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Determinants of Youth Engagement in Cashew Nut Production in Ruangwa District, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing youth engagement in cashew nut production in Ruangwa District, Tanzania, where empirical evidence remains limited. A cross-sectional research design employing multistage sampling was used to select 96 youths engaged in cashew nut production in Chienjele ward. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression. The descriptive statistics revealed that 46.9% of farmers grew local varieties, with the majority harvesting between 100 and 399kg, at a mean farm size of 1.29. The binary logistic regression results revealed that source of income ($p< 0.01$), farm size ($p< 0.01$), price of cashew nut ($p< 0.05$) and land ownership ($p< 0.05$) were found to have positive and statistically significant influencing youth engagement indicating that youths with reliable income sources, access to larger farm sizes, ownership of land, and higher market prices are more likely to engage in cashew nut production. Distance to the nearest market ($p < 0.1$) and access to market information ($p < 0.01$) were significantly negatively associated with youth engagement, suggesting that logistical challenges and limited access to market information discourage youth participation in cashew nut production. The findings indicate that improving market access, providing accurate and timely market information, and enhancing land ownership opportunities could motivate greater youth participation in the cashew value chain. The study recommends that policymakers and development actors prioritise targeted interventions to improve access to resources and market linkages, thereby fostering inclusive and sustainable youth engagement in cashew nut production.

1. Introduction

Globally, youth unemployment and underemployment remain pressing socio-economic challenges, and agriculture is increasingly recognised as a strategic sector for inclusive job creation (Adeyanju et al., 2023; OECD-FAO, 2020). According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2022), more than 600 million jobs will be needed by 2030 to absorb the expanding youth population, particularly in rural areas where employment opportunities are limited. Agriculture continues to play a central role in rural economies, serving as a primary source of employment and income generation for millions of young people (Rural21, 2025; Sumberg et al., 2024). FAO (2025) reports that 44% of working youth are employed in agri-food systems, compared with 38% of working adults, highlighting the role of agri-food systems in economic inclusion and livelihood security. However, behind these figures lie deep structural disparities: many young farmers face limited access to land, credit, technology, and information, restricting their ability to participate effectively in commercial agriculture (Begho and Daubry, 2025; OECD-FAO, 2020).

Cashew nut farming serves as a strong example of how agricultural value chains can empower young people economically. Cashew production, concentrated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, connects smallholder farmers to global markets for raw nut and processed products (Intelligence, 2024; Rural21, 2025). Africa alone now produces more than half of the world's raw cashew nut (African Cashew Alliance, 2024), and countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Benin are showing how youth can engage in cultivation, processing, and export activities (Global Trade Magazine, 2020). Yet participation remains limited by barriers such as land scarcity, inadequate access to finance, and limited processing infrastructure (Msangi et al., 2024). For example, the average age of cashew farmers in Ghana is 54 years, indicating low levels of youth engagement in the sector (African Cashew Alliance, 2023). Expanding youth participation requires targeted investment in skills development, value addition, and digital marketing linkages to enable a shift from raw production to higher-value

activities, such as processing, packaging, and branding (Global Trade Magazine, 2020; Rural21, 2025).

In Tanzania, cashew nut production is a crucial subsector of the national economy, contributing nearly 15% of agricultural export earnings and supporting over 700,000 smallholder households (Cashewnut Board of Tanzania [CBT], 2023). Production increased significantly in the 2024/25 season, reaching approximately 528,260 tonnes and earning over TZS 1.52 trillion (USD 580–600 million), compared with 254,500 tonnes in earlier seasons (CBT, 2025). This growth has been supported by improved market mechanisms, input distribution, and government incentives through programmes such as Building a Better Tomorrow (BBT), the Warehouse Receipt System (WRS), and Agricultural Sector Development Programme II (ASDP II) (URT, 2021; Food Business Middle East & Africa, 2025; LICO Global, 2025). However, youth engagement in the cashew value chain remains relatively limited due to constraints, including lack of access to land, credit, and processing facilities (CBT, 2025; Magesa et al., 2015; Changalima and Ismail, 2022).

In the Lindi Region, particularly in Ruangwa District, cashew has historically been a key cash crop, accounting for approximately 28% of the nation's production. Government efforts, including the BBT and WRS initiatives, aim to integrate youth into agricultural production by improving their access to land, inputs, and markets (CBT, 2022; CBT, 2025). Nevertheless, many young people remain unemployed or confined to subsistence farming, and farm yields remain low (Magesa et al., 2015; Changalima and Ismail, 2022). This mismatch between growing national cashew output and limited local youth engagement highlights the need to understand the factors influencing youth participation at the regional level.

To interpret these dynamics, the study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). SLF (Scoones, 1998) provides a structural lens for examining how access to livelihood assets, such as land, farm size, credit, and market information, shapes participation in agricultural value chains. For instance, secure land tenure encourages young farmers to invest in farming, while reliable market information improves decision-making and participation in value chains (Msangi et al., 2024; Mtenga and Ochieng, 2020; Mmbughu et al., 2024; Magesa et al., 2014). While SLF captures these structural enablers and constraints, SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and TPB (Ajzen, 1991) introduce motivational and behavioural dimensions. SDT focuses on autonomy, competence, and relatedness—factors that influence young people's engagement in agriculture. In this context, land ownership reflects autonomy, training and extension services enhance competence, and co-operative membership builds relatedness. TPB complements this view by explaining how attitudes (e.g., perceived profitability), subjective norms (e.g., community or peer expectations), and perceived behavioural control (e.g., access to finance and infrastructure) shape behavioural intentions to participate in farming (Haile et al., 2022; Obisesan, 2021). Together, these frameworks provide a robust analytical basis for understanding how structural assets, motivational factors, and behavioural intentions interact to influence youth's engagement in cashew farming. In light of the above, this study was undertaken to assess the determinants of youth participation in the cashew value chain in Ruangwa District, Tanzania.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Description of Study Area

The study was conducted in Ruangwa District, located between *-10° 04′ 0.01″* South of the Equator and *38° 55′ 59.99″* East of Greenwich. The district receives an annual rainfall of 800-1200mm. The rainfall pattern in the district is unimodal, with an average yearly rainfall of 1000 mm, and the average temperature ranges from 24°C to 33°C (Ruangwa Strategic Plan 2021/2022 – 2025/2026). Chienjele ward in Ruangwa District was purposively selected because it is among the agriculturally promising wards where cashew nut production occurs (RSEEO, 2025).

2.2. Study Design and Data Collection

Specifically, a cross-sectional survey design was employed, with the research team using multistage sampling as outlined by Kothari (2004). There were two stages to this process. In stage one, Ruangwa District and Chieleje Ward were purposively selected. In stage two, 96 farmers (youth) were randomly selected from small-scale cashew farmers (URT, 2021). Data from youth households were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and an interview guide. Heads of youth households involved in cashew production were purposively selected for the study because they are at the hub of household-level decision-making (Mwatawala *et al.,* 2020). The questionnaire was designed to gather information on the socio-demographic characteristics of a household head and the

determinants of youth engagement in cashew production. In-depth interviews with extension officers at the district and ward levels were also conducted to gather more relevant data for the study. Additionally, documentary reviews were conducted to gather key information on cashew nut production in the study areas.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data collected from the semi-structured questionnaire were coded, validated, sorted, and entered into SPSS Statistical Software version 25, then exported to STATA version 18 for descriptive and econometric analyses. A preliminary data exploration was conducted to identify missing values, duplicates, and outliers before analysis. A descriptive analysis was used to determine the demographic characteristics and the status of cashew nut production in Chienjele Ward. In contrast, frequencies and percentages were used to conclude the data. Inferential analysis (Binary logistic model) was applied to examine the relationship between determinants and youth engagement in cashew nut production in the study area. The main dependent variable was youth engagement.

The study analysed the data using binary logistic regression. It was used in this study because the dependent variable (youth engagement in cashew nut production) was binary, determined by whether a youth engaged in cashew nut production (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989). As a function of covariates, we can model a binary or dichotomous variable using logistic regression.

The two responses of the dependent variable were coded as:

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1 & If\ the\ youth\ engaged\ in\ cashew\ nut\ production \\ 0 & If\ the\ youth\ not\ engaged\ in\ cashew\ nut\ production \end{cases}$$

Using binary logistic regression, the explanatory variables can be related to the outcome variable via an appropriate transformation of the probability of success. In our case, "success" means "youth engaged in cashew production." The model with *X's* explanatory factors/variables was given by:

$$logit(\rho) = g(X) = X'\beta = \beta_\theta + \beta_1 x_1 + + \beta_n x_n \ldots\ldots\ldots(i)$$

In a regression analysis, the response variable is related to one or more explanatory variables. In many cases, the outcome variable is discrete and has two or more possible values (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000). Binary Logistic Regression (BLR) is used when the explanatory variables are quantitative or qualitative, and the response is binary rather than continuous (Hair et al., 2010). In the 1970s, this method was proposed to overcome the difficulties of ordinary least squares OLS regression in dealing with binary outcomes (Peng et al., 2002). In logistic regression (LR), there are two possible outcomes: the probability (p) is either 1 or 0. It is based on binomial probability theory. So, the event is associated with one group rather than another. According to the maximum likelihood approach, LR is the best-fit function that maximises the probability that the observed data belong to the correct category, given the regression coefficients (Burns & Burns, 2008).

A binary logistic regression model can be used to investigate implicit relationships between response variables and explanatory variables. Assuming the case of an explanatory variable X with a binary outcome variable Y, the logistic model predicts the logit of Y from X, which represents a natural logarithm of the odds of Y. This simple formula can be written as follows (Peng et al., 2002; James et al., 2013):

$$In\left(\frac{\rho}{1-\rho}\right) = \beta_\theta + \dot{\beta}\dot{x} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(ii)$$

The left-hand side is called the log-odds (logit). The LR model has a logit that is linear in X. Hence:

$$\dot{\rho}(x) = \mathrm{E}\left(\frac{Y}{X}\right) = \frac{e^{\beta_\theta + \dot{\beta}x}}{1+e^{\beta_\theta + \dot{\beta}x}} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(iii)$$

Where ρ represents the probability of the outcome of interest when X=x; β_θ is a parameter representing the Y-axis intercept, and β is a parameter of the slope, X can be a qualitative (categorical) or quantitative variable, and Y is always qualitative or categorical. From simple linear regression to multiple linear regression is expressed as follows:

$$In\left(\frac{\rho}{1-\rho}\right) = \beta_\theta + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + . + \beta_n x_n \ldots..(iv)$$

Therefore

$$\dot{\rho}(x) = \frac{e^{\beta_\theta + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \ldots\ldots\ldots + \beta_n x_n}}{1+e^{\beta_\theta + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \ldots\ldots\ldots + \beta_n x_n}} \ldots..(v)$$

Where ρ is the event probability, $\beta\theta$ is the Y-axis intercept, βs are slope parameters, Xs are combinations of explanatory variables, and μ is the error term. The Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) approach is used to estimate β_θ and βs.

Table 14: Description of the model variables

Variable	Category description
X_1 = *Education status*	Continuous (*Number of years of schooling)*
X_2 = *Source of Income*	Continuous (TZS)
X_3 = *Farmer's experience*	Continuous (Number of years)
X_4 = *Farm size*	Continuous (acres)
X_5 = *Price of cashew*	Continuous (TZS)
X_6= *Access to storage*	*1 if access, 0 if otherwise*
X_7= *access to off/non-farm Income*	*1 if access, 0 if otherwise*
X_8 = *distance to the nearest warehouse*	Continuous (Km)
X_9 = *Land Ownership*	*1 if own 0 if otherwise*
X_{10}= *Market information*	*1 if accessed 0 if otherwise*
X_{11} = *access to extension services*	*1 if access, 0 if otherwise*
X_{12} = *access to' training*	*1 if access 0 if otherwise*
X_{13} = *Member of co-operative*	*1 if member 0 if non-member*
X_{14} = *Credit access*	*1 if accessed 0 if otherwise*

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Demographic characteristics of study farmers

Table 2 summarises the socio-demographic characteristics of the study respondents. The results indicate that most youths engaged in cashew nut production were aged 27-35 (62.5%), suggesting that participation is concentrated among economically active youths with the physical capacity to undertake labour-intensive farming activities. This age profile supports earlier evidence that agricultural engagement among youths tends to peak in the late twenties and early thirties, when individuals actively seek stable income and employment opportunities (Mussa, 2016).

The gender distribution shows that 58.3% of respondents were male, indicating a male-dominated pattern of participation, although female involvement remains substantial (41.7%). This pattern is consistent with previous studies reporting higher male participation in cashew production among youths (Ayinde et al., 2023). Regarding marital status, more than half of the respondents (58.3%) were married, suggesting that cashew farming plays a significant role as a livelihood strategy for household heads seeking to meet family obligations, including food security, education, and healthcare needs. This finding aligns with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which emphasises agriculture as a key means by which households secure and sustain their livelihoods over time (Scoones, 1998).

The household size results further show that the majority of respondents lived in households of 1 to 3 members (58.3%), followed by households of 4 to 6 members (36.5%). This distribution suggests that youths establishing families may be more motivated to engage in cashew production as they take on growing economic responsibilities and social expectations. Such engagement is consistent with self-determination theory, which posits that participation in productive activities is strengthened when individuals perceive autonomy, competence, and social relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 96)

Variable	Variable Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-26	36	37.5
	27-35	60	62.5
Sex	Male	56	58.3
	Female	40	41.7
	Married	56	58.3
Marital status	Single	36	37.5
	Divorced	4	4.2
Household size	1-3	56	58.3
	4-6	35	36.5
	7-9	5	5.2

3.2. Status of Cashew Nut Production in Ruangwa District

3.2.1. Type of Cashew Nut Grown

The findings in Table 3 show that 46.7% of respondents grow local varieties of cashew nut, 29.3% grow improved/high-yield varieties, 13.3% grow both types, and 10.7% are unsure of the type they produce. The findings indicate that cashew nut farming in Ruangwa is still dominated by local varieties, which are often low-yielding and more susceptible to pests and diseases. The adoption of improved/high-yield varieties is relatively low (29.3%), reflecting challenges in seed distribution, extension services, and awareness. According to Mnenwa & Maliti (2010), limited access to improved seedlings was a key barrier to productivity among smallholder cashew farmers in Tanzania.

3.2.2. Production Per Acre

The results in Table 30 show that 80% of respondents harvested between 100–399 kilograms, 13.3% harvested below 100 kilograms, and only 6.7% harvested 400–600 kilograms in the last season, where production was averaged at 350kg/acre compared to the globally average output of 375 kg/acre (local varieties) to 500 kg/acre (improved varieties). The results indicated that most youth cashew farmers in Ruangwa District continue to produce at relatively low yields. Low yields may be associated with limited access to improved varieties, inadequate use of inputs, pests and diseases, or poor farm management practices. A study by Qudus et al. (2024) conducted a trend analysis of cashew production in Africa from 1976 to 2020 and found that production increased by approximately 30% over the last decade, reaching a record 2,440,286 tons in 2020. The slight increase over the years was caused by limited investment in improved agronomic practices, limited investment in the value chain, low farmer bargaining power, and limited capacity to benefit from the cashew economy (ibid).

3.2.3. Land size

The findings in Table 3 show that 85.3% of respondents cultivate 1-5 acres, 9.3% cultivate 6-9 acres, and 5.4% cultivate 10 acres or more, with an average land size of 1.29 acres. The results showed that small-scale farmers with relatively small landholdings dominated cashew nut farming in Ruangwa District. Similar findings were reported by Mgonja (2022), who identified smallholder farmers as the backbone of Tanzania's cashew sector but noted their limited capacity to expand production due to land constraints, capital shortages, and institutional barriers. Youth engagement in farming suffers due to limited land access, which diminishes both income diversification and resilience to shocks.

Table 3: Status of Cashew Nut Production in Ruangwa District (n = 96)

Variable	Variable Categories	Frequency	Percent
Type of cashew nut	Local variety	45	46.5
	Improved/high-yield variety	28	29.3
	Both	13	13.3
	not sure	10	10.7
Production per acre	under 100	13	13.3
	100-399	77	80
	400-600	6	6.7
Land size	1-5	82	85.3
	6-9	9	9.3
	≥10	5	5.4

3.3. Determinants of Youth Engagement in Cashew Nut Production

The results in Table 4 indicate that, out of 14 socio-economic and institutional factors used in the model, source of income, farm size, price of cashew nut, distance to the nearest warehouse, land ownership, and market information were statistically significantly affecting the youth's engagement in cashew nut production in the following subsections.

3.3.1. Source of Income

Table 4 reports that source of income is a positive and statistically significant determinant of youth engagement in cashew nut production at the 1 percent level ($p < .01$). The estimated coefficient (B = 0.655) and the corresponding odds ratio (Exp(B) = 1.876) indicate that, holding other factors constant, youths with a reliable or diversified source of income are approximately 1.9 times more likely to participate in cashew production than their counterparts without such income. This finding suggests that financial stability enhances youths' ability to meet production costs and reduces the perceived risks associated with agricultural investment, thereby encouraging participation in cashew farming. The result is consistent with earlier empirical evidence showing that income availability plays a critical role in shaping youth engagement in agriculture (Aphunu & Atoma, 2010; Nnadi & Akwiwu, 2008).

3.3.2. Farm size

Table 4 indicates that farm size is a positive and statistically significant determinant of youth engagement in cashew nut production at the 1 per cent level ($p < .01$). The estimated coefficient (B = 0.399) and the associated odds ratio (Exp(B) = 1.491) suggest that, holding other factors constant, each additional acre of land increases the likelihood of youth participation by approximately 40 per cent, with youths being about 1.5 times more likely to engage in cashew production as farm size expands. This result highlights the importance of land availability in shaping youth participation decisions, as larger farm sizes may reduce entry constraints, allow economies of scale, and support greater investment in productive inputs and diversification. The finding is consistent with prior empirical evidence showing a positive relationship between farm size and youth participation in agriculture in rural contexts (Obisesan, 2021). Similar evidence from Tanzania further confirms that farm size, alongside land tenure security and education, significantly influences youth engagement in agricultural activities (Msangi et al., 2024).

3.3.3. Price of cashew nut

Table 4 presents the binary logistic regression results examining the influence of cashew nut prices on youth engagement in cashew nut production. The price of cashew nut is positively and statistically significant at the 5 per cent level ($p < .05$), with a coefficient (B) of 0.998 and an odds ratio (Exp(B)) of 7.723. The findings indicate that, holding other factors constant, an increase in the cashew nut price substantially raises the likelihood of youth participation in cashew production. Specifically, a unit increase in price is associated with a nearly twofold increase in the probability of youth

engagement, with youths approximately 7.7 times more likely to participate in cashew nut production. These results suggest that price incentives play a critical role in shaping youth production decisions by improving expected returns and reducing entry barriers. The finding is consistent with empirical evidence reported by Mmbunghu et al. (2024), who showed that higher cashew nut prices in the preceding season significantly increased smallholder participation in cashew production in the Lindi and Mtwara regions of Tanzania, with participation rising by about 63 per cent among farmers facing improved price conditions.

3.3.4. Distance to nearest warehouse

Table 4 shows that distance to the nearest warehouse is negatively associated with youth engagement in cashew nut production and is marginally significant at the 10 percent level ($p < .10$). The estimated coefficient ($B = -0.012$) and the corresponding odds ratio ($Exp(B) = 0.988$) indicate that, while holding other factors constant, each additional kilometre from a warehouse slightly reduces the likelihood of youth participation in cashew production. Specifically, increasing distance is associated with a modest decline in participation probability, reflecting higher transaction costs and reduced ease of access to storage and marketing facilities. Although the effect is relatively small, its statistical significance suggests that spatial proximity to warehouses shapes youth production decisions. This finding is consistent with empirical evidence showing that greater distance to markets or collection points discourages agricultural participation by increasing transport and marketing costs (Haile et al., 2022). Similar evidence from Tanzania indicates that longer distances between cashew farms and warehouses are associated with lower profitability, thereby constraining producer incentives to engage in cashew nut production (Yusuph, 2009).

3.3.5. Land ownership

Table 4 indicates that land ownership is a positive and statistically significant determinant of youth engagement in cashew nut production at the 5 percent level ($p < .05$). The estimated coefficient ($B = 0.555$) and the associated odds ratio ($Exp(B) = 1.742$) indicate that, holding other factors constant, youths who possess land are approximately 1.7 times more likely to participate in cashew production compared to those who do not own land.This result underscores the importance of secure land access in encouraging youth participation, as ownership enhances tenure security, lowers transaction costs, supports investment in productive inputs and capital, and increases control over production decisions. The finding is consistent with recent evidence from Tanzania showing that formal land tenure and land titling significantly promote youth engagement in agriculture by enabling greater time commitment and higher levels of investment in farming activities (Msangi et al., 2024). Similar conclusions were reported by Mtenga and Ochieng (2020), who found that land ownership increases the likelihood that youth choose farming as a primary livelihood strategy in Tanzania.

3.3.6. Market information

Table 4 shows that access to market information is a statistically significant determinant of youth engagement in cashew nut production at the 1 percent level ($p < .01$). The estimated coefficient ($B = -0.583$) indicates an adverse effect. At the same time, the associated odds ratio suggests a substantially lower likelihood of participation among youths lacking market information, holding other factors constant. Specifically, limited access to timely and reliable information on prices, demand conditions, and quality standards markedly reduces the probability of youth engagement and increases the likelihood of non-participation. These results highlight the critical role of information as an enabling resource within agricultural value chains, where information gaps can effectively exclude potential producers. The finding is consistent with previous empirical evidence showing that inadequate access to market information significantly constrains farmers' participation in agricultural markets (Magesa et al., 2014). Similar evidence from Tanzania indicates that access to market information positively influences smallholder market participation by reducing uncertainty and improving production and marketing decisions (Changalima & Ismail, 2022).

Table 4: Binary Logistic Regression for Determinants of Youth Engagement in Cashew Nut Production

Variables	β	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(βB)
Education	-0.275	1.121	0.06	1	0.806	0.759
Source_income	**0.655**	1.016	31.005	1	0.000	**1.876**
Experience_farm	0.01	0.004	5.377	1	0.152	1.010
Farm size	0.399	0.146	7.44	1	0.006	1.491
Price_cashewnut	0.998	0.990	4.262	1	0.039	7.723
Storage_access	0.476	0.42	1.28	1	0.258	1.609
Off_Non_farm income	−0.001	0.039	0.001	1	0.982	0.999
Distance_nearest warehouse	-0.012	0.007	3.026		0.082	0.988
Land_ownership	0.555	0.957	0.337	1	0.016	1.742
Access_credit	3.197	1.003	0.039	1	0.844	0.821
Extension_service	-0.827	0.764	1.172	1	0.279	0.437
Cooperative_member	0.635	0.665	0.911	1	0.34	1.887
Access_training	-0.966	0.805	1.439	1	0.23	0.381
Market_information	-0.583	1.108	17.107	1	0.032	2.91
Constant	-3.412	1.608	11.991	1	0.139	4.228

4. Conclusion

Source of income, land size, cashew nut price, and land ownership were found to have positive, statistically significant effects. Conversely, distance to the nearest warehouse and access to market information were significantly negatively associated with youth engagement. These findings carry important implications for agricultural policy, rural development planning, and youth empowerment strategies, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve youths' access to productive resources, such as land, capital, and reliable market information. Strengthening youth-friendly credit systems, promoting land titling or secure land access, and investing in rural infrastructure, particularly storage and market facilities, can reduce structural barriers and lower the cost of participation. Price responsiveness among youth suggests that stabilising and improving farm-gate prices through transparent market systems, value chain coordination, and stronger bargaining power can substantially increase the number of young people entering cashew production. Thus, it is critical to ensure that agriculture becomes a viable and competitive livelihood option for the next generation. The significance of distance and market information points to the need for robust market integration policies. Expanding digital platforms for real-time price dissemination, establishing decentralised warehouses, and strengthening farmer organisations can enhance market efficiency and reduce the spatial disadvantages faced by rural youth. The study reinforces the idea that promoting youth engagement in agriculture requires holistic interventions that address both economic incentives and structural constraints. If well implemented, such measures can not only increase youth participation in cashew nut production but also contribute to rural employment creation, enhanced agricultural productivity, and long-term sectoral sustainability. Ultimately, empowering youth to participate meaningfully in high-value crops like cashew can play a transformative role in national development by fostering inclusive growth, stimulating rural economies, and ensuring intergenerational continuity in agricultural innovation. The study focuses on production but does not examine youth participation across other segments of the cashew value chain, processing, trading, storage, and transport. Future research could investigate youth engagement along the entire value chain to identify broader employment opportunities beyond farming.

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