

AN APPRAISAL OF THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Every nation is expected to grow and mature in multifarious sectors, not only for meeting the socio-economic needs of its citizens but creating the necessary environment for them to achieve their personal goals and contribute to the nation's stability and progress. Nigeria's Heads of States and Governments in collaboration with various ministries and agencies evolved strategies and mechanisms for effecting micro-economic changes for national development. Before and after independence in Nigeria for instance, there were several development plans; policy statements and other programmes like the National Food Production Programme (N.A.F.P.P); Operation Feed the Nation (O.F.N); Green Revolution (G.R); Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (D.F.R.R.I) among others. The objectives of these governmental policies look very viable and promising in enhancing food production, reducing and possibly eradicating poverty in the Nigerian state; as well as to boost the rural economy and fundamentally stimulate development of the national economy, thereby making Nigeria an economic giant on the continent and even beyond. However, in spite of the huge financial allocations and investments by the governments; millions of Nigerians are said to be living below a dollar each day, Nigeria is still importing food to feed her citizens after fifty three years of nationhood, there are high numbers of unemployed youths in the land and the rural areas are not developed. The study which is ex-post facto library research, examines O.F.N and G.R as the two strategies which focus on food security cum poverty reduction. Corruption, poor infrastructures, political instability, poor level of public participation etc were identified as the common challenges militating against the strategies' efficacy and some recommendations were proffered for present and future political leaders to note for national socio-economic development.

Keywords: Impediments; Boost; Policy Statements; Corruption; Inconsistency and Economic Developments.

INTRODUCTION

Among the various functions of government whether military, civilian or monarchy is to ensure the radical and absolute transformation of the nation or society they govern. It was in line with the above philosophy that states and national government plan and develops strategies for eradicating poverty among the populace and boost socio-economic activities.

In cognizance of the level and degree of poverty in the Nigerian state, the military government of General Yakubu Gowon in 1972 introduced poverty reduction programme tagged, National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB). The two were to boost food production and especially the bank was to be devoted to funding agriculture by giving of soft loans to farmers for food security.

The government of General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976 introduced Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), to produce food for both local consumption and exports for foreign exchange earnings.

In 1980, the first executive president of Nigeria, Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shagari introduced Green Revolution (GR) programme to meet the agricultural and socio-economic challenges of Nigerians. General Muhammad Buhari's administration in 1984, introduced 'Go back to land programme' with variation to suit the specific needs of the various states.

In 1987, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's regime set up the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Peoples' Bank of Nigeria, Community Bank's projects and the feminist empowering programme, Better Life for Rural Women were also in place to meet multi-sectoral needs.

General Sani Abacha's government in 1993, came up with the Family Economic Advance Programme (FEAP) and Family Support Programme (FSP); basically to use the family institutions to fight against poverty, infant mortality and other socio-economic challenges in the nation. In 2001, the second executive president of Nigeria, Chief Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo launched the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) purely to eradicate or minimize poverty in the nation.

All of the afore mentioned programmes and projects were some of the various governmental strategies to boost agricultural production for food security; facilitate rural development; serve as employment opportunities for the teeming youths and fight against poverty in the country. The various policy statements looks promising, enterprising and potent strategies for structural development and transformation of the nation's rural and national economy at large in view of the governmental backing, huge capital investments and the availability of the natural endowments.

Conceptual Clarification

Understanding the phraseology of some of the concepts will aid one's comprehension and appreciation of the paper.

- **Appraisal:** Means to assess or evaluate the impact or affects of the programmes understudy, whether they have achieved the desired objectives for which they were established or not.
- **Strategy:** According to Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary is 'a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose; example, to develop a strategy for

dealing with unemployment'. O.F.N and G.R among others can therefore be called governmental plans and strategies to boost economic development of the country and overcome poverty in the nation.

- **Agriculture:** Is the practice for farming both of cultivating land, rearing of animals and other livestock for economic and commercial purposes.
- **Poverty:** Is the inability of a person or group of people to acquire or obtained what they want; eat what they need at any given point in time. The absence of economic power and means to satisfy one's socio-economic needs independently at all time is an indices of poverty. Unemployment is among the causes of poverty in most developing countries.
- **Socio-Economic Development:** Is the attendant commercial activities which the governmental programme understudy is expected to stimulate or provide for both the citizen and the government. The income to be generated both within and outside the country and the market for the produced crops, the growth of supportive implements and equipments industries to be developed etc are expected to provide employment opportunities; produce food for the teaming population and even export others as a means of foreign exchange earnings for the nation. With these brief conceptual clarification, the study proceeds to examine two strategies.

TWO STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution (GR) are chosen as the two strategies to be examined or appraised for some fundamental reasons. Nigerians are said to be living below a dollar per day. This implies there are families that cannot get or eat three square meals daily and the rate of unemployment in the nation is alarming. Other reason is for simple comparative analysis purposes. For instance,

- OFN was introduced by a Military government, while GR was introduced by a Civilian government.
- OFN was introduced by the country's leader from western region, while GR was introduced by the country's leader from the northern part.
- Each of the programmes was launched with clear structures and huge capital investments on it.
- OFN was set up in the 1970s while GR was set up in the 1980s.
- In spite of these programmes, the Nigerian state is still facing socio-economic and poverty challenges which such programmes were supposed to address.

Current and future government are to objectively study and understand the areas of strength and weakness of such programmes so as to come up with better strategies for the nation's poverty eradication drive; agricultural, socio-economic and political development.

It is however pertinent to know that Nigeria is a predominantly agricultural country with a large landmass and abundant mineral deposits in the country like gold, rubber, precious stones, oil, groundnut, cocoa, kaolin, zinc, hides and skin, cotton, coal, uranium, to mention but few (Hamidu, 2010:4). Besides, there were many able young men and women that could serve as labour force to boost the economy of the nation, but, the country was expending huge sum of money importing food. Fadeiye (1978:51) observed that between 1971 and 1975, Nigerian government had expended over N298 million on food importations. Given the above figure, he opined that there was an indication that the country's foreign earnings would eventually be concentrated on food importation, thus jeopardising its social and economic development.

It was against the above background that the Military Government of Nigeria under the leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976 introduced Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2013 report). Arua (1982) was of the view that OFN was launched in 1976 following chronic inability of the agricultural sector of the economy to satisfy the food and economic need of the country.

Among the objectives or rationale for setting up of the OFN were first to increase the food production capacity of the nation and tackle nutritional challenges among Nigerians; and secondly to increase the engagement of youths in agriculture, facilitating knowledge sharing from institutions of higher learning to the sites of food production- which is the farm land.

To achieve the stated objectives, the programme was also launched in all states in the federation and all states were given significant amount of money to vigorously pursue and achieve the set goals (Fadeiye, 1978). University students, military, Para-military and public servants and farmers were all encouraged to embark on mass agricultural productions. Students of higher institutions were mobilized and deployed to the rural areas to intimate the rural farmers on new farming skills, techniques and seedlings so as to boost food production (Obasi, 2013).

The specific objectives for using the middle and higher level undergraduates for this project were as follows:

- As leaders of tomorrow, students should be made to work on farms and to appreciate the problem of the farming communities;
- Students should be made to appreciate the dignity of labour; and
- Students should be involved in the mass mobilization now going on in the country for the production of food. Such mobilization and interaction would benefit all the various units and the nation in food production and sufficiency using the cheap labour force on ground, the policy guideline stipulates.

Paradoxically, four years later, instead of sufficient food produced in the land for the people and export purposes, food importation bill has reached ~~N~~1 billion from over ~~N~~298 million in the early 1970s (Fadeiye 1978:51). Thereafter, a new government

came on board; therefore the programme was scrapped or died a natural death. Many factors were and could be attributed as the causative agent for the failure of OFN, which shall be examined later.

Six months after assuming office, the first executive president of Nigeria, Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shagari on 14th, April 1980 launched the Green Revolution (GR). The aim of the GR was to make Nigeria a self reliant in food production, that is, to produce enough food for the teeming masses of Nigeria; and secondly, to diversify the nation's foreign exchange resources for the sustenance and betterment of the economy, reducing over dependence on oil.

To achieve the stated objectives, GR developed good organizational structures like, the National Council on Green Revolution; Green Revolution National Committee; Ministerial Committee on Green Revolution and other Technical sub-Committee on Green Revolution and the various state Coordinating Committee on Green Revolution.

The composition of these committees were all encompassing- the academia, politicians, farmers, civil society organization were all represented. The Federal Government disbursed significant amount of money to the committees and the states for the singular purposes of achieving the stated objectives.

Commenting on the organizational structures and achievements of GR, Obiadi (1985:210) state:

While the defunct Operation Feed the Nation was aimed at mobilizing the general public and creating an awareness of the food problem, the Green Revolution came up with practical measures to find a practical solution to our food problem. Green Revolution is a serious and colossal project of the Federal Government including and involving eight Federal ministries, eight departments, twelve parastatals and other government agencies. The target period for feeling the impact of Green Revolution in food production is between five to seven years. At this early stage, the programme has already recorded huge achievements and activities which include: supply of tractors and implements; mobile rice threshers; irrigation pumps; sorghum and millet threshers as well as fertilizers; improved seeds and large amount of insecticides and herbicides etc. As a result, there were improved fishing, progress in live stock farming; establishments and developments of River Basin Development Authorities; irrigation projects and there were rural development for agriculture under the programmes of Accelerated Development Area (ADA) and Integrated Agricultural Development Project (IADP) which boost the socio-economic life of the rural dwellers.

GR seems to be more viable and result oriented in the nation's quest for food security and poverty eradication. However, like its predecessor, the programme is said to consume millions of naira with little or no tangible long lasting impacts. Most of the imported equipments are said to be derailed by the elites for personal uses

(Suleiman, 2011).The programme came to an abrupt end with the General Muhammad Buhari's led coup in 1983.

ANALYZING THE NEXUS

OFN and GR look very similar from all intent and purposes. They both aimed at ensuring that the Nigerian state boosts her agricultural basis, taking advantage of the large arable land, favourable climatic condition and the relatively cheaper labour force in the country, vis-a-vis the reduction of poverty through the ample agricultural/farming industry.

Both programmes were experimented just within four year span of the government of that period. Each of the programmes was assumed or was expected to build on the previous one, that is, on its predecessor. For example, before OFN of 1976, there was the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) of 1972, and before GR of 1980, there was OFN of 1976.

Each of them was said to gulp large amount of money, recorded some achievements and confronted certain challenges that seems to impede the country's thrive for mass food production, poverty and unemployment reduction among others.

To this epoch, the Nigerian state is still importing food for it citizen. For example, the Deputy Senate president of Nigeria, Ike Ekweremadu said Nigeria is expending N24.5 trillion annually on food importation (Daily Trust 25th April, 2012). What a shame for the most densely populated black nation in the world, the acclaimed giant of Africa? This also implies that the economic development and the acclaimed economic increase in Nigeria is either not equitably distributed or the acclaimed degree of economic developments are mere propaganda, since 162 millions of Nigerians live on less than a dollar a day; life expectancy is 44 years and the country ranks among the poorest in the world, with high rate of unemployed youths, observed Arua (1982).

The above unfortunate scenarios are firmly notifying and attesting to every rational person that the whole micro-economic and poverty reduction programme in the nation has failed woefully. Poverty has not reduced in the country; significant numbers of Nigerians are sleeping and walking without three square meals or even a simple balance diet; unemployment are on the increase and the nation still import food, in spite of her prospects and economic viabilities. What could be the underlying factors affecting the nation's quest for agricultural developments and poverty reduction?

FACTORS IMPEDING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

Consequence upon the above discourse, some factors are glaring as the prominent impediments to the country's quest to develop agriculture for food sufficiency, earn foreign exchange and provide employment for the teeming youths in the land via agriculture related socio-economic activities.

Political Instability: Political instability in the land in terms of frequent change of government has affected and is affecting agricultural projects and policy statements. The programme of a particular government with huge capital investments and organizational structures was suddenly stopped or changed within three to six months after a change of government in the country. NAFPP for example was dropped for OFN; OFN was dropped for GR, so on and so forth. In spite of the similar objectives of the programmes and the huge capital investments, once the government of the day is changed, the succeeding government technically drop the existing programme, by either denying it funds or merging it with another ministry. Thereafter, the new administration will try to initiate what she perceived as a better programme and start the process of confidence and structure building afresh with another huge financial allocation. Corroborating, Okoye (1992: 196) asserts:

The uncoordinated nature of the programme limited their impacts because none of them was given enough time to mature and be evaluated before being discarded. For instance, the NAFPP, the OFN and GR were the same in terms of objectives and orientation. None of them was given enough time to mature before being discarded. Each regime simply coined a new label for its own programme for purposes of identification

Inconsistency in Governmental Policies: Inconsistency of governmental policies on agriculture for economic growth and national developments is a serious threat. Viable and promising governmental strategies for poverty reduction and food security via agriculture like OFN and GR were not inherited and sustained by succeeding regime perhaps because they were not enshrined in the nation's constitution or due to the ego and personal aggrandizement of the new leaders, just to make name and siphon some funds (Okoye, 1992:197). Lack of consistency in project execution by successive administration is not only retarding agricultural development and poverty reduction, but making the state to be duplicating and replicating it financial expenses on one project in a disjointed and illogical manner which makes it difficult for analysts to examine and ascertain the efficacy of the programme in term of cost benefit analysis. No matter what, National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC) in Nigeria have succeeded and its impacts are evident perhaps due to the objective of the scheme, acceptance and funding of the policy by successive leaders, couple with the fact that it is enshrined in the nation's law. If the twin programmes explained earlier enjoyed similar privileges, Nigeria would have become another Egypt of Joseph's days.

Low Level of Public Participation: Low level of public participation in policy formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation is a critical factor for the success of any projects. In the twin programmes under review, the farmers who were the major stakeholders were not adequately mobilized and properly incorporated in to the scheme. In the case of OFN, University undergraduates were sent to go and teach the local farmers modern farming techniques and introduce them to new seedlings. The farmers with the legendary methods of farming found the new method abstract and too advanced, which obviously led to a clash between theory from the University and practical by the farmers or conflicts between traditional and orthodox farming methods. Whenever any sector of the stakeholders in agriculture is

relegated to the background, regardless of huge financial investments, such projects hardly last long. This was evidenced in the twin programme in Nigeria (Suleiman, 2011). The University graduates and top government officials that were mobilized got the imported equipments and material but never took up farming as their primary vocations; if some of them do, their number was insignificant when compared to the real farmers.

Poor Level of Technology: The poor level and nature of technology in the country, where all modern agricultural implements and equipments must be imported has seriously affected agricultural productions and employment opportunities. Huge sum of money were used to import Tractors, Fertilizers, Herbicides and Seedlings among others. Sometimes before the imported items arrived into the country and reach the actual farmers, the farming season had gone far. The absence of manufacturing machines and industries in the nation to produce those required agricultural materials has facilitated poverty and unemployment in the land; made government to expend on importations and sometimes the imported items arrived a bit late or at worse no spare parts for them whenever they develop technical problem. During the GR programme, some of such odd scenarios were evidenced, which affected the enthusiasm of the affected communities, observed Ogbazi (1992:205).

Bribery and Corruption: Bribery and corruption was the noticeable monster militating against agriculture, food production and employments in the country. Large sum of money were expended in procuring equipments and implements, training of personnel both within and outside the country. To even arrive at that level, money normally changes hands through the back doors. The company to be given the contract, the people selected for the pilot test training and even the people to be given the items too were expected to give something to the officials responsible. At times, the rural farmers have to pay certain amount to cover logistics and security expenses, before he/she could get those supposed free equipments, implements and seedlings. During the GR experiments, money and items were said to be siphoned by some corrupt public servant (Obiadi, 1985). The actual farmers couldn't get access to most of the imported implements because they couldn't give kick backs. Some officials were said to smuggled or sold some of the imported agricultural materials to politicians and business men who re-sale at an exorbitant price in the market, thereby making it difficult for the farmers to get them; which affected mass crop production and also failed to attract the youths into agriculture.

Bureaucratic Bottle Neck: Bureaucracy and the channel of communication involved in acquiring the necessary items by the farmers seem to be too rigid. After coming to any of the distribution/collection centres at whatever level, the rigorous checks by the authorities concern before the required items are released, usually frustrate and disturb the common farmers. The bureaucracy involve was too hectic for the rural farmers, who were often asked to come tomorrow, come tomorrow. Such artificial barriers made the rural farmers either to give bribe or forsook the government offers. Those who struggle to get those items got little and lately. The farmers saw such bureaucratic action as distraction to their farming time and therefore forsook coming to seek those items (Awa, 1992:14&15). This perhaps explained why ample imported

materials were found in some stores unused. It was not true that the materials were equitably distributed or reached the farmers at the grass root and there were left over, no. The real farmers couldn't get those materials as at when due as a result of the bureaucracy involved. Most of the rural farmers and youths therefore resorted to the traditional method, while others opted for white collar jobs.

State of Infrastructures: The poor nature of road network from the interior to the exterior, that is, from the village to local government headquarters, to the state capital and vice versa affected the supply of agricultural materials to the farmers and the transportation of agricultural products from the village to the cities. The absence of good storage facilities that was accessible to the rural farmers, affected crop preservation. Where there were stores, some of them lack the necessary facilities like electricity and preservative systems. Perishable goods like tomatoes, fish, yams, cassava, citrus, melon, mangoes, meat, and spinach etc easily decayed within the shortest possible time except those that were consumed immediately. The lack of electricity also hinders the rural dwellers from being abreast with government agricultural policies and the latest farming techniques, which affected mass crop production in most rural areas and also encouraged the active labour force to leave the rural area for the cities in search for white collar job (Awa, 1992:13&14). These unfavourable factors discouraged the active labour force from engaging in agriculture. Some of them migrated to the urban areas for better living conditions; while the farming industry were managed by less active force with little or no financial strength for mass food production in the country.

Other factors worthy of notes were high level of illiteracy in the nation and among the rural farmers; poverty among the populace; draught and desertification and lack of favourable market for the produced crops. Currently, similar factors in addition to endemic ethno-religious crisis are hampering agricultural growth and employment opportunities in the nation.

As a response to the monumentally poverty in the land, in 2001, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). This was basically to address poverty in Nigeria and related issues which replace the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) are the most recent poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2013). NAPEP and NAPEC coordinate and oversee various other institutions including ministries and develop plans and guidelines for them to follow with regards to poverty reduction. NAPEP goals include training of youths in vocational trades, to support internship, to support micro- credit, create employment to the automobile industry and help VVF patients. The programme is seen as an improvement over the previous Nigerian government poverty reduction programmes; according to 2008 analysis, the programme has trained 130,000 youths and engaged 216, 000 (Ejeh, 2010). In spite of the above attempts, poverty in the country is still alarming. For instance, the African Development Bank's (AFDB) annual report published recently reaffirmed that the Nigerians living below the national poverty line has worsened from 65.5 in 1996 to 69.0 per cent in 2010. The report asserts that poverty is higher in the rural area at 73.2 per cent than 61.8 per cent in the urban areas. It further stated that malnutrition is wide spread in rural areas and disadvantaged groups are particularly vulnerable to

chronic food shortage and unbalanced nutrition. 41 per cent of Nigerian children are stunted, 9 per cent wasted or thin and 23 per cent under weight. The report further disclosed that unemployment rate was at 24 per cent as of 2011, compared to 21 per cent in 2010, with the highest per cent among the age bracket of between 15 to 25 (Daily Trust 11/8/2013).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FAILURE OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

As result of poverty and unemployment there are multiple socio-economic, political and psychological effects on the teaming youths, the economy and the nation at large. Some of such impacts are:

Increase in Crime: Food, water, warmth, shelter are some of the physiological need of man (Maslow, 1954). The absence of the aforementioned, due to poverty and unemployment increase the propensity for crime in the nation. University graduates and other unskilled unemployed workers resort to carrying of arms to earn a living either as armed robbers or terrorists, abducting political office holders and expatriates for huge financial compensation. Nigeria is today confronted with diverse youth group serving as ethnic militia, destroying the lives and properties of their supposed enemies for financial and economic motives. This was an alien practises in Nigeria, but now a regular feature in the country which is mostly attributed to unemployment and poverty among such youths (Hamidu, 2010:39).

Political Thugery: The increase in the number of young men carrying weapons and following politicians and who are sometime sent to go and threaten political opponents or the perceived enemies of their 'Oga' or candidate is attributed to poverty and unemployment. Some of such thugs who are mostly under drugs not only threaten or attack their master's opponents but disrupt electoral process in some cases. For instance in the interiors or remote areas, they terrorize the electorates, cause confusion and snatch ballot boxes and paper when they noticed that their 'Oga' is not likely to win in the polling unit (Hamidu,2013). Such behaviours have in some instances prevented some voters from coming out to cast their votes which has jeopardised vital electoral process.

Increase in Cross Border Crime: Poverty and unemployment in the country has forced the youths to create their own job and business opportunities by engaging in smuggling of goods from their country to another or collaborates with other unscrupulous elements, either local or foreign in the society to siphon contraband items in and outside the nation. The smuggling of arms, ammunitions, crude oil, human trafficking and other related crime are common on the Nigerian territory today. The absence of credible job opportunities in the land has facilitated the establishment of unofficial strong cartels dealing with illegal items, sometimes with official connection and backing (Ering, 2011:77).

Force Migration/Brain Drain: Owing to lack of good welfare package and other incentives, both the employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled workers and potential workers are leaving the country to another country where they thought

they could find better jobs and employment opportunities. Lack of job opportunities, insecurity and high level of poverty has and is sending many young enterprising Nigerians and other young men of mostly African descent to seek for opportunities in Europe; while some of them die on transit for using illegal and dangerous routes (Ering, 2011:78). Some of them that manage to get to their destinations end up becoming nuisance like engaging in prostitution; becoming drug baron or joining of other criminal gangs just to make both ends meet. Such behaviours tarnish the image and reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians.

Negative Image of the Country: As a result of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria, many Nigerian youths use their skills and technical knowhow to defraud innocent and unsuspecting members of the society both within and outside the country. In Nigeria today, 'yahoo boys', who are computer wizard use their information communication technology (ICT) knowledge to manipulate people, create artificial scenarios and cheat people of their belongings to earn a living. Besides, there are multiple fake certificates, passport and other vital documents made in Nigeria by Nigerians for travelling or acquiring something tangible abroad. Some of which were dictated as fake. Such unfortunate developments are negatively portraying the image of the country in the international environment. The leaders of the Nigerian state should be aware of these and other unfortunate incidence occurring within and outside the nation due to poverty and unemployment (Akinsanmi, 2007).

Poor Dietary Intake: Since agriculture is neglected in the land, there are no varieties of food items for the people to eat. Majority of Nigerians' especially those in the rural area hardly see or get some fruits and other classes of food to take. As a result, some Nigerians' especially the pregnant women and children lacks the necessary vitamins for healthy growth and development (Business Day 11/8/2013). U.N.I.C.E.F representative, Jean Gough revealed that eleven million Nigerian children suffer malnutrition. Poverty and ignorance is said to be responsible for malnutrition in developing countries like Nigeria (Olugbode, 2013). The lack of vital minerals, vitamins and other classes of food affects the quality of the strength, wisdom and productiveness of the Nigerian populace negatively.

CONCLUSION

To say that Nigeria is still importing food at this period of her socio-economic and political development is amazing. It is a clear evidence of lack of holistic and realistic pursuance of agricultural policy statements by successive administration in the country. If China, India and other countries in Asia could achieve self sustenance and food security, Nigerian state is then a failure in this direction. The land and rainfall are available but the youths are unemployed thereby constituting nuisance in the nation, the citizens are under fed and the state is still importing food, what a monumental fiasco of the governmental strategies.

Breaking the circle of poverty through agriculture ought to be the singular goal of the nation's leaders at all levels. Boosting agriculture will among other things boost food security; ensure and facilitate the intake of balance diet by the populace; the teaming youths will get employed as result of the development of attendant socio-economic industries and the governments revenue and foreign exchange earnings will be diversified and stable, regardless of the fluctuation of the price of oil in the

global market. Developing these sectors will not only justify the confidence repose on the government by the electorates, but will strategically facilitate the achievement of vision 20:2020 of this administration. Therefore, those in authorities and stakeholder should awake for the holistic development and stability of the Nigerian state.

RECOMMENDATION

- Nigerians should have a change of heart and positive attitudes toward agriculture and socio-economic development of the country generally.
- The government and corresponding institutions of the state should promote ethical standard in social system and agricultural sub-sectors in particular.
- Government should provide the necessary equipments and materials for the farmers early, that is before the farming season began.
- Government should provide the necessary conducive atmosphere for the private sector to be fully and actively engage in agriculture and food production in the nation.
- The necessary infrastructures like light, good road network, storage facilities and cottage industries should be provided or made accessible to the farmers to boost their morale and prevent unnecessary rural-urban migration by the most active force.
- Policy makers should ensure consistency of good and viable agricultural programmes and projects. The farmers and civil society organization should resist any policy or attempts at thwarting viable agricultural policy by any new government for selfish reasons.
- Farmers should be assisted to sale their products profitably. The state could as well buy from it farmers at a reasonable amount to preserve or even export.
- The Federal government can organize national agricultural competition and trade fare among the states in the federation. This will encourage and boost agriculture and equally attract foreign investors to the sector.
- In formulating, monitoring and executing agricultural policies, the appropriate stakeholders, no matter their educational level should be incorporated. Combining traditional and orthodox method of farming could boost the nation's economy.
- There should be massive agricultural campaign at all levels, cutting across every sectors of the nation using all the native languages, visual aids and other socializing agencies to reach the masses for maximum support and co-
corporation.

- The Nigerian government should thrive to industrialize so as to be producing the agricultural equipments and implements in the land. This will save cost and create job opportunities for the teaming youths in the land.
- Government should establish cottage industries to process agricultural products for local consumption and export purposes. The industries could as well employ some of the youths.
- Corrupt government and agriculture officials should be prosecuted to serve as deterrence to others for national development.
- The Nigerian youths should acquire more practical skills to be self employed than awaiting the few governmental job opportunities that are hard to secure.

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Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Ishaku Hamidu and Gambo Yusuf (2014), An Appraisal of the Impact of Governmental Strategies for Agricultural Development on Poverty Reduction in Nigeria. *J. of Environmental Sciences and Resource Management*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Pp. 74 – 87.
