



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

“EVALUATING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN AGRIBUSINESS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW”

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Abstract:

Sustainable agriculture and food security should be considered if the country is aiming for economic development. Youth has a big role to play in it, they are the hope of the future, the wealth of the nation. This research intends to examine deeply the involvement of youth in progress and development of sustainable agriculture, food security, and the issue of youth unemployment. It assesses the barriers and opportunities for youth participation in agribusiness and sustainable agriculture, by reviewing most cited research and publications for the past twenty (20) years. This study will be useful to the academicians, researchers, decision makers and government officials if they need to know the vital role of youth in agribusiness, sustainable agriculture, and food security. The significant findings, key results of the researchers and authors about main topic were carefully chosen and assessed to come up with a valuable contribution to literature review.

Keywords - youth; unemployed youth, agribusiness, sustainable agriculture, food security.

I. INTRODUCTION

YOUTH, WHO ARE YOU?

Around the world there is no universally accepted definition of youth, but United Nations made definition about Youth who are between ages of 15-24. In different nations, the legal age of majority is 18 years old, at which point a person is considered an adult and entitled to equal treatment under the law. But based on relative social, institutional, economic, and political conditions, the operational definition subtleties of the term "youth" differ from nation to nation.

As an outcome, youth is a clearer category than other well-known age groups. However, age is the most straightforward way to describe this group, particularly in terms of education and employment, as "youth" is commonly described as a person between the ages of finishing compulsory education and starting their first job, (U.N Org., 2013).

The World Youth Report (2020) highlights that 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years make up 16% of the global population. UNESCO recognizes YOUTH as a key group for driving change, creativity, and innovation. Committed to supporting young people, UNESCO works to empower them in fighting inequality, promoting sustainable development, and building peace. For over 20 years, UNESCO has partnered with youth worldwide through initiatives that strengthen their capacities, foster knowledge, and create spaces for dialogue between youth, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Through the actively participating in all its initiatives, UNESCO makes sure that youth voices are respected and heard.

ON AN ISSUE OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH.

The trend of unemployed youth keeps on increasing. How to reverse this trend? Youth should be productive, and active catalyst of change, so how to make them productive? How to change them from unemployed to employed state?

This issue was elaborated by (White, 2012), who confirmed that underemployment and youth unemployment are major issues worldwide, especially in rural areas. If provided by sufficient support, small-scale agriculture—the main employer in developing nations—can extend a viable substitute for corporate farming on a larger scale. Nonetheless, there is growing evidence that young people are becoming less interested in farming, a trend fueled by things like the value of farming and rural life, the disregard for small-scale agriculture, and the challenges associated with obtaining land. These developments are explained by the growing discipline of youth studies, which draws attention to problems such rural youth's lack of skills and the obstacles they encounter when trying to make a living from farming. Youth participation in agribusiness is widely recognized as a key strategy for creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people and for the advancement of agrifood systems.

(Yami et. al., 2018). Youth unemployment in Africa is increasing, necessitating agribusiness involvement. Understanding young people's interest and obstacles to agribusiness participation is then crucial.

What is the role of Youth in Agri-business?

Youth involvement in agribusiness is essential in determining the direction of sustainable agriculture and guaranteeing global food security. The quest for sustainable food production systems is growing as the world's population rises, underlining the necessity of creative and innovative agricultural methods. Youth have a challenging and unique position to lead these innovations and aid in the establishment of stronger, effective, and sustainable agricultural practices because of their initiatives, vigor, and flexibility they have power to change the present and the future of the world.

Though their potential is becoming more widely acknowledged, youth's involvement in agribusiness is still low in many areas. This is primarily because of things like restricted access to training, funding, and land, as well as a lack of knowledge about the opportunities in agriculture. In rural areas, where agriculture is common, this underrepresentation is especially disturbing. Food Crisis is happening everywhere that is why it is needed to think of innovative ways of producing food locally to reduce the import burden (Mbaga, 2013).

How to make them participate and be part of development of the country? And if they are already engaged in agribusiness, how can it be intensified? At present there are many unemployed youths yet many of them are lacking interest to be involved in agri-business. According to Musemwa et al. (2007) majority of young people in Eastern Cape view agriculture to be a challenging job, thus they are shunning agricultural activities. (Abdul Aziz, et.al., 2013) revealed that youth interest in agriculture is significantly influenced by their attitude on agriculture. In similar vein, Waldie (2004) believes that if agriculture is viewed as inferior, thus young people will look for whatever appeals to them in urban non-agricultural sectors. Young people have been moving to cities in search of work prospects and employment because of this lack of interest in agriculture.

To assist the expansion of agri-food systems in developing countries and generate employment opportunities, youth involvement in agribusiness is vital (Ninson & Brobbey, 2023). Even though many young people view that agriculture is a viable and sustainable enterprise, several factors, including prior agricultural experience, education, social support, and access to financing, affect their involvement in agribusiness. Skill training programs have a positive impact, improving productivity, income, and employment opportunities. However, barriers like limited access to finance, land, and extension services hinder youth engagement.

There is also a widespread problem of lack of food security in every country, especially now that there is a global warming that affect the production of agricultural products around the world. These issues pose a threat to food security by disrupting agricultural production, reducing of water access, increasing of pest and dryness of land. There is a need to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and improve climate change resilience to combat these challenges. (Boye, et.al. (2024) assert that to promote youth involvement in agribusiness, policies should focus on enhancing access to resources like capital, education, training, land, and mentoring,

What is sustainable agriculture, and what is the role of youth in it?

Sustainable agriculture and food security should be considered if the country is aiming for economic development. Youth involvement and participation in agri-business includes farm management, cattle and poultry raising, food processing and marketing can be a great game changer in the issue of food security and sustainable agriculture. Youth has a significant role in rural and agricultural development as it is an accepted belief (Ommani, et al., 2009). The youth participation is vital for nation to expand and flourish the agricultural sector, but their involvement is declining in rural areas particularly (Repon & Russel, 2014). Lack of participation made them leave the rural areas and going to city areas. (Ommani, et.al., 2009), further disclosed that young people wanted to work in the cities because of living situation and job security there. Youth play a pivotal role in the future of sustainable agriculture, serving as key agents of change in the transition toward more resilient, productive, and environmentally responsible food systems. Young people have the potential to drive innovations and adopt sustainable practices that are essential for long-term agricultural sustainability amid challenges the world is facing related to rural development, climate change and food security. The agricultural sector is extensive and encompasses activities such as livestock farming, crop cultivation, fisheries, and related industries.

Current trends on agriculture requires the participation of the younger generation. Dissemination of information related to new techniques of agriculture through social media can help. The social media platform can increase awareness about the needed information on sustainable agriculture. However, it can be noted that elderly farmers who lack education are reluctant to use social media and not interested to discover new methods, they use traditional methods in farming due to lack of awareness and education hence, productivity in agriculture is low. One main issue here is, youth is not interested in agriculture. Globally, the efforts are being taken to ensure that youth will participate in agriculture to enhance the agriculture production, (Kumar, et.al. 2019).

Despite progress in some countries, global trends in hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition are not on track to meet sustainable development goals (SDG) targets by 2030. Proper financing is critical to reversing these trends. In the report, it presents a contemporary definition of funding for food security and nutrition and provides direction on how to measure and implement it effectively. Recommendations focus on advanced funding tools and reforms to improve the food security and nutrition financing architecture, aiming to sustainably increase funding to end malnutrition, starvation, and food insecurity, (UNICEF Report, 2024)

This review explores the critical role of youth involvement in agribusiness and sustainable agricultural practices to enhance food security. It examines the barriers and opportunities for youth engagement, the potential benefits for rural development, and the policies and initiatives that can support youth-driven agribusiness ventures. Understanding these dynamics is key to creating a vibrant agricultural sector that can meet the needs of future generations while contributing to broader goals of agricultural sustainability and food security. It likewise aims to find knowledge and skills of youth in agribusiness and their willingness and

interest to be involved and participate in socio- economic development through sustainable agriculture and food security of the world.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The 2008 World Development Report examines agriculture's role in economic growth, particularly for underprivileged populations. It highlights changes, low-cost growth sources, poverty alleviation, and population exodus. The report emphasizes limiting environmental impacts and protecting natural resources. Increasing young agricultural farming activities (i.e., producing more money) and lowering food prices are two ways that agricultural growth can directly and indirectly reduce poverty. (World Dev. Report 2008)

Kote, et.al., (2024), their scoping review examines the existing literature on youth participation in agriculture, highlighting its importance for sustainable development, food security, and economic growth. Challenges include limited access to land, finance, education, and technology. Opportunities include entrepreneurship programs, vocational training, digital platforms, and supportive policies. The review emphasizes the benefits of young participation in agriculture, including poverty alleviation, rural development, innovation, and food production. It calls for multifaceted approaches to empower young people.

Varzakas & Smaoui, (2024- their review emphasized the need for sustainable food systems to ensure food and nutrition security, address climate change, and address challenges in governance. It used a case study on plant-based proteins and suggests research on alternative proteins and concluded by stressing the need for system changes, including research on alternative proteins, to achieve sustainable, healthy diets and improve food safety systems.

Mithi, et.al., (2021), assessed the involvement of youth in agricultural pursuits in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, discovered that young people encounter obstacles such as restricted access to financial resources, markets, incentives, land, and practical training. According to the findings, increasing young people's participation in agricultural endeavors can be accomplished through the provision of land, financial assistance, and knowledge sharing by extension agents.

Haruna, et. al., (2019)- explored challenges and potential solutions for increasing youth participation in agricultural education to promote food security. Data from 240 students in North Central Nigeria shows that young people are aware of their role, but challenges hinder participation. Recommended solutions include practical skills enhancement and improved funding and the importance of addressing these challenges to sustain interest and increase youth participation in agricultural education should be emphasized.

Leavy & Hossain, (2014), examined the decline young people's interest in developing nations, focusing on the impact of volatile food prices since 2007. Data was generated from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to know why youth are withdrawing from agriculture activities and listed some conditions under which the capable entrepreneurial youth are interested to farming. The findings, highlighted obstacles like limited land access, credit, and perceived risks, and calls for measures to involve young people in agricultural decisions.

Ahaibwe, et. al., (2013). – disclosed that the Ugandan youth, particularly under 30, are facing declining agricultural participation, leading to increased unemployment and job insecurity. Challenges include low agricultural inputs, limited land ownership, and limited access to credit and extension services. Additionally, youth with higher education and those from households with more adults are less likely to engage in agriculture. These constraints hinder agricultural productivity and youth involvement in the sector.

Maina, et. al. (2012), disclosed that with 78% of the population under 30, there is an increase of youth unemployment in Kenya, while their involvement in agriculture is on the decline. The services and industrial sectors have not created enough jobs for the growing labor force, potentially threatening food security and economic growth. Data from the Kenya National Panel Survey and the 2009 Census reveal that young farmers are concentrated in agricultural production but are less likely to use improved inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and veterinary drugs, which limits productivity. Issues are identified like land ownership, limited credit, and insufficient extension services hinder their participation; thus, suggestions are provided like, promoting youth involvement through laws and policies.

Ayinla, (2004). Disclosed that integrated fish farming is a multifaceted agricultural approach that emphasizes fish production and helps address the gap between fish demand and supply. This system is important for poverty alleviation and hunger eradication, as it enhances food security. However, its full potential in terms of increasing fish production through aquaculture has yet to be fully realized.

III. METHODOLOGY

A literature review was conducted, to determine the youth involvement in agribusiness, challenges they encountered, their role in sustainable agriculture and food security. This extensive and comprehensive literature review allows the researchers to understand the existing state of knowledge on this area by examining the outcomes from several research. The review relies on databases relating to youth engagement in agribusiness, their role in sustainable agriculture and food security. Peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last twenty (20) years are given priority.

The studies collected was critically analyzed to identify important ideas, theoretical frameworks used, and the methodologies used. A narrative synthesis method was used to review and link findings across research.

IV. CONCLUSION

This review is an eye opening to the policymakers to make the Youth more involved in sustainable agricultural development and be part of change thus will lead them to be independent financially and productive member of the society. (Afande, et. al., 2015), confirmed that young people are asset for sustaining agricultural production, which is essential for economic expansion and growth, (Magagulla & Tsvakirai, 2020) agreed that when it comes to agricultural sector, the youth is showing a positive economic outlook. If they will be more engaged in sustainable agriculture and agribusiness, the issue of unemployment can be lessened.

Youth should be motivated to engage in agricultural activities to promote a nation's economic development, as they are the biggest assets of any nation worldwide and play a significant role in society, (Kimaro, et. al., 2015). Youth involvement in agriculture for economic growth, food security, and sustainable development should be intensified.

The significant findings of authors and researchers reveal that concerns about rural development, unemployment, and food insecurity are driving interest in youth involvement, but barriers like limited access to land, resources, education, and unfavorable views of agriculture continue to exist, according, which also looks at motivations, challenges, opportunities, and impacts. Giwu, et.al (2024) concluded that better credit availability and policies should address young people's characteristics and environmental issues to enhance youth involvement. Supportive policies, vocational training, and entrepreneurship initiatives are some ways to increase youth involvement. In addition to highlighting the benefits of youth involvement for food production, innovation, rural development, and poverty reduction, is necessary multipronged strategies to get beyond obstacles and unleash youth's potential in influencing the future of agriculture. When youth are empowered, the more advanced a country is. The economies that use the potential of younger generation in a proper way are more developed. On the contrast, the economies which are not realizing the significance of the youth trail is behind in development. (Rani & Roy, 2017), to harness the potential of youth in agriculture, they must be provided with adequate training which would boost the employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

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