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Youths' willingness to engage in agriculture as a business insights from parts of Chilanga District, Zambia.

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Abstract
The agriculture sector in Zambia is the fourth largest contributor to national GDP (8.7%) and the largest contributor to employment (GRZ, 2007). Zambia's agricultural sector is said to be key to the development of the Zambian economy and provides livelihood for more than 60% of the population (Jain, 2007; IAPRI, 2020). This paper investigated the willingness of youths to engage in agriculture sector with the objective of identifying obstacles that hinder them from participation.
The study adopted a case research design in studying the phenomenon in depth. Data were collected using both primary and secondary sources. There was no complete sampling frame for the population as a result; it was not possible to undertake a probability sampling techniques. Therefore, a convenient sampling method was used in this study. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis, tables and graphs.
The study found that 91% of the youths in Chilanga district were willing to engage in agriculture while 9% were not. The willingness could be as a result of benefits the agriculture sector offers in the study area. Horticulture type of farming was the most preferred and manual labour was the least form of farming preferred. The study also reviewed that access to land ownership was the main obstacle to youth participation in agriculture together with lack of knowledge on Government policies.
In conclusion, the study indicated that youths were willing to contribute to the development of the agriculture sector. This can contribute in reducing poverty and youth unemployment in Zambia. Therefore, the Government should use most effective media platforms such as social media in disseminating information on the agriculture policies in the country.
KEYWORDS: agriculture, youths, participation

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I. Introduction

Agriculture is an important sector in the economy of most developing countries in the World. In sub Saharan Africa, it accounts for 25%-40% of the total Gross Domestic Product, although this share has been declining over the past decade. For example it showed a declining trend in Kenya from 29.03% to 23.13%, Uganda from 26.15% to 23.42%, Zambia from 22.57% to 20.72% and Nigeria from 42.71 to 32.7% from 2000 to 2011 according to AGRA (2013).

Agriculture remains an important source of national income for most developing countries (Mashindano, Kayunza, Corta, and Mro, 2011). Furthermore, for many countries, the production of agricultural commodities, both for domestic use and export is an important source of economic growth and livelihoods (UNEP, 2011). According to UNEP (2011) approximately 2.6 billion people depend on agriculture for livelihood, the majority comprises subsistence farmers. Hence, agricultural growth can reduce poverty directly by raising farm incomes and indirectly, through labour markets and reduction of food prices (World Bank, 2008)

According to Kimaro (2015) (Afande, Maina, 2015) in order to foster a country's economic development, the agriculture sector must be very viable and youths should be encouraged to effectively take part. This is because they are fundamental assets that any country can have and constitutes an important resource for sustaining agricultural productivity which plays a fundamental role in economic development. The Youths are among the most productive individuals in any society given that they are resilient, persevering and resourceful stakeholders (Naamwintome and Bagson, 2013). Additionally, compared to the older population, youth are the ideal catalyst for agricultural developmental change given their greater ability and willingness to adopt to innovation (Afande et al., 2015).

However, despite the agriculture sector playing a pivotal role in socioeconomic development, there was still lack of enough information on the willingness of youths to participate. Therefore, this piece of work gives an overview about the willingness of youth's taking part in agriculture industry. The overall aim of the study

was to find out the willingness of the youths to participate in agriculture development in Zambia. The study objectives determine willingness of participation of youths in agriculture; investigated the obstacles to youth participation in agriculture and found out the type of agriculture youths prefer to participate.

II. Methodology

The study was conducted in Chilanga district of Zambia. Chilanga district shares its boundaries with Kafue Town on the South-east, Mumbwa town on the west, Lusaka town on the North and Chibombo Town on the North Western side. The total population is estimated at 107, 051 of which 53,863 are males and 53, 188 females with 21,853 households. Chilanga rests on the side of a large hill, which is a major decline in altitude between the plateau of Lusaka Province, and the Kafue River flats. The district has a mixture of open Savanna and Miombo trees which have been massively cut down either for wood fuel or paving way for booming housing industry and farming which has rocked the district. Chilanga district is predominantly a farming area and most of the people living in the area are either commercial or subsistence farmers (GRZ, 2013)

Data was collected using both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data sources included peer-reviewed journals, text books, conference papers and from international organisations reports. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaire and entered in Microsoft excel 2010 were analysis was also done (Kothari, 2004). There was no complete sampling frame for the population as a result; it was not possible to undertake a probability sampling techniques. Therefore, a convenient sampling method was used in this study. Convenience sampling method is appropriate in situations where a sampling frame is unavailable (Lee, 2003). A total of 100 questionnaires were administered on site and the response was 100%. Data was collected in two months' time starting 1st February to 30th March 2020.The sample respondents of the study comprised youths aged between 15-35 years.

III Results and discussion

Table 1: Presents the demographic profile of respondents with results showing gender equality of 50% males and 50% females. The findings are in good standing with the publication of FAO (2011) which showed that both males and females were interested to participate in agricultural activities.

Besides, the results also indicates that most represented age group in this research was 15-20 years cohort constituting 52% of the total sample size with the least represented age group of 21-25 constituting 11% of the sample size. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were not yet married representing 83%, mostly dependents of school going, 17% married but both were willing to venture in agriculture for the purposes of earning income and this contradicted the past findings of FAO (1999). However, 60% of respondents had attained secondary level of education and 36% attained tertiary level of education and those who had attained primary and below represented 4%.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Variable	**NUMBER**
Gender	
Male	50
Female	50
Age	
15-20 years	52
21-25 years	11
26-30 years	23
31-35 years	14
Marital Status	
Single	83
Married	17
Education	
Primary and below	4
Secondary	60
Tertiary	36

Table 2 showed that 91% of the youths were willing to participate in agriculture development, which supports the view of FAO (1999) that sates that the involvement of youth in agricultural production had contributed significantly to agricultural development and empowering youth to always meet their needs.

Table 2: Youths willing to venture in agriculture

YES (WILLING)	91%
Not (willing)	9%

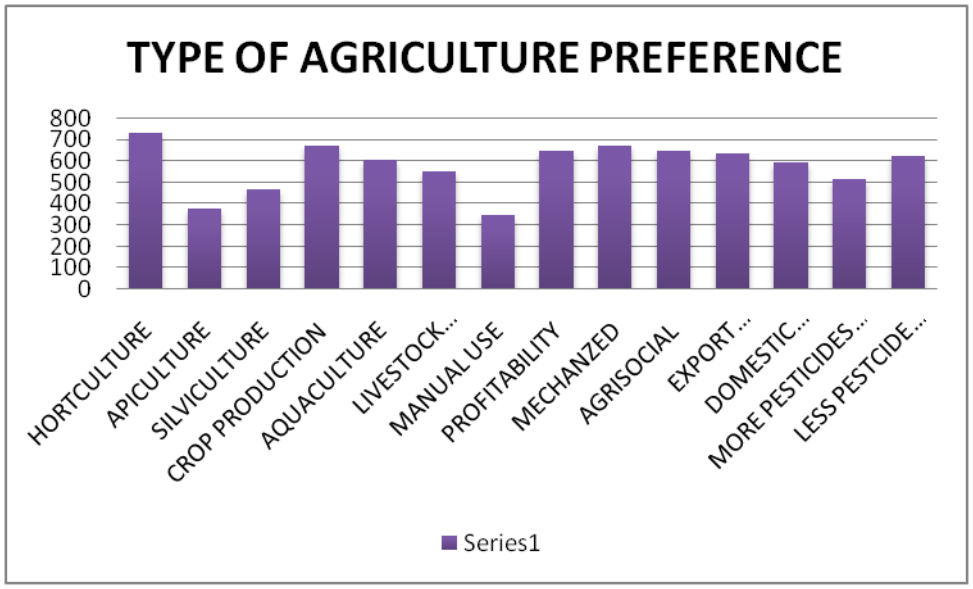

Figure 1: Type of agriculture preference attribute

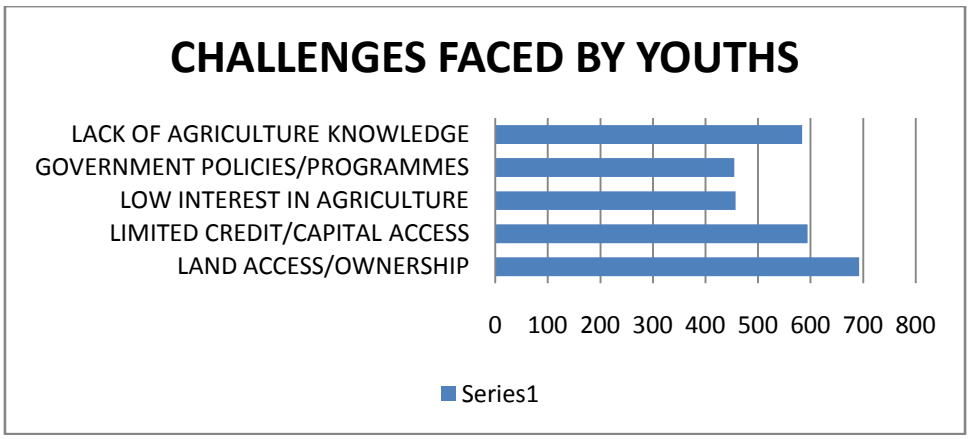

Figure 2: Challenges faced by youths

The results of the challenges faced by youths in participating in agriculture development was access to land as the major constraint factor limiting youths to participate. Besides, limited access to finance was also indicated as the second most constraint, this is in line with the findings of Afande et al., (2015) who postulated that access to finance provided by financial institutions is often difficult for most farmers because they do not have the right collateral required by financial lending institutions. The findings also indicated low interest and poor government policies in agriculture as part of constraints to youth willingness participation in agriculture development.

Tables 3 indicates the number of youth knowledgeable about the government policies on agriculture 72% of the youths were not knowledgeable about any government policies of the government on agriculture and only 28% were knowledgeable. This could be the cause of low involvement of the youths in agriculture in some parts of the country as also postulated by Chikezie, (2012) as he indicated that though youths have desirable qualities that can promote agriculture; most of them have strong apathy towards it. This has resulted in mass unemployment and lack of sustainable livelihood among youth. With fewer youth into agriculture, the long term future of agriculture sector is in question (Chikezie, 2012).

Furthermore, the inability of governments to integrate youths in agricultural activities has been the major problem for country's agricultural development. Therefore, for the country to be economically stable the agricultural sector must be strong and youths have to be encouraged on their participation (Daudu et al., 2009).

Tables 3: Knowledge of government policies in Agriculture

Yes (Knowledgeable)	28%
No (Not knowledgeable)	72%

Table 4 show the findings that only 17% of the youth were aware of youth empowerment programmes and 83% were not aware, this could be the cause of why most youths rated access to financial capital as one of the constraint to youth participation in agriculture. Therefore, For the future food production and youth development there is need to consider the identified constraints such as inadequate credit facilities, low return on agriculture investments, lack of access to tractors, land and other farming inputs in order to motivate youths (Adekunle et al., 2009).

Tables 4: Awareness of youth empowerment programmes

Yes (Aware)	17%
No (Not aware)	83%

IV Conclusions and Recommendations

Youth's participation in agriculture serves as a source of income generation and a source of employment. However, their willingness to participate in agriculture is characterized with perceived constraints that include lack of access to land, poor government policies and lack of access to finance. To increase youth participation in agriculture development, there is need for the Government of the Republic of Zambia to address these constraints. For instance, to enhance access to finance there is need to increase the youth that can benefit from loans offered by commercial banks and other government institutions.

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