

Agricultural Programmes and Food Security in Nigeria (1960-2016): A Historical Overview

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Abstract

Agriculture is important to the sustenance of every society and serves as the back bone of economic development, especially in the provision of adequate and nutritional food for human development and raw materials for industry. Agriculture is critical to achieving national poverty reduction targets and it is still the single most important productive sector in Nigeria aside from oil, often in terms of its share of Gross Domestic Product and in terms of the number of people it employs. Sustainable agricultural development in any country is propelled by agricultural programmes. It is in this light that this paper sets out to examine the historicity of agricultural programmes and food security in Nigeria.

The paper traced chronologically different agricultural programmes from 1960 to 2016. These programmes were aimed at improving the level of agricultural production and adequate food security for all. The paper's target and appraisal is whether these agricultural programmes have led to the realization of food security in Nigeria. The research's reliance is on secondary source materials interpreted using historical narrative to analyze agricultural programmes and food security in Nigeria. The paper's submission is aligned to address the findings of the interrogation of agricultural programmes in Nigeria.

Introduction

Agriculture is an integral part of national development in most economies and, also, it is an aspect of development that is related to agrarian reforms. In Nigeria the agricultural sector that provides food has suffered so many challenges and worse reforms. Among the major challenges facing agriculture in Nigeria are climate change, drought, land degradation, violent conflicts, government policies towards agriculture, etc. Considering the challenges facing the agricultural development in Nigeria, for example, the growth of the agricultural sector has declined drastically since independence with the contribution of agriculture to the national economy dropping from 80% in the 1960s to a mere 34% in 2003. Conscious of the strategic importance of agriculture in the economy, successive Federal Governments of Nigeria (FGN) have formulated

and implemented national agricultural programmes aimed at boosting agricultural production since independence.

National agricultural programmes are those programmes that are initiated and implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) either singly or in conjunction with the World Bank, other financial agencies, foreign donor agencies, state or local governments, among other bodies. Such programmes usually start as pilot projects and then were expanded to cover all or most states and or local governments in the country to make them 'national' in outlook. There have been numerous national agricultural programmes in Nigeria in the past fifty or so years. All the agricultural programmes have well defined aims and objectives to improve food security, such as the provision of subsidies for farmers in the form of fertilizer, tractors, insecticide, seedlings, farming equipment loans through Agricultural Banks and assistance from World Bank, and other foreign organizations.

Historically, after independence, Nigerian elites inherited the colonial agricultural structure that gave more preference to the production of cash crops over food crops. This made Nigeria receive her highest revenue from the agricultural sector.

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With the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria neglected agriculture and relied on the oil sector. Most farmers in the rural sector also migrated to the urban centres in search of petro-dollar, abandoning the rural areas. Since then, Nigeria has been battling with one form of agricultural programme or the other in order to tackle the question of food insecurity in the country.

Food insecurity has resulted in hunger, malnutrition, and kwashiorkor among individuals and households. Food insecurity has forced people to engage in social vices such as stealing, armed robbery, prostitution, child labour, ethnic and religious crisis, which threaten the survival of any nation. This paper sets out to examine the problems of agricultural programmes in Nigerian and possibly proffer forward looking suggestions.

Concept of Food Security

According to World Food Summit, Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The World Bank Report defines food security as the access by the population of a country to enough food for an active and healthy life at all times of the year.

According to the World Health Organization, there are four important dimensions to food security, which must all be present. These are:

- **Availability of food**, which is determined by the level of food production, reserve stocks and net trade.
- **Access to food**, which concerns the ability of individuals and households to secure sufficient food. This is often a matter of household income, food markets and prices. Historically, famine and loss of food security have been a matter of access rather than availability.
- **Utilization of food**, which concerns the ability of individuals and households to maintain a healthy diet that meets human requirements in terms of nutrition, including energy and micro nutrients.
- **Stability**, which concerns the stable presence over long periods of time of all the three dimensions listed above.

Nigeria as a nation is seriously facing food insecurity resulting from violent conflicts, climate

change, land degradation, famine, over dependence on foreign import, etc. All these combine to cause shortage of food, hunger, poverty, malnutrition, etc. Lack of sufficient food in Nigeria has led to the establishment of various agricultural programmes from 1960-2016. The question that begs for answer is, have these agricultural programmes tackled the question of food insecurity in Nigeria from 1960-2016?

Agricultural Policy and Programme in Nigeria

Nigeria's agriculture is characterized by low farm incomes, low capacity level to satisfy food and fibre needs of the country, and primitive techniques of production. It is in fact a prototype of peasant agriculture which has been described by various writers as being caught in a vicious circle of poverty. Nigeria's agricultural policy is the synthesis of the framework and action plans of Government designed to achieve overall agricultural growth and development. The policies always aimed at the attainment of self-sustaining growth in all the sub-sectors of agriculture and the structural transformation necessary for the overall socio-economic development of the country as well as the improvement in the quality of life of Nigerians. The main features of agricultural policies in Nigeria include the evolution of strategies that will ensure self-sufficiency and the improvement of the level of technical and economic efficiency in food production. Nigeria's agricultural policy is the action plans of Government, designed to achieve overall agricultural growth and development. While agricultural programmes are plan of action aimed at accomplishing a clear agricultural objective, with details on what work is to be done, by whom, when, and what means or resources will be used. It is imperative to note that all these agricultural programmes have well defined aims and objectives to improve food security through the provision of subsidies to farmers in the form of fertilizer, tractors, insecticide, seedling, farming equipment; loan through agricultural bank, World Bank, foreign organization and international donor agencies. Conscious of the strategic importance of agriculture in the economy, the government of Nigeria formulated and implemented national agricultural programmes aimed at boosting agricultural production.

Historicizing the Agricultural Programmes ***Nnamdi Azikiwe and Tafawa Belewa (1960-1966)*** ***Regional Agricultural Programmes (RAP)***

The post-independence agricultural programme in Nigeria was characterized by colonial cash crop production against food crops. After independence, new programmes were formulated to maximize agricultural production and export. Agricultural programmes were set in place between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Regional Governments (RGs) in accordance with Nigeria's Constitution of 1963. To achieve this aim, the Regional Ministries of Agriculture were established in 1962/63. The Western region became the major producer of Cocoa and Coffee, Mid-West Rubber, Eastern region Oil Palm and Northern region Groundnut and Cotton. Since it was an offspring of colonial agriculture, successes were recorded in terms of production of cash crop, agricultural raw-materials for industries, export earnings and jobs opportunities for millions of Nigerians. The programme faced some major setbacks because priority was not given to food crops. The regional agriculture programmes was an inheritance of colonial agricultural policy of cash crop export. Lack of unity declined the success of regional agricultural programmes; ethnicity and political differences and disagreement affected the programmes from becoming a success.

General Yakubu Gowon's Regime. (1966-1975) ***National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)***

NAFPP was an agricultural extension programme established by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in 1972, following the end of the Nigerian civil war and the need to end the food crisis that engulfed the nation at that time. The programme was designed to spread to other states after the pilot stage that was established in Anambra, Imo, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Benue, Plateau and Kano states. The programme which had three components: research, extension and agro-services was divided into three phases namely the Mini kit, Production Kit and Mass Production phases. The aim of this programme was to educate farmers on methods of food crop production, and organize workshops/seminars for farmers, provide job opportunities for small and medium scale farmers, and encourage

large-scale irrigation and export. The programme did not achieve desirable result because farmers who could not form co-operatives were left out. The programme relied on disbursement of credits and farm inputs through cooperative societies in which most small-scale farmers did not benefit. Sudden withdrawal of funding by the FGN due to the introduction of Operation Feed the Nation also affected the programme. The major weakness of this programme is that it lacked farmer's participation.

The River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs)

The development of river basins was conceived in 1963 with involvement in the Lake Chad Basin and River Niger Commissions for countries bordering the Lake and the Niger River. Other river basin authorities were established under Decree Nos. 25 and 31 of 1976 and 1977 respectively. These include the Sokoto-Rima (for Sokoto), Hadejia-Jamare (for Kano), the Chad (for Borno), the Upper Benue (for Gongola), the Lower Benue (for Benue and Plateau), the Cross River (for Cross River), the Anambra-Imo for Imo and Anambra), the Nigeria (for Kaduna, Niger and Kwara) the Ogun-Osun (for Oyo Ogun and Lagos), the Benin-Owena (for Bendel and Ondo) and the Niger Delta (for Rivers): ***River Basin Development Authorities*** set out to provide Irrigation facilities and to bring more land under cultivation. Again, it aimed at increasing the total output per farmer, construction of feeder roads to the rural areas as well as the construction of fish ponds. The programme failed because of intensive political interference and substantial public funds were wasted to streamline sizes and functions of RBDAs through the disposal of their non-water assets.

Agricultural Development Projects (ADP)

Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) was initially known as Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADP). It was earlier established in 1974 by the World Bank, Federal Government of Nigeria, State and Local Governments. Initially, it was made up of nine pilot (enclave) ADPs, covering a few local government areas in Funtua, Kaduna State (1975), Gusau, Sokoto State (1975) Gombe, old Bauchi State (1975), Ayangba, old Benue State (1978), Lafia, old

Plateau State (1979), Bida, Niger State (1980), Ilorin, Kwara State (1980), Oyo-North, Oyo State (1981), and Ekiti-Akoko (1982). Agricultural Development Projects over-emphasized modern and high input technology in order to boost production by engaging in commercial agriculture. The aim and objectives toward a mechanized and technological agriculture never saw the light of the day because of shortage of funds, untimeliness of subsidized input supply, high frequency of labour mobility, limited involvement of input agencies, dwindling funding policies and counterpart funding, and also intricacies of technology transfer hinders the success of the programme. Ayatse observed that ADP faced a fundamental problem of funding due to corrupt attitudes of those charged with the execution of the programme. They looted funds, connived with foreign contractors and imported sub-standard agricultural equipment and machineries. In addition, much of the ADPs loans and facilities did not reach the poor farmers due to either political interference or nepotism.

General Olusegun Obasanjo, (1976-1979)
Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

The Operation Feed the Nation was launched in 1976, 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 himself/herself. The programme was introduced purposely to reduce the cost of bread basket for the average family unit in Nigeria, by cutting down on the demand for certain food items. The programme again encouraged domestic food production by encouraging the spirit of self-sufficiency and national reliance on food. The programme did not succeed because of indiscriminate use of land for farming activities; most farmers were very young and inexperienced; hired labour was the main source of labour employed by participants; there was absence of available markets and livestock diseases caused havoc on farms of the novice farmers.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979-1983)
The Green Revolution Programme (GRP)

The Green Revolution Programme was formally

launched on June 3, 1980 by Alhaji Shehu Shagari; the GRP was a replacement for OFN. GRP was to ensure that Nigeria attains self-sufficiency in food production within five years. The programme depended on the ministry-based extension system and was instrumental to raising mass awareness on the problems of food confronting the nation. The FGN ensured the success of the programme by providing agrochemicals, improved seeds/seedlings, irrigation system, machine, credit facilities, improved marketing and favourable pricing policy for the agricultural products and encouraged farmers to produce food, cash crops, and livestock. The programme failed because there was delay in executing 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. It is necessary to understand here that Operation Feed the Nation is a continuation of Green Revolution. The programmes were supposed to provide the desirable result but failed because of mismanagement of funds and proper monitoring. According to Goodluck Jonathan, "Green Revolution and Operation Feed the Nation failed because they were not properly articulated; agricultural programmes in Nigeria just followed the political class and disappeared"

General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985)
Back to Land (BL)

The Buhari/Idiagbon regime initiated a "Back to Land" agricultural policy which had the sole aim of self-sufficiency in food production. The main aim of Back to Land is to revive the agricultural sector and to produce sufficient food for all. It was also aimed at encouraging Nigerians to go back to farm to reduce over dependence on oil and help the rural farmers to increase their production. The objective of the programme was to achieve agricultural productivity and to cater for the growing population. The programme encouraged the rural farmers to engage in full time agricultural production to close the gap of food insecurity ravaging the country. It achieved little owing to inherent weakness like inadequacy of data, insufficient input and technological deficiencies among others.

General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993)***Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)***

The Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was initiated in January 1986. 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 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 programme encountered some major challenges with respect to poor quality of infrastructures provided by the directorate due to embezzlement/mismanagement of fund. Also, improper focus and programme accountability made the impact of the programme almost insignificant.

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

With the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, government admitted the failure of past policies to significantly improve the economy and reverse the declining trend of production in the agricultural sector. The Structural Adjustment Programme relied most especially on the agricultural sector to achieve the objectives of its far-reaching reforms on diversification of exports and adjustment of production and consumption structure of the economy. SAP provided strategies on food crops, livestock, industrial raw materials, wildlife, forestry and fish production. It also provided policies on support services such as agricultural extension, technology development and transfer, etc. SAP had more of an impact on the distribution of farm incomes than on agricultural growth and productivity. Mismanagement of fund and corruption led to the downfall.

Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW)

BLRW was founded in Nigeria by Mrs Maryam Babangida (wife of the then president of Nigeria) in 1987. The programme was aimed at stimulating and motivating rural women towards achieving better standards of living and sensitizing the rest of Nigerians to their problems. It also encouraged recreation, enriched family life, and inculcated the

spirit of self-development particularly in the fields of agriculture. Cultural and religious inhibition of the Muslims that do not allow easy access to women in 'purdah' reduced the level of participation and consequently led to low level of benefit accruing from the programme.

National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)

The first National Fadama Development Project (NFDP-1) was designed in the early 1990s to promote simple low-cost improved irrigation technology under World Bank financing. The programme covered twelve states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, and Taraba, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). NFDP adopted community driven development (CDD) approach with extensive participation of the stakeholders at the early stage of the project. This approach is in line with the policies and development strategies which emphasize poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary participation. The pitfall of the programme was that land reform act/decreed has been criticized most as what highly placed officers used to usurp land that belonged to poor people.

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) was established in 1992 much more later than the decree (land use decree, 1978) and Act (land use act 1979). The authority embarked on some activities (bush clearing, land preparation, farm infrastructural development, soil conservation and environmental issues, soil survey, evaluation, soil testing and capacity) to provide baseline data for agricultural-related activities and advisory services to agricultural land users. NALDA aims at giving strategic support for land development, promoting better uses of rural land and their resources, boosting profitable employment for rural dwellers, raising the level/standard of living of rural people, targeting and assisting in achieving food security through self-reliance and sufficiency. What really led to the failure of the programme was that the unskilled handlings of water application through irrigation degraded and depleted the soil of its productive capacity.

General Sani Abacha (1993-1998)***Family Support Programme (FSP)/ Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)***

Family Support Programme (FSP) was initiated in 1994 while FEAP was initiated in 1996 by the late General 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 areas like health, education, women in 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 dethroned thereby limiting their impact on the women and the masses.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007)***National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).***

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was initiated by Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. The key elements of this development strategy included poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. Its activity with States Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) would help to implement integrated rural development programme to stem rural-urban migration. NEEDS offered farmers improved irrigation, machinery and crop varieties which would help to boost agricultural productivity and tackle poverty head on since half of Nigerian's poor people are engaged in agriculture. Corruption, mismanagement, lack of accountability and proper planning hindered the programme from attaining full result.

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 regime. The broad aim of the programme was to increase food production and eliminate rural poverty. NSPFS assisted farmers in increasing their output, productivity, and income;

strengthening the effectiveness of research and extension service training and educating farmers on farm management for effective utilization of resources; supporting governments efforts in the promotion of simple technologies for self-sufficiency. 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 and difficulty in integrating technology into existing production system, crippled the programme from moving forward.

Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP)

Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP) was launched on 16th April 2003 under Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. It covered 26 states and was designed to address the problem of food production and rural poverty. RTEP aimed at improving root and tuber to about 350,000 farmers in order to increase productivity and income. RTEP hoped to achieve economic growth, improve access of the poor to social services and carry out intervention measures to protect poor and vulnerable groups. It also achieved food security and stimulated demand for cheaper staple food such as cassava, yam, potato, etc., as against more expensive carbohydrate such as rice. The programme did not go far because of problem of market, lack of accountability, and proper planning.

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua (2007-2010)***Seven-Point Agenda (SPA)***

Food Security: Targets at increasing food security among the items were given adequate attention under the seven-point agenda. Through this focus, the administration intended to enhance agricultural production that would lead to enough food production for local consumption and export. SPA aimed at strengthening agribusinesses through institution of profitability and price support mechanism, land tenure changes, aggressive development and supply of new land, strengthening of farmer support groups through commercial farmers, improvement of rural access infrastructure, and resuscitation of the River Basin Development Authorities RBDAs. The programme which was targeted at massive food production did

not carry the peasant farmers along; problem of monitoring and evaluation, poor input and marketing access affected the programme.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2010-2015)

Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA)

In support of Goodluck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development developed and implemented an Agricultural Transformation Agenda. The focus was to assure food security, reduce expenditure of foreign exchange on food imports, diversify the economy, generate foreign exchange and create jobs. ATA was focused on major policy reforms to eliminate corruption in the seed and fertilizer sectors, improve the functioning of market institutions, establish staple crop processing zones to attract private sector into areas of high production to reduce post-harvest losses, add value to locally produced crops and foster rural economic growth. Corruption, embezzlement of funds, lack of transparency, Islamic insurgency, herdsman and farmers conflicts, lack of planning, monitoring and evaluation, etc., hindered the actualization of this programme.

Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2016)

Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) Adopted from Goodluck Jonathan.

The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) is a Federal Government initiative instituted by the past administration to actualize the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). It aimed at subsidizing the costs of major agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and seedlings for farmers. Buhari also promised the government officials that his administration would continue with the immediate past government's agricultural expansion drive. Buhari ATA continuation policy includes developing domestic value chains for commodities like rice, wheat, maize, and soya beans; strengthening agricultural export markets for products including cocoa, cassava, oil palm, and sesame; providing a better enabling environment for agricultural development by improving infrastructure, designing clearer policies, and improving working relationships between the tiers of government; and providing better inputs, tools, and training that allow farmers to increase their

yields. History is likely to repeat itself because the Buhari administration tends to focus on the fight against corruption and considerable attention is not given to agriculture but only in theory.

Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP)

President Buhari also launched the Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP) in November 17, 2015, with the aim of uplifting thousands of small farmers out of poverty and to generate millions of job opportunities for the unemployed Nigerians. The thrust of this programme is to reduce and possibly eradicate poverty amongst Nigerians. Buhari's agricultural programmes have more to do with diversification from oil industry to agriculture, by using earnings from oil to strengthen and expand agriculture. By this it would uplift thousands of small farmers out of poverty and generate millions of job opportunities for the unemployed. Keen interest is not given to the agro-sector.

The analysis above is taken from the perspectives of various agricultural programmes according to regimes/administration from 1960-2016. It further showcased the regimes/administrations of Gowon, Babangida, Abacha and Chief Obasanjo to have more than one agricultural programmes. From 1960-2016, agricultural programmes were introduced to bring about food security, but it clearly showed that almost all the programmes failed to tackle the question of food insecurity. It seems to me that agricultural programmes in Nigeria followed the political elite that introduced them and disappeared along with them whenever they leave public office.

Appraisal of Agricultural Programmes and Food Security (1960-2016)

The agricultural programmes are meant to tackle the problem of food insecurity, but this is not the case in Nigeria. Agricultural programmes in Nigeria have not fully actualized their full potential of making Nigeria a food-secured nation. Different agricultural programmes were introduced from 1960-2016 to tackle the problem of food insecurity but yet Nigeria still lacks adequate food to feed its citizens due to the growing population. The Malthusian population thesis found an application in Nigeria context. According to Robert Thomas Malthus:

There is a natural tendency for population to increase faster than food supply. He projected that, while population grows at geometrical progression {1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32.....}, food supply can only increase arithmetically {1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.....}. This he said is the cause of poverty and food insecurity.

Nigeria's population increases in a poly geometrical progression, much faster than food supply. This experience is seen in the 1970s when agricultural output was growing at less than 1.5% and less than the rate of population growth. Food production decline by 7% in the 1960s, 15% in the 1970s, 8% in the 1980s and further dropped to 23% from the 1990s-2016. Agricultural programmes did not help in providing adequate food to all Nigerians due to lack of continuity in the programmes and further research; the lack of ability and will-power from the managers or managerial staffs and unqualified agricultural specialists affected the programmes. The distorting factors that affected the agricultural programmes were favoritism, cronyism, patronage system and nepotism. If some programmes had taken so long with proper planning, monitoring and evaluation, probably food insecurity would have become a success story.

Corruption further compounded the level of food insecurity; Nigerian leaders at various levels (federal, state and local government) saw golden opportunities to amass wealth and enriched themselves. This has trickled down to affect most of the agricultural programmes, because funds meant for the transformation of the agricultural sector were siphoned to personal or private pockets. In connection to the above assertion is a statement by Godson Ibeji:

Agricultural subsidies are diversified into individual or groups associated with members of the government. Officials who are responsible for managing the disbursement of these funds may knowingly approve agricultural subsidies for family members or associates who were not eligible.

In 2009, for example, the federal government

claimed to have released the sum of six billion naira to Agricultural Research Institutes in the country through Research Council of Nigeria. The money did not get to the Research Institutes. Fadare recorded that "there is nothing on ground to justify such spending as empty laboratories, collapsed infrastructure and abandoned projects were the order of the day in virtually all the Institutes".

From 1960 to 2016, every agricultural programme in Nigeria was targeted toward providing small scale farmers with high-yielding varieties of seeds, tractors, fertilizer, insecticides, and other farming equipment at subsidized prices. Under the National Accelerated Food Production Programme NAFPP in 1972, for example, farmers were to pay half the cost of machinery over a three-year period. The Green Revolution Programme GRP in 1979, which was an adoption of Operation Feed the Nations (OFN), turned to small scale farmers to increase food production. Despite the enormous investment, the agricultural revolution failed and food supply continued to increase at arithmetical progression in contrast to geometrical progression of population growth.

Also, owing to the 1970s oil boom, agriculture fell into dismal neglect. Many farmers rushed to the urban areas to cash in on the new jobs and opportunities. This made the agricultural programmes incapable of providing food security. Increasingly, Nigeria turned to imports to feed its growing population. By the 1980s, food production had tumbled by nearly 10% and food imports represented 15% of all imports. According to Ayittey, Babangida administration reshaped agricultural strategy by placing more emphasis on rural infrastructure and development. The Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was created in 1986 for the purpose of boosting food production. But it failed because many projects were conceived, designed and executed without monitoring, evaluation, planning and consulting the local communities that were supposed to benefit. Nigeria resorted to import and spent an enormous amount on imported food. Nigeria spent USD \$635 billion on wheat imports and USD \$356 billion on rice imports. By 2010 it spent USD \$217 billion on the import of sugar and USD \$97 billion on fish imports. By 2004, the country was spending USD

\$3 billion a year on food imports including rice, chickens, and dairy products, even with that more Nigerians went about hungry.

In a nutshell, from 1990s to 2016, Nigeria's agricultural sector continued to be plagued by high labour costs, credit scarcity, systemic corruption and deteriorating infrastructure. Fertilizer shortage, corruption, etc. hindermost of the agricultural programmes from its aims and objectives.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide a historical overview of agricultural programmes and food security in Nigeria from 1960-2016. From the historicization of these agricultural programmes, one cannot help but notice how good the aim and objectives of these programmes were but the actualization never saw the light of day.

The failure of the agricultural programmes in Nigeria cannot be examined in a vacuum but must be studied within the context of socio-economic and political setting. For socio-political reasons, Nigerian leaders, until recently, generally neglected agriculture in pursuit of oil revenue, which made these agricultural programmes to become a fashion show. Also, with the oil windfall Nigeria's leaders saw a golden opportunity to amass wealth that was supposed to be channeled to agricultural programmes.

If corruption can be eradicated, success in agricultural production will go a long way. Nigeria's leaders must know that the solution to Nigeria's agricultural sector is not dependent on foreign technological transfer and on increasing modern inputs such as tractors, fertilizer and foreign loans; Nigeria should significantly raise budgetary allocation to agriculture and fight against corruption. Diversifying the economic is the solution to Nigeria's economic growth where other sectors will support the agricultural sector especially the industrial sector to avoid the "Dutch Disease".

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