

POULTRY FARMING: A PANACEA FOR CURBING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG YOUTH IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, demand for animal protein source and the unemployment rate are increasing yearly because of high increase in population. In order to meet up with these increases more youth involvement in poultry rearing is needed. Poultry rearing is one of the most lucrative business ideas today, as it does not require huge capital to start, easier to rear and less laborious to cater-for. Poultry rearing provides various job opportunities which include: selling of birds and their products, selling of point of lay and marketing of poultry feed. but still there are great challenges of income fluctuation and seasonality, poor infrastructures and poor mindset of youth participation within the sector. It is therefore, recommends various government agencies, banks, private sectors, civil society, rural co-operative societies, youth agencies in Nigeria with the assistance of various international donor agencies can collaborate and play more role of giving loans, grants and adequate extension services to ensure that youth empowerment is achieved within an eco-friendly environment through profitable poultry production. Government as well as parents should use poultry production business to pursue youth empowerment. The effort would drastically reduce the level of the prevalent unemployment rate among the youth in the Nigeria.

Keywords: Youths, Unemployment, Poultry Rearing, Chicken

Introduction

Youths are young people within the age range of 18-34 years (National Youth Policy, 2009). In Nigeria most people within this age bracket that are willing, qualified and able to work but are not gainfully employed and are therefore regarded as unemployed youths. Gbosi (2006) defined unemployment as a situation where people that are willing and able to work at a specified wage or salary are unable to get jobs. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Nigeria's youth population qualified to work is about 40 million. But only a total of 11.2 million are unemployed. This value is significant and worrisome. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been on the rise for the past 10 years especially from 2016 to 2020. For instance, in 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in Nigeria was 13.96 % compared to 14.17 % obtained in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020; Statista, 2021). A situation where able-bodied are not gainfully employed will surely lead to an increase in various societal vices such as armed robbery, cyber-crime, militancy, prostitution, kidnapping and other unwanted vices (Adawo and Atan, 2013). In order to avoid these issues in the future,

there is the need to create more job opportunities through training and empowerment of entrepreneur minded youths in eco-friendly businesses. The aim of such empowerment scheme should focus on producing youth entrepreneurs that will become job providers and not job seekers.

Table 1: Youth unemployment rate in Nigeria (2010-2020)

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)
2010	9.47
2011	9.56
2012	9.71
2013	9.84
2014	8.41
2015	7.81
2016	12.48
2017	13.96
2018	13.72
2019	13.96
2020	14.17

Sources: Statista, 2021

Nigerian the populous nation in Africa has higher demand for animal protein, Its blessed with a lot of natural resources in agricultural sectors (FAO, 2019; Statista, 2021). In poultry alone it can provide the much needed empowerment and entrepreneurship option that can not only provide jobs for the Nigerian youth but also make them job creators. Poultry sector has tremendous employment potential and would go a long way in reducing unemployment rate in Nigeria. Hence, the focus of the paper on poultry rearing as a panacea to youth unemployment.

Poultry

Poultry refer to birds such as chickens, turkeys, ducks, pheasants, gees, ostrich, quail, and related species that are used for production of meat, eggs, meat or feathers (Mozdziak, 2019). The term poultry covers a wide range of birds from indigenous to commercially breeds chicken such as ducks, turkeys, guinea fowl, geese, quail, pigeons, ostriches and pheasants (FAO,2006). The domestication of birds such as chicken, ducks, quails, turkey, and geese with the intent of rearing for meat, egg production as well as using their fecal droppings and feathers in industries as natural unprocessed materials is known as poultry farming (Stiles, 2017). The rearing of birds originated many years ago, which emanated by collection of their eggs and young ones from their natural habitat domesticated them as farm animals. The types of poultry that are commonly reared in Nigeria are chickens, ducks, guinea fowls, turkeys, pigeons and more recently ostriches. Those that are of commercial or economic importance given the trade in poultry, are chicken, guinea fowls and turkeys, amongst which the chickens predominate. Nigerian poultry industry comprises about 180 million birds – Nigeria has the second largest chicken population in Africa after South Africa (SAHEL, 2015) – producing 650 000 tonnes of eggs and 300 000 tonnes of poultry meat in 2013 (FAOSTAT, 2017).

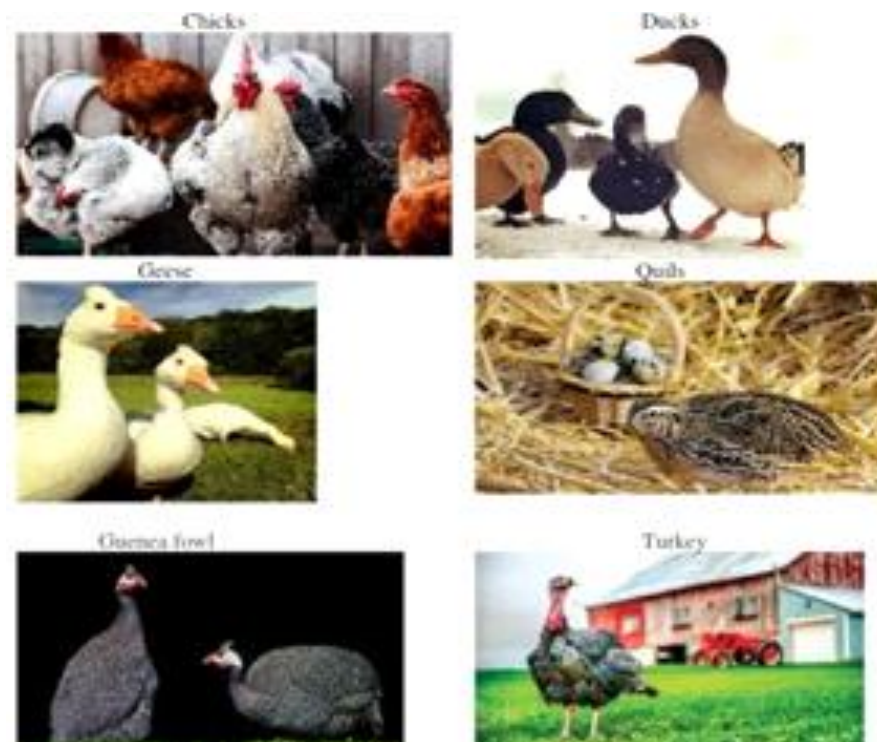


Plate I: Poultry Birds in Nigeria: A Chicken, b Duck, c Gees, d Quills, e Guinea fowl & f Turkey

Sources: [https://www.academia.edu/43806750/INTRODUCTION TO POULTRY FARMING](https://www.academia.edu/43806750/INTRODUCTION_TO_POULTRY_FARMING)

Chicken

The chicken (*Gallus domesticus*) is a domesticated jungle fowl species, with attributes of wild species such as the grey and the Ceylon jungle fowl that are originally from Southeastern Asia. Rooster or cock is a term for an adult male bird, and a younger male may be called a cockerel. A male that has been castrated is a capon. An adult female bird is called a hen and a sexually immature female is called a pullet (Wikipedia 2022). Chicken is a bird. One of the features that differentiate it from most other birds is that it has a comb and two wattles. The comb is the red appendage on the top of the head, and the wattles are the two appendages under the chin.

Systems of Poultry Production in Nigeria

There are two distinct systems of poultry production in Nigeria, as in most developing countries of Africa and Asia. Each of these two systems is associated with features of scale, stock, husbandry and productivity that therefore define the two distinct production systems. The two systems are conventionally referred to as the commercial poultry and the rural poultry, respectively (Adene and Oguntade, 2006).

The Commercial Production System as the name implies is industrial in its prototype and therefore based on large, dense and uniform stocks of modern poultry hybrids. It is capital and labour intensive; as well as inputs and technology demanding. On the other hand, the Rural Poultry is by convention a subsistence system which comprises stocks of non-standard breeds or mixed strain, types and ages. It is generally, of small scale, associated with household and little or no veterinary inputs.

Poultry production in Nigeria amounts up to 454 billion tonnes of meat and 3.8 million eggs per year, with a standing population of 180 million birds. About 80 million chicken are raised in extensive systems, 60 million in semi-intensive systems and the remaining 40 million in intensive systems (ASL 2050, 2018).

Extensive (Free-Range System)

Farmers keep indigenous chicken flocks, which are left to roam around and scavenge for food and water. Flocks contain birds of different species and varying ages. There may be rudimentary shelter, though most birds roost outside in trees or nest in the bushes. Production is subsistence-oriented, mainly for family consumption. This system is present mainly in the northern regions of the country.



Plate II: Extensive System of Poultry in Nigeria

Sources: <https://www.goggle.com>

Semi-Intensive System

There is a combination of extensive and intensive system where birds are confined to certain areas with access to shelter. In this system, the birds are confined in an enclosed area outside during the day and housed at night. Feed and water are available in the house to avoid wastage by rain, wind and wild animals. Semi intensive system are commonly found in urban and peri -urban as well as rural situation.



Plate III: Semi Intensive System of Poultry Production in Nigeria
Sources: www.google.com

Intensive (Commercial Systems)

In intensive systems, farmers keep exotic birds of one species, producing either meat or eggs for the market. This system ranges from medium to large scale commercial enterprises and also used at household level. Chickens are fully confined in houses or cages. Capital outlay is higher and the birds are totally dependent on their owners for all their requirements.



Plate IV: Intensive System of Poultry Production in Nigeria

Sources: www.google.com

CONTRIBUTIONS OF POULTRY FARMING AS A MEANS TO MINIMISE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Poultry farming provides wider employment opportunities than any other livestock business because there are many branches in the poultry industry (Abiola, 2007). The importance of the poultry sub-sector is chiefly in the provision of meat and egg as well as the provision of employment either directly or indirectly and the contribution to the revenue (Gross Domestic Product) of the country (Adebayo and Adeola, 2005). Compared to a number of other livestock species like cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and rabbits, the poultry is easier to rear, less laborious to cater-for and financially less expensive to maintain. The poultry has fast-growth and high financial- returns; with few social, health and religious taboos against its consumption, usage and production than the aforementioned animals.

Many new businesses require a large capital outlay, which is not within reach of most business owners. A typical startup business also takes a long time to produce a return on your investment. By contrast, a small-scale poultry business has a relatively low start-up cost and rapid returns. You can begin with as little as N50,000 (which basically covers the cost of buying the day-old chicks and feeding them) and get a 100% return on your capital investment within two months. No other business can provide such a quick turnaround.

There are other lucrative poultry related ecofriendly opportunities which poultry related venture which include: Selling of dressed or frozen chicken parts; Sales of Poultry eggs; Marketing of poultry feeds; Selling of poultry medication and vaccines; Hatchery operations and selling of day old chicks; Selling of point of lay birds; Sales of poultry manure (fecal waste/dropping); Transportation of poultry products; Poultry Marketing Agencies; Poultry consulting firm.

Poultry meat and eggs play a very useful role in bridging the protein gap in Nigeria. They are palatable and generally acceptable. The importance of poultry to the national economy cannot be overemphasized, as it has become popular industry for the small holders that have great contribution to the economy of the country. The enterprise has assumed greater importance in improving the employment opportunity and animal protein production in Nigeria (Afolabi, *et al.* 2013). Therefore, it is clearly shown that poultry rearing is an indispensable tool for alleviating poverty and unemployment rate among youth in Nigeria.

Challenges Affecting Youths Participation in Poultry Production

Poultry farming in Nigeria has encountered some great improvements over the years, no doubt. However, that is not to say this farming sector is free of challenges. On the contrary, some farmers in poultry farming are faced with problems cutting across various areas (Alara ,2021).The most common problems peculiar to poultry farming in Nigeria include:

1 Access to Capital

When it comes to poultry farming in Nigeria, adequate funding is one major challenge. To run a successful farm, capital has to be readily available to farmers. Make no mistakes about it; the level of growth any farm experiences dependent on the capital invested in it.

2 Lack of Information

Lack of requisite knowledge and training on how to engage in poultry farming became a major challenge among the youths. Access to the necessary information contributes to the success of poultry farming. One mistake some people make is venturing into a business with very little or no information about the field. On the other hand, some people get their information from the wrong sources, which eventually leads to business failure. A farmer who ventures into the business with all the information needed will perform way better than someone with none or the wrong information.

3 Parasites and Diseases

Parasites and diseases lead to a loss in egg production. While some breeds of birds are resistant to certain diseases, others aren't. If you're rearing birds for maximum production, they need to be kept in the best state possible. Being prone to pests and diseases will be a barrier to this happening.

4 Problem of Feeds

The growth rate in birds is solely dependent on the type of feeds they are being fed with. Feeding goes way beyond giving the birds something to eat. These birds require a balanced diet if they are to perform well. Nutritional deficiencies can alter the growth of pullet and the production level of hens.

5 Availability and Affordability of Vaccines

Ready access to vaccines and drugs is of great importance in poultry farming. However, not all farmers can afford the cost of vaccines. It's easier for industrial poultry farmers to buy vaccines when necessary as they can afford the expenses. The same can't be said for farmers into small-scale poultry farming in Nigeria. In addition to this, vaccines might not be readily available; hence, prevalent sales of fake ones. Administering fake vaccines to birds can be harmful to their health.

Other challenges include: poor infrastructure, poor mind set about the sector, development and empowerment politics, problems of tradition, the effect of climate change, poor parental, family and societal view of agriculture generally (although fast changing), use of less effective production methods, and poor government policies (Ajani, *et al.* 2015).

Conclusion

Poultry farming has major role to play in creating lucrative business opportunities for unemployed youth in Nigeria, based on its importance as a source of animal protein and income generation. Produce is relatively inexpensive and widely available. Poultry production has a less detrimental impact on the environment than other livestock and financially less expensive as it does not require huge capital to start, one can start from the comfort of his home with relative number of chickens desires

depending on specie available. it also contributes to the revenue generation (GDP) of Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. The government should use poultry production business to pursue youth empowerment with extra vigor to drastically reduce level of unemployment in Nigeria. This approach will enable the Federal Government to meet the target of reducing poverty and generate productive employment for a lot of people every year.
2. Youths that are willing to engage in poultry farming are advice to have requisite knowledge and engage them self in training before they start.
3. There should be on enlightenment on the awareness of job opportunity within the poultry through the media such as radio station, television and even at social gathering.

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