

Motivational Strategies for Enhancing Participation of Rural Youths in Commercial Fish Production in Taraba state.

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Abstract

The paper investigated strategies for enhancing participation of rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State. The design of the study was survey. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire titled "rural youth production enhancing Questionnaire" (RYPEQ). The population of the study comprised of 86 commercial fish farmers, 63 fisher folks and 104 rural youths. This gives a total population of 253 respondents. There was no sampling because the entire population of registered fish farmers, fish folks and rural youths were used. Mean was used to answer the research questions, while ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that carrying out feasibility study, action plan, selection of appropriate site for fish production, feeds supplement, fish pond construction, stocking of fish, regular inspection, and proper preservation are among the basic technical strategies required to enhance the participation of rural youths in commercial fish production. Also the study revealed that inadequate access to land; credit facilities, Market information, entrepreneurship training and modern processing equipment were the major constraints. It was recommended amongst others that youths in Taraba state should be provided with sufficient funds and facilities for modern commercial fish production and remove challenges encountered by graduates in the implementation of SIWES programme.

Key Words: Motivation, Strategies, Youths, Commercial Fish Production

Introduction

Agriculture remains the largest employer of labour in Nigeria and the developing countries in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and pacific. It is the single most important vocation that remains intimate to the rural populace in various communities. Between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s, Nigeria moved from a position of self sufficiency in basic food stuffs to one of heavy dependence on imports, under investment, a steady drift from the land to urban centre, increased consumer preference for imported food stuff particularly frozen fish, rice, wheat and poultry meat (Ekele,2014). Similarly, Food and Agricultural Organization (2005)

reported that agricultural production declined to around 4% per annum towards the end of the decade. Consequently, successive governments in Nigeria have attempted introducing programme and agencies that were meant to serve the rural people. Programme such as National poverty eradication programme (NAPEP), Fadama Development Programme and National Policy for Integrated Rural Development did not address the the felt needs of the community, particularly the youths who are the majority in most cases. (Agbulu and Olaitan, 2002)

The youths in the explanation of Ekele (2015), are those who have completed secondary or tertiary education or those who have no formal education at all and are between the ages of 16 to 45. These youths according to the author are mostly resident within the rural/urban communities and have the potential of engaging in commercial fish production.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Blue Print (2012) stated that, Commercial Fish production involves basic technicality, in which the fish farmers must possess the skills needed. These technicalities include basic principles of production, management, harvesting, processing, preservation and Marketing. The blue print further highlighted the need for youths to capitalize on the opportunities provided by the government to acquire such technical skills as related to commercial fish production. to According to Barrie and Peter (2004), The strategic objective of developing fisheries resources are to ensure increased and sustainable fish production, food security, self reliance, wealth creation, conserving the natural resources base, poverty reduction ,employment, income and increased in foreign exchange earnings, in which the rural youths are the target audience to implement these strategic objectives.

Motivation is the incentive given to an individual or groups of people in order to perform certain task. Agbulu and Ekele (2004) explained that motivation in agricultural education deals with providing incentives to the trainee such that skills are acquired in a given occupational area. In the context of this work, motivation refers to incentives provided that would enable youths go into commercial fish production. These incentives may include technical expertise made available to youths at various forums (Massette and Sali,2000). However, the years of neglect by the authorities have rendered many rural youths reluctant to participate in government program. They have come to distrust government policies towards

rural youths. Consequently, most of the rural youths are unemployed. It is against this background that the researchers investigated motivational strategies that will enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine technical strategies required to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production.
2. Examine factors militating against participation of rural youths in commercial fish production.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered by the study.

1. What are the technical strategies required to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production?
2. What are the constraints militating against participation of rural youths in commercial fish production?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significance difference in the mean rating of the responses of commercial fish farmers, fisher folks and rural youths on technical strategies required for fish production.
2. There is no significance difference in the mean rating of the responses of commercial fish farmers, rural youths and fisher-folks on constraints militating against rural youths participation in commercial fish production.

Methodology

Survey research design was used for the study. The study was conducted in Taraba State. The study investigated the strategies for enhancing participation of rural youths in commercial fish production. The population of the study consists of three group, eighty six (86) commercial fish farmers, sixty three (63) fisher folks and one hundred and four rural

youths (104), which give a total of two hundred and fifty three (253). The researchers used the entire population for the study and hence there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire and has 23 items. The questionnaire was titled: *Rural Youths Production Enhancing Questionnaire (RYPEQ)*. Cronbach- Alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire. Twenty youths from Benue state who have similar characteristics with the population in the study area (but are not part of the population) were selected for reliability test. The coefficient of reliability test obtained was 0.82. The research instrument received face validation from three experts. Two validates were from the Department of Agricultural Education and one from the Department of Fishery all in the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. 253 questionnaires were administered by the researchers and 249 were retrieved representing 98% of the questionnaire. Mean was used to answer the research questions while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses.

Research Question 1. *What are the technical strategies required to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production?*

Table 1: Mean ratings of the responses of respondents on technical strategies to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production

S/N	Technical Strategies	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Carry out feasibility study and action plan on the area	253	3.81	.39	Agreed
2	Selection of appropriate site based on soil quality, availability of water	253	3.75	.45	Agreed
3	Construction of pond using concrete cement	253	3.72	.56	Agreed
4	Stocking of ponds with adequate number of fish based on pond capacity	253	3.71	.60	Agreed
5	Mix appropriate feeds and supplementing the natural feeds with artificial feed 3 times daily	253	3.68	.54	Agreed
6	Regular inspection of fish to inspect health status	253	3.70	.58	Agreed

7	Regular checking of water quality to avoid pollution and dirty	253	3.64	.62	Agreed
8	Liming of pond to maintain pond	253	3.61	.51	Agreed
9	Carry out selective harvesting or sizeable fish, and market fish product through the appropriate channel to maximize profit	253	3.62	.49	Agreed
10	Proper reservation of fish using various methods, such as smoking, sun-drying, salting, canning and cooling	253	3.66	.57	Agreed

N = Number of Respondents, SD = Standard Deviation Source= Field Survey Data (2015).

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that all the 10 items had their mean values ranged from 3.49 to 3.81 and were above the cut of point of 2.50 of 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the respondents agreed that all the 10 items were technical strategies that could enhance the participation of rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State. The standard deviations of the 10 items ranged from .39 to .63, this indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and from one another in their responses on the technical strategies that could enhance the participation of rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State.

Null Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on technical strategies to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production.*

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of the responses of Fisher folk, fish farmers and rural youths on technical strategies to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decisions
Between Groups	.767	2	.383	1.473	.086	NS
Within Groups	38.743	250	.155			
Total	39.510	252				

Significant level = .05, N = Number of respondents, df Degree of freedom, F = f-ratio, sig = p-value, NS = Not Significant. Source= Field Survey Data (2015).

Data in Table 2 showed a p-value of .086, which is greater than the alpha value of .05. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on technical strategies to enhance participation of rural youths in commercial fish production. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on technical strategies that could enhance the participation of rural youths in commercial fish production was not rejected. This implies that the experience of the three groups of respondents did not significantly influence their responses on the technical strategies that could enhance the participation of rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State.

Research Question 2. *What are the constraints militating against participation of rural youths in commercial fish production?*

Table 3: Mean rating of the responses of respondents on constraints militating against rural youths participation in commercial fish production.

S/N	Items statement	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Inadequate access to land by rural youths	253	3.64	.54	Agreed
2	Inadequate access to credit facilities from Banks	253	3.65	.58	Agreed
3	Major lakes and rivers owned by government prevent fish farming	253	3.59	.63	Agreed
4	Many community and family owned lakes, which restrict fish farming	253	3.75	.47	Agreed
5	Inability to access modern market	253	3.74	.54	Agreed
6	Lack of modern processing and preservation equipment	253	3.61	.49	Agreed
7	Inability of the rural youths to access entrepreneurship training	253	3.71	.58	Agreed
8	Inadequate knowledge and skills on fish production	253	3.61	.53	Agreed
9	High cost of fish farming inputs	253	3.66	.51	Agreed

10	Poor access to extension services	253	3.71	.59	Agreed
11	Inadequate assistance from government and NGOs	253	3.68	.54	Agreed
12	Inadequate fish storage facilities in the market	253	3.70	.58	Agreed
13	Poor access to market information	253	3.64	.63	Agreed

N = Number of Respondents, SD = Standard Deviation, Source= Field Survey Data (2015).

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that all the 13 items had their mean values ranged from 3.59 to 3.74, which were above the cut-off point of 2.50 of 4 points rating scale. This showed that the respondents agreed that all the 13 items were constraints militating against rural youth's participation in commercial fish production in Taraba State. The standard deviations of the 13 items ranged from .47 to .63, this indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and from one another in their responses on the constraints militating against rural youth's participation in commercial fish production in Taraba State.

Null Hypothesis 2. *There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on constraints militating against rural youths participation in commercial fish production.*

Table 4: *Analysis of variance of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on constraints militating against rural youths participation in commercial fish production in Taraba State.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decisions
Between Groups	.338	2	.169	.713	.491	NS
Within Groups	59.235	250	.237			
Total	59.573	252				

Significant level = .05, N= Number of respondents, df = Degree of freedom, F = f-ratio, sig = p-value, NS = Not Significant. Source= Field Survey Data (2015).

Data in Table 4 showed that a P-value of .49, which is greater than the alpha value .05. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on constraints militating against rural youths participation in commercial fish production. Therefore, the hypothesis of no

significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths on constraints militating against rural youths participation of rural youths in commercial fish production was not rejected. This implies that the experience of the three groups of respondents did not significantly influence their responses on constraints militating against participation of rural youths in commercial fish production.

Major findings of the Study

1. It was found out from the study that technical strategies were required by youths for commercial fish production in Taraba State.
2. The findings revealed that the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected which means that the experience of fisher folks, fish farmers and rural youths were not significantly different.
3. It was found out from the study that several constraints or challenges are been encountered by youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from table 1 and Table 2, shows that technical strategies were needed by youths for commercial fish production in Taraba State. The result is in line with the findings of Gitanga (1999) who found out that carrying out feasibility studies and selection of appropriate site based on soil quality and availability of water is essential. The findings was also in congruence with the work of Bashir (2010) who asserts that liming of pond, supplementing the natural feeds with artificial feeds are also required for fish production.

Finding from Table 3 and Table 4 that there are many constraints militating against rural youth, The result is in line with the work of Johnson (1996) who assisted that lack of modern processing and preservation equipment are major factors. Also, study by Massete and Sali (2000) were in line with the finding from Table 3. The authors posits that inadequate access to credit facilities by youths and high cost of fish farming inputs are challenges encountered by youths.

Conclusion.

The study has shown that technical strategies are required by rural youths in commercial fish production in Taraba State. Furthermore, the result of the study revealed that there are challenges that must be tackled to pave way for youths to enter into commercial fish production. Consequently, Strategic effort must be made by stakeholders to encourage youths/graduates in commercial fish production. However, the challenges identified have to be tackled in order to create an enabling environment for youth/graduate involvement in commercial fish production.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Stakeholders in fish production should ensure that all the technical strategies identified for commercial fish production be implemented through constant workshop and training.
2. Taraba State Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and allied agencies should as a matter of urgency eliminate identified bottlenecks associated with commercial fish production in the State to give room for more youth participation,
3. Financial development agencies, such as commercial Banks, Agricultural Banks, Micro-Banks and Community Banks, should encourage rural youths to take facilities at minimum or zero interest rate.
4. The individual moneylenders and other sources of granting loans should encourage the rural youths to enhance fish production, as its profitable and high yielding.

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