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AN APPROACH TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGES OF SESAME PRODUCTION AND MARKETING CAUSED BY MARKET LIBRALIZATION IN NGURU L.G.A OF YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study centers on assessing the strategies to mitigate the challenges of sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in Nguru Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria. Qualitative research approach and a phenomenological research design were applied, Purposive sampling and semi-structured interview were designed for data collection and the data collected were analyzed thematically. Consequently, The findings from the study revealed that, the study area over the last decades witnessed massive migration from food crops to sesame production, as a result of liberalization which increased the export of sesame to the neighboring countries rapidly, sesame production influence the production of other crops one bag of sesame can afford to buy a huge amount of consumable crops. The challenges faced by the sesame producers and marketers as a result of free-trade in the study area, include; drought, land grabs from small scales farmers, lack of integration of farmers to the sesame marketing system, weak extension service, food crops price inflation, food insecurity by small scales farmers, herders invade sesame farms on several occasions to feed their animals, also thieves are everywhere from time of harvest to the time of sell trying to take the advantage of a small circumstance, lack of market facilities, poor connection with international markets, price fluctuations, competitive advantage, limited access to credit, inefficient handling including, storage, packaging, and processing problems, inadequate of government interventions, and absence of market regulations and legislations. This situation has poses predicament to the producers and marketers of sesame also threatens the community with food insecurity and corresponding incidence of poverty in the study area. This study conclude that free trade has a significant impact on sesame production and marketing, free trade has open access for international marketers to come in and buy sesame in large quantities, this had increase the monetary value for sesame, and therefore consequently motivate farmers to migrate from food crops production to sesame production. The study recommended that the government of Yobe state, should create awareness on the negative effect of total migration from food crops to sesame production., Government should create sensitization training or workshop in order to educate marketers on the new trend in the sesame international market.

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1.0. Introduction

Sesame production was, and is, always one of the basis for agro industrial development that contributes significantly to the commercialization, monetization as well as the integration of natural rural sector (Taphee and jongur, 2014). Worldwide, there are over 5.53 million tonnes of the sesame crops produced yearly, with Myanmar being its largest producer, and India and China as the largest exporters (Nigeria Export Promotion Council, 2018). Africa accounts for more than 40 percent of the world's sesame crop producers with Sudan as the leading producer. Nigeria is now the second largest African producer, behind Sudan, and ranks the 6th in the world (United State Agency for International Development, 2014).

Sesame is the major oil crop in terms of exports in Nigeria, accounting for over 90% of the values of oil crops exports. Oil crops are the second most important exports in Nigeria after Cocoa. Sesame is unlike other crops in the country in which peasants play an important role and mainly grown under "commercial" farms (Mbwika, 2016). Sesame crop is an important crop to the Nigerian agricultural sector, and Nigeria's non-oil sector in general. It is one of the most sought cash crops in Nigeria, after cocoa and it is currently Nigeria's leading agricultural export in the first quarter of 2018, generating over $700 million in export revenue, ahead of cocoa $500m (NEPC, 2018).

Nigeria currently produces about 461,000 metric tonnes of Sesame crops yearly with the largest producing states in the North being Jigawa,Yobe, Borno, Gombe, Nassarawa, Benue and Taraba. About a total of 26 States grow sesame crops presently and the production is expected to increase given the good prices obtained by farmers and increased demand worldwide (NEPC, 2018).Sesame is one of the cash crops grown in Yobe State. It is a very popular crop among the

rural farmers. Report shows that great majority of small-scale farmers in the State are into production and marketing of sesame crops within the area, which indicates the usefulness of the crops to bring much income to the locals (Oladimeji et al, 2014).

Nguru local government area has been known for food crops, cash crops and livestock production, Agriculture is Nguru's main economic activity.The economy of the town is based on trade and commerce of gum Arabic, groundnut, sesame, meat, hides and skins, and fishing, among others, which led to the establishment of Nguru Oil Mill and extension of railway line to the town in the 1950s (Misari,1980).

However, report shows that 85 percent of subsistence/small-scale farmers in the study area are now shifting their focus to sesame production because of its potential to earn reasonable amount of income and increasing demand worldwide, without much emphasis on food crops production (YOSADP, 2014).

With the advent of globalization with its incessant effect of economic interdependencies, cross-border transactions of goods and services, visa-a-vie, free-trade and shifting of agricultural productions to more competitive side of the world led to the shift of most farmers from food crops production to sesame production, especially Nguru local government farmers, because of its lucrative nature and increasing demand worldwide. This situation in the area threatens the community with food scarcity and insecurity (YOSADP, 2014).

Therefore, the paper is set to assess the strategies to mitigate the challenges of sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in Nguru Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Free Trade has transformed the nature of agricultural production and marketing, which manifests in the shift in focus from food crops to cash crops production due to the lucrative nature of the

latter in the international market (Yusuf, 2003). The study area consists of many rural areas whose major source of livelihood is farming. They sell their farm produce to acquire basic necessities of life at exorbitant price. Most farmers in Nguru LGA (85%) resort to sesame production because of its monetary benefits, which indicates the potential of the crops to earn reasonable amount of income to all actors involved in its production and marketing. This scenario in the area is on the increase which led to the negligence of other crops, especially food crops. (North East Arid Zone Development, 2013).

This trend is accompanied with several challenges to both producers and marketers of sesame, such as land grabs from small scales farmers, weak extension services, food crops price inflation, food insecurity by small scales farmers because most farmers are not in a position to take advantage of seasonal price differences due to limited income to cover their financial commitments, and which in most cases have to be settled soon after harvest.

The implementation of policies of free-trade under the direction of the World Bank, IMF and the WTO has restructured the Nigerian economy relating to the rural areas through encouraging the commercialization and privatization of land, resources and the liberalization of the market which has been accompanied by deregulation.

Paradoxically, the situation in recent time took another dimension, whereby majority of the farmers produce more cash crops than food crops for their consumption (Yusuf, 2003). Therefore, this study intends to assess the strategies to mitigate the challenges faced by sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in Nguru Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria.



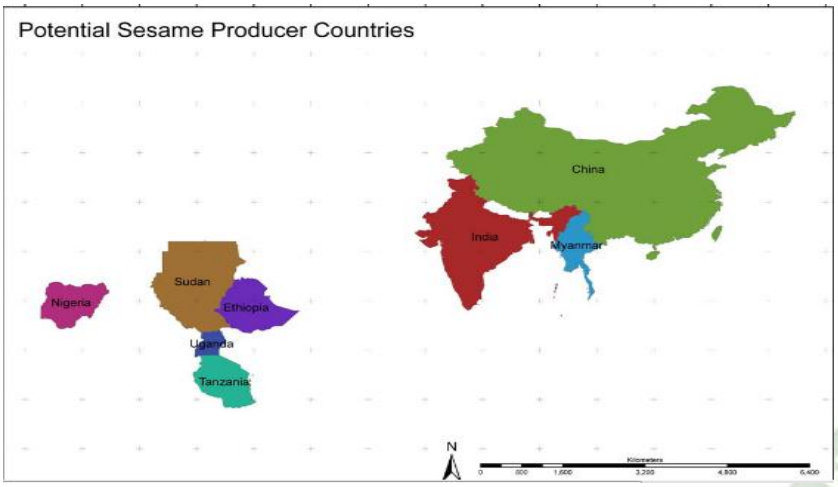
The Sesame Crop:

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Sesame is probably the most ancient oil crop known and used by mankind. It is often argued that sesame has its origin in Africa and spread early through West Africa to India, China and Japan, which became secondary center of diversity. With the exception of *Sesamum prostratum* Retz, all the wild sesame species are found in Africa. Strongly believed the variability and importance of sesame in the economics of several African countries justify the African continent to be the ultimate center of origin (Kafiriti and Decker, 2001).

Nigeria is of course one of the 51 major sesame-producing countries in the world. In 1999, the total land covered by sesame production has been estimated to be 6,259,000 hectares. Ranked in terms of the land coverage of sesame, India, Sudan, Myanmar, China, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Ethiopia lead the world. Based on production, India, China, Sudan, Myanmar, Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania took the rank from the highest to the lowest. These eight countries (see map below) have produced 81.4% of the world sesame production. The African

countries constituted 62.5% of the major producing countries (FAO, 2006; MOARD, 2006).



World top eight sesame producing countries,Source: survey result, 2006.

According to Arari (2005), 98% of the world sesame producers are developing countries due to its labor intensive nature of production. Generally, sesame is produced globally within the ranges of 250 North and South latitudes. However, few varieties can grow up to 40 degrees like in China, USA and Russia. Generally, sesame is well adapted in areas below 1250 meters above sea level and performs well at a temperature above 20 0C. Good sesame growth requires a rainfall from 500-650 mms and performs well in sandy loam (good fertile) soil with PH value of 5.5- 8. Sesame is an oilseed which mainly grows in tropical and subtropical regions. The uses of sesame are diverse, from direct consumption as food to an ingredient in cosmetic and pharmaceutical products. Worldwide, there are over 5.53 million tonnes of the sesame crops produced yearly, with Myanmar being its largest producer, India and China being the largest exporters. Nigeria is now the second largest African producer, behind Sudan and ranks the 6th in the world (NEPC, 2018).

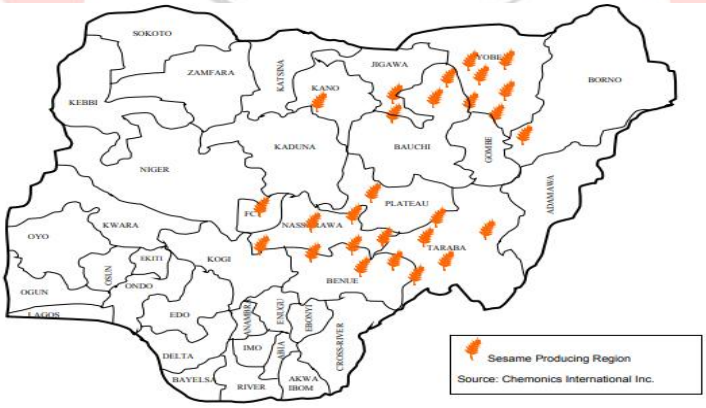
The growing world's population, changing consumption patterns and health awareness of consumers has led to recent growth in the sesame market. In 2017 the world production of

sesame was approximately 5.5 million tonnes, and the major share of sesame was produced in Africa and Asia. In 2018 the global market value of sesame was estimated at US $6.5 billion. It is expected that by 2025 the global sesame market will reach US$17.77 billion (FAO 2019), Global sesame production is forecast to reach 9.26million tones by 2040, up from 5.5 million tonnes in 2017. The demand for sesame in China alone is expected to reach 2.56million tones in 2040, up from 1.3million tones in 2016 (Mordor, 2019).

2.1 Types of Sesame Crops

There are two (2) types of sesame crops produced in Nigeria, which are the White/raw and Brown/mixed sesame; both qualities are widely accepted in the international market (USAID, 2002). The White sesame (Food Grade) crop is Food-grade used for meal, paste, confections, and bakery products in bakery industry. The crop is grown around the towns of Keffi, Lafia/Makurdi, Doma, Nassarawa, Taraba, Yobe and Benue States (USAID, 2002). The Brown/mixed sesame (Primarily oil-grade), crop is oil grade chiefly used in cooking for its rich nutty flavor and radiant texture. The crop grows in the North part, in Bauchi State, Taraba, and in Jigawa, some part of Yobe, and somewhere in the southern part of Katsina, and Kano States. (NEPC, 2018).

Map of Nigeria Showing Sesame Producing Regions.



Nigeria's sesame producing region
Source: Chemonics international Inc. 2012.

2.2 Sesame Production and Value

Sesame is typically produced in tropical and subtropical regions. However, some varieties of sesame can be produced in temperate regions free of frost during the growing season. Sesame plants are very responsive to several environmental factors including soil moisture, air temperature, soil nutrients and presence of heavy metals. According to FAO (2019), in 2017, sesame was produced on 9.9 million hectares of land with an average yield of 554 kg/hectare. There has been an upward trend in world sesame production over the last 50 years (FAO, 2019). Despite the growth in supply, the price trend has tracked a similar upward path. In 2014 world production of sesame reached a high as did the global market price. Global production and price trends of sesame from 2001 to 2017 was upward to 33.8% and the Sesame production forecasts indicate a steady growth of world sesame output (FAO, 2019)

2.3 Influence of Free Trade on Nigerian Economy

Free trade offers developing countries like Nigeria the opportunities to create wealth through the export-led growth, to expand international trade in goods and services and to gain access to new ideas, technologies and institutional designed. (Yusuf 2003)

Evidently, free-trade has brought about the domination of the Nigerian economy since its basic export is woven around raw materials. The raw materials provide the basis for production and further production; whereas export in Nigeria promotes economic diversification abroad; it restricts diversification in the domestic setting. The Nigerian economy is thus not competitive in the global trade circle (Majekodunmi and Adejuwon, 2012).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

There are numerous ideas that might be used to assess the strategies to mitigate the challenges of sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in Nigeria, as well as their implications

for national development. The Dependency Theory postulated by Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer in 1949, would be used as the theoretical framework for this investigation. Dependency theory was developed as a framework for understanding the reasons for the divergence in the development level between wealthier and poorer nations. It contends that resources flow from a periphery of poor and underdeveloped states to a core of wealthy states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. (Randall and Theobald 1998).

3.0 Methodology

The phenomenological research design was used as one of the qualitative methods in this study, which was based purposive sampling and semi-structured interview for data collection and the data collected were analyzed thematically. According to David, (2009) phenomenological research design is described as a set of non-statistical inquiry, techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomena. As a result, the paper employs qualitative method.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses, interprets and analyzes the strategies to mitigate the challenges of sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in Nguru Local Government Area of Yobe State, Nigeria. It deals with the presentation of data and analysis using thematic analysis technique which had been structured to highlight the findings based on the challenges being faced by the sesame producers and marketers in promoting peaceful coexistence, all which are presented in this section in a sequential subsections based on the themes.

4.1 Inadequate awareness on the dangers of high production of sesame

This refers to the lack of awareness about the dangers of migrating from food crops to sesame production by residents of Nguru local government.

Based on above themes the study revealed that there are various strategies to mitigate the challenges of sesame production and marketing as a result of free-trade in the study area, for

instance, if there is the need to achieve a balance in the production of both cash crops and food crops, also a balance in price value will go a long way in solving the problem that we faced. Every year we faced food crises from the time we over relied on sesame production, the problem is when we sell sesame we don't buy food, we add responsibilities to ourselves, some of us add a second wife, some buy motorcycle; after a few time we don't have what to eat again. Sesame farmers need to be mobilized about the dangers of doing this.

4.2 The Need for Regulations

The need for regulation refers to the people desire for government to intervene and regulate the activities of sesame production.

The study revealed that Government plays a vital role, for instance, through the RIFAAN program. The government helps to provide fertilizers and other equipment necessary for farming. We received aid from nongovernmental organizations like the Action against Hunger; they have helped us with sesame seedlings, zobo seedlings and cucumber seedlings as well. A lot of females have benefited from this assistance.

The study also established that people should be encouraged to farm their consumables so they can have food stored at Home, with this the food crises will be solved completely.

5.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that free trade has a significant impact on sesame production and marketing. Free trade has opened access for international marketers to come in and buy sesame in large quantities. This had increased the monetary value for sesame, and, therefore, consequently motivates people to migrate from food crops production to sesame production. Also, total migration from food crops to sesame production causes food crises, hunger and starvation among the rural dwellers. The study establishes that most of the sesame farmers were

in frenzied of taking advantage of the monetary value and their rush to sells to the market and spend the money on luxuries, and later on they suffer on what to eat.

The study also established that there are strategies put in place to improve sesame production and to mitigate the current challenges facing the sesame farmers in Nguru Yobe State, However, the government shows a very little commitment towards actualizing these strategies. There is also very little commitment from the part of non-governmental organizations.

5.0 Recommendations

1. The government of Yobe state as a matter of priority should complement the effort of farmers through the creation of awareness on the negative effect of total migration from food crops to sesame production.

2. Government and non-governmental organizations should support the effort of farmers, thereby assisting them with farming materials, such as fertilizers, seedlings and other things necessary for the progress of mixed crops farming.

3. Participatory extension activities should be introduced to farmers in order to address farmers' immediate problems for sustainability in the study area.

4. Government should encourage the participation of private investors in the area of farm inputs supplies to farmers in making agricultural inputs readily available in affordable prices and in a sustainable manner.

5. Government, through the ADP, should revive the JASCO commercial stores that were in existence in the 1980s. These stores can be used to store seeds, fertilizers and agro-chemicals and thus prevent adulteration to the farmers.

6. Government should embark on enlightenment campaign through Radio/TV programmes, distribution of pamphlets and extension visits to villages to inform farmers on improved

production technologies on food crops and avoid the dangers of highly dependence on sesame production.

7. Farmers should be encourage to form well managed cooperatives or producer groups and networks as avenues for accessing inputs, output markets, as well as credit facilities to invest.

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