

## **A Reflection on the Challenges in Nigerian Agricultural Policies and the Way Forward**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the Nigerian Agricultural Policies before and after independence. The paper employs secondary source of collecting data. The study reveals that despite the soundness of most of the Nigerian Agricultural Policies, there is a real short fall between the expectations and results. It also identified some of the challenges of the reviewed policies which have been hitherto affecting the translation of these ambitious policy documents into realities. Based on the findings of this paper, it was recommended that government should redouble its efforts in implementing various policies and programmes, adopting a consistent policy measures, avoiding unjustifiable policy reversals, partnering with relevant inter-governmental organizations in order to attract the much-needed private sector capital injections into the agricultural sector, as well as increasing the expertise to make the sector become the engine of growth in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Agricultural policies, economy programmes and Nigeria*

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### **Introduction**

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economies in developing countries of the world. The growth of this sector is, however, not in consonance with its strategic importance in the economies of the various countries (Ogbonna, 2011). For instance, available statistics on Nigeria's agricultural potential is intimidating. Apart from the fact that Nigeria has the potential to produce all the imported food components, agriculture also provides a means of livelihood for an estimated 60 percent of the country's population, with vast arable land across

the country in excess of 30.5 million hectares of land (9th biggest in the world), a variety of livestock, an agriculture-friendly climate, and coastal marine resources of over 960km of shorelines, and 120,000 square kilometres of rivers and lakes.

Similarly, it was also observed that the country has the capacity to produce over 50 export crops at a competitive level, as well as being a large domestic consumer market depicted by its national population in excess of 170 million people. There is virtually no food item currently imported into the country that the country lacks the soil and weather conditions to cultivate. For instance, rice, the leading imported food, can be cultivated successfully in Benue, Niger, Kano, Kebbi, Ebonyi and Lagos states; coffee, apple and strawberry are grown in Plateau State; cocoa abounds in Ekiti, Ondo, Osun and Edo States. Cotton is grown in Zamfara, Katsina and Oyo states while palm trees and rubber plantations do well in the southern states. Root crops like cassava, yam and potatoes are also in abundance in most states across the country while cereal crops including maize, millet, sorghum, as well as leguminous plants are cultivated chiefly across the northern states. Livestock, fruits and vegetable and aquatic foods are readily available in Nigeria in addition to a very rich forest belt in the southern parts. Regrettably, Nigeria is still a net importer of agricultural products, as it imports N630 billion worth of fertilizer annually, the country has also lost its dominant position in the export of key agricultural crops like cocoa, groundnuts, groundnut oil and palm oil, since 1960 (Akinwunmi, 2011).

Before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity, agriculture was the backbone of Nigerian economy and it remained so until it was displaced by the mining sector in the early 1970. Thus, in the first decade of Nigerian independence, the agricultural sector was the major source of government revenue, foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities. The post-1960 era witnessed extensive planning and regional competition in agriculture including concentration of attention on commodity exports, the utilization of taxation policy by Marketing Board as an instrument of development finance, and the popular belief that food production activities could take care of themselves without any generated revenue for their respective regional development while Royalties, based on the principle of fiscal federalism, were paid to the federal government. This important economic sector began to witness a gradual decline since late 1960s with the contribution of agriculture to the national economy dropping from 80% in the 1960s to a mere 34% in 2003 (Agber, Iortima and Imbur, 2013).

Generally, agricultural products have been recognized to have domestic and industrial value and great export potential because they can provide food for the entire population and income to farmers as well as many economic agents involved in the marketing of agricultural products. They serve as major source of raw materials for industry as well as major source of non-oil foreign exchange earnings for the nation. Significant growth potentials in agricultural products can be exploited. The potentials include generating growth in export earnings through

increased cultivation of crops, generating increased income for labour and entrepreneurs who are engaged in small scale industries as well as large scale agro-based industries that make use of agricultural products as raw materials. In addition, the manufacture of food items like vegetable oil and fats, majority of which are currently imported can be obtained from industrial processing of agricultural commodities.

In view of the investment and export diversification potential of agricultural commodities that has not been fully exploited, some questions may be asked. What are the previous and current agricultural policies adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address the problems in the agricultural sector? What are the challenges of these policies? How could we address these challenges? The thrust of this paper is to review the major agricultural policies in Nigeria with a view to identify its challenges and suggest the way forward. The remaining sections of the paper is structured as follows. Section Two presents an overview of the major agricultural policies in Nigeria. Section Three discusses the challenges of these policies. Section Four suggests the way forward while the Section Five concludes the paper.

### **An Overview of Major Agricultural Policies in Nigeria**

The potential of agriculture for propelling Nigeria economic development was recognized by the colonial government when policies were put in place to encourage output growth and to extract the surpluses. The predominant theme of development in this period was the surplus extraction philosophy or policy whereby immense products were generated from the rural areas to satisfy the demand for raw materials in metropolitan Britain (Ayoola, 2001). This early interest of the extraction policy was on forest resources and agricultural exports like cocoa, coffee, rubber, groundnut, oil palm, and so on.

These policies were Forest Policy (1937), Forest Policy (1945), Agricultural Policy (1946), Policy for the Marketing of Oils, Oil Seeds and Cotton (1948), Forest Policy for Western Region (1952), Agricultural Policy (1952), Policy for Natural Resources (undated) and Western Nigeria Policy of Agricultural and Natural Resources (1959). More than half of the policies in this era focused on forest matters while less emphasis was placed on food and animal production. Most of these policies were made without proper institutional arrangement, programmes, specific projects, strategies, goals or targets and specific objectives geared towards realization of the dreams of the policies. This can be proved by the fact that there is only one documented agricultural scheme that evolved towards the end of the era (early 1960s) termed Farm Settlement Scheme.

## **Farm Settlement Scheme (FSS)**

This was initiated by some regional governments in Nigeria and was a critical element of Western Nigeria Policy of Agricultural and Natural Resources of 1959. The main objective of this scheme was to encourage young school leavers to be involved in choosing farming as their career, in order to prevent them from moving to the urban areas in search of white collar jobs. These settled farmers were also to serve as models in good farming systems for farmers residing in nearby villages to emulate. Unfortunately, the dream of this scheme was not materialized because some of the settlers were too young and inexperienced in farming thus causing a high percentage of drop-outs among the settlers. Secondly, lack of understanding of the meaning and implication of the scheme by some settlers who assumed that through their participation in the scheme they would eventually get paid job. They were discouraged and some withdrew as soon as the allowances were not given any more. Thirdly, the cost of establishing a viable farm settlement was too high in terms of cash and staff. Finally, expenses made on the scheme was incurred mainly on installation of infrastructure like construction of houses, schools, markets, roads, and so on. for the settlers which did not directly bring about increase in agricultural output by the participants as targeted (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

New policies were formulated in the post independence era to actualize more equitable growth in agriculture. The earlier surplus extraction policies were quickly translated into the pursuit of an export-led growth (Ayoola, 2001). This led to the demarcation of the country into the Western Region (cocoa), Northern Region (groundnut) and Eastern Region (oil palm). In this period, there was also an import substitution policy which saw industrialization as the best strategy to achieve economic growth. Other policies and programmes include:

- National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP, 1972),
- River Basin Development Authority (RBDA, 1973),
- Agricultural Development Project (ADP, 1975),
- Operation Feed the Nation (OFN, 1976),
- The Green Revolution Program (1980);
- Accelerated Development Area Project (ADAP, 1982),
- Multi-state Agricultural Development Project (MSAP, 1986),
- Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS, 1987),
- National Fadama Development Project (NFDP, 1992)
- The National Special Program for Food Security (NSPFS, 2003).
- The Transformation Agenda of Jonathan Administration

### **National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)**

National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) was an agricultural extension programme initiated in 1972 by the Federal Department of Agriculture during General Yakubu Gowon's regime. It was introduced to end the food crisis that engulfed the nation at that time. The programme was designed with the basic aim of increasing food production in the country through: the education of farmers on methods of increasing their productivity in the area of food crop production and the organization of workshops, seminars and conferences for farmers to enhance their education for greater agricultural productivity. The reasons for the failure for the programme to fail were the cost-sharing arrangement that involved the farmer in the last two phases of the programme; since cooperative societies were the main organs through which money was disbursed for on-lending to farmers, farmers who were not members of cooperative societies were left out; unceremonious withdrawal of funding from the cooperative societies by the Federal Government and Demonstration trials were done on some selected farmers' plots by the research and extension personnel which did not give a true representation of the outcome of the technology or programme (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

### **River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs)**

This was another national agricultural programme that came into existence in 1973. Its aims and objectives included to provide irrigation facilities through the construction of dams for all year-round agricultural production, to provide potable water to people in the rural areas for increased agricultural production, to assist to bring more land under cultivation by increasing the farm size of the small scale farmers through the provision of land clearing services using government tractor hiring services at minimum charges, to increase the total output per farmer with increased net returns, to construct feeder roads to the rural areas for good transportation, to improve the rural infrastructures to help stem the rural-urban migration and the construction of fish ponds to enhance the distribution of fingerlings to farmers.

Some of the River Basin and Rural Development Authorities included Lower Benue River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Upper-Benue River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Sokoto-Rima River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Lake Chad Basin and Rural Development Authority, Kano-Ja'amare River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Benin-Owena River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Niger River Basin and Rural Development Authority, among others (Decree 25 of 1976). However, these River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) suffered from intensive political interference. In addition, substantial public funds were wasted to streamline sizes and functions of RBDAs through the disposal of their non-water assets (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

## **Agricultural Development Projects (ADP)**

ADP formerly known as Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADP) was earlier established in 1974 in the North East (Funtua), North West (Gusau) and North Central (Gombe) states as pilot schemes. The two basic aims and objectives the ADPs were meant to achieve included increased food production and the raising of income of the small scale farmers; with the ultimate goal of improving their living standard and welfare. Thus, the earlier impressive result of the programme led to its replication in 1989 to the entire then nineteen states of the Federation. This approach to agricultural and rural development was based on collaborative efforts and tripartite arrangement of the Federal Government, State Government and World Bank (Amalu, 1998 cited in Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012). Today, this has grown to become the major agricultural and rural development programme existing in states in Nigeria. The important features of the programme are reliance on the small scale farmers as the main people that will bring about increase in food production and the feedback information mechanism which is a decentralized decision making process that allows farm families/households to give their responses to an innovation/technology, incentive, subsidies, and so on according to their judgment. The objectives of the programme are to bring about solutions to the decrease found in agricultural productivity by sustaining domestic food supply, through massive infusion of World Bank funds, and ADPs were established to provide extension services, technical input support and rural infrastructure (Ayoola, 2001) to the farmers or rural dwellers.

Some problems that occurred in the course of executing the projects were the shortage of fund due to decline in oil prices that started in 1982 which led to the delay in recruiting competent staff and provision or purchasing of materials and facilities needed for the projects take off. This made implementation much slower than scheduled. Secondly, ADP emphasizes more on modern or high input technology like sole cropping while majority of the farmers practiced mixed/relay cropping. There was also untimely supply of subsidized input for the programme. Present problems of ADP include: high frequency of labour mobility, limited involvement of input agencies, dwindling funding policies and counterpart funding, intricacies of technology transfer among others (Agber *et al.*, 2013).

## **Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)**

This programme evolved on 21st May 1976 under the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo. The programme was launched in order to bring about increased food production in the entire nation through the active involvement and participation of everybody in every discipline thereby making every person to be capable of partly or wholly feeding him or herself. Under this programme, every available piece of land in urban, sub-urban and rural areas

was meant to be planted while government provided inputs and subsidies (like agrochemicals, fertilizers, improved variety of seed/seedlings, day old chicks, machetes, sickle, hoes, and so on) freely to government establishments. Individuals received these inputs at a subsidized rate.

The failure of the programme can be attributed to:

- i) Farming was done on any available piece of land irrespective of its suitability for agriculture;
- ii) Majority of the participants in the programme had little or no farming background and there was no formal or informal preparatory teaching or advice given to them on how to manage their farms.
- iii) They practiced mono cropping instead of mixed or relay cropping and relied on hired labour to carry out their farming activities, which resulted in high input and low output or yield per unit of land;
- iv) Preference was given to government establishments and individuals in authority or administration over the poor farmers (real producer of food) in terms of input supply;
- v) There was abundance of food in the market and less demand for the food because many people produced part or almost whole food they consumed. There was incidents of endemic poultry diseases especially new castle disease that wiped out the bird's due to lack of quarantine and necessary routine inoculation or vaccination.

### **Green Revolution (GR)**

Green Revolution (GR) was a programme inaugurated by Shehu Shagari in April 1980. The programme aimed at increasing production of food and raw materials in order to ensure food security and self sufficiency in basic staples. Secondly, it aspired to boost production of livestock and fish in order to meet home and export needs and to expand and diversify the nation's foreign exchange earnings through production and processing of export crops. The Federal Government ensured the success of the programme by providing agrochemicals, improved seeds, irrigation system, machine (mechanization), credit facilities, improved marketing and favourable pricing policy for the agricultural products. The programme did not achieve its objective of increasing food supply because there was a delay in execution of most of the projects involved in the programme. There was also no monitoring and evaluation of the projects for which huge sums of money were spent.

### **Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)**

The Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure was introduced in Nigeria in January 1986 under General Ibrahim Babangida's Administration. It was a kind of home grown Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) that was embarked upon in most sub Saharan African countries by the World Bank, African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The programme was designed to improve the quality of life (improvement in nutrition, housing, health, employment, road, water, industrialization, and so on) and standard of living of the rural dwellers through the use of many resources that exist in the rural areas and mass participation of the rural people. The poor quality of infrastructures provided by the directorate probably due to embezzlement or mismanagement of fund made the impact of the programme almost insignificant. Therefore, the directorate has been criticized in the past for lack of proper focus and programme accountability (Idachaba, 1988).

### **Better Life Programme (BLP) For Rural Women**

Better Life Programme (BLP) for rural women was founded in Nigeria by Mrs. Maryam Babangida (wife of the then president of Nigeria) in 1987. The programme aimed at stimulating and motivating rural women towards achieving better living standards and sensitizing the rest of Nigerians to their problems. Other objectives include to raise consciousness about their rights, the availability of opportunities and facilities, their social, political and economic responsibilities, to encourage recreation and enrich family life and inculcate the spirit of self development particularly in the fields of education, business, arts, crafts and agriculture. Over publicity of the programme was criticized by people who thought that the programme might turn into a mere fashion parade. Furthermore, cultural and religious inhibition of the Muslims that do not allow easy access to women in veils, which reduced the level of participation and consequently led to low level of benefit accruing from the programme.

### **National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)**

This was established in 1992 much more lately than the Decree (Land Use Decree, 1978) and Act (Land Use Act 1979). The authority aims at giving a strategic public support for land development, assisting and promoting better uses of Nigeria's rural land and their resources, boosting profitable employment opportunities for rural dwellers, raising the level/standard of living of rural people, targeting and assisting in achieving food security through self reliance and sufficiency. The land reform act has been criticized most as what highly placed officers used to usurp land that belonged to poor people.



- ***Family Support Programme (FSP)/ Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)***

Family Support Programme (FSP) was initiated in 1994 while FEAP was initiated in 1996 by late General Sani Abacha and his wife Mrs. Maryam Sani Abacha. This programme culminated in the creation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare. The programme stressed on areas like health, education, women development, agriculture, child welfare and youth development, disability, destitution, income generation as well as facilitating the provision of shelter for the less privileged in the society from ongoing housing programme of government. It is unfortunate that these programmes (FSP and FEAP) died as soon as the administration that initiated them was ended thereby limiting their impact on the women and the masses.

- ***National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)***

The Federal Government of Nigerian in collaboration with the World Bank established the National Fadama Development Project Phase I (NFDP-1) in 1992. The scheme was designed to promote simple low-cost improved irrigation technology. The main objective of NFDP-I was to sustainably increase the incomes of the Fadama users through expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value-added output (<http://www.fadama.org/>). To achieve this objective, small irrigation pumps and shallow tube wells for Small Scale Irrigation Farming System (SSIFS) were developed for the Fadama users. The first and second phases of the NFDP programme covered twelve states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun Oyo, Taraba, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The programme, NFDP adopted Community Driven Development (CDD) approach with extensive participation of the stakeholders at early stage of the project. This approach is in line with the policies and development strategies for Nigeria which emphasize poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary participation (<http://www.fadama.org/>). The overall assessment of the first and second phases of the project showed a remarkable success, and this led to the introduction of the third phase. The problem associated with the project comes from the unskilled handling of water application through irrigation. This avoidable problem was capable of degrading and depleting soil productivity (Afolayan, 1997).

- ***National, Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS)***

This Programme was launched in January 2002 in all the thirty six states of the federation during the Olusegun Obasanjo's regime. The broad objective of the programme was to increase food production and eliminate rural poverty. Other specific objectives of the programme were to assist farmers in increasing their output, productivity and income, to strengthen the effectiveness

of research and extension service training and educating farmers on farm management for effective utilization of resources, to support governments efforts in the promotion of simple technologies for self sufficiency, to consolidate initial efforts of the programme on pilot areas for maximum output and ease of replication, to consolidate gains from the continuity of the programme and consequent termination of external assisted programmes and projects. Setbacks associated with the programme were in the forms of inability of majority of the beneficiaries to repay their loan on time, complexity and incompatibility of innovation and difficulty in integrating technology into existing production system. Others include insufficient knowledge of credit use, poor extension agent-farmer contact, unavailability of labour to carry out essential farming activities, lack of modern storage facilities and high cost of farm input (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012, p. 16).

- ***Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP)***

RTEP was launched on 16th April 2003 under Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration. It covers 26 states and was designed to address the problem of food production and rural poverty. At the local farmers' level, the programme aims to achieve economic growth, improve access of the poor to social services and implement intervention measures to protect poor and vulnerable groups. At the national level, the programme is designed to achieve food security and stimulate demand for cheaper staple food such as cassava, garri, yam, potato, and so on as against more expensive carbohydrate like rice. Small holder farmers with less than two hectares of land per household were the targets of the programme while special attention is being paid to women who play a significant role in the rural food production, processing and marketing. RTEP also targets at multiplying and introducing improved root and tuber varieties to about 350,000 farmers in order to increase productivity and income.

### **The Transformation Agenda of Jonathan Administration**

The Transformation agenda of the Jonathan's Administration started on May, 2010 after the death of late President Umaru Musa Yar'dua on May 5, 2010. The policy document of President Jonathan's administration in relation to transformation agenda is to develop and reposition Nigeria Agricultural sector focuses on seven core areas of reformation which include:

- i) Elimination of all forms of corruption in fertilizer and seed distribution by ensuring that such key farm inputs are sold directly to genuine farmers at approved rates to prevent diversion and exploitation.
- ii) Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme by which E-Wallet was developed for input delivery to farmers.

- iii) Revolution in Food Crops and Grains, especially the rice reform programme that had led to establishment of 13 new Rice Mills with two million metric tons per year production capacity, the development of cassava value chains with the establishment of two large scale cassava processing plants through the support of 6 billion US € 6 billion investment commitment from a large US investor for the production of ethanol as well as sorghum transformation to boost output to reach over two million metric tons per year (Raji, 2013).
- iv) Cash Crop Production Reform, especially Cocoa Transformation Agenda with target output of 500,000 metric tons by 2018 through sustainable production systems by maintenance of existing farms, rehabilitation of old plantations, and expansion programmes through intensification and good agricultural practices. This is aimed at creating 400,000 jobs for Nigerian cocoa sub-sector and increasing cocoa processing capacity of factories, transforming cotton production sub-sector to raise output from 125,000 metric tons of seed cotton in 2011 to 500,000 metric tons in 2015, and also raising international export capacity from 22,500 tons in 2011/2012 to 170,000 by 2015 (The Presidency, 2013).
- v) Attraction of private investor to the agricultural sector with over US€8 billion of private sector investment commitments was already deployed in agribusiness ventures, and attraction of large indigenous and global multinational firms like Flour Mills of Nigeria, Dangote Group, Syngenta, Indorama, AGCO and Belster into agricultural sector promotion and development (Raji, 2013).
- vi) Institutional Reforms whereby the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has been decentralized with the appointment of State and Regional Directors.
- vii) Attraction of fund from International Agencies to develop agricultural sector and this has led to the mobilization of over US€4 billion from World Bank, IFAD, China-EXIM, Melinda Gates Foundations, DFID, ADB and the Ford Foundation to support Nigeria's transformation programme in the agricultural sector (The Presidency, 2013).

### **The Challenges of Agricultural Policies/Programmes in Nigeria**

The successive administrations have implemented a number of policies and programmes to improve output of the agriculture sector. However, the interventions have not had the desired result as a result of the following challenges.

- ***Non Interaction between and among Stakeholders***

Nigerians have the skills to make policies or initiate programmes and technological choices to achieve the sustainable development in agriculture. The continued dearth of progress in these policies and programmes in agriculture in Nigeria is the consequence of non-interaction between the government and the various stakeholders within a particular programme as well as lack of opportunities for decision making and policy dialogue with other stakeholders. Agriculturists, scientists, researchers and more importantly the farmers or rural dwellers are normally ignored during planning and implementation of agricultural development policies and programmes. These stakeholders are in a better position to identify the policies and programmes that will be tailored to the need of the farmers or masses: Their non-participation has led to failure of intervention programmes, increased poverty and inaccessibility of basic social amenities with dwindling economic fortune.

- ***The Appalling Level of Financing in Agricultural Sector in Nigeria***

One of the problems identified by Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Akinwunmi Ayo Adesina was the appalling level of financing in agriculture in comparison with other African nations. According to him, “Nigeria spends only 3 percent or less of her entire budget on agriculture. Other countries, much smaller than Nigeria, do much more. Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique spend between 10 percent to 15 percent and more on agriculture.”

- ***Poor and Rudimentary Storage Culture***

Akinwumi, (2011) also noted that a lot of Nigeria produce is lost due to lack of proper storage and processing facilities and that Nigerian farmers have been poor managers of agricultural resources due to poor planning. “Look at yams in Benue, big yams, but we are losing them because we don't have any way of processing it. In Kadawa Valley in Kano, we were producing about 630,000 metric tons of tomato before. Today, we have 240,000 metric tons, why? Every day that tomato rots because there's no cold storage, there is no processing. This discourages farmers. Yet, Nigeria is now the largest importer of tomato paste from China and Italy,” the minister said.

- ***Role Conflict between Different Programmes and Projects***

This may be due to new administration's lack of interest and invention of new policy and programme. There was role conflict between FSP and FEAP while that of DFRRRI and ADP in many states were most pronounced. Reports has it that DFRRRI merely removed the sign post of some ADPS and replaced it with its own to lay claim to the construction of certain rural roads

and borehole (Ayoola, 2001). In addition, before the streamlining of RBDAS to the original eleven, much resource wastage had occurred in time of role confusion and role conflict with ADPS as well as inefficient direct production activities.

- ***Short Duration of Agricultural Policies and Programmes***

There has not been continuity of existing programme by incumbent and new administration for the impact of the policy/programme to be realized. For example, FSP (1994) and FEAP (1996), OFN and RBDAS were both initiated in 1976 and NAFPP in 1972, OFN in 1976 and GR in 1980. All these changes retarded development progress and did not allow the development policies and programmes to fulfill their mission and mandate to overcome the Nigerian food crisis.

- ***Inconsistency and Incompatibility of Regional Policies and Programmes with the National Policies/Programmes***

It should also be recognized that a programme and/or policy can have different impacts on different people (clientele) because the programme and/or policy has different effects on the various target audience or as a result of existence of different policies or programme at the same time. For example, RBDA (1976) and OFN (1976), DFERRI (1986) and BLP (1987). New policies and programmes should also be consistent, work in harmony and closely with regional and national policies and programmes. The good relationship and peaceful atmosphere will always ensure success of agricultural policies and programme and consequent agricultural development (Agber, *et.al*, 2013 p. 251).

- ***Emphasis on Mainly Food and Animal Production***

Agricultural growth and development need diversification into different sectors like manufacturing and services. An exclusively reliance on farm output, as most agricultural policies and programmes emphasize, means subjecting the inhabitants of the nation to chronic poverty, marginalization and stagnation. Policies should aim at mobilizing resources (human and material) with the aim of developing programmes or projects in rural non-farm employment (like fee fishing, hunting lodges, and growing ornamental plants) and in secondary and tertiary sectors (like tourism, recreational and environmental services or preservation). Many of these activities that were previously overlooked and geographically quite dispersed have become true productive links involving agro-industrial operations, sophisticated system of distribution, communication and packaging (Agber, *et al.*, 2013; Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

- ***Misappropriation and Lack of Fund to Execute a Specific Policy/Programme***

Government may need to channel funds from the informal sector to the formal sector of the economy to make developed policies and programmes both workable and more effective. As can be seen that abrupt withdrawal of fund by the government in NAFPP contributed to its failure and lack of fund delayed implementation of ADP schedule. This problem of lack of fund persists in ADP till today. Misplacement of priority or misdirection of fund to unnecessary components of agricultural programmes should also be avoided to avoid wastage of resource that will hamper programme success. For example, in FSS where expenses incurred mainly on infrastructure which did not directly increase agricultural output was one of the problems that led to the failure of the scheme.

- ***Inadequate Virile Technical Advisory/Extension Services***

It should be borne in mind that United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) succeeded today because of their systematically timely technical advisory services provided within the ambit of the university based or Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture. Provision of extension services has been likened to a factor of production in the sense that it helps in acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by smallholder farmers. It also provides, teaches and convinces farmers to adopt and diffuse innovation. Its absence in educating participants/beneficiaries on the meaning and goal of OFN, FSS and BLP contributed immensely to their failure.

- ***Lack or Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation of Programme and/or Project***

Evaluation is purposely done to determine achievements of rural development programme vis a vis the set aims. Evaluation techniques can improve the implementation and efficiency of programmes after interventions and, provide evidence as to the cost efficiency and impact of a specific intervention within and between policy sectors (FAO, 2004). Evaluations, especially continuous/on-going and stage by stage evaluation, are important because they expose lapses associated with achievement of programme objectives; thereby, offering the opportunities for adjustment. Unfortunately, monitoring and evaluation has not gained important recognition in Nigeria. This is evident in GR where there was no monitoring and evaluation of programme on which huge sums of money was spent in executing.

## **The Way Forward**

The recurring nature of the challenges as discussed above seems to make agricultural reform in Nigeria a daunting task. If after fifty-six years of independence and in spite of huge

financial investment by government, NGO, international support agencies, corporate organizations and the private sector, Nigeria still faces the problems of hunger, poverty and malnutrition, and the few agro-allied industries operate below optimal level, it means the entire agricultural sector requires a thorough and complete overhaul. This is a process that requires a good and realistic planning, strict financial discipline by policy makers, proper funding, sustained zeal for policy implementation, clear and realistic manifestation of a strong political will by leaders to adopt appropriate strategies for change and a strong commitment towards policy consistency and continuity (Raji, 2013). Others include but not limited to

- i) Various stakeholders including farmers/rural people should be involved in planning and execution of agricultural policies and programmes;
- ii) Agricultural policy and programme should be open, transparent and must be framed within a context in which agricultural development policy and programme are national issues that are based on a consensus broad enough to guarantee continuity and freedom of expression of individuals opinions on decisions;
- iii) Government should promote a virile extension liaison services that is empowered and backed up with adaptive research and mobile personnel equipped with necessary media facilities and information. This will help to solve the problem of misconception of the objectives of the policy/programme by the target audience;
- iv) Programmes should also be monitored and their efficacies evaluated in terms of a specific geographical impact of that programme. This provides a highly useful approach for gauging the direct and indirect impact of different programmes and project interacting simultaneously;
- v) Policy makers/planners should also identify and evaluate alternative or different intervention programmes in terms of both their immediate and long-term impacts and of their implications to the communities and society at large;
- vi) The philosophy of policy/programme consistency should be adopted in Nigeria. This is the easiest way to streamline, direct and focus on agricultural development. This philosophy should be a critical issue that our future policies and programmes should address, and
- vii) Government should provide the enabling environment for private sectors involvement in agricultural development especially in areas like processing, preservation, exportation, tourism, recreational and environmental services. This will promote agricultural development and project us to the entire world. Our tourist centres like Yankari Games Reserve, Obudu Cattle Ranch, Museums, and so on. can serve this purpose.

## Conclusion

This study has thoroughly examined the major government agricultural policies and/or programmes in Nigeria before and after independence. An overview of these agricultural policies has shown a real short fall between expectations and the results. Therefore, the government should redouble its efforts in the area of implementation of its various policies and programmes in order for them to translate from mere policy documents to desirable outcomes. It is not disputable, that most of these strategic policy options are sound, but the challenge has been how to translate these ambitious policy documents into realities. The agricultural sector will remain a basis for economic transformation. Therefore, the federal government must adopt consistent policy steps, avoids unjustifiable policy reversals, partner with relevant inter-governmental organizations in order to attract the much-needed private sector capital injections into the sector, as well as expertise to make the agricultural sector becomes the engine of growth in Nigeria.

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