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ENSURING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study generally aims at ensuring effective implementation of agricultural part programmes and projects in Nigeria. Data for the study was obtained through the review of literatures on agricultural programmes and projects in Nigeria. The various agricultural programmes and projects were identified such as the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) National Fadama Development Project (NFDP) some benefits of Agricultural programmes such as increasing participation of the people in agriculture and ensuring food security and sustainability were discovered and the constraints to the implementation of the agricultural programmes such as bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor funding, shortage of trained many power among others were revealed. The study recommend, that for agricultural programmes to meet with their set goals, there should be adequate orientation of the people on the needs and benefits of the said programmes, there should be employment of trained personnel's the people should be well involved especially the farmers.

Keywords: Effective Implementation; Agriculture; Development; Programmes; and Projects.

Introduction

In order for Nigeria to get out of poverty circle, the government needs to focus on development of the agricultural sector, which has high labour absorptive capacity and simultaneously promote industrialization through devising correct policies particularly those that will make agriculture attractive to the teeming youths that now dominate the unemployment market (Afolami. 2011).

The dwindling price of crude oil in the global market and its adverse effects on the country's revenue generation makes agriculture the major source of cash income in Nigeria. According to World Bank, a mere one percent increase in agricultural productivity will decrease a person's likelihood of being poor by between two and three percent (Tyohemba, 2014). The relationship between food production output and population growth varies according to the location, scale and the period considered (Grigg, 2013). In many rural areas, population growth has reduced the size of farms, increased the extent of rural unemployment and underemployment, and led to the decrease of real incomes of the rural

population (Grigg, 2013). Hence, the solution to population increase and food insecurity in Nigeria lie in increasing agricultural production with special regard to crops, livestock and fisheries, coupled with improved access to markets and infrastructures (Odili, 2014).

Similarly, Daneji, (2011) opined that the rural area suffers more neglect and under development with ever increasing cases of population growth, unabated rural migration of able bodied youths, malnutrition, total marginalization and lack of basic necessities of life such as health care centers, schools, good roads, portable and safe drinking water, electricity, and irrigation.

Consequently, this justifies the need for urgent actions and interventions to address the myriads of problems of the rural areas and set the nation on the path to glory and excuse a larger proportion of the nation's population from inhuman living circumstances in order to achieve self-sufficiency in food production (Abomave-Nimenibo, Usanga and Ikpe, 2019). Probably, it is as a result of the aforementioned that successive governments in Nigeria have initiated at implemented series of agricultural development interventions that aimed at elevating the level of agricultural production which in turn ensures self-sufficiency in food production (Livingstone-Attorneys, 2020) and these interventions can be viewed from two perspectives which is based on policy and nature of the agency.

Also in Nigeria, these agricultural programmes and projects have undergone series of changes especially in the postcolonial era and these changes have been a mere reflection of changes in government or administration (Akinbode, 2016; Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012). This is because these policies and programmes vary only in nomenclature and organizational network. They emphasize almost same objectives like: to provide food for the inhabitants of the nation and export excess to other countries and to provide rural dwellers and farmers with extension services, support and rural development services. According to Livingstone-Attorneys (2020) with all these laudable policies, projects and programmers, Nigeria is yet to attain a better height in food Security. However, some of the policies and programmes were positively impactful while some made no difference.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are; explore

1. The various agricultural programmes and projects in Nigeria.
2. The benefits of the various agricultural programmes and projects.
3. The constraints to the effective implementation of the agricultural programmes and projects.

Therefore an attempt is made in this paper to review some of the current agricultural programmes and projects of successive Nigeria governments vis a vis the development of the agricultural sector in the nation. As reviewed by Livingstone-Attorneys (2020), some of the agricultural programme and project interventions are as follows:

Agricultural Development Projects (ADP)

Agricultural Development Projects 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 idea of Agricultural Development Programmes is an offshoot of the concept of integrated agricultural and rural development. It started in 1972 in Northern Nigerian towns of Gombe and Gusau with two pilot projects assisted by the World Bank. This became necessary because of the need for the, application of knowledge and skills in all the relevant areas of agriculture. This concept involved the provision of Infrastructural facilities such as roads, schools, water supply in the rural areas at the right times in required quantity to farmers.

National 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 Main objective of NFDP-I was to sustainably increase he incomes of the fadama users through expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value-added output. The programme -covered twelve states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun Oyo, Taraba including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). 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 emphasizes on poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary participation. Over all appraisal of the first and second phases of the project show remarkable success hence, the invention of the current third phase.

The major problem associated with the project lies on the fact that unskilled handling of water application through irrigation can degrade and deplete the soil of its productive capacity (Afolayan, 1997) while environmental impact assessment conducted on behalf of the NFDP showed that the programme does not pose serious threat to the environment (Agriscope, 2001).

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 hopes to achieve economic growth, improve access of the Poor social services and carry out intervention measures to protect poor and vulnerable group. At the national level, the programme is designed to achieve food security and stimulate demand for cheaper staple food such as cassava, garri, yam and potato etc as against more expensive carbohydrate such as 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 rural food production, processing and marketing. RTEP equally targeted multiplying and introducing improved root and tuber varieties to 350,000 farmers in order to increase productivity and income.

Agricultural transformation agenda (ATA)

The Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) of the President Good luck Ebele Jonathan's administration identified seven sectors as the main growth drivers during the transformation period, 2011 - 2015, via: agriculture, water resources, solid minerals,

manufacturing, oil and trade and commerce as well as culture and tourism. The decision was prompted by the fact, that the performance in these sectors has been constrained by several challenges including low productivity, low level of private sector investment, non-competitiveness, inadequate funding. shortage of skilled manpower, low investment in research and development, poor development of value chain and low value addition, poor regulatory environment, poor quality of goods and services and poor state of physical infrastructure, policy instability and discontinuity, low level of technology, paucity and poor flow of information and high cost of doing business (FGN.2011). Government thus, assumed a baseline Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 11.7 percent per annum within the period, which will translate to real and nominal GDP of about ₦ 428.6 billion and ₦73.2 trillion, respectively at the end of the program period.

National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)

National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) was an agricultural extension programme initiated in the year 1972 by the Federal Department of Agriculture during General Yakubu Gowon's regime. The programme focused on bringing about a significant increase in the production of maize, cassava, rice and wheat in the northern states through subsistent Production within a short period of time. The programme was designed to spread to other states in the country after the pilot stage that was established in Anambra, Imo, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Benue, Plateau and Kano states. Mini -kit, production-kit and mass adoption phases were the three phases of the programme. The policy goal of NAFPP was to make Nigeria self-sufficient in food production. Consequently, land reform and mass literacy policies were recommended for farmers.

It was the opinion of the initiators of this programme to target crops for accelerated production are major staple foods of Nigerians and if produced in abundance, hunger and related food crisis will be put to check. This was achieved through the introduction of high yielding varieties, use appropriate fertilizers, agrochemicals, good storage and processing facilities, provision of Credit as well as marketing outlets.

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

This Programme evolved on 21 of May 1976 under the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo and still remains one of the most widely-publicized agricultural programme. 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 everybody or 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 such as agrochemicals, fertilizer, improved varieties of seeds and seedlings, day old chicks, machetes, sickle, hoes etc. The OFN programme attempted to mobilize the general public to participate actively in agricultural production and ensure self-sufficiency in food production. The OFN programme stimulated Nigerians to farming through the strategy used. Some of these strategies included subsidized production inputs, increased bank credit to farmers, establishment of commodity boards and

fixing of attractive prices for agricultural produce. A mass mobilization and mass awareness programme. Policy instrument include mass media, centralized input procurement, massive fertilizer subsidy and import.

Green Revolution Programme (GRP)

The programme was inaugurated by Shehu Shagari in April 1980 to increase production of food and raw materials in order to ensure food security and self-sufficiency in basic stales Secondly, it aspired to boost production of livestock and fish in order to meet home and exports 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 systems, machines of various kinds, credit facilities, improved marketing and favorable pricing policy for the agricultural products.

Policy instrument include food production plan, input supply and subsidy, special commodity development programme, review of Agricultural credit guarantee scheme, increased allocation to RBDAS etc. The policy goal of GRP had the dual purpose of curtailing food importation through boosting crop production, and promoting big mechanized farming.

River Basin-Development Authorities *(RBDAS)*

The existing abundant water resources in Nigeria and its potential for increasing agricultural production prompted the establishment of River Basin Development Authority (RBDA). The scheme became necessary because of persistent short rainy seasons in many parts of the country batch has continued to restrict cultivation to single cropping pattern the year round. However the establishment of large-scale irrigation facilities witnessed unprecedented multiple cropping patterns. Larger areas were put into cultivation, while livestock and fisheries production were intensified. Available statistics from eight River Basin Development Authorities showed that there was an increase in the tempo of activities in 1998 when it was earlier reported that the Hadejia-Jama are River Basin and Tiga and Challawa dams located in former Kano State could Conserve enough water to irrigated land that can produce over 50% of the nations need for wheat, 30% of its need for rice, cotton and sugar cane. In addition, it could produce several us and tons of fish: develop livestock, poultry and hydroelectric power generation

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 of 1979). The authority aims at giving 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. This development authority executed a national agricultural land development programme aimed at moderating the problems of low utilization of abundant farm land, thereby increasing food production level of farmers through expansion of farmers' farm lands. A survey conducted by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 1998 indicated that the agency was able to

develop 16,000 hectares of land. Out of this, 12,984 (81.1%) was cultivated with various crops. It also provided extension services to farmers at project sites. The overall goal of NALDA was to encourage farmers to plant above what they can consume, so that the surpluses can be sold at the local markets or exported to other countries for foreign exchange earnings. The land reform act/decree has been criticized most as what highly placed officers used to usurp land that belonged to poor people.

Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)

The Directorate was initiated 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-Sahara African countries by the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and African Development Bank. The programme was designed to improve the quality of life (improvement in nutrition, housing, health, employment, road, water, industrialization etc) and standard/level 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.

On establishment. DFRRI attempted to open the rural areas through the construction of access roads, and provision of basic amenities of modern living. The potentials of rural areas were seen to be both immediate and long term and the idea of opening up of rural areas with feeder roads and integrating it with other parts of the country provided basis for food that could be evacuated to enhance the quantity of food and raw materials consumption.

Consequently, the agency was to ensure more food at cheaper rate and improve rural condition to stem the rate of rural-urban migration; improve quality of rural life and by implication, its productive capacity that would ensure a greater exploitation of the potentials of rural areas. The problem of DFRRI was hardly one of enthusiasm and relevance but of variation between enormity of rural under development and the quantum of resources available to subdue the problem. The poor quality of infrastructures provided by the directorate probably due to mismanagement of fund made the impact of the programme almost insignificant. However, the directorate has been criticized in the past for lack of proper focus and accountability.

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 rest0f Nigerians to their problems. Others include raising the consciousness about their rights, availability of facilities and their social, political and economic responsibilities; encourages recreation and enrich family life; and inculcate the spirit of self-development particularly in the fields of education, business, arts, crafts and agriculture. The programme was over p publicized and was criticized by people who thought that the programme might turn into a mere fashion parade. Also, cultural and religious inhibition of the Muslims that do not allow easy access to women in purdah reduced level of participation and

consequently led to low level of benefit accruing from the programme.

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

Family Support Programme (FSP) was initiated in 1994 while FEAP was initiated in 1996 by General Abacha and his wife, Mrs. Maryam Sani Abacha. This programme notably culminated in the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare. The programme stressed on areas like agriculture, health, education, women in development, 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 on-going 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.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was initiated in 1999 by Olusegun Obasanjo. The key elements of the development strategy programme included poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. NEEDS provided help to agriculture, industry, small and medium scale enterprises and oil and gas. It Sells up a series of performance targets that government wanted to achieve by 2007.Thesedue a b percent annual growth in agricultural GDP of US $3 billion per year on agricultural exports and 95 percent self-sufficiency in food. NEEDS offered farmers improved irrigation, machinery and crop varieties which would help to boost agricultural productivity and tackle poverty head on since half of Nigeria's poor people are engaged in agriculture. Its activity with States' SEEDS would help to implement integrated rural development programme to stem rural-urban migration. NEEDS differ from other reforms by it participatory process that will ensure ownership, sustainability, encompassing scope, coordination, attractiveness, problem solving and a achievement oriented. NEEDS/SEEDS process has been commended for bringing about cordial relationship between the Federal and State level planning. The plans enumerate strategic roles for the private sector in agriculture.

Benefits of agricultural developmental intervention programmes and projects in Nigeria According Boluwaji (2014), the benefits S of being a participant and a beneficiary in some of the agricultural programmes as outlined above include: making agricultural extension services more client driven and efficient; strengthening farmers bargaining power; funding by agency, training, reducing transaction costs for input supplies and output buyers as it has been proven by the Fadama III project. Ogbonna and Nwaobiala (2015), Koyenika and Ikharea (2014),noted that a reasonable percentage of women farmers that fully benefitted from the Fadama programme got farm input and had access to market through their involvement in the Fadama III Project. More so, Babatunde, Abraham, Jubril and Tenmitope (2017), reported that the benefits accrued from the program by the farmers were a knapsack sprayer, training on recordkeeping, agro-chemicals, fertilizer, improved seeds, a watering can, pest and disease management, conflict resolution, and

the construction of a well, borehole, cooling shed and market stall.

Oladipo, Dauda, Bolarin, Bello, Aliyu and Orire (2016) noted that the men respondents strongly agreed that they had increased productivity because of participation in Fadama Programmne while in women category; the majority agreed that participation in Fadama programme brought about increase in productivity. This implies that majority of both men and women farmers' perceived increase in their agricultural productivity. According to Oyedele and Akintola (2012), the main strategy of NSPEs is to empower small farming communities with the provision of a soft loan, agricultural inputs and technical support services to achieving NSPFS objectives of increasing farmers Output and income on a sustainable basis. According to the authors, the participatory farmers are formed into groups for ease of coordination and management of credits and inputs received on behalf of farmers.

Constraints to implementation of agricultural developmental intervention programmes In a study titled constraints and strategies for improving agricultural intervention programmes in Nigeria by Olaolu and Akinnagbe (2014), it was indicated that several constraining factors limited the effectiveness of the project. As indicated in the study, most of the serious problems as perceived by the facilitators include high cost of farm inputs, lack of credit facilities and low productivity of farmers. On the other hand, seven problems were significantly perceived differently by the farmers and facilitators. The few problems perceived differently were lack of sufficient land, high cost of labour, marketing problems, difficulty in integrating technology to existing production systems, lack of credit facilities, low productivity and stow implementation of the project plans. These few problems perceived differently could be as a result of the poor rapport existing between the farmers and facilitators. This is likely as a result of the facilitators' area of specialization and because most of the facilitators are more office oriented than field oriented.

Echeme and Nwachukwu (2010), in impact of FADAMA II project implementation in Imo State, Nigeria, concluded that series of issues are associated with programme and project Implementation failure in Nigeria. As indicated in their study, these issues ranges from poor project funding to low level of local government support, poor community support and low Capacity building. Meanwhile, Ofana, Efefiomn and Omin (2016) in a study of constraints of agricultural developments in Nigeria opined that the existing input subsidy administration has been known to be defective, discouraging the development of agricultural service delivery competitiveness. The system of input-end subsidy administration has been tainted with official and institutional corruption and impedes the growth of efficient private sector led input service.

Hence, the process of using some private sector fronts appointed by government to procure fertilizer on its behalf, led to distortions in the procurement process such as over-invoicing, late and insufficient deliveries and middlemen cartel development in the distribution system (*Ofana, et al., 2016*). Consequently, the administration of subsidy policy was considered tainted and non-transparent in implementation and consequently ineffective. Also, they opined

that subsidized inputs have been diverted to the open market and sold at higher input prices, thereby depriving farmers the subsidy benefit which the unintended beneficiaries usurp.

As opined by Daneji (2011), in spite of the positive impact of some of the agricultural development strategies adopted in Nigeria, certain noticeable limitations still exist. However, some of these are common among most of the programmes. These include the following:

- **Top-down approach in project design and implementation.**

In many of the programmes, development planners assumed both the problem and solutions and forced them on the. Target beneficiaries whose programmes are often times at variance with the needs of the people. This often results in contacts, wasting of scarce resources, time and energy and sad enough the affected people at the end of it all are worse off.

- **Bureaucratic bottlenecks**

In most of the developing countries such as Nigeria, development agencies are often erroneously subjected to civil service rules. It is very important to stress the need for sustainability at the onset of the development initiatives and during the process of programme Implementation. This is necessary if the entire effort must stand the test of time. This could take the form of accountability not only in terms of financial or running cost but also in terms of impact. This is in recognition of the need for continuity of programme of activities and what the people stand to benefit from the project.

Mores so, Food and Agricultural Organization (2020) indicated that the success of any agricultural development programme depends largely on the ability of the planner in making Sure that limiting factors such as lack of mechanisms at the local level to carry out planning and assessment with the involvement of the potential beneficiaries; lack of coordination between development programmes and supply inputs; lack of trained manpower; lack of coordination between programme planning and implementation are considered and taken care of. These, and related issues, have been briefly discussed as follows:

- **Lack of people's participation**

Lack of impact of the existing programmes for rural areas in developing countries is also largely the result of the fact that these programmes have been designed without taking into account the situation at the grassroots level especially the needs and priorities of rural people, as they see them. The assessment of people's needs can, however, only be possible through in-depth micro-level studies and surveys carried out with the active involvement of the rural people, for which few mechanisms are available at present.

- **Lack of adequate involvement of financial institutions**

Financial institutions in developing countries are also frequently out of touch with the real needs and aspirations of the rural beneficiaries, especially the rural poor. Although many developing countries have established programmes for the provision of credit and soft loans for rural and agricultural development, these programnmes, are mainly target-oriented, with the poor remaining outside the mainstream because they are unable to provide the required guarantees. Financial packages for rural energy programmes have to be taken up as part of the

comprehensive planning approach if they are to make the desired impact.

- **Lack of coordination between Government and voluntary organizations**

Government officials in rural areas frequently do not have training or knowledge of planning and technology assessment or do not have the motivation to carry out such assessment and planning by reaching out to the people. Voluntary action groups and non-governmental organizations, because of their local presence and commitment to rural development, can fill this gap by bringing together the people and the programmes meant for them. However, voluntary agencies and NGOs frequently do not join hands with the Government machinery within the framework of a common programme. Without a suitable coordination mechanism, the work of the NGOs is often restricted to sporadic demonstration projects, which makes a limited impact on improving rural living conditions through sustainable rural development.

- **Trained manpower as agents of change**

Trained planners, who can easily communicate with the rural people and have the professional skills to prepare and implement rural development plans, are, however, seldom available. Lack of trained manpower has often been found to be a major constraint in developing and implementing rural energy planning in the developing countries which have taken up such programmes. Training programmes have to be designed and organized for the different levels of personnel and for the rural farmers, and would be effective if they were taken up as part of a comprehensive programme for rural development planning.

Conclusion

The study explored the various agricultural programme, and projects in Nigeria since the independence of such as Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) National Fadama Development Project (NFDP), National Special Programme on food security programme on food security, (NSPFS), foot and Tuber Expansion programme, Agricultural Transformation Agenda, (ATA) National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Operation feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution Programme (GRP).

River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), national agricultural land Development Authority (NALDA), Directorate of food, Road and infrastructure (DFFRI) Better Life programme for Rural Women, Family Support programme and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies. The study also revealed the benefits of the Agricultural programmes and projects such as making Agricultural Extension services more client driven and efficient strengthening farmers bargaining power, funding by agency, training, reducing transaction costs for input supplies and output buyers. Increased participation and involvement in agricultural productivity and ensuring food security. The study also discovered that the top-down approach in project design and implementation, bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of adequate involvement of financial institutions, poor coordination between government and voluntary organizations, and shortage of trained manpower as agents of change constrained to the adequate implementation of agricultural programmes and projects.

Recommendations

Based on the revelations as to the constrained to the implantation of agricultural programmes and projects in Nigeria, the study recommended that:

1. Agricultural Programmes and projects should be approached from the bottom level which is the farmers and producers since they are the people mostly affected.
2. All bottlenecks should be cleared minimum to avoid input access delays.
3. Adequate orientation should be done to the people as to the needs and benefits of any agricultural programme.
4. Financial institutions should be well involved all agricultural programmes require proper funding.
5. The agricultural programmes should be properly organized so as to bring about adequate coordination between the government and voluntary organizations.
6. Trained personnel's should be employed.

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