

# **Roles of Youth Organizations in Farm Development in Rivers State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*The study investigated the role of youth's organization in farm development in Rivers State. Interview schedules were used to collect data from 120 youths selected through random sampling procedure from Rivers State. Descriptive and inferential statistics namely, mean and factor analysis respectively were used to analyze the data. The result shows that youths play important roles in the supply of labour, donation of materials, initiating of projects, attend meetings punctually and use initiatives to gain outside help. Also, youths in community based non-formal rural youth agricultural programmes is mainly in youth organizations which includes, age grades, local social clubs and young farmers organization. The major problems that inhibit youth in agricultural activities were lack of commitment, lack of logistic support and lack of land ownership. It was recommended that a robust relationship between agencies interested in encouraging youth involvement in agriculture should be evolved through legislation and implementation of policies to guarantee training programmes, credit facilities and land accessibility to youths at the identified rural youth organizations. This will enhance youth involvement and catalyze agricultural development.*

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**Key Words:** Role, Youth, Organizations, Farm, Development

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## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to Study**

Youth organisations are crowd of youths recognized by their common curiosity of purpose. Kessem (2010) confidential youth organizations in relation to the characteristics of the environment in which they are positioned: Size duration, rhythm proximity of members, basic of configuration, admission, extent of organization functions, orientations in relation with other groups and types of control, power and extent of harmony. Youths have the potential to overcome some of the major constraints to expanding animal production in developed and developing countries such as pest control, feeding, genetic improvement than adult farmers. They play an important role in awareness raising on different subjects (Ijere, 1992). Mobilizing

the youths for national development is a common phenomenon amongst the western and developing countries. In such countries as Great Britain, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, the United States of America and Tanzania, the involvement of youths in agricultural production through youth organization had contributed significantly to agricultural development and empowering the citizenry and youths to always meet the full needs and deep seated aspiration to be self sufficient in food production (FAO, 1990). Indeed, since the youths are the future of any country, it is useful to develop them into patriotic citizens, future progressive farmers and better citizens. The youth organizations are the nurseries for them (Ajayi, 2006). The poor state of agricultural productivity and low esteem of agriculture as manifested in rivers state is as a result of youths' low interest in farming, lack of industrial firms to process agricultural products and skilled labour among others has led to worsening Nigerian food deficit (NDE, 2006). 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 through the national policy on education which made practical agriculture a core subject at the junior and secondary school level and agricultural science as a vocational subject (FMAWD, 1989). In order to involve youth in agriculture to reap the benefit of the constructive engagement of youth in agriculture, the question relates to the following questions: What is the role of youths organizations in agricultural development in the study area? The purpose of the study is to examine the roles of youth organizations in agricultural development in Rivers State.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The Study was conducted in Rivers State of Nigeria. Rivers State was created by Decree No. 19 of May 31, 1967, and is one of Nigeria's 36 states. Its capital city is Port Harcourt. According to 2006 National Population Census, the State has a population of 6,185,400 people out of which women accounted for 2,474,735; youths are 2.8 million, The number of men in Rivers State is 2,673,026 ([www.rivers StateMinistryofyouthDevelopment.gov.ng](http://www.riversStateMinistryofyouthDevelopment.gov.ng) ).

The State is bound on the South by Atlantic Ocean, on the north by Anambra State, Imo and Abia States, on the east by Akwa Ibom State and the west by Bayelsa and Delta States (Ibemere and Ezeano, 2014). Rivers State which is in the Niger Delta has topography of flat plains with a network of Rivers and tributaries. The State is made up of seventeen (17) ethnic groups namely: Ogba/Egbema, Ndoni, Opobo, Igbani, Ogoni, Eleme, Okirika, Kalabari, Abua, Odual, Ekpeye, Engenni, Etche, Ikwerre, Degema, Andoni. Rivers State is situated on the Southern part of Nigeria.

Rivers State lies between latitude five North (5°N') and mid-way between longitude five South (5°S') of the Greenwich Meridian (Howard, 2007). The State is divided into three Senatorial Districts, namely Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East Senatorial Districts. The three districts make up the twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State. Rivers East senatorial district comprises Emohua, Etche, Ikwerre, Obio/Akpor, Ogu-Bolo, Okrika, Omuma and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas. Rivers West Senatorial District comprises Abua-Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku-Toru, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema and Ogbema-Egbema Ndoni Local Government Areas. While Rivers South-East Senatorial District is made up of Khana, Gokana, Tai, Eleme, Andoni, Opobo/Nkoro and Oyigbo Local Government Areas.

The thick mangrove forest, raffia palms and light rainforest are the major types of vegetation. The predominant occupation of the people of Rivers State is farming. The people have a rich cultural heritage of different beliefs, traditional songs, dances and masquerades; the dominant ethnic groups are the Ogonis, Ikwere, Ijaws and Etches; although Pidgin English is also used because of the multi-lingual nature of the State. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people.

The State has over 2,805 primary schools and 243 secondary schools. The secondary schools are concentrated mainly in Local Government Area Headquarters. The Tertiary institutions include University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt, established by the Federal Government in 1975, Rivers State University of Science and Technology now Rivers State University Founded in 1980 by the State Government in the Year 1980, Rivers State College of Health Science and Management Technology, Oro-Owo, Rumueme, Port Harcourt, established by the State Government, the Federal Polytechnic at Omoku (Federal Technical College Omoku) and the State owned Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic at Bori, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education at Rumuolumeni, with Campuses at Nkpolu-Oroworukwo and Ndele and School of Nursing and Midwifery at Rumueme, Port Harcourt. There is also the Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic at Rumuola, Port Harcourt Rivers State. (Tukool.Com -2018). The descriptive survey design deals with the systematic collection of facts from a target audience or population. This design rightly adopted by the researcher as it did help to determine the roles of youth organizations in agricultural development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and weighted mean and inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the stated hypothesis. Objective 1 was achieved using weighted mean scores. The Hypotheses were tested using ANOVA. The weight (w) of a response was based on 5-Point Likert Rating Scale, respectively with a cut off decision meaning of 3.0.

#### 4.0 Results

**Table 4.2 Roles of Youth Organisations in Agricultural development in Rivers State**

Roles	Rivers East (n=199)				Rivers West (n=21)				Rivers South East (n=27)				Pooled (n=247)		
	Su m	Mea n	SD	Remar k	Su m	Mea n	SD	Remar k	Su m	Mea n	SD	Remar k	Su m	Mean	Remar k
Clearing of farm land	387	1.94	.780	D	35	1.67	.483	D	46	1.70	.465	D	468	1.89	D
Ploughing of farmland	440	2.21	.742	D	41	1.95	.590	D	55	2.04	.706	D	536	2.17	D
Cultivation of farmland	424	2.13	.812	D	49	2.33	.796	D	61	2.26	.656	D	534	2.16	D
Hiring of labour	439	2.21	.706	D	41	1.95	.590	D	53	1.96	.587	D	533	2.16	D

Donations of seedlings to farmers	454	2.28	.883	D	65	3.10	1.75	A	110	4.07	1.35	A	629	2.55	D
Provision of fingerlings to fish farmers	405	2.04	.987	D	79	3.76	1.41	A	61	2.26	1.09	D	545	2.20	D
Provision of planting materials to farmers	554	2.78	1.83	D	71	3.38	1.65	A	116	4.30	.869	A	741	3.00	A
Provision of farmland to youths	376	1.89	.869	D	41	1.95	1.07	D	46	1.70	.669	D	463	1.87	D
Donation of fishing net to fishermen	469	2.36	1.40	D	77	3.67	1.42	A	50	1.85	.770	D	596	2.41	D
Donation of Pesticides to farmers	372	1.87	.855	D	47	2.24	1.33	D	114	4.22	.934	A	533	2.16	D
Basic equipment provision to farmers	510	2.56	.714	D	65	3.10	1.26	A	68	2.52	.580	D	643	2.60	D
Money (funding) to farmers	667	3.35	1.05	A	60	2.86	1.45	D	64	2.37	.492	D	791	3.20	A
Buying of truck (donations) to farmers	361	1.81	.753	D	37	1.76	.944	D	40	1.48	.509	D	438	1.77	D
Buying of tractor to farmers	338	1.70	.841	D	38	1.81	1.07	D	62	2.30	.542	D	438	1.77	D
Buying of van to farmers	383	1.92	.984	D	45	2.14	1.35	D	87	3.22	1.18	A	515	2.08	D
Building of market for farmers	356	1.79	.838	D	41	1.95	1.20	D	72	2.67	.961	D	469	1.89	D
Buying of preservatives to farmers	345	1.73	1.01	D	44	2.10	1.04	D	112	4.15	.818	A	501	2.02	D
Building storage facilities to farmers	346	1.74	.793	D	39	1.86	1.27	D	51	1.89	.577	D	436	1.76	D
Building farm house to farmers	323	1.62	.825	D	37	1.76	1.13	D	63	2.33	.877	D	423	1.71	D
Clearing of farm routes	330	1.66	1.02	D	56	2.67	1.68	D	123	4.56	.698	A	509	2.06	D
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.08</b>				<b>2.40</b>				<b>2.69</b>				<b>2.17</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Decision Means  $\geq 3.0$  = Agreed;  $< 3.0$  = Disagreed

The mean values of agricultural roles of youth organisations in community development in Rivers State using a decision rule of mean  $\geq 3.0$  are as shown in Table 4.2. The Table reveals that the respondents in Rivers East Senatorial Zone agreed to only one agricultural role of youth organisations in community development which is Money (funding) to farmers (M = 3.35), in

Rivers West Senatorial Zone, the respondents agreed to the following: Provision of fingerlings to fish farmers (M = 3.76), donation of fishing Net to fishermen (M = 3.67), while in Rivers South East Senatorial Zone, the respondents agreed to the following: Clearing of farm routes (M = 4.56), Donation of Pesticides to farmers (M = 4.22), etc.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant variation in Agricultural roles performed by youth organisations among the three senatorial districts in Rivers State.

**Table 4.10: Analysis of Variance Result for Agricultural Roles among Senatorial Districts**

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Between Groups	10.087	2	5.043	23.476	0.000
Within Groups	52.418	244	.215		
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.504</b>	<b>246</b>			

Where: ss = sum of squares; df= degree of freedom; ms= mean squares; F=F calculated  
Source: Researcher's computation with SPSS 25.0,

The Analysis of Variance Result for Agricultural Roles among senatorial districts in Rivers state is shown in Table 4.10. The F calculated (23.476) and p-value (0.000). Since the probability of value (0.000) is less than the standard P-value of 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant variation in agricultural roles performed by youth organization's among the three senatorial districts in Rivers State. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e there is significant variation in Agricultural roles performed by youth organisations among the three senatorial districts in Rivers State.

**Table 4.11: Least Significant Different Comparison of Senatorial Districts**

Senatorial Districts	Mean	Sig.
Rivers East Senatorial District Vs Rivers West Senatorial District	-.320*	.003
Rivers East Senatorial District Vs Rivers South East Senatorial District	-.612*	.000
Rivers West Senatorial District Vs Rivers South East Senatorial District	-.293*	.031

**Source: Researcher's computation using SPSS 25.0**

Table 4.10.1 showed that there was significant difference among the three senatorial districts in Rivers State since they all had p-values < 0.05. The Least Significant Difference is used to determine the variation in agricultural roles between the three senatorial districts. The mean value of Agricultural Roles of Youth Organisations in Community Development in Rivers State using a decision rule of mean  $\geq 3.0$  are as shown in Table 4.2. The Table reveals that the respondents in Rivers East Senatorial Zone agreed to only one Agricultural Role of Youth

Organisations in Community Development which is Money (funding) to farmers (M=3.35), in Rivers West Senatorial Zone, the respondents agreed to the following: Donations of seedlings to farmers (M=3.10), Provision of fingerlings to fish farmers (M=3.76), Provision of planting materials to farmers (M = 3.38), Donation of fishing Net to fishermen (M = 3.67) and Basic equipment provision to farmers (M = 3.10) while in Rivers South East Senatorial Zone, the respondents agreed to the following: Donations of seedlings to farmers (M = 4.07), Provision of planting materials to farmers (M = 4.30), Do nation of Pesticides to farmers (M = 4.22), Buying of van to farmers (M = 3.22), Buying of Preservatives to farmers (M = 4.15) and Clearing of farm routes (M = 4.56).

## CONCLUSION

The ways of youths involvement in agricultural activities were: use of initiative to gain outside help, supply of labour, attending meetings punctually, initiating projects and donating of materials. Also, the important community based non-formal rural youth agricultural education programme were young farmers organization, age grade and local social clubs, while major problems inhibiting youth in agricultural activities were lack of commitment, lack of logistic and land insecurity.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. It was recommended that agencies interested in involving youths in agricultural development should put policies in place using the identified nature of youth involvement in agriculture determined by the study to ensure youth involvement in agricultural development.
2. Technical know-how of the youths should be enhanced through skill acquisition.
3. Monitoring of youth activities by government agencies is also recommended

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