

EXPLORING MOTIVES FOR YOUTH RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN KOGI EAST, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA.

¹Mohammed Kebiru Ibrahim, ²Inibehe George Ukpong, and ¹Monday Ufedo Shaibu

¹Dept. of Agric. Economics & Ext., Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria.

²Dept. of Agric. Economics & Management, Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study examined drivers of youth rural-urban migration in Kogi East, Nigeria, and involved 240 rural households made of those with migrants and non-migrants. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, probit regression and mean score. The results indicate that educational status of migrants, number of dependants, employment status of migrants, remittance received, and non-food expenditure significantly influenced migration choices of youths. Challenges that come with rural-urban migration were identified to include mainly increased crime rate (Mean=4.5), dilapidated and congested road system (M=4.4), high unemployment rate (M=4.1), increased rural poverty (M=3.1) and deteriorating quality of social services in cities (M=3.1). To significantly discourage rural-urban migration among youths, the government should consider sustainable rural development by improving social facilities in the rural areas, while concerted effort should be directed towards improving agriculture capacities of the rural population, to promote increased agricultural outputs, employment, increased income, and reduced dependency of rural households on remittances for survival.

Keywords: Youth migration, Rural-Urban Drift, Migration, Kogi state, Nigeria, Probit regression.

INTRODUCTION

Migration has been viewed as a survival strategy of poor rural population (Ajaero & Onokala, 2013). With the dwindling world economic situation, rural-urban migration is projected to be on the rise, with the bulk of urban growth expected in developing countries which are already vulnerable to socioeconomic crisis including youth restiveness, juvenile crimes, high unemployment, rural poverty and food insecurity. Osby (2015), recorded that two-thirds of the world population is projected to reside in the urban cities, mainly in developing countries. Thus, developing countries face the risk of unprecedented increase in the number of rural-urban migrants likely to involve mainly youths in pursuits of their hopes, aspirations and search for better livelihood (Bruecker, 2014; World Bank, 2013).

In many developing nations, there have been a rapid growth in terms of population of urban areas far more than that of rural areas. Rural-urban migration is the dominant pattern of internal migration, and forms an inherent part of economic development process in developing countries including those of Africa (DeBrauw *et al.*, 2014; Ofuoku & Chukwuji, 2012). Nigeria with a poor population growth control and socioeconomic imbalances, is a typical example of such scenario where there is tremendous expansion of urban areas due to rural-urban migration (Aworemi *et al.*, 2011). The unavailability of livelihood requirements especially social amenities and better job opportunities in the rural areas lead to massive migration of energetic youths to the urban areas in search of greener pasture. This promotes labour migration as a result of imbalances between the income in the rural areas, such as rural farms, and the wages offered elsewhere in the urban areas (Erdkamp, 2016).

In rural African communities most of which are facing poor economic growth and poor rural development, rural population mainly women and children remain vulnerable to poverty. Ekpebu & Ukpong (2013), quoted that agriculture employs about 73% of rural population in Africa and about 30% of the labour force in Nigeria, most of which are women. Thus, sustainable development should involve empowering rural population mostly women to engage in sustainable means of livelihood for instance agriculture and aquaculture (Nwabueze, 2010).

In other words, agriculture has been the major source of livelihood of the rural people in most African communities, including Nigeria (Ekpebu & Ukpong, 2013), hence to ensure sustainable rural development, there is a need for suitable and consistent rural development policies that would promote agricultural development in the rural areas (Ita *et al.*, 2013). Sustainable agricultural development would enhance better standards of living and poverty alleviation in the rural areas, hence the need for greater commitment by the government towards designing sustainable strategies for economic development, mainly agriculture and other sources of rural livelihoods (Ekpebu & Ukpong, 2010). Also, in the quest to achieve sustainable development, conservation agriculture needs to be encouraged in rural African communities (FAO, 2008).

More so, owing to poor economic situations in the rural areas, most rural households encourage their members to move to urban areas in search for jobs and higher quality education so as to benefit from remittances and prestige (Acharya & Leon-Gonzales, 2016). Rural-urban migration can also be as a result of expulsion due to crimes, advanced opportunities in education, and unemployment (Aromolaran, 2013). According to Ajaero & Onokala (2013), rural-urban migration promotes community development through monetary remittances and rural-urban migrant support for community development

projects. Eze (2015), noted that monetary remittances to rural households remain the common benefit of rural-urban migration. Ofuoku (2015), reported that many rural households use remittances from their out-migrants to support agricultural production, especially to hire labour and for purchase of other farm inputs. These benefits notwithstanding, there is concern over the impacts of rural-urban migration on both urban and rural areas. According to Tacoli *et al.* (2015), the growing impacts of rural-urban migration have raised great concerns among nations with about 80% of 185 countries developing policies aimed at lowering rural-urban migration. The risk of rural-urban migration includes urban social disorders as a result of socioeconomic marginalization of rural migrant rather than actual movement of rural people to urban cities (Osby, 2015). Qin & Liao (2015), reported that rural-urban migration affects the quality of the urban environment, as in the case of China. Rural-urban migration affects the wellbeing of households including children (Zhang, 2015). According to Xu & Xie (2015), found that rural-urban migration affects the wellbeing of rural school children who migrate with their parents and those left behind by their migrant parents.

A study by Fazoranti (2009), on rural-urban migration revealed negative effects of the migration on both the rural and urban areas in Nigeria. Rural-urban migration has a significant impact on unemployment levels of the destination cities. Between 1998 and 1999, urban unemployment rose from 5.5% to 6.5%, a rate higher than the national unemployment which increased from 3.9% to 4.7% during the same period (USAID, 2002). Rural communities share this burden through loss of manpower necessary for agricultural activities and production. Ofuoku & Chukwuji (2012), noted that rural-urban migration has resulted in labour shortage in the rural areas. While emigration of agricultural labour is said to improve vegetation greenness (Li *et al.*, 2016), rural-urban migration thus result in drastic decrease in rural labour which in turn reduces total cropped area and quality of work, giving rise to reduced food production and reduced household wealth. The impoverishment of rural areas in Nigeria is partly explainable by economic isolation and out-migration of youths in search of employment in cities, which affects the labour force for agricultural production, with males more prone to migration than females (Ofuoku *et al.*, 2015).

It is obvious that many African countries have engaged in numerous rural development strategies, most of which have failed due to either unsustainable or inconsistent policies, corruption or changes in leadership. In Nigeria, poverty alleviation and economic development programmes such as agricultural development programmes, have failed over the past three decades as a result of unsustainable development policies (Ekpebu & Ukpong, 2013). According to Ukpong & Mohammed (2014), Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, however, despite its great economic potential and rich natural resources, the country still suffers from decades of poor development, inconsistent economic (agricultural) policies and dwindling economic growth as a result of corruption and poor leadership. Thus, the need for sustainability in development and economic growth with more focus on the rural areas which are most vulnerable to the impacts of a long history of underdevelopment, poverty and economic hardship. In other words, the reason rural people migrate to urban areas is as a result of poor economic and structural development in the rural areas, hence, increased search for improved livelihood in the urban cities (World Bank, 2013).

In particular, Nigeria has been facing glaring cases of food crisis characterized by high food prices, food shortage and increasing food import bills with cereals (mainly rice and wheat) and fish among the most imported products (Ekpebu & Ukpong, 2013). According to Iruo *et al.* (2010), rural-urban migration has affected rural economic development in Nigeria

including fisheries development in terms of continuous loss of labour to the urban areas. In other words, the impact of rural-urban migration may result in the decline of the rural community economy that could lead to poverty and food insecurity, thus increasing the vulnerability of rural households (Mini, 2000). This arises owing to disproportionate exodus of the youth from the rural areas leaving only aged members and children to constitute the labour force. Therefore, efforts to address rural-urban migration would help to address food insecurity and other socioeconomic issues in the country by encouraging more youths to engage in viable economic activities, skills development and agriculture, hence promoting increased food production and improved income.

This study therefore seeks to find out the drivers of youth rural-urban migration and the associated problems, with a view to proffer suggestions that would promote sustainable rural development in Nigeria and other African countries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

Kogi State was carved out of Kwara and Benue States in 1991 and located in the North central region of Nigeria. The state is popularly called the Confluence State owing to the confluence of River Niger and River Benue at its capital, Lokoja, which is also the first administrative capital of modern-day Nigeria. It is located between latitude 7°45'N and longitude 6°45'E Greenwich meridian. Its population is about 3,278,487 people. The state has a landmass of about 29,833km² (11,519 sq miles) and divided into three senatorial districts (Kogi-East, Kogi-West and Kogi-Central). The state comprises of twenty-one (21) Local Government Areas. The study area, Kogi East senatorial district constitutes nine (9) Local Government Areas: Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Idah, Ibaji, Olamaboro, Odulu, Ofu and Omala. It has a total population of 767,633 people and landmass of about 4,829km² (1,901sq miles).

Selection of Sample Population

A rural area according to NPC (2003), is an area having a population of less than 20,000 persons. Kogi state like other states in Nigeria has three senatorial zones, from which Kogi East senatorial zone was used for the study. A three- staged sampling technique was adopted for this research. The first stage involved purposive selection of four (4) local government areas (Ankpa, Dekina, Idah and Olamaboro) out of the nine (9) local government areas under Kogi-East senatorial zone. These four local government areas were purposively selected bearing in mind their size in terms of both land mass and population, and level of commercial activities. In the second stage, three villages from each local government area were randomly selected making a total number of twelve villages. The villages selected include Anyigba, Egume, Ochaja, Ankpa, Okenyi, Ofugo, Ajaka, Idah, Ejule, Ogugu, Imane, and Iga-ikeje. The third stage involved the random selection of twenty (20) households from each village, making a total of 240 respondents used for the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Structured questionnaires and personal interviews were used to collect data from rural households. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics, mean score from Likert-type of rating scale and a bivariate probit model. The probit

model was employed to examine factors that drive youth rural-urban migration. The general form of the probit model is stated as:

$$\text{Prob}(Y=1/X) = F(X,\beta)$$

$$\text{Prob}(Y=0/X) = 1-F(X,\beta)$$

Where X denotes the characteristics that explain factors that drive youth rural-urban migration, β denotes the effect of changes in X on the probability of migrating to urban areas, and F is the cumulative distribution function (CDF). The explanatory variables are defined as.

$X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n$

Where,

X_1 = Educational status of household head (in years)

X_2 = Educational status of migrant (in years)

X_3 = Marital status (0 single, 1 married)

X_4 = Household size

X_5 = Number of dependants

X_6 = Employment status of migrant (0 no, 1 yes)

X_7 = Farm output (kg)

X_8 = Remittance (naira)

X_9 = household non-food expenditure (naira)

X_{10} = Entrepreneurial skills prior to migration (0 no, 1 yes)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of Households and Migrants

Number of Dependants

Majority (86.7%) of the households have between 1-10 dependants, mainly children and elderly people who depend on household heads for their livelihood. This finding indicates that households in this area have less number of children (1-10) as compared to a general rural household setting, which could be attributed to the high level of education and perhaps, their knowledge of birth control and family planning through campaigns often carried out in the state. This stems the rate at which people reproduce thereby reducing the burden of household heads catering for their children and the aged.

Presence of Migrant in the Household

Majority (80%) of the households had at least one migrant member, while 20% did not have migrants, suggesting that migration is a common phenomenon among rural dwellers in the study area.

Remittance

In terms of remittance sent home, 66.7% of the migrants send remittance back home to their households in the rural areas, while 33.3% do not send any form of remittance. This suggests that most migrants do not neglect members of their households left behind in the rural areas. This could also be an indication that migrant's absence in their hometown might not reduce the welfare of the house as remittance sent home provides additional income to rural household, and may substitute for the labour that could have been provided by the migrant or used to provide labour for the household's agricultural activities. In addition, this suggests a significant wealth outflow from the urban to rural areas as a result of youth migration.

Frequency of remittance

Majority of the migrants (42.7%) send remittance on monthly basis, while only 6.3% send remittance on an annual basis (see, Table 1). This frequency of receiving remittance could actually fill the gap of their absence and at the same time reduce the level of poverty affecting the family members at home. This finding is in accordance with Osundu and Ibezim's study (2013) that most of the migrants earn monthly income part of which is remitted home. However, depending on the percentage of income remitted, migrants who frequently remit money to rural households could be facing economic pressure owing to high living costs in the cities, which could affect the standards of living. Thus, in an attempt to study the economic implications of rural-urban migration, there is a need to also evaluate the implication of remittances on both migrants who remit resources and rural households who receive and use the remitted wealth.

Gender of migrants

As shown in Table 1, the equal number of male (50%) and female (50%) migrants to urban centres may indicate that female population migrates as much as the male to urban areas in search for means of sustaining their family, suggesting that youth migration in the study area is gender balanced. Rajan (2013), reported that the percentage of female migrants is more than that of males. The finding from this study could be attributed to the fact that migration is considered as a widely employed survival strategy for both males and females.

Educational status of migrants

The high level of educational attainment among migrants in the study implies that education plays a significant role in pulling migrants towards urban areas in search of jobs. This finding is in line with Pradhan (2013), who in a similar study in India reported that almost all the respondents in this study areas were literate except very few (1.1%).

Entrepreneurial skill prior to migration

A slim majority (51%) of the migrants were reported not to have any form of entrepreneurial skills prior to migration, while about 49% had various forms of entrepreneurial skills. From the result, the difference between migrants with entrepreneurial skills and those without is quite small, implying that, as much as youths in this area lack entrepreneurial skills, a good number of them interestingly get trained entrepreneurially. Both the skilled and unskilled youths have chances of being

employed in the cities, the skilled migrants could seek for more professional jobs while the unskilled could become useful in jobs that do not require professional trainings such as labourers, grocery clerks, hotel maids or general cleaners.

Employment status of migrants prior to migration

Prior to migration, 60.4% of the migrants were not engaged in any form of employment while 39.6% were engaged in one form of occupation or the other. This shows that many of the migrants were not gainfully employed and solely depended on the rural household heads for their welfare.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of Household and Migrants

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
HOUSEHOLD LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS		
No. of Dependants		
≤ 10	208	86.7
11-20	22	9.2
21-30	8	3.3
> 30	2	0.8
Total	240	100
Presence of Migrants		
Yes	192	80
No	48	20
Total	240	100
Remittance		
Yes	128	66.7
No	64	33.3
Total	192	100
Frequency of Remittance		
Monthly	82	42.7
Quarterly	14	7.3
Midyear	20	10.4
Annually	12	6.3
No remittance	64	33.3
Total	192	100
MIGRANTS SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS		
Gender		
Male	96	50
Female	96	50
Total	192	100
Educational status		
Primary	2	1
Secondary	24	12.5
Tertiary	166	86.5
Total	192	100
Entrepreneurial activities		
Yes	94	49
No	98	51
Total	192	100
Employment Status Prior to Migration		
None	116	60.4
Civil service	6	3.1
Artisan	42	21.9
Computer utilization	10	5.2
Others	18	9.4
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Factors that Drive Youth Rural-Urban Migration

Results of the probit regression model showing factors that drive rural-urban migration is presented in Table 2. The probit regression model was employed to determine factors that influence the decision of youths to migrate from rural to urban areas. The results indicate that educational status of migrant, household size, number of dependants, employment status prior to migration, remittance, household non-food expenditure and entrepreneurial skills prior to migration significantly influenced the migration decision, while marital status, educational status of household heads and farm output were not statistically significant.

The educational status of migrant was observed to be positive and significant at 5% (95% level of confidence), implying that education plays a significant role in youth urban migration decision and an increase in the number of years spent schooling will also increase the likelihood of youth rural-urban migration. This outcome could be attributed to youths who attained some levels of education being interested to move away from rural areas to urban cities in search of job opportunities to match their educational status, as supported by Pradhan (2013), in a similar study in India.

The size of the household has a positive marginal effect, significant at 10% level, which implies that as the household size gets larger, the probability of youth migrating from the rural household to urban centres increases, which agrees with Ehirim *et al* (2012), who reported similar result.

Number of dependants in the household was found to have a positive bearing on migration and significant at 5% level, implying that the higher the number of dependants in the household the more likely it is for migration to occur. This could also mean that households with large number of dependants tend to encourage youths to migrate to urban areas in order to reduce the burden on the household, than households with smaller size of dependants.

Employment status prior to migration as a driver of youth rural-urban migration was observed to be positive and significant at 1% level. This implies that migrants who are not gainfully employed are more likely to move out of the areas to urban centres in search of job opportunities to better their livelihood than their idle counterparts in rural areas.

Remittance has a positive effect, significant at 1% level, implying that the quest for remittance could influence household's decision to encourage migration among young members to urban areas. People in the cities who send money home are highly regarded by others in the area, also, the quest for monetary value tends to pull youths to urban areas.

The non-food expenditure of the household was observed to have a positive effect on migration drives of rural youths and significant at 5% level. This is an indication that the cost of accessing non-food needs like clothing, better housing, better education, social amenities, and healthcare, amongst others, is very high and mostly not readily available in rural areas. Thus, the demand for such non-food needs tend to drive people away from the rural areas in search of better sources of earnings. Change in taste and preference are also driving forces for rural-urban migration.

Entrepreneurial skills prior to migration was found to be positive and significant at 10% level. This implies that those who have learnt one form of skill or the other tends to move to urban centres where there are better opportunities for utilizing such skills. The absence of infrastructural facilities especially electricity and good access roads in rural areas make business start-ups more expensive than in urban centres, and deprive rural dwellers greater opportunities to create wealth to support their households.

Table 2: Probit Regression Estimates for Factors that Drive Youth Rural-Urban Migration

Variable	Marginal effect	Standard error	P-value
Education of household head	0.0227	0.0228	0.320
Educational status of migrant	0.2687**	0.0532	0.011
Marital status	-0.1929	0.6229	0.757
Household size	0.0464***	0.0272	0.089
Number of dependants	0.0611**	0.0318	0.045
Employment status of migrant	0.6098*	0.2547	0.000
Farm output	0.0031	0.0002	0.141
Remittance	0.7147*	0.1947	0.005
Non-food expenditure	0.0011**	0.0002	0.012
Entrepreneurial skills	1.5174***	0.2498	0.090
Constant	-0.9495	2.4470	0.698

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data (2015). Log-likelihood = -62.2252, *, **, *** indicate coefficient significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

Problems Resulting From Youth Rural-Urban Migration

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 3, indicates ranking of problems associated with rural-urban migration. These include; increased crime rate in urban areas, dilapidated and congested road system in urban cities, high unemployment rate in urban areas, increased rural poverty, deterioration of quality services in cities, and decline in standard of living of rural dwellers.

Movement of youth from rural areas may pose a threat to the urban area as they get caught up with the reality of life in contrast with their high expectation of greener pasture and better life. This reality tends to make youths engage in criminal acts like burglary, robbery, kidnapping, assassination, vandalism, prostitution, hooliganism amongst others. This is mainly as a result of their effort to survive in the absence of opportunities, and forcefully attempt to make wealth to meet their high expectations and needs of their rural households. This suggests that as rural-urban migration continues to take place, the crime rate is likely to continue to increase in urban areas, hence the need for greater employment opportunities and affordable basic facilities for urban population.

The problem of high unemployment rate is in agreement with Otto (2008), who noted that on the supply side, rural-urban migration disproportionately increase the growth rate of urban job seekers relative to urban population growth. Also, the rural people are faced with the possibility of poverty and hunger as a result of migration of the youth to urban areas, especially where migration involves youths who played major roles in farming and other income generating activities, or where benefits of migration does not improve remittances to rural households. Aromolaran (2013), reported that rural-urban migration is a direct result and driver of poverty, health crisis and hunger. Rural to urban migration has had drastic and dramatic effects on both human and environmental health, food security and consequently the sustainability of our planet. Hope for a sustainable and peaceful future depends upon the health and food security of rural communities which in real sense is not in existence.

Another problem identified by the respondents was decline in standard of living, suggesting that rural-urban migration may pose more challenges for the rural households than the opportunities it seems to create for them. Movement of youth from the rural to urban areas may cause peasant farmers not to produce enough food for subsistence use, let alone for sale. Thus, food shortages, low productivity, low income and increased poverty may lead to decline in their standard of living, poor social and infrastructural facilities.

Table 3: Ranking of Problems Associated with Migration in Descending Order of Magnitude

S/N	Problem	Mean Value	Rank
1	Increased crime rate in urban centres	4.5	1 st
2	Dilapidated and congested road system in cities	4.4	2 nd
3	High unemployment rate in urban areas	4.1	3 rd
4	Increased in rural poverty	3.1	4 rd
5	Deterioration of quality services in cities	3.1	4 rd
6	Decline in standard of living of rural dwellers	3.0	6 th
7	Neglect of aged and children	2.9	7 th
8	Low agricultural productivity	2.8	8 th
9	Decline in social status and cultural values	2.8	8 th
10	Low farm labour supply	2.7	10 th

Source: Field Survey Computation (2015)

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that rural-urban migration has become more of a common practice and culture of most rural households in rural African communities as a result of a long history of rural underdevelopment and poverty. Nigeria like most other African countries, has been facing increased issues of poor development of rural areas following lack of provision of social facilities and poor human capacity building, while most rural areas face decades of neglect by the government. Labour outflow from the rural areas coupled with poor basic social amenities would continue to render rural population vulnerable to poverty, hunger and poor wellbeing. Unfortunately, rural-urban migration is not the solution to rural poverty despite its benefits, considering its negative effects on both rural areas from which most people migrate, and urban areas to which they migrate. Considering the growing impacts of rural-urban migration on urban cities, there is high concern that Africa with its poor technology could face a significantly degraded society characterized by increased crimes, moral degeneration, environmental problems and poor living conditions.

More so, owing to the declining trend in food production and increased cases of food insecurity in Nigeria, the issue of rural-urban migration especially among the youths needs to be given a considerable attention. This is important because development of agricultural sector which is the dominant source of employment and livelihood for the rural population cannot be achieved if labour is continually lost to urban employments that barely exist. This has implications for food security as the menace of rural-urban migration implies that tomorrow's farmers are continuously migrating in droves to the cities. If the trend is left unchecked agriculture will be left in the hands of tired and weak rural population and the result will be production inefficiency and declining output.

In view of these growing concerns, the study examined the determinants of youth rural-urban migration in Kogi East Senatorial District, Kogi State, Nigeria. The major drivers of youth rural-urban drift are employment status of migrants, remittance, number of dependants, educational status of migrants and non food expenditure. Rural-urban migration led to increased crime rate and high unemployment rate in urban areas. The study suggests that the government should direct concerted effort towards improving the agriculture capacities of the rural population, through provision of extension services, and affordable access to farm credits and other farm inputs. It is expected that if agricultural capacities of rural population are improved, it will translate to increased agricultural production and ultimately reduce the dependency of rural households on remittances for survival. Also, to promote agricultural sustainability, rural farmers could be encouraged to embrace sustainable agricultural systems such as conservation agriculture, zero bush burning, controlled mixed farming and increased use of organic manure.

A sustainable rural development involving provision of basic social amenities such as stable electricity supply, establishment of healthcare facilities, technical schools, and good access roads to rural communities, would promote skills acquisition, improved agricultural markets, and youth development towards improved wellbeing. The government might partner with corporate and private sectors to establish skill acquisition centers in both rural and urban areas, to help the youths acquire self-sustaining skills, and at the same time provide employment and help to stem the tide of rural-urban drift. Rural

community members can form cooperative organizations and cottage industries to help engage youth into self-help projects and serve as sources of employment to the youths. Government should involve youths in rural developmental policies that is geared towards improving their wellbeing, while also considering the need for national orientation programmes for youths, which might involve career development and motivation to help the youths focus more towards achieving sustainable means of livelihood.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ibrahim Mohammed K., PhD, Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, Kogi State University, Nigeria.
Inibehe George Ukpong, PhD. Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Extension & Management, Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Shaibu Monday U., Postgraduate Student, Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, Kogi State University, Nigeria.