

“Rural Youth Participation in Agriculture in Begi district of West Wollega Zone of Oromia regional state, Ethiopia.”

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Abstract:The study was aimed to investigate participation of rural youth in agricultural activities. Study intended to describe the attitude of youth towards agricultural activities, types of agricultural activities which were engaged by rural youth and the economic factors which influence rural youth participation in agriculture. Data for this study were collected from Beghi district in West Wollega through survey questionnaires, focus group discussion and interviews. Cross sectional study design was employed to accomplish the basic research objective. Simple random sampling technique was employed to collect quantitative data. The study revealed that most of the rural youth aspire to non-agricultural occupations. The absence of access to different kinds of services and infrastructures at a desired level to youth in rural areas make agriculture and rural life unattractive to youth. Land shortage, budget problems, lack of agricultural input, low attitude for agriculture and personal influence are constraints challenges rural youth to participate in farming as their means of livelihood.

Keywords: Agriculture, participation, rural youth.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture, which was begun before 10,000 years ago, mainly includes the production of plants and animals, and it is critically important for humans (FAO, 2008). It is the world's largest economic sector, on which, about 2.5 billion people rely for their livelihoods. Over 70 percent of the world's poor are living in rural areas, and have engaged in farming (Foster, *et.al.*, 2003; World Bank, 2014). Agriculture can help to reduce poverty, raise income and insure food security for 80% of the world's poor, who are live in rural areas and works mainly in farming (World Bank 2018). Ethiopian society is largely agrarian and agriculture is the backbone of country economy. Agriculture accounts about 50% of the Ethiopian gross domestic product and 65% of the Oromia regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Young people are being raised up with career aspirations by far beyond agriculture putting the farming enterprise at risk. Youth are most power full and energetic to bring new change and create new invention on the world. In recent time rural youth are migrating to urban for the search of other job rather than participating in agriculture. Youth are not interested to live in rural area; they are totally leaving rural area to settle in the cities which have difficult effect on agricultural development of the Ethiopian country as the general and Beghi woreda particularly. Rural youth are migrating from rural to urban due to difficulty of challenges in rural area from study area. For this reason agricultural productivities become decreasing in recent time. The current cross sectional study design aims to identify aspiration of rural youth participation in agriculture, kind of activities rural youth wish to participate in and constraints challenges rural youth in agricultural participation. The study aims to find out the extent of rural youth participation in agriculture, explore socio-cultural factors that influence the likelihood of youth engagement in agriculture and to find future prospect of rural youth participation in agriculture.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This potential cross sectional study design was carried out on rural youth participation in agriculture in Begi district of Oromia regional state, Ethiopia from April 2018 to April 2019. A total 286 which include both male and female rural youth between age group of 15 -29 were involved in this study.

Study Design: Study was cross sectional study design which was focused on study of rural youth participation in agriculture, socio economic factors determine their engagement in agriculture and economic constraints prevent rural youth participation in agriculture.

Study Location: This was a tertiary rural youth participation in agriculture in Begi district of Oromia regional state, Ethiopia.

Study Duration: April 2018 to April 2019.

Sample size: 286 rural youth were sample size of study population.

Sample size calculation: The sample size was estimated on the basis of a single proportion design. The target population from which researcher randomly selected my sample was considered 1004. I assumed that the confidence interval of 5% and confidence level of 95%. The sample size actually obtained for this study was 286 rural youth. purposive sample techniques was applied to select key informants for interview and focus group discussion.

Subjects & selection method: The study population was drawn from consecutive rural youth who participate in agriculture

Inclusion criteria

1. Rural youth
2. both sex
3. Aged 15-29 years,

Exclusion criteria

1. Rural youth who participate in merchant activity
2. Rural Youth with bad behavior

Procedure of methodology

After written informed approval was obtained, a well-designed questionnaire was used to collect the data of the recruited rural youth participation in agriculture retrospectively. The questionnaire included socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, nationality, income, educational background, and economic constraints, interest of their participation and degree of their participation in agriculture, attitude towards agriculture and personal influence of youth participation in agriculture were included in questioner for finality of study objective. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 24) and adequately presented in frequency tables and chi square test where as qualitative was analyzed through descriptive methods of data analyse

III. RESULT

The data further show that, there was gap in the educational level of male and female respondents. Majorities (60.1) of male were attended high school and (18.5%) female were attended primary school which show controversial relationship between gender and education level. There were not males degree holders of respondents which implies educated male are not aspiring to live in rural area as well as to participate in agriculture. The result of study show that, male youth were not interested to live in rural area because of challenges and difficulty of life in rural area. They are in the urban by participating in day to day activities of urban life. Married male stayed in rural area because they are enforced to save their child and families throughout participation of agriculture. The table below show educational backgrounds of respondents.

Table 1: Educational background of respondents

Educational back ground of respondent for identifying effect of education on their interest							
Gender	Un educated	Write and read	1-8 th School	9-12 th school	Diploma or TVET	BA/BSC degree	Total
Male	5(1.7%)	6(2.1%)	-	172(60.1)	-	-	183(64%)
Female	-	14(4.9%)	53(18.5%)	-	8(2.8%)	28(9.8%)	103(36%)
Total	5(1.7%)	20(7%)	53(18.5%)	172(60.1)	8(2.8%)	28(9.8%)	286(100%)

Source: Own survey method April, 2019

Of total number of participants, 206 (72%) were responded low rate of rural youth participation in agriculture and 47 (16.4%) responded medium for their participation in agriculture. The left 7.7% and 3.8% were said high and very high rate of rural youth participation in agriculture. Majorities of respondents’ responded low rate of participation in agriculture. This implies most of rural youth were not participated in agriculture and aspire in nonagricultural activities.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents’ degree of participation in agriculture

Gender		Degree of extent of rural youth participation in agriculture				
		Very high	High	medium	Low	Total
Male	Frequency	11	22	27	123	183
	Percent	6%	12 %	14.8%	67.2%	100%
Female	Frequency	0	0	20	83	103
	Percent	0%	0%	19.4%	80.6%	100%
Total	Frequency	11	22	47	206	286
	Percent	3.8%	7.7%	16.4%	72.0%	100%

Source: Own survey method April, 2019.

The table below shows, from total participants, 144 (50.3) respondents were disagree and 75(26%) were strongly disagree for statement friends will support me if I participate in agriculture and be farmer. Whereas 12%, 5.6% and 5.2% respondents agree, strongly agree and neutral respectively. Most of Friends were not support rural youth participation in agriculture.

Table No 3: Shows Distribution of friends’ consideration in agriculture

Variables	Friends will support me if I participate in agriculture and be farmer					Total	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Male	Frequency	0	11	15	98	59	183
	Percent	0%	6%	8.2%	53.6%	32.2%	100%
Female	Frequency	16	25	0	46	16	103
	Percent	15.5%	24.3%	0%	44.7%	15.5%	100%
Total	Frequency	16	36	15	144	75	286
	Percent	5.6%	12.6%	5.2%	50.3%	26.2%	100%

Source: Own survey method, December, 2019

154 (53.8 %) of respondent disagreed and 90 (31.5%) were strongly disagree whereas 9% of respondents were agree; with small number of respondents strongly agree and neutral by 3.5% and 3.1% respectively for statement my family support me if I participate in agriculture and be farmer. Families do not support their child to participate in agricultural activities. The table below shows , families encouragement and their contribution in supporting rural youth in agricultural participation.

Table No4: Shows distribution of parents’ consideration in agriculture

Gender of respondents	Family support me if I participate in agriculture and be farmer					Total
	strongly agree	agree	Neutral	Dis agree	Strongly dis agree	
Male	0(0.0%)	21(11.5%)	9(4.9%)	63(34.4%)	90(49.2%)	183(100)%
Female	10(9.7%)	2(1.9%)	0(0.0%)	91(88.3%)	0(0.0%)	103(100%)
Total	10(3.5%)	23(8%)	9(3.1%)	154(53.8%)	90(31.5%)	286(100%)

Source: Own survey method April, 2019

The respondents were asked to indicate the attitude of communities for their participating in agriculture and view the communities have for rural youth farmers. From the below results in table 158 (55.2%) of the respondents indicated that communities consider rural youth farmers as lazy workers who lost other job opportunities, whereas 128(44.8%) were considered rural youth as strong and good workers. From this table we understand majority of rural youth participated in agriculture were considered as lazy workers who lost other chance of job.

Table No5: Shows distribution of Communities’ attitude for rural youth farmers

Gender of respondents	How community view rural youth farmers		Total
	Good & strong workers	Lazy workers who lost other job opportunities	
Male	30(10.5%)	153(53.5)	183(64%)
Female	98(34.3%)	5(1.7%)	103(36%)
Total	128(44.8%)	158(55.2%)	286(100%)

Source: Own survey Method August 2018

The families consider rural youth farmers as those who have no other job opportunities and do not have the chance of being other professional because the family wants their youth do government works and being reach through merchant activity. Because of families’ low attitude on agriculture rural youth participation in agriculture is getting low youth are aspire to other types of work.

Rural youth recently reported that access to information, lack of credit and negative perceptions around farming are the leading reasons why rural young people are leaving small farming at such alarming rates.

Table No 6: Shows access of credit influence rural youth participation in agriculture

To what extent access of credit influence rural youth participation in agriculture						
Gender of respondents	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Small Extent	Not at all	Total
Male	13(7.1%)	17(9.3%)	109(59.6%)	29(15.8%)	15(8.2%)	183(64%)
Female	12(11.7%)	28(27.2)	63(61.2%)	-	-	103(36%)
Total	25(8.7%)	45(15.7%)	172(60.1%)	29(10.1%)	15(5.2%)	286(100%)

Source: Own Survey method April, 2019

From the results in table6, 172(60.1%) of the respondents indicated that to a moderate extent access to credit influenced their participation in agricultural activities, whereas 45(15.7%) indicated to a great extent, 25(8.7%) very great extent, 15(5.2%) not at all respectively influence rural youth participation in agriculture.

The decision of youngsters or teenagers to engage in agriculture not only depends on the access to resources that person has both tangible and intangible assetsbut also depends on how a person behaves in comparison to his /her references groups (relative motive).The more an individual is concerned about relative income the more he is dissatisfied or motivated that may result in a change of livelihood decisions (such as increasing labor supply in agriculture and increase labor supply in non-farm, i.e. change occupation from farm to non-farm employment), social unrest or migration. To obtain a better understanding of how youth perceive their life in agriculture, during the individual interviews and questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their future interest of agriculture.

TableNo7:ShowsRural youth aspiration in agricultureandtheireducational status

Educational background	Do you have interests to participate in agriculture		
	Yes	No	Total
Uneducated	5(100%)	0(0.0%)	5(100%)
Read and write	0(0.0%)	20(100%)	20(100%)
Primary school	0(0.0%)	53(100%)	53(100%)
High school	84(48.8%)	88(51.2%)	172(% 100)
Diploma/certificate	0(0.0%)	8(100%)	8(100%)
BA/Bsc degree	0(0.0%)	28(100%)	28(100%)
Total	89(31.1%)	197(68.9%)	286(100%)

Source: Own survey method, April, 2019

From the table 6, 68.9% were not interested to participate in agriculture whereas 31.1% were interested to participate in agriculture. The result implies that as educational level increase their interest to participate in agriculture decrease. According to result of study 100% of uneducated were interested to participate in agriculture comparing with degree holder 100% were not interested to participate in agriculture.

This implies that education status influence participation of rural youth in agriculture. With the increasing of education level rural youth interest to agriculture is decreasing in study area.

This result disagrees with Angba (2003) that participation increases with increased education level. According to result of study conducted educational status has impact on the interests of rural youth to participate in agriculture because educated were not interest to participate as those under primary school and not get education when researcher compare with each other.

Over all future a prospect of rural youth participation of agriculture in study area is seriously under question. It has been predicted that youth aspiration towards agriculture was declined in recent time. Rural youth are still moving to urban for sake of better life and simple work because of difficult challenges in agriculture.

From the table six (6) only 21% of high school students were interested to participate in agriculture, when researcher compare with diploma and BA/BSC degree their interest in agriculture is decreasing and rate of participation is very low. From both diploma and degree respondents none of them are not interested to participate in agriculture.

For both illiterate and read and write their interest to participate in agriculture is high .This show that how the level of education have impacts on rural youth participation in agriculture. The educated youth have interest to be government employer and participate in non- agricultural works which can satisfy them in their future life.

Universities graduated were not interested to participate in agriculture. They wish to be government employment and if they lost chance of being government employer, they come to participate in nonagricultural activities.

If they do not get other non-agricultural activities; they were migrate to urban and learn urban life then after for food they will participate in holding of materials for other to get money, after that habit of chewing chat and drink come to their life.One research respondent state that:

“Talking about agriculture to me is wasting time. My family is a farmer for a long time, and they thought me to help them after finishing my education. Therefore, at this time I want to do government work to live a better life and to change my family’s life. In future I want to live in urban with my family because all of my families were lost their power and now they are elder and fatigued to work agriculture.”

According to ideaofthis informant, interest to participate in agriculture is hopeless and distress and useless to practice agriculture as the future activities of their life.These problems were come up with low income gained from agricultural sector because they didn’t use modern agricultural inputs and better seeds for improvement of agricultural activies.Due to these problems the peoples of study area are faced food insecurity problems

Table No8: Shows distribution of Family preference for their child

Family career preference for children	Family encouragement for life success		Total
	Yes	No	
Agricultural occupation	53(18.5%)	27(9.4%)	80(27.9%)
Non- agricultural occupation	123 (43%)	83(29%)	206(72%)
Total	176(61.5%)	(38.5%)	286(100%)

Source: Own survey method,march 2019

As shown in table above, most of the respondents (43%) were encouragedbyfamilies for life success. But, the family’s encouragement tends to focus on non-agricultural occupation. Thus, despite the facts that above (85%) of respondents’ parent have based their livelihood on agricultural occupation, their preference for their children was nonagricultural career to be their future means of livelihood. As such, 72% of respondentsfamilywere preferred in nonagricultural occupation for their children and 27.9% of them were preferredagricultural occupation for future life of their childdren.This is affirmed by youth farmers during focus group discussion and interview with them.

When they were asked if they wanted any of their children to be farmers’ themselves, the most frequently given answer was absolutely no rather they aspired to their children beyond agricultural occupation. They never wish their children to end up being a farmer. Both children and farming parents felt it would be better if children were able to avoid the possibility of becoming a farmer.

IV. DISCUSSION

Youth are the real spirit for future agriculture of the country. Forces that shape and influence youth today will be the forces that dominate our country tomorrow. Youth look not only for a livelihood, but for dignity and for purpose and meaning in their lives. Youth make up approximately one-fifth of the total population in many countries in developing and emerging economy regions. The socio-economic development and prosperity of rural areas depends to a considerable extent, on the type of youth living in rural areas, because the rural youth have abilities to orient themselves to go along the main stream of the development process. In sub-Saharan Africa, the two thirds of people are engaging in agriculture, and one fourth of them are chronically hungry; although agriculture supports the livelihoods of the majority of the poor; and has the potential to economic growth and poverty reduction through adoption of improved technologies (Kelsey, 2011; Diao, et.al, 2006; FAO, 2008; FAO, 2014a; Dercon and Gollin, 2014).

Agriculture is the principal source of livelihood in study area and youth are a dominant constituent in the community’s demographic structure; but most of youth fail to take farming as their means of livelihood. The youth do not see working in the agricultural sector as a viable means of realizing their dreams of a good life. Instead, they want to engage in non-agricultural occupation in urban areas. The reason behind the low participation of agricultural career is associated with many factors but the characteristics of agricultural life and/or present form of rural inability to fulfill the needs and aspirations of rural youth is one of the factors that forced rural youth to aspire towards nonagricultural city life.

The views of parents and relatives /peers on agriculture, and the influences of personal attitude have significantly influenced rural youth to participate in agriculture. Though respondent’s parents have based their livelihood on agricultural occupation, they preferred and encouraged their child to have nonagricultural career. On the other hand status given to agriculture does not seem affected youth agricultural aspiration since most rural youth consider agriculture as significant in the given community but fails to participate in it.

The study also showed that, in spite of most rural youths’ nonagricultural aspiration, an attempt to start and/or do agriculture as a last resort is also challenging since it is constrained by many structural factors. The constraints are more severe particularly for rural youth who were in school empty handed. Land problem, the problem of agricultural input, such improved seed, asset problems like shortage of money, backwardness of agricultural tools and over price of seed and UREA /Chemicals/ are among economic constraints distress rural youth participation in agriculture.

Overall, my empirical results do suggest that economic disparities relative to peers are a welfare relevant concern for most rural youth in Ethiopia. In addition, the thesis illustrates that controlling for both father and mother attributes simultaneously in the specifications crucially interacts with the impact of some of the variables of interest.

Study shows that, there was low participation of rural youth participation in agriculture and disinterest of youth participation in agriculture was the results of social ,economic and personal constraints challenges them during agricultural participation. With this problems peoples of study area are under big problems of food insecurity. They can’t teach their child to practice agriculture and opportunity of agricultural development is very rare and under participation.

It is a known fact that hardly few youths are practicing agriculture, even though, majority of the rural youth have vigor and zeal to excel in agricultural and allied activities. In this context, it is worthwhile to know the aspirations and extent of participation of rural youth in agriculture. Aspiration of rural youth in agriculture is one of key to identify and measure rural youth participation in agriculture.

Though, the country’s agriculture-led development policy gives significant emphasis to the agriculture sector, the rural areas have been deprived of access to different kinds of services and infrastructure, such as road, electricity, and sanitation facilities. Both the qualitative and quantitative data show that the rural youth feel that the current state of rural life and agricultural practice does not fulfill their needs and aspirations. As such most of the respondents are not satisfied by rural life. Thus, rural youth are not that much interested to participate in agriculture in the absence of these facilities.

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The study adds some insights for understanding the causes of rural under development. There are different views why and under what conditions and when would young people like to make the decisions to opt for farming (Ellis, 1998, 2000; Bryce son, 1996; Rig, 2006; Barrett et al, 2001; Sumberg et al., 2017). In addition, the study finds that the decision of youngsters or teenagers to engage in agriculture not only depends on youth’s own choices or employment preferences driven by their capabilities and behavior but also depends on the preferences and attributes of parents.

Researcher show earlier that, the inconsistencies reported in literature as to the effect of parents’ (fathers’ versus mothers’) attributes on the choices of children’s livelihood partly emanate from the specifications used in the regression models (i.e. the choice of variables a researcher often uses as a proxy to control for parental effects). For instance, educations of fathers’ and mothers’ have opposite effects on the probability of youth staying in agriculture. Both mother and father were not choice agricultural activities for their child, rather they prefer government and non agricultural activities such as trade ,day to day activities which make them in urban life.

Therefore, rural youths’ low agricultural aspiration supplemented with these constraints has made youth to far from participating in agriculture. Thus, the agriculture continued to be done by the older generation who has no/little formal education. To increase youth employment in agriculture and reduce youth unemployment and underemployment as well as infuse rural development, it is necessary to improve the resource base of the marginalized youth, specifically for those rural youth who are trapped in structural poverty. Putting micro-financial institutions in place helps to liquidity and input supply constraints. Such kinds of institutions have to

facilitate and encourage youth as well as parents to make use of credit for productive investments. Thus, explicit consideration of the relatively highly deprived households and improvement in land and labor markets could help to convert deprivation into opportunities and ameliorate the situations of the left-behind. This requires better coordination within households, communication, and cooperation between different government departments, civil society, NGOs, and the private sector.

V. CONCLUSION

The result of study reveals, 68.9% of respondents were not interested to participate in agriculture and only 31.1% were interested to participate in agriculture. The majorities who have interest to participate in agriculture was who did not get modern education. Low rate of rural youth participation in agriculture was the results of social, economical and personal constraints affect them in agricultural activities. High percent of rural youth were interested to participate in non agricultural activities and though agricultural as backward activities due to families, personal interest and peer influence towards agriculture.

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