functionalism. The major proponents of structural functionalism theory include: Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Emile Durkheim, Niklas Luhmann, Bronislaw Malinowski, Gabriel Almond, and Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown.

Structural functionalism is a sociological theory that attempts to explain why society functions the way it does by focusing on relationships between various social institutions that makes up society. Structural Functionalism takes into account macro-level analysis of the society. As a theoretical framework, structural functionalism attempts to explain the bases for maintaining order and stability in society, and relevant arrangement within the society. This theory originated in the biological and medical sciences. It was adopted as a mode of analysis in Sociology and Anthropology in the work of Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parson.

The key assumptions of the theory are as follows:

1. Societies and social units have order and interdependent parts like a biological organism held together by cooperation and orderliness.
2. Societies and social units work toward the natural or smooth working of the system, i.e. towards equilibrium.

3. Societies and social units, just as natural environments, are separate or distinct but adapt to each other.

The theory posits that social systems are collective means to fill social needs. From the structural functionalist perspective, in order for social life to survive and develop in the society to fulfil certain needs, there are a number of activities that are required to be carried out by specific groups or institutions. In this model, individuals produce necessary goods and services in various institutions, and roles that correlate with the norms of the society (Gingrich, 1999; Durkheim, 1997; Spencer, 1971).

Thus, one of the key ideas in Structural Functionalism is that society is made-up of groups or institutions, which are cohesive, share common norms, and have a definitive culture (Durkheim, 1997; Durk, 2007). The theory also posits that a society is cohesive if it consists of various intermediate groups which share the same norms. And that the higher the level of integration between these intermediate groups, the more cohesive society will be as a whole. The absence of social cohesion can result in greater violence and disorientation in the society (Durk, 2007).

In the context of this study, the norm of the society is that youth are the strength and labour force of the society and are thus expected to be necessarily involved in any productive activity in the society. The strategic role of the youth in the sustenance of agricultural production is a fact that has been stressed by many scholars and reports (Arokoyo, 1992; Okeowo et. al., 1999; Mgbada, 2000; The National Youth Development Policy, 2001). Any deviation from this norm therefore would possibly lead to disorientation as can be seen in the present situation of poor agricultural production in Benue State. Structural functionalism theory sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Gerber, 2010).

Without any doubt, the youth are regarded as a vital source of manpower for development, and constitute a very significant work force in rural communities (Malatest, 2002; Odhiambo, 2001; Ommani, 2011). Adejare and Arimi (2013), noted that agriculture in Nigeria is faced with several problems particularly lack of labour. They stressed that labour is the most important input in agricultural production because it is required in carrying out farm activities such as land clearing, ploughing, weeding, fertilizer application, pesticide application, harvesting and other farming activities. Kayode and Ogunmola (2013), emphasized that non-recognition of the role of youth in agricultural production in Nigeria was one of the major constraints against greater agricultural production in the country.

One of the major criticisms of the structural functionalism theory is that, the theory does much to explain why certain aspects of society continue as they always have, despite some phenomena being clearly less beneficial for society as a whole. Structural functionalism thus falls short in explaining opposition to social institutions and social structure by those being oppressed or who are negatively affected by some institutions and structures. The theory believes in status quo maintenance, yet change could be an important factor in moving the society forward. Ritzer (2012), particularly criticised Durkheim for assuming that societies have needs and that social structures automatically emerge to respond to these needs.

This theory was however adopted for this work because it proposed integration of all parts of the society to maintain social stability. It is obvious that apathy of the youth, instead of proper integration into agricultural production, portends great danger and is a problem that requires urgent and appropriate steps to address. Durkheim believes that division of labour could increase interdependence of members of the society and so reinforce social solidarity. In order to produce goods and services more efficiently, members of the industrial societies specialized in particular roles. Members of the society are dependent on each other's specialized skills and this interdependence forms the basis for organic solidarity. Durkheim

believes that a situation of “anomie” arises where social controls are weak and moral obligations, which constrain individuals and regulate their behaviour, are not strong enough to function effectively (Haralambos & Horborn, 1991).

The choice of the functionalist theory is justifiable because the norm of society in this theory states that, the youth are the strength and labour force of society including Nigeria and should be actively involved in any productive activities including agricultural production for accelerated growth in the sector, so as to bring about economic growth, ensure food security and reduce poverty not just in Tiv land of Benue state but in Nigeria. The study addressed the shortcomings of the functionalist theory by advocating for strengthened social controls to instil in the youth the requisite moral obligation to enable them function effectively and bring about growth in agricultural production and other sectors of the Nigeria economy.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that have been used in carrying out this research study. The chapter is organised under the following headings: Research design, study Area, population and sample, sample size and sampling procedure, methods of data collection, techniques for data analysis, and limitations of the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used two designs; it made use of the survey design and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The two designs are chosen because the strength of one design (survey) is another design's (Focus Group Discussion) weakness. While on one hand, survey has the strength of obtaining information about a larger population through questionnaires; it has the weakness of not being able to probe peoples' opinions. Case study on the other hand can explore deeper opinions of a selected group of people, through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Therefore, the two designs are adopted due to their complementary nature. The weakness of FGD is the strength of Survey design and vice versa.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

Tiv are a group of people living mostly in Benue state and the Benue valley in North Central Nigeria. However, considerable populations are indigenes of Taraba and Nassarawa states (Sambe, 2014; Makar, 1975). The Tiv people are the descendants of Tiv the son of Takuruku Anyamagenga, and they are believed to have migrated from *Swem*, a location somewhere around the Nigeria-Cameroon mountain axis, close to a place called Ugbe in Kwande Local Government Area. Around 1456, they started to move towards the Benue valley and have now spread across the North central region of Nigeria (Makar, 1975).

Several reasons have been advanced on the migration of Tiv to this area. One of the reasons has been that the Tiv people being predominantly farmers found the vegetation in the

present Lower Benue River basin suitable for agriculture and migrated to it. The second reason put forward is that the population of the Tiv grew very rapidly, and since they lived in sparse settlements and practiced the shifting cultivation type of agriculture, they found the area in Benue valley irresistible (Bohannon, 1953).

In addition, the increase in their population might have increased their military capability as well, giving them effective advantage over their neighbours. This view is particularly strong because all the small ethnic groups around Tiv that were reluctant to move were either encircled and remain within the Tiv territory up to date or were defeated and pushed further. The migration of the Tiv people into the Benue river basin coincided with the military decline of the Kwararafa Confederacy in the nineteenth century. Thus, the Tiv did not find much resistance to their settlement in their present position (Makar, 1975; Dzeremo 2002). Migrations during the pre-colonial times were largely carried out in groups and batches, since land was largely not scarce. In such a case, the various clans or families in front spearheaded the migration into virgin lands where resistance was weak.

The Tiv have two lineages: Ichongu and Ipusu. But for administrative purposes, Tiv land was divided into five intermediated councils; namely Jemgbagh (Gboko, Buruku and Tarka LGAs), Jechira (Vanseikya and Konshisha LGAs), Sankera (Ukum, Logo and Katsina-Ala LGAs), Kwande (Kwande and Ushongo LGAs), and Minda (Makurdi, Guma, Gwer-East and Gwer-West LGAs). In Benue state, the Tiv comprises 14 Local Government Areas, namely: Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Logo, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Makurdi, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya Local Government Areas.

Going by the 2006 population census estimates, the Tiv speaking area has an estimated population of 2,807,285 out of the total 4,253,641 in Benue State representing about 2/3 of the total population of the State. The Benue State Population has a growth rate of 3.2 percent. In 2013, the population of the Tiv speaking area of Benue State was estimated to be

3,571,904 out of 5,377,461 of Benue State, calculated at 3.0 population growth rate (NPC, 2009). The population projection also indicates that 34 percent of the total population in the Tiv speaking area of Benue State was the youth (persons aged between 15 and 34 years) (NPC, 2009).

The Tiv speaking area is bordered in the North by Nasarawa and Taraba States, to the East Cross-River State. In the south it is bordered by Otukpo and Oju Local Government Areas of Benue State while in the West it is bordered by Apa and Agatu Local Government Areas of Benue State as well as Nasarawa State.

The topography of the Tiv speaking area of Benue State is mainly an undulating plain with sporadic hills scattered across the area. The drainage system in the area is essentially made up of the second largest river in Nigeria, the River Benue with its several tributaries that traverse the area. Generally, based on Koppen's Scheme of Classification, the Tiv speaking area of Benue State lies within the AW Climate, and experiences two distinct seasons, the wet/rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season lasts from April to October with annual rainfall in the range of 100 - 200mm. The dry season begins in November and ends in March. Temperatures fluctuate between 23 – 37 degrees Celsius in the year. The south-eastern part of the state adjoining the Obudu-Cameroun mountain range, however, has a cooler climate similar to that of the Jos Plateau (BNARDA, 2006; Our Benue Our Future, 2009).

The vegetation of the area consists of tropics and rain forests which have tall trees and tall grasses that occupy both the western and southern fringes while the Guinea savannah is found in the eastern and northern parts with mixed grasses and trees that are generally of average height (BNARDA, 2006; Our Benue Our Future, 2009).

The state's main geologic formations are sandy-loam shelf basement complex and alluvial plains. These, together with its location in the transition belt between the north and



south ecologies of Nigeria and a favourable rainfall pattern, account for its support for a wide variety of crops (BNARDA, 2006; Our Benue Our Future, 2009).

The predominant occupation of Tiv people is farming. The major agricultural products found in this area include various species of cereals such as rice, guinea corn, maize and soya beans. In addition, root and tuber crops are grown in the area. These include yams of various species, cassava and sweet potatoes. Fruits trees of various species are also grown in the area such as orange, mango, guava, pawpaw etc. Again, vegetable fruits such as pepper and tomatoes are produced in the Tiv speaking area of Benue State, especially during rainy seasons (BNARDA, 2006; Our Benue Our Future, 2009).

In recent times, however, there has been a general outcry about poor agricultural production in Benue State with many people blaming it on the decline of youth-participation in the activities of the sector. Many people at this moment are in a serious doubt as to whether the State is indeed living up to its nickname as the “Food Basket of the Nation” (Our Benue Our Future, 2009; The Nation, 2013; Ahungwa, Umeh and Muktar, 2013; Daily Trust, 2012). This study, therefore, investigates the level of youth participation in agriculture in the study area and unravel, the concomitant causes and effects of such levels of participation on agricultural production in the area.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

Generally, the population of the Tiv speaking area of Benue State is estimated to be 3,571,904 people by the year 2013 (NPC, 2009). However, this study is specifically concerned with the youth with population of 451, 671, representing about 34per cent of the Total population of the area (NPC, 2009).

Although this study is designed to cover the population of the entire Tiv people of Benue state, due to the vastness of the area, only six (6) local governments out of the fourteen (14) covering Tiv land have been randomly selected through cluster sampling technique for

this study. The selected local government areas were Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Ukum, Buruku, Gwer-West and Tarka. The projected population of the youth in the six selected local government areas by the year 2013 is 451,671 (NPC, 2009). The distribution of the population among the six selected local government areas is as summarized in table one (1) below:

**Table 3.1: Population Distribution per LGA (2013 population estimate)**

S/N	Senatorial District	LGA	Total Population	Youth Pop = 34% of Total Pop
1	North-East	Katsina-Ala	227,311	77,286
		Konshisha	278,557	94,709
		Ukum	266,861	90,733
2	North-West	Buruku	253,618	86,230
		Gwer-East	207,432	70,527
		Tarka	94,664	32,186
		1,378,443	451,671	

Source: NPC, 2009; Author's Compilation, 2016.

### 3.4 Sampling

#### 3.4.1 Sample Size Determination

Sample size for the study was 400 respondents. This was scientifically generated using the sample size determination formula according to Yamane (1967). This was done as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size required,

N = Population size of youth in the six LGAs,

e = Tolerable error (5%).

$$n = \frac{451,671}{1 + 451,671(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{451,671}{1 + 451,671(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{451,671}{1 + 1129.18}$$

$$n = \frac{451,671}{1130.18}$$

$$n = 399.6$$

$$n = 400 \text{ (in approximation)}$$

### 3.4.2 Allocation of Sample Size per LGA

Allocation of the sample size per each Local Government Area was done as specified by Bourley (1964) for population allocation formula. This was done as follows:

$$nh = \frac{n \times Nh}{N}$$

Where nh = Sample size per LGA

Nh = Total population in each LGA

N = Total population size

n = Total sample size

$$\therefore nh = \frac{400 \times 77,286}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{30914400}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 68.44$$

$$nh = 68 \text{ (Katsina-Ala LGA).}$$

$$nh = \frac{400 \times 94,709}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{37883600}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 83.9$$

$$nh = 84 \text{ (Konshisha LGA).}$$

$$nh = \frac{400 \times 90,733}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{36293200}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 80.4$$

$$nh = 80 \text{ (Ukum LGA).}$$

$$nh = \frac{400 \times 86,230}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{34492000}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 76.4$$

$$nh = 76 \text{ (Buruku LGA).}$$

$$nh = \frac{400 \times 70,527}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{28120800}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 62.5$$

$$nh = 63 \text{ (Gwer-East LGA).}$$

$$nh = \frac{400 \times 32,186}{451,671}$$

$$nh = \frac{12874400}{451,671}$$

$$nh = 28.5$$

$$nh = 29 \text{ (Tarka LGA).}$$

Therefore, Katsina-Ala=68, Ukum =80, Buruku=76, Gwer-East= 63, Konshisha= 84, Tarka=29, Totalling=400 respondents

### 3.4.3 Sampling Techniques

Several sampling techniques were employed in this study. First, the population of the Tiv speaking area of Benue State was divided into two (2) clusters according to the two (2) Senatorial Districts (Benue North-East and Benue North-West Senatorial Districts) in the area. Thereafter, the simple random sampling technique was employed to select 3 Local Governments Areas from both Zones and then three Council Wards in each of the Local Governments Areas and two Villages in each Council Ward. In this way, a total of 36 villages were selected from the study locations for the purpose of administering questionnaires and carrying out Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and In-depth interviews.

Six individuals were asked to make random choices from a pack of fourteen (14) squeezed pieces of paper representing the names of the fourteen local government areas in the Tiv speaking area (Benue North-East and Benue North-West Senatorial Districts). The first six selected local government areas were considered. Using the selection with replacement technique in order to ensure randomness, the process was continued until the six local government areas were selected. During the processes if an initial selected local government area was chosen, it was ignored, making sure that only those that were not selected before were taken into account.

From the process, six local government areas were selected. These are: Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Ukum Local Government Areas from the Benue North-East Senatorial District. In the Benue North-West Senatorial District the selected Local Government Areas are: Buruku, Gwer-East and Tarka. A similar process was done in order to select both the Council Wards and Villages for the study. These techniques were employed to avoid any form of bias in the choice of the Local Government Areas, council wards and villages. (see details on table 2 below).

**Table 3.2: Study Sampling Distribution**

S/N	Senatorial District	LGA	Council Ward	Village	Sample (FGD)
1	North-East	Katsina-Ala	Kyurav-Tiev I	Ikowe	11(9)
				Ayua	12(8)
			Mbajir	Sai	11(10)
				Abako	12(9)
			Mbatyula/Mberek	Chanchaji	11(10)
				Kenvanger	11(9)
		Konshisha	Iwarnyam	Agidi	14(10)
				Awajir	14(10)
			Mbanor	Mhambe	14(9)
				Angbaaye	14(8)
		Ukum	Mbatem/T/Agberegba	Iber	14(10)
				Tse-Leke1	14(8)
			Borikyo	Sankera	13(10)
				Gyemwase	14(8)
			Mbayenge	Joortar	14(10)
				Tsemelabo	13(9)
			Uyam	Tse-Ayakpa	13(8)
				Tse-Afati	13(8)
2	North-West	Buruku	Mbatyough	Diwa	13(10)
				Agbenor	13(9)
			Shorov	Tyowanye	12(10)
				Garagboughor	12 (9)
			Mbaya	Biliji	13(9)
				Adogo	13(8)
		Gwer-East	Ikyonov	Austoma	11(9)
				Village	
			Mbaiase	Aliade	11(10)
				Ulam	10(10)
			Mbalom	Anhwange	11(9)
				Ayar	10(8)
		Tarkaa	Mbaajirakaa	Jordoon	10(8)
				Uku	4(8)
			Mbachaverkyodo	Pipeline	5(9)
				Asukunya	5(9)
			Mbakwaghkem	Shelevaan	5(8)
				Jovimenge	5(9)
				Chemtso	5(7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>400 (324)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Further, the sample size for each local government area was shared equally among the villages in the three selected Council Wards of the local government area. The remainder was shared one slot each to villages according to alphabetical order. After determination of the number of respondents per each village, the simple random technique was employed to draw actual sample for the study. This was done through the use of “Lucky-dip”, where the inscriptions YES and NO were written on pieces of paper and dropped in a container and thoroughly shaken to allow the people to make random choices. Those who got “YES” were considered while those with “NO” were ignored. To ensure randomness, the “selection with replacement” technique was used. This process was repeated until the already determined number per each village was obtained. Thus, a sample of 400 respondents was drawn from across the 36 villages in 6 Local Government Areas in Tiv land.

Purposive sampling technique was also used to select heads of households for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informants Interview (KII). In the process, 10 key informants (Members of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources) were selected for KII while 324 individuals (heads of households and community leaders) were selected across the 36 study locations for the purpose of FGD. All together, a total of 734 respondents were contacted.

The summary of the sampling techniques is presented in Table 2 above with the exception of the ten (10) staff from the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

The method of collecting data for this research was basically primary. The primary data were collected through questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and Interview. From the initial 400 questionnaires distributed, 8 of them were not returned while 392 of them were returned and answered properly. The unreturned questionnaire constituted only 2% of the

total questionnaire and was considered too insignificant to distort the research process. Consequently, the 392 returned questionnaire were considered as the base figure for analysis in this work. Thus, the analyses and generalizations of this study are based on the 392 questionnaire.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was considered in this research to facilitate easy management of data. It was divided into six main parts, namely: the socio-demographic data of respondents and level of youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land, impact of youth involvement in agriculture on agricultural production, constraints hindering youth involvement in agriculture, strategies used by government to increase youth involvement in agricultural production and how youth involvement in agricultural production can be encouraged for accelerated agricultural production.

The questionnaire constitutes both open ended and close ended options. The open-ended options allow respondents to answer certain questions in their own words in reflection of their personal views. On the other hand, the close-ended option allows them to select from options provided by the researcher.

The procedure for the data collection involved the training of a research assistant in each of the Local Government Areas, who assisted the researcher in the distribution of the questionnaire. Where the respondents were not literate enough to fill in the questionnaire, they were allowed to select interpreters of their choice who helped explain and completed the questionnaire for them.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus Group Discussions were used to collect qualitative data. This method was used because of the advantage of getting complementary information from discussants (heads of



households and community leaders) with the information obtained from respondents through questionnaire regarding to the situation of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.

The first step in data collection was to obtain an introductory letter from the Head of Department of Sociology, Benue State University, Makurdi, after which a preliminary trip was made to the study areas. The main purpose of which was to enable the researcher to obtain permission from the community leaders and make contact with groups and get familiarised with the communities and members of the sampled communities for study. Each Local Government Area was visited on a separate day as prearranged. In this way, the necessary arrangements for successful and smooth collection of data were made.

After creation of the necessary rapport, some research assistants were recruited along with a secretary, recorder and community guides per each local government area selected for the study. The research assistants were assigned the responsibility of mobilizing the groups and persons for the purpose of Focused Group Discussions and administration of questionnaires in each area of their coverage. Funds were made available for the research assistants to take care of logistics during the task of the research within their local government areas.

In the process of the data collection, the researcher and his assistants visited the selected council wards and determined focus group members through his relationship with the people. In each of the council wards, two focus group meetings were held and lasted for about an hour to one hour 30 minutes. Women held their sessions separately from the men. The discussions were held either in market squares or school premises. The sitting arrangement was a semi-circular formation to facilitate face to face contact among discussants.

The discussion began after welcoming the focus group members and explaining the objectives of the study to them and also urging them to respond to the questions freely. To

effectively conduct the discussion, the researcher engaged two research assistants who were recording the discussions while she was taking notes. The assistants also assisted in preparing the venues for discussions. Data collection instruments involved the use of tape recorders, phones, note books, and pen.

Altogether, thirty six (36) FGDs were conducted with three hundred and twenty four (324) participants and each group discussion constituted about 8-10 people. The researcher wanted ten people per group discussion but in some areas, the group members were not up to ten so the researcher met with eight, nine and ten people depending on the number of people that availed themselves. In some cases, more than ten persons availed themselves but the researcher, with the aid of the research assistants, peacefully resolved the issues by explaining to them that only ten (10) people were required for the discussion.

### **3.5.3 Key Informants Interview (KII)**

As in the FGD, after obtaining a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Sociology, Benue State University, Makurdi, a preliminary trip was made to the study areas to enable the researcher to make contact with informants and familiarise with them. An interview guide was considered to obtain data from key informants such as the staff of the State Ministry of Agriculture. This particular instrument was considered essentially because of the need to allow greater freedom for discussants to express their views on topical questions in the study, so that certain facts that might have been ignored could be revealed. On the whole, the choice of these two key instruments for collecting data in the study was targeted at obtaining objective and complementarily views towards the subject under investigation by both the respondents and key informants.

All scheduled visits were done according to prearranged dates to ensure that no date coincided with another. However, due to unavoidable circumstances some scheduled visits were cancelled and rescheduled. The scheduled visits also included a visit to the staff of State

Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, as well as BNARDA offices located in the local government areas.

The process of data collection required the researcher contacting the selected key informants in their home, farm or market square for the interview. During the interview, the researcher asked searching questions to ensure that the data generated had rich information. Data gathering gadgets were tape recorders, phones and writing materials.

### **3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The analysis of data in the study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitative data was derived from questionnaire responses as offered by respondents, while analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency tables and cross-tabulation. The reason for the choice of this technique of data analysis was the desire to facilitate easy understanding of issues under investigation. The analysis work was primarily done using set objectives as a guide.

The qualitative data was derived from FGD with heads of households and community leaders and key informants comprising the staff of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. For FGD, analysis was done through reading and listening to the discussions and then determining where there was agreement and disagreement regarding a topic. The researcher also identified the different positions that emerged regarding each topic and assessed the level at which each member assumed a position and analysed it. Data analysis for KII involved transcribing the information that was got from key informants.

The use of qualitative analysis permitted greater insight into the practical realities of the situations under investigation through unambiguous and direct responses from the discussants. In other words the qualitative data was gotten from the “*horse’s mouth*” rather than from arithmetical manipulations.

### **3.7 Problems Encountered**

This study encountered some problems. First, is the problem of how to cover the study area (Tiv land) which is geographically vast. It was practically impossible for the researcher to cover every community in all the local government areas. The researcher solved this problem by dividing the study area into two clusters corresponding with the two senatorial districts (Benue North-East and Benue North-West) constituting the Tiv land. In each of the zones, three local governments were randomly selected. As a result, the researcher was able to manage the vastness of the study area to his or her advantage and get the required data without going to every local government area.

Another problem encountered was how to analyse data from Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews. The problem was however resolved through reading of Sociological texts on qualitative analysis of data especially in relation to FGD and in-depth interviews. Also, professional advice was solicited from some lecturers in Sociology department on the interpretation and analysis of FGD and KII.

Again, this work was limited to the rural areas even though agricultural production is also prevalent in urban areas. The researcher resolved this issue by considering the fact that, according to Are, Igbokwe and Asadu (2010) and Erebor (1998), factors of production in agriculture are land, labour, capital and management; and they maintain that the most important among them in crop production is land which is much prevalent in the rural areas, particularly in Tiv land of Benue state.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, questionnaire responses are presented in tables and analyzed to draw out the views of respondents. The simple percentage method is used for the analysis of the work. In addition to that, the qualitative data, drawn from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with heads of household and interview with key informants is also presented.

#### 4.1 Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

This section carries the socio-demographic data of respondent. Several variables have been considered, viz: age, sex, marital status, educational qualification and religion and the data is presented in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents**

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency N = 392</b>	<b>% = 100</b>
a.	<b>Age (years)</b>		
	15-20	88	22
	21-25	102	26
	26-30	124	32
	31-35	78	20
b.	<b>Sex</b>		
	Male	177	45.2
	Female	215	54.8
c.	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	165	42.1
	Married	227	57.9
d.	<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
	No formal Education	137	35
	Primary School	51	13
	Secondary School	161	41
	Tertiary	43	11
e.	<b>Religion</b>		
	Christianity	313	80
	Muslim	4	1
	Traditional	75	19
f.	<b>Occupation</b>		
	Civil Service	24	6
	Farming	141	36
	Business/Trading	47	12
	Artisans	59	15
	Student	121	31

Source: Field Survey, 2016

N = Total number of respondents from the questionnaire

The demographic data presented above shows that, in respect to age, the young population structure explains the fertility rate in Tiv land. The high fertility rate also suggests enough labour force but the problem was that most of the young population was not in full-time agriculture but in part-time agriculture by providing farm-hands to their parents and guardians occasionally, some by sending money to their parents or uncles for farming and others by selling their labours for money or helping relatives anytime they want to render assistance to them. Farming was not their primary aim of focus but occasionally involve in farming. The highest number of respondents is 32% (214) in the age group 26-30 years. This is followed by those in the age group of 21-25 years which is 26% (102) of the respondents. The next is those in age group 15-20 years which is 22% (88) and lastly, 20% (78) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 31-35 years. The trend of age distribution here between the ages of 31-35 years old were matured youth and most of them were married and they were the least contacted during the interview which suggests that youths within this age category were more prone to deserting the villages.

In relation to gender, 54.3% (215) females out of 392 respondents slightly dominated the males who were 45.2% (177). This population suggests that, in the rural Tiv communities, there are more young females than males suggesting that the males are more prone to deserting the villages than the females.

On marital status, the data showed that 57.9% (227) were married while 42.1% (165) of the respondents were single or divorced. Based on educational qualification of respondents 35% (137) had no form of formal education, 13% (51) had primary education, 41% (161) had secondary education while 11% (43) respondents had tertiary education. The educational qualification of respondents showed that, those with no form of formal education and secondary school education were more with the percentages of 35% and 41% respectively. Those with tertiary education had the least percentage (11%) suggesting that the youth with

tertiary education were more prone to deserting the rural communities maybe in search of greener pastures in the cities.

On religious background of the respondents, data indicated that Christianity is the dominant religion in Tiv land with 80% (313). This is followed by traditional religion with 19% (75), while Islamic religion had the least with 1% (4). This data clearly demonstrates that, the Tiv people are mostly Christians with only a handful of traditionalists and very few Muslims.

Lastly, data on occupation of respondents showed that, majority of the respondents were farmers because out of the 392 youth respondents contacted during the questionnaire, 36% (141) were farmers, 6% (24) were civil servants while 12% (47) of the respondents were into business or trading. Also, 15% (59) were artisans while 31% (121) were students.

It should be noted however that, although farmers appear to have the highest percentage of 36% in the study area, they may actually be the least if the respondents were grouped between farming and non-farming occupation. However, it is important to note that, the respondents who were students with 31% (121) also serve as farm-hands during holidays and respondents that were engaged in business/trading, civil servants and artisans are also involved in some form of agricultural production, although not as a primary means of livelihood but as part-time farmers.

#### **4.2 Days of Visit for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

In each of the local government areas, FGDs were scheduled for different dates (See Appendix V). It was scheduled that FGDs would be first conducted in Katsina-Ala LGA before Ukum LGA. However, there was a slight change in the execution of the exercise. As the research team proceeded to carry out the exercise, they conducted FGD in two villages in Katsina-Ala (Ikowe and Ayua) and enroute to other sampled villages in Katsina-Ala, the team had to pass through the sampled villages in Ukum LGA; as such the team conducted FGDs in

these villages before proceeding to carry out the exercise in the other sampled villages in Katsina-Ala LGA. Visits were done and FGDs conducted as scheduled in other LGAs.

**Table 4.2: Actual days of visit for FGD**

Table 4.2: Actual days of visit for FGD							
S/N	Senatorial District	LGA	Council Ward	Village	Date		
1	Benue North-East	Katsina-Ala	Kyurav-Tiev I	Ikowe	23/1/2016		
				Ayua	23/1/2016		
				Mbajir	Sai	24/1/2016	
			Mbatyula/Mberev	Abako	24/1/2016		
				Chanchaji	24/1/2016		
				Kenvanger	24/1/2016		
			Konshisha	Iwarnyam	Agidi	16/1/2016	
					Awajir	16/1/2016	
				Mbanor	Mhambe	16/1/2016	
			Ukum	Borkyo	Angbaaye	16/1/2016	
					Iber	16/1/2016	
		Tse-Leke			16/1/2016		
		Mbayenge		Sankera	23/1/2016		
				Gyemwase	23/1/2016		
		Uyam	Jootar	23/1/2016			
			Tsemelabo	23/1/2016			
		2	Benue North-West	Buruku	Mbatyough	Tse-Ayakpa	23/1/2016
						Tse-Afati	23/1/2016
Diwa	27/2/2016						
Mbaya	Agbenor				27/2/2016		
	Tyowanye				27/2/2016		
	Garagboughor				27/2/2016		
Gwer-East	Ikyonov			Biliji	27/2/2016		
				Adogo	27/2/2016		
	Mbaiase			Austoma	09/1/2016		
				Aliade	09/1/2016		
Tarka	Mbalom	Ulam	09/1/2016				
		Anhwange	09/1/2016				
		Ayar	09/1/2016				
		Jordoon	09/1/2016				
	Mbachaverkyondo	Mbaajirakaa	Uku	12/3/2016			
		Pipeline	12/3/2016				
		Asukunya	12/3/2016				
		Shelevaan	12/3/2016				
Mbakwaghkem	Jovimenger	12/3/2016					
	Chemtso	12/3/2016					
State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources					15/3/2016		
Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority					17/3/2016		

Source: Field Survey, 2016



### 4.3 Level of Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv Land

This section of the study seeks to ascertain the status of youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land. It was discovered that, out of the 392 youth respondents as shown on Table 4.3 below, only 35.7% (140) were highly involved or on full time involvement in agricultural production. On the other hand, majority of the youth respondents [64.3% (252)] involved in agricultural production, but at a low or part time level.

**Table 4.3: Nature of Youth Involvement in Agricultural Production in Tiv-land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Full-time	140	35.7
Part-time	252	64.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

This part time participation of youth in agricultural production in Tiv land in Benue State has contributed to low productivity of agricultural products. Focus Group Discussion and Key Informants from the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources affirmed the results obtained from the questionnaires. A focus group member strongly maintained that, youths in Tiv land detest agricultural production, as such, perceive agricultural production as a waste of time and effort. Discussants generally believed agriculture is seen by youth as an old fashion activity reserved for the elderly uneducated persons. During a focus group discussion session in Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State, a Priest working in the area said:

My sister, here in Gwer-East Local Government, we are living with only Adam (s) and Eve (s) and the smallest children who are in school. The moment the youth get any qualification, it becomes a ticket for them to run to the city and only come home occasionally to offer a little helping hand to their aged parents on the farm for a few days, collect food stuff and money for their up-keep in the city or the youth can come in during burials. The issue with the youth in this community is that, they are doing nothing in the cities but to come back and be committed to agricultural production is not the case.

Also a discussant from Agidi village in Iwarnyam ward in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State noted that:

Youth do not like to be in agricultural production but occasionally come home when they are hungry to carry food and collect money with a claim that they detest agricultural production and would prefer to have a job in the city and make fast money without relative stress and pains. The youth claim that man's life is too short to be wasted in the farm but sometimes they follow us to the farm to give a helping hand especially when they want food and money. Some of them come into the community to sell their labour and go back to the city.

In likewise manner, an adult male group member from Gwer-East local government area in response to a question "do you think the youth are involved in agricultural production in your household?" said;

Our children are no longer interested in farming. They only want to "palm" their hair and be going around the streets only to come to the house and eat and go back. My son even though he has gone to school up to diploma level, but there is no job for him, not even in our local government area. But to join me on the farm he does not want. Though, occasionally we go to the farm together when he is around but for him to own a farm and settle down is not possible. He only prefer to join me occasionally to help me out but the commitment is not there at all (FGD, 2016).

Again, in response to the same question, a group member from Abako, Mbajir Council ward in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area said;

... making of heaps ridges, planting and harvesting at appropriate times is not usually possible with us because our children are not ready to follow us in farm work again. If they manage to go to the farm for two days in a week, they have done so much. The truth of the matter is that our children are always having one engagement here and there so there is usually something somewhere to take them away from farming and nothing good comes out of such engagements. They still depend on us for everything. But to pay attention to farming is a problem. Most of the time you don't even see them; their interest is not just in farming but elsewhere, even though when they are around they can follow me to the farm (FGD, 2016).

It can be deduced from the above statements that the level of youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land is very low. But if the youth who have the energy to take up agricultural production are not showing commitment, food production

will be low and the country will be in a serious jeopardy in the nearest future because the youth are a bridge between the present and the future.

These findings seem to agree with the proportions of Ekong (2003), Isa (2008) and our Benue our Future (2009). Ekong (2003), reiterated that youth in Benue State have participated minimally in agricultural production in recent times. This according to Ekong (2003), is the youth perception that agricultural production is a waste of time, effort and unprofitable. Isa (2009), similarly stressed that the youth have lost interest in agricultural production in recent times and as a result, minimally involve in agricultural production activities or abstain from farming activities. Benue State government in her development policy blue print, Our Benue Our Future (2009), lamented the little involvement of Benue youth into agricultural production, noting that the raw energy of youth in recent times has been channelled to other unproductive activities rather than agricultural production. However, it is important to note that youth serve as farm hands and sell their labour to farmers.

This data also indicate a depleted labour force in agricultural production, leading to low productivity in Tiv land of Benue state. These were the views of the youths themselves. It can be categorically concluded that youth in Tiv land of Benue State are participating in agricultural production on part time basis, leading to low productivity in Tiv land of Benue state.

Focus Group Discussions also pointed out that most of the farmers in the study area were farming on part time basis. The members agreed that it is difficult to find full time farmers who are young people. It is mostly the old people who take farming on full time basis as the youth are always looking elsewhere for greener pastures.

An informant from Tse-Afati village in Uyam council ward of Ukum local government area had this to say:

...youth generally look down on agriculture...they don't regard it as their full time job...they feel they can make money by working in big offices...The problem here is that those big offices of their dreams seem to be limited in relation to the number of youth in Tiv land. This however, does not mean youth in Benue state are not involved in agricultural production because the civil servants send in money to us to help them pay for work done on their farms. Apart from that, it is the same youth that we look up to for planting and even weeding, harvesting and transporting...The problem with our youth is that they don't want to sit down and fully participate in doing all these things and anytime the youth are not available, our farm work suffers (KII, 2016).

**Table 4.4: Type of Agricultural production Practiced by Youth in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Subsistence	105	75.0
Commercial	435	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Furthermore, the study sought to know the type of agricultural production practiced by youth in Tiv land. Table 4.4 above shows that the youth in Tiv land were mostly found to be involved in subsistence type of agricultural production [75% (105)]; only a few youth [35 (25%)] were involved in commercial agricultural production.

Focus Group Discussions also indicated that most youth who practice agriculture operate at subsistence level. They produce just for family consumption, while occasionally few crops may be sold to buy household items and other food items needed. The members agreed that commercial farming is not common as farmers do not have funds to produce crops on a large scale.

In a KII, it was revealed that most youth were small scale farmers. According to an informant in Uku village in Mbajirakaa council ward in Tarka Local Government Area:

...most youth here produce in small quantities...if it's rice they may cultivate from 1 to 20 bags...tomatoes are also produced in baskets, not more than 100 baskets per farmer...a single farmer does not have the capacity to produce and single-handedly supply to industries... (KII, 2016).

This finding seems to corroborate the studies by Ega (1988). He found that farmers in developing countries such as Nigeria produce mostly on small scale level for subsistence consumption. Since they are usually poor and uneducated, they tend to lack funds and technical know-how needed for large scale production. This tends to be the bane of agricultural production in developing countries.

This study further investigated the ways that youth are involved in agricultural production. Out of the 392 youths that were contacted, 20.4% (80) were involved in supply of labour, 15.3% (60) were involved in initiation of agricultural projects, 50 (12.8%) were involved in giving financial support to their relatives for agricultural production, 15.3% (60) donated agricultural materials such as fertilizers, pesticides and so forth to their relatives in the communities for improvement in agricultural production, while it was found that 36.2% (142) were involved in anything that they could lay their hand on but not agricultural production.

Focused Group Discussions and Key Informants interviews corroborate this view. According to an informant in AUSTOMA village, Gwer-East Local government area,

Some of our children go into the farm and help us, some send money or buy fertilizers and pesticides and send to us but majority of our children prefer to stay at home and do not care to go to the farm or do anything in the morning, while we are going to the farm, they will be sleeping and by the time you come back from the farm you will not see them, until late in the night when they will come home drunk and ask for food... (FGD, 2016).

This is in line with Ajayi (2006), who asserts that youth involvement in agricultural production entails their supply of labour, donation of materials for agricultural production, initiating agricultural projects, giving financial support for agricultural production. The problem here is that, majority of the youth are not getting involved. 36.2% (142) out of 392 contacted are involved in agricultural activities. This does not speak well of the future of

agricultural production process in our society, because youth who are energetic should be prepared to carry out full-time agriculture especially those that have no white kola jobs.

### **Farming systems practiced by youth in Tiv land**

The study revealed the type of farming system practiced by the 140 youths involved in agricultural production on full time basis. It revealed that 49.3% (69) respondents, which were the majority, involved in crop production, while 22.1% (31) of them were involved in animal breeding. Further, 28.6% (40) respondents participated in both crop production and animal breeding.

Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews further confirmed in strong terms that youth are mostly engaged in crop production than animal breeding and not a combination of the two. Crops such as rice, yam, cassava, tomatoes are cultivated by the youth. The discussants believed that agricultural ventures that relate to breeding of animals are not favoured by the youth, though some may keep livestock such as goats, pigs and chickens on a small scale in addition to the crop they produce.

Information from KII also corroborated the above findings from questionnaire, and Focus Group members. According to a key informant:

...the youth do not keep live stock on large scale like the Fulani people, as a major agricultural activity, instead they till the soil and produce crops notably yams, rice, cassava, fruits and so on...Some youth farmers however keep goats, pigs and chickens on relatively low scale...(KII, 2016).

This implies that most youth in Tiv land who are farmers participate more in crop production than animal breeding or both. This may be in keeping with the fact that Tivland has abundant fertile soil favourable for crop production (Our Benue Our Future 2009). Also the poor nature of farmers in Benue may not allow them to engage in animal breeding which is economically more costly than crop production (Ega, 1988).

It was important to ascertain the stages of youth involvement in crop production because crop production process involves land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, transporting the harvested products to the house and later moving them to the market.

**Table 4.5: Stages of Crop Production mostly involved in by the Youth in Tiv-land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Land preparation	63	16.1
Planting	30	7.7
Weed control	51	13.0
Fertilizer application	20	5.1
Harvesting/Transportation	55	14.0
Land preparation/marketing	103	26.3
Land pre/planting/weed control/harvesting	70	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.5 above presented various stages of crop production among youth in Benue State. It was discovered that land preparation and marketing of crops or products had the highest number of youth involvement with 26.3% (103). Land preparation had 16.1% (63) youth involvement, planting of crops has 13.0% (51) youth involvement. For fertilizer application on crops, 5.1% (20) of the youth were involved; harvesting and transportation of crop products from the farm to the barn and from the barn to the market had 14.0% (55); land preparation, planting of crops, weed control and harvesting had 17.9% (70).

The data indicated that the youths who were involved in land preparation and marketing of crop products had the highest percentage of 26.3% representing (103) youths out of 392. These were matured youth who were married and probably left every other stages of crops production with their wives and waited for the crops to be harvested, and transported to the market for them to sell. It was discovered that, the respondents who were engaged in all stages of crop production marketing such as land preparation, planting, weed control and harvesting of crops were between 26-30 years and were women. The implication here is that, most female youths involved in all stages of crop production except marketing while the male youths were involved in only land preparation and marketing. It was also discovered that the

youth were engaged in only harvesting and transportation were between the ages of 15-20 years old. These were very young males and females who were energetic and can move farm crops on their heads and wheel barrows. Transportation of farm crops in the rural communities in Tiv land is mostly done by very young youths. Transportation in the local communities in Tiv land involved moving of farm products on the heads and in wheel barrows, moving crops from the farm to the barns and then moving them from the barns to the market.

#### **4.4 Factors Determining Youth Involvement in Agricultural Production in Tiv-Land**

The study sought to ascertain the exact factors that determine youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land. Respondents generally were of the opinion that, the factors that determine youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv-land included:

- i. Nature of education
- ii. Rural/urban migration
- iii. Inadequate government support
- iv. Socialization

**Nature of Education:** It was discovered that the nature of educational system which does not lay emphasis on practical agricultural development of youth is faulty. Respondents were of the opinion that many schools in Tiv land of Benue State put more emphasis on theoretical agriculture without practicalizing it in the school garden so much that student graduate from schools knowing the names of crops without practically seeing or producing them in on the school garden. It was further discovered that many schools in Benue State do not have school garden and yet teach agricultural studies and that youth in the state, particularly in Tiv land were only involved in practical farming during holidays and as soon as they were out of school, they would prefer to stay back in the city where majority of the schools are located to find white collar jobs that are insufficient or non-existence to accommodate the teeming



population of youth that graduate from schools year in year out. This is in line with Chikezie et al. (2012), who argued that western education that is supposed to train young people theoretically and practically, basically put more emphasis on the theoretical aspects of agriculture and that many youth for instance graduate from schools believing that milk comes merely from the grocery store rather than having the understanding and knowledge that milk comes from a cow. Traxler (1990), concluded that the school year was determined around land preparation, planting, weed control and harvesting, and lessons were based around the topics in agricultural production so much that most youth had first-hand experience with agriculture which is not the case in the present educational system should serve as a motivating factor and not as a push factor, chasing the young people out of agricultural activities.

**Rural/Urban Migration:** Respondents generally maintained that the lack of infrastructural development such as good roads, good drinking water and electricity good housing inadequate health facilities does not encourage youth to stay in the rural communities and engage in agricultural production. Apart from that, the level of educational attainment of the youth makes them to move to urban centres for a good life and a means of livelihood other than stay back in the villages and involve in crop production without a good life. This could deprive rural areas of the labour power needed for agricultural production. It was also discovered that, the level of educational attainment pushes the youth to migrate from the rural areas to urban centres. Youths with higher qualifications were found to be leaving the rural areas but those without any form of education or have secondary school certificates find themselves irrelevant in cities and may chose to remain in the villages and engage in crop production. Considering the fact that it is difficult to see youth without any form of formal education, entails that youth migrate to cities to search for jobs and as a result, lack of labour force in the rural communities becomes a problem, while the cities are overcrowded with

youth which leads to increased crime rates and other anti-social behaviours such as drug addiction and so forth. This is in line with Chikezie et al. (2012) who argued that the more the youths are educated the more their apathy towards farming and consequently move to urban centres which reduces the farming population in the rural areas as a result of depleted labour force and reduces the quantity of farms in the rural areas while creating unpleasant situation in the cities such as high crime rates, prostitution, drug addiction and overcrowding of the cities and so forth.

**Inadequate Government Support:** it was also found that the support given by governments at the local, state and federal is not adequate. Respondents strongly emphasized that government interest in agricultural production and adequate encouragement to motivate the youth would certainly bring about increased youth involvement in agricultural production and consequently lead to improved agricultural production in Benue State and Nigeria as a whole. For instance, an informant during group discussion said:

Many factors could determine the level of youth involvement in agricultural production. Among these factors are the level of educational attainment by the youth, the manner in which most parents bring up their children to view agricultural production process particularly farming, migration from the rural areas to urban centres and of course the most important factor to me is government seriousness about youth empowerment, job creation and food production (FGD, 2016).

It is apparent that the level of education attainment of the youth influences youth involvement in agricultural production. This is so because, it was discovered that youths with some level of educational attainment migrate to urban centre in search of white collar jobs but those who were uneducated found themselves irrelevant in urban centres and may chose to remain in the rural areas and engage in farming.

Socialization of children also relate to educational attainment of youth and migration as youth are socialized by parents to think that educated people need white collar jobs, hence, the need to migrate from the rural areas to urban centres or cities in search of greener pastures.

Conclusively, government can influence or motivate youths to be involved in agricultural production and the action of government can either drive youth into agricultural production by providing the basic social amenities in the rural areas and empowering youth to be involved in agricultural production, or send the youth away from the rural areas to urban centres and away from farming and away from agricultural production by not providing the basic social amenities in the rural areas and by empowering the youths to be involved in agricultural production in Benue State.

This position is in line with the views of Ojediran (1997) who said that, “one of the major setbacks of agricultural production programmes is attributed to the inability of the local state and federal governments to integrate youth into the mainstream of numerous agricultural development programmes implemented over the years and to develop the rural areas by providing basic amenities to make them attractive for the youth to stay back and imbibe farming as a noble profession”.

It was also discovered that some of the factors discovering youth involvement in agricultural production can be easily avoided. Such factors as poor perception of youth about agricultural production, poor harvest, inadequate land and the get-rich-quick mentality by the youth which can be avoided through government systematic initiative and the will power to develop rural areas, encouragement on the use of improved seeds varieties and fertilizer and the provision of agro-allied industries in the rural areas for processing of agricultural products modern to avoid waste of products.

The above findings agree with the views and propositions and research bodies such as Alabi, (2004), Wiley (2007), Adekundu, et al (2009), Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2009), and Afande, et al (2015) who said; “the youth lack the necessary support to improve their productive capacity and access to land and credit facilities for the funding of agricultural production. Since youth does not possess the collaterals acceptable to banks and by other

financial institutions”. Anger (2010), blames it on the youth themselves who do not demonstrate enough seriousness in bringing development not just in agriculture but in society in general by indulging themselves in other criminal activities that will generate money speedily.

It could thus be seen that, the plethora of issues or factors impinging on the involvement of youth in agricultural production in Benue State as raised above, can be avoided if government at all levels show genuine interest in agricultural production and have a political will power for accelerated agricultural production not just in Benue State but in the nation by making agricultural production to deliver viable incomes and guarantee the kind of lifestyle the youth need, desire and expect.

In conclusion the factors determining youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land were identified. This included economic, social and environmental factors. Economic factors include inadequate credit facilities, low farming profit margins, lack of agricultural insurance, initial capital and production inputs. Social factors include public perception about farming and parental influence to move youth out of agricultural production. Environmental issues include inadequate land, continuous poor harvests, and soil degradation.

#### **4.5 Impact of Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv land**

According to the data as expressed similarly by all the respondents, youth involvement in agricultural production has positive impact on the agricultural production in Benue State and decreased youth involvement in agricultural production has negative impact in agricultural production of Benue State. Some of the positive impact of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land as the research found includes the following:

- i. Increased labour power
- ii. Increase output
- iii. Woo investors in agriculture to Tiv land
- iv. Increase income

**Increase Labour Power:** the involvement of youth in agricultural production as was expressed by all respondent showed that, youths are the reservoir of labour power needed to drive agricultural production to greater heights. This is so because, the youth are energetic, innovative and easily adopt to new forms of farming techniques unlike the old farmers who are weak. The study found that greater youth involvement in agricultural production can be instrumental in determining the quantity of food production in Tiv-land. For instance, an informant in Uku village in Mbajirakela council ward in Tarka Local Government Area noted that:

... Youths are very critical to improved food production. Without the youth that can make large number of ridges, heaps and during land preparation, our farms would suffer. What a youth can do in a day may not be possible with the old farmers. We depend on the youth and without them, food production will suffer and that is why these days that youth involvement in agricultural production is declining, food production is going down. The status of Benue State as “Food Basket of the Nation” is under threat (FGD, 2016).

The above findings showed that the involvement of youth in agricultural production will increase the labour force in agricultural production process. Involvement in agricultural production is indispensable since the youths form the bulk of energetic labour force especially in developing countries like Nigeria. These findings are consistent with the views of Adekunle et al (2009), Olayiwola and Oyeranti, (2005) Agwu, et al (2012), Eremie (2002), Gebremedgin and Switon, (2001) who asserted that youth involvement in agricultural production is indispensable because the youths are the only source of labour force in developing countries such as Nigeria and Benue State in particular that depend on the physical viability of the youth for crop production. The involvement of the youth in production process will bring about increased labour force. The youth do the more tasking works.

**Increase Output:** respondents generally agreed to the fact that youth participation in agricultural production will bring about increase in agricultural production output. This is so

because the youth are strong enough to carry out any crop production task faster and can stay much longer on the farm to complete multiple agricultural tasks because of their energy. Because of the youth energy, many farming activities such as land preparation, planting weed control, fertilizer application, harvesting and transportation are done faster and more appropriate time leading to increase of agricultural output in Tiv land.

**Woo Investors in Agriculture to Tiv Land:** When the youth in Tiv land participate in agricultural production, investors in agriculture would be attracted because they are sure of employing young energetic people that would carry out many agricultural production tasks. For any investor in agriculture to come into a place he or she is sure of his capital, fertility of the land and availability of labour force. Benue State is already blessed with a fertile land that is good for agricultural production so if the youth are involved in agricultural production, any investor in agriculture would be attracted to the state because of the availability of the energetic youth labour force. For instance, an investor in rice farming would require energetic youth locally available to carry out rice production tasks instead of moving them from elsewhere.

**Increase Income:** Youth participation in agricultural production according to all respondents will increase income of people generally and the State income generally because Benue State is an agrarian state and the people would be able to pay their bills and live comfortable lives. Respondents concluded that, the agricultural sector in Benue State is suffering because the sale of surplus farm products is no longer visible due to the fact that the youth are not committed to agricultural production process.

According to the data, decreased youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land as was expressed similarly by all the respondents has great negative impact on the agricultural production process in Benue State and Nigeria at large. Some of these negative impact has disrupted the state generally because the youth are the most productive age group

(18 – 35 years) in any society particularly societies that depend basically on manual labour for crop production such as the Tiv people in Benue State. Some of the negative impact of decreased youth involvement in agricultural production according to the data includes the following:

- i. Shortage of family labour
- ii. Loss of time for farming
- iii. Loss of family income
- iv. Poverty
- v. The sale of family assets
- vi. Child labour
- vii. Socio-economic status of families
- viii. Decreased food production
- ix. Psychological stress
- x. Disruption of formal agricultural institutions.

**Shortage of Family Labour:** The families in Tiv land of Benue State depend on the family members for agricultural production particularly the youth who are energetic for farm works which involves physical agility to be agriculturally productive. Decreased youth involvement in agricultural production entails shortage of family labour needed for earning out many crop production activities such as land preparation, planting, weed control, harvesting, transportation of farm products and so forth. The family now lacks the labour power to achieve many agricultural production activities due to decreasing youth interest in farming and this has created a huge problem for the family production capacity it was discovered that during the peak period of farming, families suffer searching for farm labourers and the labourers at times become so expensive for most families to afford.

**Loss of Time for Farming:** Decreasing youth involvement reduces the number of one is expected to spend on the farm. It was discovered that, the old farmers are weak and most of them sick. As a result, the aged farmers put in a few hours, mostly in the early hours of the day for fear of the sun and accomplish just but a little agriculture leaving some productive activities that would have been carried out on the same day. This agrees with the assertion of Thea et al. (2004) who asserts that the old farmer and ill health generally affect production because the timing of general agricultural production task is disrupted. The more one is able to spend enough time on the farm, the more he/she can accomplish many farming activities. Again, it is true that the fertility of soil also determines the yields but if the soil fertile and the farm is large, the more productive the yields. Spending less hours on the farm therefore reduces area of cultivation for agricultural production resulting to low agricultural production.

**Loss of Family Income:** With the decreasing involvement of youth in agricultural production in Tiv land, the family income has been greatly reduced. This is so because, it was discovered that the farms are now small and earnings from the sale of surplus farm products are no longer visible due to the inability of families to have full-time participation of youth in agricultural production. This becomes a problem because, payment of school fees, medical bills, and the general up keep of the family depends on the sale of surplus farm product but with the decreasing involvement of the energetic youth into agricultural production, the family income is greatly reduced moreover, it is difficult for most families to access the basic farming inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides and so forth due to lack of income.

It was discovered that, due to decreasing youth participation in agricultural production, agricultural production is now low and so earnings from farm surplus have reduced and many families cannot afford to pay medical and other bills resulting to many deaths in the rural Tiv communities of Benue State. The more the youths are willing to be fully participating in agriculture in Tiv land, it will ensure increased farm sizes and increased productive output.



**The Sale of Family Assets:** Many families in Tiv land of Benue State have sold out their family assets such as land, houses and farm tools or inputs in order to solve other pressing needs such as payment of medical bills of their loved ones. Decreasing participation of youth in agricultural production entails small farms and low income and as the level of youth participation in agricultural production increases, it has weakened many families in handling emergencies. The result is the sale of family assets which usually starts with non essential items such as household items like radio, television if any, and this can progress into sale of crops meant for food on the farm, then further progresses into selling of productive assets such as land, livestock and so forth. Many families in Tiv land are at the very of a terminal slide towards destitution and total collapse. In fact, according to the data, many families wished they never existed in the first place because they felt their pain is too much for them and there is virtually nothing they can do to help themselves and their members. Many families can barely eat because they do not produce enough to eat and sale the surplus to take care of other bills. Some families have sold their land and are now squatting with other people or begging for land from others to farm. This, therefore, calls for an urgent intervention by the government and well meaning Nigerians to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production so as to save the situation of families in the rural communities of Tiv land.

**Child Labour:** Another negative impact of youth participation in agricultural production as was discovered by the researcher is the issue of child labour. It was discovered that the children who are very small are forced to start working on the farm to support the family at a very tender age. These children take on major household work and forego basic necessities such as good food and clothing to assist their old parents on the farm. Some children abandon schooling and engage in agricultural production and other economic activities so as to raise money and support the family. Because some of children are too small, this becomes an

avenue to be wayward and become village criminals, prostitutes drug addiction and so forth. This has become a big societal problem child labour in itself is a societal problem and also leaving these young children to constitute nuisance to the society by engaging in anti-social behaviours is yet another social problem which the present family in Tiv land is going through and requires an urgent attention to encourage youth participation in agricultural production.

**Socio-Economic Status of Families:** The socio-economic status of families in Tiv land is diminishing due to decreased energetic youth into agricultural production. The farm sizes have decreased as well and many rural families in Tiv land have lost their socio-economic status as some have become beggars for survival especially the old people in Tiv land of Benue State which was not the case when all family members were highly involved in agricultural production.

**Disruption of Formal Agricultural Institutions:** It was also discovered that decreasing youth participation in agricultural production has disrupted many formal agricultural institutions. The reason, according to government official from the Benue State Ministry of agriculture and Water Resources is that, extension workers tractor driver are supposed to be young and energetic youth but with the decreasing level of youth interest in agriculture most youth would rather work in the bank or other industries that command prestige.

In response to the question “In your assessment, what impact does youth participation in agriculture have on agricultural production in Benue State?”, an official interviewed from BNARDA said:

We all know that high level of youth involvement in agricultural production will mean high production and a good life. But youth in Benue State have lost interest in farming so agricultural production in Benue State is at the mercy of God. This is so because, with decreasing youth involvement in agricultural production, there can be no

agricultural development because this depend on good extension network. But here in Benue State, the only extension workers are very old and a few have retired, so we have grossly inadequate extension services in the state. For example, Benue State had about three hundred and sixty eight (368) village Extension Agents (VEAs) on the field. But at present, the state has only one hundred and two (102) VEAs on the field and government has placed embargo on employment and the youth are not interested in extension services. This VEAs are too small to go into the villages and assist farmers to gain knowledge about new technologies and unproved varieties and there are other good programmes designed to help farmers to be agriculturally productive but we don't know how such information can reach farmers and there is nothing we can do and when you want volunteer youth to help carry such information to farmers, they do not want to be involved even those that have read agriculture as a course in the universities. The situation is so bad (KII, 2016).

This is to say that, decreasing youth participation in agricultural production has greatly affected agricultural development of Benue State especially as an official from the system has noted that “there is nothing we can do to encourage the youth into the system”. This is in consonance with the views of Thea et al. (2004, p.91) who said that, “decreased youth interest in agricultural production affect formal agricultural institutions operating in the rural areas of Benue State and nobody seem to know the way forward”.

**Poverty:** Poverty is one of the major problems of youth participation in agricultural production. This is so because, low level of youth participation in agricultural production in Benue State has led to low production of basic agricultural products in Tiv land with compounding problems of lack of food to eat with skyrocketed prices of basic food items like yams, gari, rice and so forth. This has placed many families in Tiv land of Benue State in poverty so much that it has become difficult for people in the rural areas of Benue State to eat, access health care services and pay other bills of their children and so forth.

In conclusion, it was discovered that the impact of youth participation in agricultural production is positive when there is high level of youth participation in agricultural production such as increased labour power, increased output, ensure food security, woo investors in agriculture to Tiv land and increase income; while low involvement of youth in

agricultural production have negative impacts such as shortage of labour, loss of time for farming, loss of family income sale of family assets, child labour low socio-economic status of families, disruption of formal agricultural institutions, decreased food production, poverty and psychological stress. These negative impacts are in line with Thea et al. (2014) and Family Life Counseling Association of Kenya (1999:134-142).

The emphasis is on the high involvement of youth in agricultural production which is a determinant of increased agricultural production particularly in developing countries like Nigeria that depend on physical labour which might be lacking in the aged. USAID (2012) clearly demonstrated that engaging youth in national development yield an opportunity to harness their energy, enthusiasm, skills and innovative ideas to increase economic growth, foster social stability, improve civil participation and ensure more productivity in the society. Thus, youth participation in agricultural production could bring more involvement in the sector; ensure massive food production and poverty reduction and a general good life for people in the rural areas particularly in the rural areas of Benue State. Again, in its 2007 World Development Report, the World Bank advocated that developing countries should take advantage of their “demographic dividend” where about half of its population is made up of the youth, to accelerate economic growth and sharply reduce poverty (World Bank, 2007). It is therefore, clarion call on all the stakeholders in Benue State to encourage youth participation in agricultural production which is mostly carried out by the use of physical strength to bring about increased agricultural production in Tiv land of Benue State and Nigeria as a whole because the services of youth are mostly needed where ever hard work is needed, even in the operation of machines.

#### **4.6 Government Strategies and Programmes for Participation of Youth in Agricultural Production in Tiv Land**

The study further examined the activities of government in the study area to involve youth in agricultural production and the encouragement that is given to sustain the youth

participation in agriculture so as to be agricultural productive. Data indicated that most youth 75.51% (i.e. 296) were aware of some government strategies for youth participation in agricultural production in the study areas.

**Table 4.6: Awareness of strategies for youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Aware	296	75.51
Not aware	96	24.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.6 above indicated the level of youth awareness on government strategies to involve youth in agricultural production in the study area. The table has shown that 75.51% (296) respondents acknowledged their awareness of existing programmes or strategies for youth involvement in agriculture, while 24.49% (96) of them indicated that they were not aware of the programmes.

Discussion among the group members on the awareness of strategies for the participation of youth in agricultural production was mixed. While some of the discussants were aware of the strategies, some were still not aware of them.

Key Informant Interview also produced similar findings. An informant with State Ministry of Agriculture noted,

...there are programmes initiated to motivate youth and farmers in general to participate fully in agriculture and also make farming profitable...some of the programmes are on my table here but there is a problem on how it can reach farmers in the remotest area of Benue State (KII, 2016).

Another informant who hails from Sai village in Mbajir council ward in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area had this to say: "...I am not aware of any government programmes or strategy to encourage us, the youth to participate fully in agriculture..." (KII, 2016)

A contrary response was obtained from an informant in Adoga village in Mbaya council ward in Buruku LGA, "...Yes, I know of some government programmes to

encourage farming generally but I am not sure if the programmes are specifically for the youth...” (KII, 2016)

The study sought to know the activities of government to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production and the specific programmes put in place by the government to encourage youth to be agriculturally productive. Data collected indicated that, the government has introduced various programmes to boost youth involvement in agricultural production in the nation generally and at the state levels. It was discovered that such programmes included the National Fadama Development Project, International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD), Out-grower’s Programmes, as well as Anchored Borrowers Programme. It was discovered that Anchored Borrowers Programmes were not known in the study area but only on paper at the state Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources as shown on table 4.7 below:

**Table 4.7: Government Strategies to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
National Fadama Dev. Project	62	20.95
IFAD Out-Growers programmes	97	32.77
USAID Food Intensification Prog.	36	12.16
Nat. Fadama/IFAD Outgrowers’ prog./ Anchored Borrowers programme	101	34.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.7 shows the opinions of 296 respondents who acknowledged government programmes to boost youth involvement in agricultural production in the study area. The table revealed that most respondents (101 forming 34.12%) acknowledged their awareness about National Fadama Development Project and International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD), Out-growers programmes. Further, 20.95% (62) respondents were aware of National Fadama Development Project, while 32.77% (70) respondents

acknowledged International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD) Out-growers programmes.

Focus Group Discussions also corroborated with data from the questionnaire but they were not aware of the USAID's Food Intensification Programme. The group members agreed that they have heard of the National Fadama Development Project which was intended to improve food production and income of farmers in rural communities and the recent IFAD out growers programmes which gave farmers funds, chemicals and improved varieties to cultivate rice through agricultural cooperative societies.

During FGD, a discussant from Asukunya village in Mbachaverkyondo council ward in Tarka Local Government Area argued that:

... I know about the Out-growers programme, intended to use cooperatives to provide money, improved varieties and chemicals to farmers in the cooperative, who will provide land for rice cultivation...I am trying to access the money and the varieties too...some of my friends said they have got the money, varieties and have already begun farm work...yeah, Fadama project has been here for a while, I am aware of it... (FGD, 2016).

Studies by Jobowo (2005), pointed out that successive regimes at the Federal Government level have introduced various agricultural development schemes with the aim of encouraging the youth, boosting food production and farmers' income through provision of agricultural infrastructure, inputs and effective extension work. Akpan (2010), noted that in 1986, the federal government established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to provide vocational training to the youth, and in 1987, the Better Life Programme was created to empower women, especially female youths in the rural areas through skills acquisition and healthcare training. National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 2006 mentioned the Fadama programme which was initiated to enhance food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty and create opportunities for employment for youths in the rural areas. This was premised on the poor state of agricultural productivity reflected by youths' low interest in farming.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2009) under the Second National Youth Policy provides that the basic goal for youth in agriculture is to promote the involvement and full participation of young men and women in the agricultural sector in the country. The policy, therefore, streamlined strategic interventions to ensure greater youth participation in agriculture production such as: promotion of the involvement of youth in agricultural sector (fisheries, livestock, forestry, processing and marketing of agricultural products etc.); provision of the necessary agricultural resources such as extension services, land, credit etc in order to facilitate youth involvement in agriculture, encouragement of teaching of the science of agriculture at all levels of the educational system in the country, dissemination of knowledge on agricultural techniques and processes to youth. Other efforts are procurement of modern agricultural implements for the use of young farmers and encouragement of research in the agricultural sector (FGN, 2009).

However, it should be noted that all the programmes mentioned by researchers and government appear to be absent in the study area apart from the FADAMA project. Most of the programmes listed are initiated by International organizations in collaboration with the government. It appears the people are yet to feel the direct impact of government policies to involve youth in agriculture and increase food production in the study area. The research reveals that there is no practical existence of the programmes in the study area.

### **Effectiveness of Government strategies to encourage youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land**

Furthermore, the study examined the effectiveness of government strategies to encourage youth involvement in agriculture in Tiv land. The opinion of 296 respondents on the effectiveness of government programmes to boost youth participation in agricultural production shows that these strategies have failed absolutely in encouraging youth participation in agricultural production as 296 (100%) of the respondents felt that the strategies are not effective. The ineffectiveness of the strategies could imply a consistent



withdrawal of youth in agricultural activities with corresponding reduction in food production in the study area. In some cases, people were asked to form cooperatives but nothing came out of it.

Focus Group Discussions also seem to be consistent with the findings of the questionnaires. Group members strongly agreed that strategies for improving youth participation in agricultural production witnessed massive failure. The group members pointed out that almost all known policies and strategies on youth and agricultural development have failed in the country.

Key Informant Interviews with informants also suggested that failure of programmes is the bane of Nigeria nation. A key informant from BNARDA said;

...As far as I know, All the government programmes don't succeed...government strategies to involve more youth in agriculture have not succeeded...they have failed woefully...even when people initially thought government was serious for once on the issue of increased agricultural production (KII, 2016).

### **Reasons for Ineffectiveness of Government strategies to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land**

Responses from 296 respondents who were aware of the government strategies on why the strategies for involving youth in agricultural production failed in the study area shows that a combination of factors such as corruption, poor programme initiation and execution is responsible for the failure of the strategies.

Focus Group Discussions strongly indicated that government strategies for involving youth in agricultural production have failed massively. The discussants felt strongly that implementation of these programmes would mitigate the continuous exodus of youth from rural communities to towns and cities as well the issue of decreasing food production in their communities. They believed that most of these programmes end on paper or are only heard of in the media.

A Key Informant from the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources

out rightly said:

...what goes well in this country? Nothing I think...government policies and programmes meant to involve youths in agriculture and boost food production exist only on paper and in the media...in most cases youths only hear about these programmes but they do not have access to them, while the funds are stolen by authorities...corruption has destroyed many of the programmes and in few cases implementation of the programmes are faulty... (KII, 2016).

These findings seem to be consistent with reports and studies (Usuh, 2012; Our Benue Our Future, 2009; BENSEEDS, 2004; Benue Advanced Plan, 1999). The issue of misappropriation and failure of development programmes in Benue state is not new. There have been reports and studies which suggest that programmes to involve youth in agricultural production are clouded with corruption and subsequent failure. It has been argued that the impact of government economic programmes and policies are generally poor, and there has been a misdirection and misapplication of government safety nets (Usuh, 2012; BENSEEDS, 2004; Benue Advanced Plan, 1999). It is therefore not surprising that programmes for youth involvement in agriculture are always met with characteristic failure as the funds end up in private pockets.

#### 4.7 Suggestions for Improving Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv land

**Table 4.8: Suggestions by Respondents on how to make youth participate in agriculture in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Provision of rural infrastructure	42	10.71
Assistance with inputs/improved varieties	57	14.54
Big awards/prizes to young farmers	58	14.80
Credit facilities to young farmers	51	34.12
Revamp Agricultural shows	39	09.95
Advocacy to agric among youth	29	07.40
Advocacy/credit facilities/award prizes	57	15.54
Rural infrastructure/improved seeds/awards	59	15.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.8 above presents respondents' suggestions for the government on youth participation in agricultural production in the study area. The Table shows that 10.71% (42) respondents suggested provision of rural infrastructure, 14.54% (57) respondents listed assistance with inputs and improved varieties, 14.80% (58) of them suggested big awards/prizes to young farmers and 34.12% (51) respondents suggested credit facilities to young farmers. Furthermore, 99.95% (39) respondents called for revamping of agricultural shows, 7.40% (29) of them suggested advocacy for the youth, 15.54% (57) called for combination of advocacy, credit facilities and award of big prizes to the young farmers and 59 (15.04%) also suggested the combination of provision of rural infrastructure, inputs and improved seeds and big awards/prizes to young farmers to motivate other youth to engage in the profession.

Focus Group Discussions were in agreement with the above findings. Group members pointed out that government programmes and policies to involve youth in agricultural production must first tackle factors responsible for youth migration into cities like provision of infrastructure in rural communities. Secondly, factors that make youth detest agriculture such as the miserable stereotype attached to agricultural production should be eliminated by picturing the nobility and profitable nature of agriculture to the youth. Thirdly, issues

concerning youth access to inputs, improved varieties and credit facilities which hinder most youth from participating in agriculture should be resolved.

Key Informant Interviews also agreed with the above findings. A key informant said:

...in order for the youth to be more effectively involved in agricultural production, government must provide rural infrastructure to avoid migration of youth to towns and cities to enjoy these facilities...credit facilities on favourable terms be granted to young farmers as this could encourage other youth to come in...award of prizes such as cars and plots of land could make other youth envious and want to be involved in farming also...an annual dinner with the governor or president by youth who have been successful in farming selected through annual agricultural shows... (KII, 2016)

Various suggestions for the participation of youth in agricultural production by the government offered by researches mostly agreed with the above findings. Weigel et al. (2002) and Platt et al. (2008), articulated the positive benefits of agricultural education programmes for individuals of various categories particularly the youth. Holz-Clause and Jost (1995), emphasized that gaining insight into youth perceptions of agriculture allows researchers and educators to develop methods to better educate and inform youth about agriculture. Effective agricultural literacy is thus a critical need in ensuring that the youth are encouraged to appreciate and participate in agricultural production. Holz-Clause and Jost (1995), noted that the cultivating of agricultural interest among youths can ultimately lead to not only a more agriculturally aware society but also a workforce to support agricultural practices that allow society to thrive. Ajayi (2006), suggested that since the youths represent the future of any country, it is useful to impact them with the requisite knowledge not just to develop them into future progressive farmers but also positive contributors to the general development of the society.

Akinbile, et al. (2006), emphasized that there was a great need for rural infrastructural development and youth empowerment to encourage the young people to stay and contribute to agricultural production and development of the rural areas in Nigeria. Okoye (1992), in

like manner asserts that if the youth are mobilized and empowered, and encouraged to stay in the rural areas by providing them with basic amenities, they would most certainly contribute to agricultural production and the development of their communities. He also called for provision of access to credit facilities for young farmers on easy conditions so as to motivate more youths to participate in agriculture.

It was also recommended that youth development should be agriculture related rather than equating youth with sporting activities and competitions only. Thus, government should embark on ways to revitalize the poor food situation by constructively involving youths in agriculture. The National Policy on Education should make practical agriculture a core subject at the primary and junior secondary school level and agricultural science as a vocational subject (FMAWD, 1989).

These suggestions imply that government has a lot to do with the youth in order to increase their involvement in agriculture. It must be ready to look at infrastructure in rural areas to retain youths there, issues relating to motivation, change of perception of the youth towards agriculture, encouragement of youths who are already involved in agriculture by providing them with inputs and other facilities to promote agricultural production. Also, government can evolve ways of socially and economically rewarding young farmers.

The study further examined how Non State Actors can bring out strategies to improve and encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land and the sampled youth expressed their view as shown on table 4.9 below:

**Table 4.9: Suggestions on Non State Actors' strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Advocacy on youth agric. involvement	84	21.43
Provision of inputs, improved seeds	90	22.96
Big awards/prizes to young farmers	77	19.64
Evaluate govt youth and agric. policies	63	16.07
Pressurize govt to execute youth/agric. Policies	78	19.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.9 presents respondents' suggestions on what Non State Actors should do to enable more youth participate in agricultural production in Tiv land. The Table has shown that 21.43% (84) respondents suggested advocacy for youth involvement in agriculture, 22.96% (90) suggested provision of inputs and improved seeds, while 19.64% (77) suggested award of big prizes to young farmers. Furthermore, 63 (16.07%) called for evaluation of government programmes on youth and agriculture to ascertain their effectiveness by independent bodies and pressurising government to implement youth and agricultural policies.

Focus Group Discussions also pointed out that Non State Actors can directly and indirectly improve youth participation in agricultural production. Direct roles could involve provision of improved seeds and agricultural inputs and advocacy for more youth participation in agriculture. Indirect roles include evaluating government policies and also calling on the government to actively involve the youth for increased food production, and collaborating with the government in initiation and implementation of policies to motivate youth participation in agriculture.

Key Informant Interviews also indicated that Non-State Actors can actually play critical roles in the involvement of youths in agricultural production. According to a key informant from Ikowe village in Kyurav-Tiev council ward in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area:

...NGOs can play important role on this issue...As IFAD and OLAM have been doing, NGOs can encourage youth participation in agriculture by providing youth with funds, seeds and inputs for farming with strict supervision...they can also create awareness on the benefit of farming to the youth, while also collaborating with the government on programmes aimed at empowering the youth for increase in food production... (KII, 2016).

The respondents also suggested that private individuals can encourage youth involvement in agricultural production as expressed differently on table 4.10 below:

**Table 4.10: Suggestions on Private individual's strategies to encourage youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Investment in Agriculture	73	18.62
Reward for Young Farmers	93	23.72
Socialize Children in Agriculture	70	17.86
Invest/Reward young farmers	81	20.66
Invest/reward/Socialize	75	19.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.10 presents suggestions for private individuals on how to improve youth participation in agricultural production in the study area. The table has shown that 18.62% (73) respondents suggested investment in agriculture, 23.72% (93) of them suggested reward for young farmers and 17.86% (70) of the respondents recommended socialization of children in agriculture by families. Furthermore, 20.66% (81) called for the combination of investment in agriculture and reward to young farmers, while 19.13% (75) respondents suggested investment in agriculture, reward for young farmers and socialization of children in farming.

Focus Group Discussions also provided information that agrees with the above data. The discussants strongly indicated that investment of private individuals in agriculture could attract more youths to the sector. Also reward for youth by philanthropists can also motivate them to participate more in agriculture, and socialization of the children on farming could also increase their desire for agriculture. The group members also felt that all families should at least have a farm and children and youths urged to go there and work so as to increase their passion for farming.

Key Informant Interviews also corroborated the above findings. A key informant commented:

... private individuals can do many things to motivate youth to be involved in agriculture...families can teach their children how to farm instead of making children to feel that farming is only for the poor...rich people can also encourage young farmers by giving them prizes as rewards...this could motivate other youth to be involved too...(KII, 2016).

It should be noted that issue of reward for young farmers and creation of incentives for the youth to be involved in agricultural production seems to have been neglected. However, if the young farmers are adequately motivated and rewarded, many youths might be attracted to agriculture and this could, in the long run, accelerate agricultural production in the study area.

### **The Level of Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv land**

The data from group discussions, key informant interviews and the questionnaires indicated that many youth, 5.53% (22) out of 100% (392) were participating on full-time basis in agricultural production in Tiv land. Data indicated that only 47.49% (190) out of 100% (392) were highly engaged in agricultural production.

At Focused Group Discussions, it was found that youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land had greatly reduced. In response to the question, “Do you think the youth are sufficiently participating in agricultural production in your household?” An adult male from Gwer-East Local Government area said:

Our children are no longer interested in farming. They only want to perm their hair and be going around the streets only to come to the house and eat and go back. My son even though he has gone to school up to diploma level, but there is no job but to join me on the farm he does not want. Have your farm and settle down is not possible for him, though occasionally he joins me to help me out but the commitment is not there at all (FGD, 2016).

This clearly indicated that many youths in Tiv land detest agricultural production. This agrees with Ekong (2003), who reiterated that youths in Benue State minimally participate in agricultural production in recent times. Also, Isa (2008), stressed that youths have generally lost interest in agriculture and as a result only few of the youth are engaged in full time agricultural production while majority of them totally abstain from agriculture or farming activities and are occasionally helping out maybe during holidays and anytime they feel like and not a matter of necessity.



The data also indicated that, majority of the youths that engage in agricultural production do so on part time basis. Higher numbers of the youth involved in farming on part time basis indicated a depleted labour force in agriculture resulting in high cost of the available labour force due to diminishing working youths.

Again, there is usually a rush for farm labourers at the beginning of each farming season due to shortage of labour, and at such times of rush for labour, hiring of youth to make heaps, ridges and carry out other farming activities is usually very expensive. The people who are even willing to engage in farming activities at such rush times, have to wait until after the rush so as to be able to afford hiring labourers, and at such late farming, the crops do not do well, so there are low yields from their farms. This agrees with Naobi (1990) and Adisa (2011), who assert that lack of agricultural labour supply in Nigeria especially at the peak periods of labour demand (during land preparation, planting, weeding and harvesting), as a result of massive migration of youths to urban centres, results in low yields and low agricultural production. Ukeje (2002), also stated that lack of labour force is one of the major factors affecting productivity in the agricultural sector in Nigeria. According to him, this labour shortage has been aggravated by a substantial reduction in the supply of family labour due to the persistent rural-urban drift of the youth.

It was discovered that most youths spend less hours on the farm and as a result many farming activities such as planting and harvesting are left to suffer or are done at inappropriate times or not done at all. This is in line with Thea *et al* (2004), who asserted that the more time one is able to spend on the farm; the more he/she can accomplish many farming activities. Again, it is true that the fertility of the soil also determines the yields but if the soil is fertile and the farm large, the more productive the yields. Spending fewer hours on the farm therefore reduces area of cultivation for agricultural production resulting in low agricultural production.

In response to a question, “Do you think the youth are sufficiently participating in agricultural production in your household?”, One of the respondents during FGD in Abako, Mbajir Council Ward in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area said:

... making of heaps/ridges, planting and harvesting at appropriate times are usually not possible with us because our children are not ready to follow us in farming again. If they manage to go to the farm, they can stay for a few hours, eat whatever food we take to the farm and leave because, to them, the sun is too high or that they have other engagements here and there. The truth of the matter is that our children are not just ready to stay on the farm even when they have nothing else doing. Last year, all the seeds of soya beans in my soya beans farm were thrown out because they were not harvested on time. Madam, but I have nine children, two are still small, five are big enough to be helping on the farm but no, and they are not doing anything. They have finished schooling but there is no job so...Madam we and our families barely eat (FGD, 2016).

It can be deduced from the above statement that, the status of youth involvement in agricultural production is very low in Tiv land. But if the youth who have the energy to take up agricultural production do not believe or have the knowledge that agricultural production can really be a profitable venture, then the production of food within the country will definitely be in serious jeopardy in the nearest future. This also answers the question “do you think youths produce enough food in your community?”

Data also showed that most youth who practice agriculture operate at subsistence level. They produce just for family consumption while, occasionally, few crops may be sold to buy household items and other food items needed. Survey design and FGD revealed that most youth were small scale farmers. According to a discussant in Uku Village, Mbaajirakaa in Tarka Local Government Area, in response to the question “what is the level of youth farming in this locality?”

...Most youth here produce in small quantities...if its rice they may cultivate from 1 to 20 bags...tomatoes is also produced in baskets, not more than 100 baskets per youth farmer...a single farmer does not have the capacity to produce and single-handedly supply to industries... (FGD, 2016).

These findings collaborate with the studies carried by Ega (1988). He found out that farmers in developing countries such as Nigeria produce mostly on small scale level for subsistence consumption. Since they are usually poor and uneducated, they tend to lack funds and technical knowhow needed for large scale production. This tends to be the bane of agricultural production in developing countries particularly in Nigeria.

Data revealed again that, majority of the youth involved in agricultural production are mostly involved in crop production (61.05%) while only a few are involved in animal breeding (13.16%).25.9% of respondents participated in both crop production and animal breeding. A discussant from Iber Mbatem Tse-Agberagba Council Ward in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State in response to the question “do youth in your community produce both crops and breed animals?” said,

.... The youth here do not keep livestock on large scale like the Fulani people as a major agricultural activity, instead they till the soil and produce crops notably yam, rice, cassava, fruits and so on .... Some youth farmers keep goats, pigs and chicken on relatively low scale ... (FGD, 2016).

This is consistent with the fact that the Tiv land has abundant fertile soil that favours crop production. Our Benue Our Future (2009), upheld that Tiv land has abundant fertile soil and that it is favourable for crop production. In like manner, Ega (1988), viewed that the poor nature of farmers in the Benue valley may not allow them to engage in animal breeding which is economically costly and time consuming, than crop production. Instead crop production is the most practiced form of agriculture in Benue State.

### **Factors Influencing Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv land**

According to the data as expressed by all the respondents from FGDs, KIIs and questionnaires, there are certain factors that influence youth involvement in agricultural

production in Tiv land. Some of these factors, as the research found, include the following: nature of education, rural-urban migration, inadequate government support, socialization process of some families in Tiv land.

**Nature of Education:** The educational system practised in Nigeria does not lay emphasis on practical agriculture. According to Ezedinma and Youdeowei (2012), agriculture is introduced into the primary, junior and senior secondary school curriculum and tertiary institutions in developing countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya. Formal agricultural training occurs at various levels in Nigeria such as diploma in schools and colleges of agriculture, forestry and animal health, bachelor and higher degree levels in university faculties of agriculture and forestry. These stages of training are to aid youths in their choices of career. However, Ezedinma and Youdeowei lamented that practical agriculture, which is an integral part of training, is not visible in many schools particularly in Nigeria. This is informed by the nature of our educational practice which does not lay emphasis on practical agriculture.

In traditional, small-scale agriculture, the young people learn from the older farmers by accompanying them to the farms, they are supposed to study the systems by watching and participating in all operations. However, many children do not follow their parents to the farm to learn the practical agriculture. It was however discovered that many children are sent to school or some children refuse to follow their parents to the farm and some parents do not see anything wrong with the attitudes of their children. This is in line with Aduuyi and Ekong (1981), who assert that farming is looked upon as a poor man's occupation or one for illiterates, so much so that many parents do not wish their children to become farmers after them. Unless this negative attitude by parents' changes and farming is regarded as a profitable business, youth will continue to drift in large numbers to urban centres in search of alternative occupation thereby leaving farming to suffer in the hands of their old parents. The

socialization of children is very important here. The educational system and parents have to socialize their children into all spheres of life. This is in line with Perry and Perry (1976:91) who viewed that, in “every kind of school we must apply thoroughly the policy advanced by Mao Tse-Tung”. According to this policy, education must be combined with productive labour so as to enable those receiving an education, be it formal or informal, develop morally, intellectually and physically so as to become labourers in all aspects of human endeavour.

Inadequate government support is another area that is found to be influencing youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land. It was discovered that public bodies, organizations and government agencies such as financial institutions, marketing institutions and extension services do not adequately support youth involvement in agricultural production. Credit facilities are not given to youth for lack of collateral. This corroborates the views of Aduayi and Ekong (1976) who said institutional factors greatly influence youth involvement in agricultural production and agricultural development process generally. A staff at the BNARDA during an interview said:

The agricultural extension agency is responsible for the education of farmers’ particularly young farmers by teaching them new and easy ways of farming, new farming techniques, varieties of crops and breeds of animals, and in assisting them to adopt them. However, most extension organizations are not adequately staffed and so members of the staff cover large areas and do not have enough supporting equipment like vehicles and other working implements, while others take on so many things that they cannot be effective in anyway... (KII, 2016).

Another problem associated with inadequate government support to youth and farmers generally is effective credit institution, even though there are a number of government credit institutions established across the country to assist farmers. Some of these institutions include Agricultural credit corporations, and the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative bank. However, it was found out that there are a lot of issues associated with this. It was found that the long process of obtaining a loan discourages a prospective borrower.

Where the assistance is given in kind to a farmer in form of fertilizer, seedlings, pesticides and so forth, these may not be delivered to the farmers on time or not delivered at all due to hijack syndrome, and where it is delivered late, the farmer's work falls behind the season. As a result, agricultural production results in low yields and less gain. This discourages the youth from involving in agricultural production.

In response to the question, "in your assessment, what impact does the involvement of youth in agricultural production have on the agricultural production of Benue State?" an official from the Ministry of Agriculture Benue State said:

Agricultural Production in Benue State, we can say, is at the mercy of God, because our youth are not adequately considering agriculture as a way of making it in life and some government institutions are not helping matters either, in the area of giving out loans and other agriculture inputs such as fertilizers, seedlings to farmers on time. And the suffering that these farmers go through getting what is meant for them is another thing and so this discourages youth involvement in agricultural production .... (KII, 2016).

### **Impact of Youth Participation in Agriculture on Agricultural Production**

According to the data derived from the questionnaires, low participation of youth in agriculture has great negative impact on agricultural production. According to the data, if youth are highly involved in agriculture, it would lead to increased agricultural production. However, the data revealed that youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue state is low and this has great negative impact on agricultural production. Some negative impacts of declined or low participation of youths in agriculture on agricultural production include the following:

**Shortage of labour:** In the traditional African society, the youth constitute the most valuable labour force. Youth involvement in agriculture is very important, while their decline in involvement will mean shortage of labour force in agricultural production. This is so because the young people are needed in carrying out farm activities more vigorously than the elderly people. The youth can be involved in farm activities such as land clearing, planting, weeding,

fertilizer application, pesticide application, harvesting and transporting of the products on head or wheelbarrows to the storage facility and to the market.

Non-youth participation or declined youth participation means shortage of labour force for agricultural production. And this affects food security of the nation, industrial raw materials and the general fate of national economies and sustainability of environmental assets. The loss of workers or labour force is critical because one or two key crops must be planted and harvested at specific times, so non-involvement of some few workers or labour force at this critical period can scuttle production of some crops particularly in Nigeria, and this will in turn cause food shortage. There is a vicious cycle which exists between shortage food production and malnutrition in Benue State. This agrees with Kayode and Ogunmola (2013), who assert that youth labour is the most important input in agricultural production particularly in traditional African societies such as Nigeria. Kayode and Ogunmola (2013), further stated that, less involvement of agricultural manpower particularly the youth would result in an unhealthy agricultural sector with little or no production of agricultural products which affects the general economies of the nation and the health of the people.

Few respondents felt that youth involvement in agriculture has no impact on agricultural production. According to these respondents, machines can be used and if the elders are given incentives, they can equally produce. These respondents do not take into cognizance the fact that farmers in developing countries such as Nigeria are poor and it is, therefore, difficult for youth labour to be replaced by mechanized agriculture. Moreover, the low level of education of rural farmers and their physically weak nature due to disease and age will negatively affect their agricultural production even if they are given incentives. This is in line with Ega (1988), who asserts that it is difficult for mechanized agriculture to be adopted to replace the youth, since farmers do not have the funds to hire or purchase machines needed for food production, coupled with lack of, or poor rural infrastructure and

low level educational of farmers in developing nations such as Nigeria and particularly in Benue State.

### **Government Programmes to Encourage Youth Involvement in Agricultural Production in Tiv land**

Majority of the respondents generally acknowledged that there are some programmes initiated by both the federal and state governments to encourage youth and the general public in agricultural production in Benue State. A few of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of any programme or strategy initiated either by the federal or state government to encourage the youth and the general public in agricultural production in their localities.

The researcher further examined the activities of both the federal and state governments to encourage youth generally and especially in the area of agricultural production and the encouragement given to sustain agricultural development in the state and the nation.

Data collected indicated that both the federal and state governments have initiated programmes to encourage the general public in the area of agricultural production and the targeted people or group are the youth. Data further indicated that, of the 392 (100%) youth contacted, 75.51% (296) were aware of government strategies to involve youth in agricultural production in the study area, and only 24.49% (90) were not aware of government programmes to encourage youth in the area of agricultural production.

The result of discussion with group members and key informant interviews on awareness of government programmes to encourage youth on agricultural production was mixed. While some acknowledged that there were some government programmes in the state to encourage the participation of youth in agricultural production, others were not aware of such programmes.

In response to a question “Are there government programme(s) aimed at encouraging youth in agricultural production?”, a key informant said:



There are some programmes initiated by state and federal government such as National Fadama Development Project, International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD) Out-growers programmes to motivate youth and farmers in general to participate fully in agricultural production and also to make farming profitable, but we only hear of these programmes on radio and sometimes somebody will come from the city and raise our hope on a new programme to assist farmers, but when they go back, you never hear from them and it dies like that ..... My daughter government is not serious... (KII, 2016).

From the above statement, one can conclude that there are programmes initiated by both the state and federal governments to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production, but the major problem is poor organization or individual lapses in the management of the programmes as a result of poor training of management staff and individuals saddled with the responsibility of executing government programmes. This lack of commitment is an endemic issue in management of projects and programmes. This observation is in consonance with the views of Ayoola (2001), who said that, “one of the problems of agricultural development projects in Nigeria is lack of sustained commitment by stakeholder in terms of funding, support and supervision which may result into the project not being fiscally empowered, resulting in project failure or its impact not felt by the targeted groups.” Ayoola (2001), further stated that, lack of logistic support is closely linked to lack of commitment, because it is the inability of the stakeholders to avail the projects of the necessary resources to accomplish them that leads to project failure as a result of inadequate publicity, inadequate finance, poor supervision and lack of technical skills.

The staff of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture commended the efforts of both the federal and state governments towards initiating laudable programmes in promoting agricultural production generally and particularly in the area of encouraging youth involvement in agricultural production in order to drastically improve food production. However, the staff lamented about the funding of such programmes. In response to a question during a key informant interview a staff of BANARDA said:

...these programmes both from the federal and state governments are many. I have so many of them on the table but the problem is funding, which make us incapable to carry out these assignments to the targeted area. We have the problem of inadequate publicity for people in the rural area, to lack of funding which makes it difficult to integrate youths in the rural area into the mainstream of numerous agricultural development programmes (KII, 2016).

This is in line with Ijere (1992), who asserted that, one of the major setbacks of agricultural development programmes is the inability of the government to integrate youths into the mainstream of numerous programmes initiated by either the federal or state governments over the years due to lack of commitment; commitment in terms of inadequate publicity, poor organization and lack of technical skills (Ijere 1992).

The government, both at state and federal levels and individuals have responded positively to the issue of agricultural development in so many ways especially in the area of encouraging youth involvement in agricultural production. But there is no proper co-ordination between governmental bodies at federal, state and local government levels and as a result, food production has declined in Benue State.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter summarizes the findings of this research and draws conclusions. It also makes recommendations aimed at improving youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

This study provides an empirical assessment into the situation of youth involvement in agriculture in Tiv land. After examining the various data obtained in this research, the following findings were made:

First of all, the socio-demographic data of the respondents revealed that matured youth (people aged between 31 and 35 years old) were more prone to deserting the villages to urban centres.

The population in Tiv land is composed of a high percentage of youths such that 80% of households have at least four youths. However, a disproportionate number of these youths in relation to their actual population strength were participating highly in agricultural production in Tiv land.

On the prevailing status of youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land, the study found out that, most of the youths are minimally engaged in agricultural production and that youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land had reduced drastically. Most youth participate in agriculture on full time basis as most are subsistence farmers. Youth who practice agriculture are involved in crop production only. Few are involved in animal rearing, while others combine crop production with animal breeding. Youth who engaged in crop production were mostly involved in crops such as rice, yam, cassava, tomatoes and soya beans, while those who were involved in animal production mostly practiced poultry, goat breeding and piggery. For stages of crop production, it was found that

youths participated in all the stages, including land preparation, planting, weeding and harvesting although with little commitment.

On the factors influencing youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land, the study found that the most common factors were combination of socialization, nature of education and rural-urban migration. Other factors included inadequate government interest in encouraging the youth, poor youth perception about agriculture, inadequate land or poor soil and poor harvest, get-rich-quick mentality, and poor rural infrastructure.

Findings on the impact of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land revealed that youth participation in agriculture affects agricultural output. This is because youth participation can increase labour power needed for agricultural production which could increase agricultural output. Also, it was found that youth participation would attract investors to agriculture. The study also found that youth participation in agriculture is significant to agricultural production in Tiv land because mechanized agriculture can replace their physical labour power but not youth initiatives and proper incentives through mechanized agriculture could lure more youth into the occupation.

The findings on government strategies and programmes for participation of youth in agriculture in Tiv land revealed that most youth were aware of existing programmes or strategies for youth participation in agriculture. These programmes or strategies include National Fadama Development Project, International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD), Out-grower's programme and USAID's Food Intensification Programme. But these strategies were not effectively encouraging youth participation in agricultural production. The ineffectiveness of agricultural programmes were due to factors such as misappropriation of resources meant for agricultural programmes and poor programme initiative and execution.

On the suggestions for the government on improving youth participation in agricultural production in Tiv land, the study found that provision of rural infrastructure,

assistance of young farmers with inputs and improved varieties, award of big prizes to young farmers and easy credit facilities to young farmers, revamping of agricultural shows, advocacy for youth involvement in agriculture can boost agricultural production not just in Tiv land but Benue State and Nigeria at large. For Non State Actors, strategies to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land include advocacy for youth involvement in agriculture, provision of inputs and improved seeds, award of big prizes to young farmers, evaluation of government programmes on youth and agriculture, to ascertain their effectiveness as an independent body and pressurising government to implement youth and agricultural policies. Strategies for private individuals to encourage youth involvement in agricultural production in Tiv land include private investment in agriculture, personal reward for young farmers and socialization of children in agriculture by families.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Based on the research findings, the study concluded that majority of the youth are participating in agricultural production and their participation in agriculture has been on part-time basis. Most youth are not fully engaged in agriculture, while many of them are subsistence farmers. Among the youth that practice agriculture, majority are involved in crop production, while few are involved in animal rearing or a combination of both. These youth are engaged in production of crops such as rice, yam, cassava, tomatoes soya beans, and breeding and rearing of livestock such as goat, pig and chicken. Most youth who participate in agriculture take part in all the processes of crop production such as land preparation, planting, weeding and harvesting although some of them on part-time.

Factors influencing youth participating in agriculture in Tiv land include socialization, education and rural-urban migration, and government interest. The negative factors influencing youth involvement in agricultural production in the study area include poor public perception about agriculture, little or no assistance from the government, inadequate

land or poor soil, and poor harvest as well as markets and agro-allied industries. Other factors include get-rich-quick mentality, the nature of educational system, and poor rural infrastructure such as good roads, electricity, good drinking water and so forth.

The low or part-time participation of youth in agriculture has huge impact on agricultural production in the study area, as it affects agricultural output. This is because youth increase the labour power needed for agricultural production which could also increase agricultural output.

Government strategies and programmes for participation of youth in agricultural production in Tiv land were known by most of the youth in the area. These programmes or strategies include National Fadama Development Project and International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD), Out-grower's programme and USAID's Food Intensification Programme. However, the strategies were not effective in encouraging youth participation in agricultural production. The ineffectiveness was due to factors such as corruption, poor programme initiation and execution.

Suggestions for the government on improving youth participation in agriculture in the area include: provision of rural infrastructure such as good roads, markets, agro-allied industries and so forth. Also, assistance of young farmers with inputs and improved varieties, award of big prizes to young farmers and easy credit facilities to young farmers, revamping of agricultural shows and advocacy for the youth involvement in agriculture. Provision of rural infrastructure will go a long way in encouraging youth to be involved in agricultural production. For Non-State actors, suggestions include advocacy for youth involvement in agriculture, provision of inputs and improved seeds, award of big prizes to young farmers, evaluation of government programmes on youth and agriculture to ascertain their effectiveness as an independent body and pressurising government to implement youth

policies on agriculture. For private individual's, suggestions include private investment in agriculture, reward for young farmers and socialization of children in agriculture by families.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Going by the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations have been offered as a way of addressing the issue of increasing youth apathy towards agriculture in Tiv land.

1. Youth empowerment programmes in agriculture should be initiated in Benue State to facilitate easy access to modern agricultural technologies, inputs and finance (soft loans or grants) for the youth. The provision of adequate modern agricultural technologies and input, apart from eliminating the drudgery attached to agricultural production in Tiv land due to predominant use of traditional tools, will also make farming activities more attractive to the youth.
2. Private individuals and corporate entities should be more involved in agriculture through investment in the sector. The investment would boost youth interest and encourage them to also participate fully in agriculture.
3. Parents and families should train and bring up their children in ways that they would appreciate the significance of agriculture to the society. Families should at least have a farm and their children should be socialized on farming processes. This could reduce the negative perception youth have on agriculture and encourage them to participate more in food production.
4. Great attention should be given towards the development of adequate socio-economic infrastructure in the rural areas. This will create an enabling environment for quality life in the villages and become an incentive for many youths to appreciate village life.
5. The government should re-strategize the education curriculum, making practical agriculture a compulsory subject at all levels of education and one of the prerequisites

for graduation. Apart from providing practical knowledge to the youth on agricultural production, this strategy shall also help the youth to appreciate the importance of agricultural production.

6. The government should make concerted efforts towards the establishment of several agro-allied industries in Benue State. Such efforts should involve both direct investment and facilitating private investment. The establishment of adequate agro-allied industries in the State will address the problem of lack of markets for agricultural produce.
7. Non-Governmental Organisations as well as private and corporate entities should be involved in programmes that would handsomely reward youth who are into farming. This would motivate other youth to participate in agriculture.
8. Non state actors should at all times conduct independent assessment of programmes on increasing youth involvement by the government, and use the findings to push the government to be more committed to youth and agricultural production.
9. The Government should employ more energetic VEEAs that would assist farmers to gain knowledge about new technologies and improved varieties and ensure that useful information about agricultural production programmes reach the remotest rural areas; and volunteers from the private sector can also help to disseminate useful information on agricultural production programmes to farmers. This would bring about an improvement in agricultural production. This will also reduce or eradicate poverty in the rural areas and ensure food security in Tiv land of Benue State and Nigeria at large.
10. The Federal, State and Local governments have to ensure that it is capable of feeding her people so as to avoid hunger and waste of money on basic food items that they are sure of producing in the country such as rice. The involvement of youth would ensure



that the country is capable of feeding the citizens. Youth participation in agricultural production can certainly determine the quantity of food produced and ensure food security. This is because of youth energy and innovativeness that can produce food enough to feed the nation, export excess and make money to solve other problems such as payment of bills.

#### **5.4 Contributions of the Study to the Field of Knowledge**

This study has made several contributions to the field of agriculture. First and foremost, it is important to note that this study has provided the basis for understanding the importance of youth in the social and economic wellbeing of many nations particularly in Tiv land of Benue state. This is so because the youths form the nucleus of labour force and should be given a central position in the mainstream of productive activities particularly in agricultural production. This study has undertaken a detailed analysis on the importance of increased youth participation in agricultural production for increased agricultural output, poverty reduction and food security of Tiv land in Benue State and Nigeria as a whole. The study has brought out the specific genuine reasons for youth apathy towards agricultural production.

The study found out that youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue state is low, as majority of the youth participate in agriculture on part-time basis leading to low productivity of basic food items in Tiv land of Benue state. This culminates to food insecurity both at the household and State levels. This has degenerated to importation of basic food items such as rice, millet, beans among other food items from neighbouring States and countries, with skyrocketed prices of basic food items at market places and basic foods like rice are eaten only on festive periods like Christmas, New year, Easter and at ceremonies such as marriage in most Tiv homes and communities in Benue state.

The research also found out that, the reasons for part-time participation of youth in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue state which has led to low agricultural productivity in the area is as a result of the nature of the educational system that does not lay emphasis on both theoretical and practical aspects of agriculture, but which puts more emphasis on the theoretical aspect of agriculture, thereby depriving the youth from participating in practical agriculture which has led to rural-urban migration that deplete family labour. Apart from that, it was discovered that poor harvest, insufficient agro-allied industries for processing agricultural products, poor infrastructural development of the rural areas of Tiv land of Benue state that mostly involve crop production, have all become push factors for the youth to migrate to urban centres to have access to basic amenities such as portable drinking water, electricity, good housing among others, to the detriment of the agricultural production; which is mostly practiced in the rural communities in Tiv land of Benue state. Also the study found out that, poor perception of youth about farming and poor implementation of government policies on agricultural development have all hampered the participation of youth in agriculture in Tiv land of Benue. It is hoped that the findings of this work will redirect the attention of researchers, government at all levels and the private sector to see how the youth can be mobilized and encouraged to participate in agricultural production so as to increase agricultural production output, reduce rural poverty and ensure food security in Tiv land and the State in general.

Secondly, the study has generated a lot of information about the operations of government on encouraging youth participation in agricultural production identifying the clear inadequacy of government efforts in encouraging youth in the sector and showing how these can be improved to bring about the general wellbeing of mankind in Tiv land and in the Nigerian society in general.

Furthermore, this work has brought out the importance of developing both the agricultural and industrial sectors, and challenge policy makers and other stakeholders in development to explore and build the long desired synergy between agriculture and industrial sectors which can make them to complement each other; linking agricultural production and industrialization as a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the aspirations of National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction and sustainable rural development in Tiv land of Benue State. Finally, this work has made it clear that the assumptions of some scholars on the mechanization of agricultural sector is inadequate since the youth are needed wherever hard work is needed and even in the operation of machines.

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## APPENDIX I

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

# BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY

(Office of the Head of Department)

Department of Sociology,  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**VICE CHANCELLOR:**  
**PROFESSOR MRS. CHARITY A. ANGYA**  
B. A. (Jos) M. A., PhD. (Ibadan)

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT:**  
**DR. BENJAMIN GOWON AHULE**  
B. Sc (ABU), M. Sc (Jos), PhD (BSU)



P.M.B. 102119  
MAKURDI, NIGERIA  
TEL: 044-533811  
531216  
531162 EXT. 347  
TELEFAX: 531260  
TELEGRAMS UNIBENUE

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

Our Ref:..... Your Ref:..... Date:.....

**To whom it may Concern:**

Sir,

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER IN RESPECT OF ANONGO DORCAS  
DOOSHIMA (BSU/SS/Ph.D/09/5196)**

The above named is a Ph.D student of this Department. She is currently researching on the topic: *"An Assessment of Youth Involvement in Agricultural production in Tivland."* As part of the requirements for the award of Ph.D in Sociology.

Please kindly give her any assistance she requires.

Thank you.

**Dr. Gowon Benjamin Ahule**  
Head of Department

## **APPENDIX II**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Sociology,  
Benue State University,  
Makurdi.

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of the above stated department and currently undertaking a research on the topic, “**An Assessment of Youth Participation in Agriculture in Tiv land,**” as part of the requirements for the award of PhD in Sociology.

Kindly contribute to the success of this work by providing sincere answers to all the questions. Any information provided here shall be used in the outmost confidentiality and only for the purpose of this study.

Yours faithfully,

**DORCAS DOOSHIMA ANONGO,**  
**BSU/SS/Ph.D/09/5196**

## **PART I: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Tick (✓) where appropriately

1. Age:

- (a) 15 - 20 ( )
- (b) 21 – 25 ( )
- (c) 26 - 30 ( )
- (d) 31 – 35 ( )

2. Sex:

- (a) Male ( )
- (b) Female ( )

3. Marital Status:

- (a) Single ( )
- (b) Married ( )

4. Educational Qualification:

- (a) No formal Education ( )
- (b) Primary School ( )
- (c) Secondary School ( )
- (d) Tertiary ( )

5. Religion:

- (a) Christianity ( )
- (b) Muslim ( )
- (c) Traditional ( )

6 Occupation:

- (a) Civil Service ( )
- (b) Farming ( )
- (c) Business/Trading ( )
- (d) Artisan ( )
- (e) Student ( )

**PART II: ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE IN TIV SPEAKING AREA OF BENUE STATE**

7. Do you participate in agricultural production in your community? Yes [ ☐ ] No [ ☐ ]

8. If yes, what agricultural activities do you engage in?

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9. What stages of agriculture you are mostly involved in?

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11. What is your level of agricultural participation? High [ ☐ ] Moderate [ ☐ ] Low [ ☐ ]

12. What type of farming system are you currently engaged in?

Subsistence [ ☐ ] Commercial [ ☐ ]

13. What are (is) your reasons for participating in that particular type of farming system?

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14. State your advantage(s) or disadvantage(s) for participating in a particular farming system?

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15. Explain the extent to which your family agricultural production takes care of your basic needs.

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**PART III: FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE IN TIV SPEAKING AREA OF BENUE STATE**

16. Mention the factors you know that influences youth participation in agricultural production.

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**PART IV: IMPACT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE IN TIV SPEAKING AREA OF BENUE STATE**

17. What is the impact of youth participation in agricultural production?

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18. What can be done do mitigate the impact of youth participation in agricultural production?

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19. State how agricultural output can be improved in your community

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20. What is your advice to youths on agricultural production?

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**PART V: GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME(S) FOR ENCOURAGING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE**

21. What programme(s) has the government at all levels put in place to encourage youth to participate in agricultural production?

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22. How has the programme(s) encouraged youth to participate in agricultural production?

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23. What do you think can Non-state actors and private individuals do to encourage youth to participate in agricultural production?

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**PART VI: SUGGESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

24. Kindly suggest you own way(s) of encouraging you to engage in agricultural production

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### **APPENDIX III**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE ON FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION WITH KEY INFORMANTS: Heads of Households/ Community Leaders**

1. What are the main agricultural products from your community?
2. To what extent are the youths participating in agriculture in this community?
3. What is the type(s) of farming system that the youths in this community are mostly engaged in and why?
4. What is the efficacy of such farming systems in your community?
5. What are the factors that encourage youth participation in agriculture in your community?
6. What impact does youth participation in agriculture have on your community and Benue State in general?
7. What factors influence the youth into agricultural production?
8. What programme(s) sponsored by the government, NGO or private individuals to encourage youth participation in agricultural production in your community.
9. How effective has the programme(s) encouraged youth participation in agricultural production in your community?
10. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to encourage youth participation in agricultural production?



## **APPENDIX IV**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE ON IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH KEY INFORMANTS: Staff of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources**

1. What is your assessment of youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
2. What factors influence youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
3. What impact does youth participation in agriculture have on food production in Benue State?
4. What are the government programmes to increase youth participation in agriculture in Tiv land?
5. What should be done to get more youths to participate in agriculture in Tiv land?

## APENNDIX V

### SCHEDULED DAYS OF VISIT FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

S/N	Senatorial District	LGA	Council Ward	Village	Date
1	Zone A	Katsina-Ala	Kyurav-Tiev I	Ikowe	23/1/2016
				Ayua	23/1/2016
			Mbajir	Sai	23/1/2016
				Abako	23/1/2016
			Mbatyula/Mberek	Chanchaji	23/1/2016
				Kenvanger	23/1/2016
		Konshisha	Iwarnyam	Agidi	16/1/2016
				Awajir	16/1/2016
			Mbanor	Mhambe	16/1/2016
				Angbaaye	16/1/2016
			Mbatem/Tse-Agberagba	Iber	16/1/2016
				Tse-Leke	16/1/2016
		Ukum	Borkyo	Sankera	5/2/2016
				Gyemwase	5/2/2016
			Mbayenge	Jootar	5/2/2016
				Tsemelabo	5/2/2016
			Uyam	Tse-Ayakpa	5/2/2016
				Tse-Afati	5/2/2016
2	Zone B	Buruku	Mbatyough	Diwa	27/2/2016
				Agbenor	27/2/2016
			Shorov	Tyowanye	27/2/2016
				Garagboughor	27/2/2016
			Mbaya	Biliji	27/2/2016
				Adogo	27/2/2016
		Gwer-East	Ikyonov	Austoma	09/1/2016
				Aliade	09/1/2016
			Mbaiase	Ulam	09/1/2016
				Anhwange	09/1/2016
			Mbalom	Ayar	09/1/2016
				Jordoon	09/1/2016
		Tarka	Mbaajirakaa	Uku	12/3/2016
				Pipeline	12/3/2016
			Mbachaverkyondo	Asukunya	12/3/2016
				Shelevaan	12/3/2016
			Mbakwaghkem	Jovimenger	12/3/2016
				Chemtso	12/3/2016
	State Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources				15/3/2016
	Benue State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority				17/3/2016