

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEW POLICY OF AGRICULTURE AND INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN APPRAISAL.

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ABSTRACT

Farmers, Non- Governmental organizations, government/policy formulators, community based organizations, are sparingly involved in policy formulations, implementation and monitoring of the new Federal Government policy in Agriculture and Integrated Rural Development and the interface of poverty eradication. As convincing as the policy document seems, it is still doubtful whether it will achieve the result embarked. The reason for this paper is to study the consistency of the effects of Federal Government Policy in Agricultural and Integrated Development in Agriculture and Rural Development for the period that falls between 2001 and 2010.

The objective of this study is to study the Agricultural and Rural Development Policies of Federal Government since 2001 to 2010. The methods used are personal observations, responses from the participants and the relevant document. Eighty percent of the people interviewed responded that they do not know the existence of the New Federal Government Policy with respect to Agricultural and Rural Development. Sixty percent of the respondents out of 30 people did not have an idea regarding policies affecting them in the Agricultural and Integrated Rural Development.

INTRODUCTION

The new Nigeria Agricultural and Integrated Rural Development Policies are some of the many strategies, programmes and institutions designed to improve agriculture and rural development in the country. The role of Agricultural and Rural Development in the Nigerian economy is very significant because Agriculture is the main business for millions of rural dwellers. Nigerian Agriculture contributes about 25% of Gross Domestic product and provides jobs for about 20% of the labour force. Furthermore, about 80% of the Nigerian poor live in rural area (Titilola, 2005).

Some of the programmes, strategies and institutions, set to improve agriculture and rural development include Federal ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, River Basin development

Authorities, Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure, Agricultural Development Projects, National Agricultural Land Development Authority, National Directorate of Employment, Community Bank, The Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Cooperation, Better Life for Rural Dwellers, Rural Infrastructure and Nigerian Rural Development.

The participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of these programmes and strategies is devoid of the rural people, the real beneficiaries of the agricultural and rural development policies and other key players in this sector.

In 2001, a new Agricultural policy has been drawn. In it, streamlined agricultural activities have been assigned to all stakeholders. The stakeholders include the three tiers of Government -Federal, State and Local Government; Non- Governmental Organizations, both national and international and the private sector. The policy emphasizes prominent role of the private sector as the prime mover of the agricultural sector.

The new Agricultural Policy and the Integrated Rural Development Policy (2001) provide the framework for Agricultural and Rural Development, through which the level of technical and economic efficiency in food production and the transformation of the rural life of the nation and the landscape on a sustainable basis. These are to be realized through the introduction and adoption of improved technology, efficient utilization of resources by the farmers, and a broad based organization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to enhance capacity development.

These policies will be implemented under NEEDS which recognizes the dominant role of the sector in the effort to tackle the pervasive poverty of the rural dwellers, in including the small- scale farmers, the widespread unemployment, limited self-employment, and the weak rural infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES

1. *To analyze the agricultural and rural development policies of the Federal Government in recent times.*
2. *Enumerate agricultural and rural development strategies and programmes.*
3. *Underscore the importance of participation by the rural farmers in agricultural and rural development.*

METHODOLOGY

1. Secondary data collected from Nasarawa State Agricultural Development Authority (NADP), Nasarawa State University, Agricultural Journals, Ecological Journals, Federal Government Department of Agriculture and Rural Development,
2. Focus group discussion from the communities that the study was conducted.
3. Data were collected using questionnaires.

About 80% of the Nigeria's poor live in rural areas and are depended of livelihood on agriculture, agro-allied industries, and fisheries and marketing of agricultural input and output. Therefore, improving the agricultural sector and food security is the challenge that Nigeria must face. While agricultural production increase over the years, the average Nigerian consume about 90% of the calories needed for a healthy and productive life. Due to increase population, low agricultural productivity and higher per capita income, the gap between food requirement and availability is likely to grow.

Strategies, programmes and institutions be designed to improve agriculture and rural development include the following

a. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)

The main policy initiative of the FMARD is focused at increase and sustained the capacity of the Agricultural sector to promote and attain self- sufficiency in basic food commodities in which Nigeria has comparative production advantage. The FMARD attempt to increase the capacity of the Nation to:

1. Increase the production of agricultural raw materials to support the requirements of an expanding agro- industrial sector,
2. Increase the production and processing of tradable agricultural commodities with view to increase the nation's capacity to earn foreign exchange from non- oil exports;
3. Increase rural employment activities and
4. Enhance and sustain the general welfare and the quality of rural; life through provision of social amenities and expanding the capacity of rural communities to help themselves through social capital formation

b. River Basin Development Authority (RBDAs)

There are twelve RBDAs established in the country to undertake food production and provision of rural infrastructure. In 1986, they were recognized and directed to focus on land and water resources development. The activities of the agencies include:

1. Dam construction to provide water for all uses including irrigation, domestic and hydroelectricity.
 2. Underground water development for agriculture and domestic uses,
 3. Soil erosion, flood control and watershed management.
 4. Water supply including national borehole programme, water supply scheme and national water rehabilitation project.
- c. Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural infrastructure (DFRRI)

DFRRI was a major attempt at transforming the rural areas through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities. The directorate was established in February 1986 under decree NO. 4 of 1987, was promulgated to give it legal backing.

In establishing DFRRI, government sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. TO improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of the people in the rural areas, for example
 - i. Substantially improving the quality, value and environment in the rural areas.
 - ii. Improving the health condition of rural people.
 - iii. Creating greater opportunities for human development and employment, particularly self-employment and consequently enhancing rural income levels; and
 - iv. Making it possible to have progressively wider range and variety of goods and services to be produced and consumed by rural people themselves as well as for exchange.
2. To ensure the use of resources of the rural areas to lay the solid foundation for security, socio-cultural, political and economic growth and development of the nation by linking the growth and development activities of the rural areas to those of the local government areas, the state and the nation at large.
3. To ensure deep root in self –sustaining development based on effectively mobilizing mass participation, starting from the grassroots, sports development as well as intra- community activities.

The directorate embarked on the provision of roads, water and sanitation services, electricity, housing, promotion of rural industrialization, rural technology, grassroots sports development as well as intra and inters community cohesion activities

d. Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs)

The ADP system in Nigeria is made up of the ADP in each state and a number of supporting agencies and institutions. These agencies and institutions comprise the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI), Project Coordination Unit (PCU), the Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), and State Ministries of Agriculture and Natural Resources. At the state level, the ADP is a semi-autonomous organization that represents the implementation organ of the state ministry of Agriculture. Its focus is on the small-scale farmers and its strategy is one of integrated rural development. The policy making body for an ADP is the ADP Executive Committee normally headed by the state Governor or a Commissioner for agriculture. However, the executive organ is the Program management Unit (PMU), which is headed by the programme manager (PM) and is assisted by the head of various divisions within the ADP.

e. National Agricultural Activities (NALDA) 1991

The aims of this programme are to assist the Nigeria's effort as food sufficiency for domestic use and to produce surplus for export. Objectives of NALDA include:

- i. Optimal utilization of the nation's rural land resources;
- ii. Promotion of economic size farm holding; and
- iii. Construction of fragmented holdings.

NALDA operates at the state and local government levels too. In addition, Agricultural Universities Research Organizations and NGO have been assigned a distinct role. The assumption underlying NALDA is that the Nigeria tenure system does not encourage long –term investment and the idea is to give permanent occupancy to farmers. NALDA works with the state, local governments and the communities to secure areas of land for development.

f. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

The NDE has several components including the agricultural schemes aim at providing employment to school leavers and graduates of a agriculture. The school leavers program is aimed at those with educational qualifications below OND/ND or NCE while the graduate scheme is for those whose educational attainment are up to OND/ND or NCE and above. The programme is expected to, essentially, produce employment opportunities and then food. A one –year compulsory training is given in the case of school leavers programme before they settled on land acquired by NDE and provide with loans and input.

The graduate scheme consists of two programmes, that is, the arable crops and the livestock programmes. Both programmes have encountered a number of problems. The problems include inability of practitioners to embrace agriculture in the provision of food as originally intended.

g. Community Bank (CB) and Project's Bank of Nigeria (PBN)

A part from the activities of the commercial banks, the Community Banks and people's bank of Nigeria were established in 1990 and 1989 respectively to cater for the agricultural interest of their clients. The people's Bank strategy is to encourage group loan to small holder farmers, traders and transporters. Interest rates were low and agricultural loans were short- term recovery in two equal installments. The Community Bank, when located in the rural farming community, is expected to grant the community soft loans to enterprising community members as the bank's main objective. The PBN is to help cushion the effect of SAP on poor sector of the community, reduce urban migration; create self-employment opportunities and improve the production base of the economy. The Community Bank, on the other hand, is to support and encourage productive activities in both the urban and rural areas, and also by providing financial and banking services to promote rural development.

h. The Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Corporation (NAIC)

This started in 1998 as the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Company but with name change in 1989. The major objective of the cooperation is to promote agricultural production by providing supports to farmers who suffer natural calamity with respect to crops and livestock

i. Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BLRD)

BLRD is another prominent programme of the SAP era. It is directed towards rural dwellers, especially woman, in their productive economic activities. Beginning from 1994, the priority of government as recorded in the rolling plan is on the consolidation and completion of all on-going programmes in agricultural sector with a view to ease the various bottlenecks on production. The priority centre on ADP's programmes, which are located in all the states of the federations and the completion of all the on-going projects of the River Basins, NALDA, and those of DFRRRI.

1. Policy instability and inconsistency;
2. Lack of proper technology for
 - a. Preservation and storage
 - b. Post-harvest pests and disease control
3. Inadequate research funding ;
4. Inadequate research contact between the farmers, processors and research institute;
5. Inadequate supporting infrastructure e.g feeder roads, and storage marketing facilities
6. Inadequate supporting supply and high cost of labour and farm inputs;
7. Inadequate credit facilities for producers;
8. Lack of proper linkage between agriculture and other sector of the economy.

Equally important is our level of dependence as shown in level 3 on import sugar, rice, and wheat. Effort should be made to reduce our level of import.

The overall objective of Nigeria's New Agricultural Policy is the attainment of self- sustaining growth of all sub-sector of Agriculture, the structural transformation necessary for the overall socio-economic development of the country, and the improvement of the quality of the life of the Nigerians. The Integrated Rural Development Policy aims at creating a macro-policy environment conducive to simulating greater private sector investment and leadership, and the promotion of technologies that enhance production in the rural areas while conserving the environment. The agriculture and rural development policies are mutually reinforcing and synergic and addressing the major objective of government in food security, poverty reduction, improving the economy and raising the standard of living of the Nigerian populace. These policies have been launched in 2001. This is a reflection of the new administration's desire to have greater development focus in all key sectors of the economy. Agriculture sub-policies cover issues of:

1. Labour capital and land whose prices affect profitability of production system of crops, fisheries and livestock;
2. Input supply;
3. Pest control;
4. Land resources; and
5. Technology development

The sub-policies are complemented by support service policies in the aspect of research, extension, training and man power development, mechanization, storage, processing, marketing, credit, seed development and general incentive in the strive to achieve an enhanced integrated rural development.

The specific objectives of the New Agricultural Policy are:

- i. Self-sufficiency in basic food production and attainment of National food security.
- ii. Production and processing for exports.
- iii. Application of modern production processing technologies
- iv. Generation of gainful employment.
- v. Production of agricultural land from degradation and environmental pollution for sustainable agricultural production.

The specific Objectives of Integrated Rural development Policy are

- i. Mobilization and empowerment of rural dwellers to improve quality of life and created wealth.
- ii. Improvement of human resources capacity of rural dwellers through, appropriate training.
- iii. Promotion of the development, and improvement in the management, of community based social economic organizations to undertake rural infrastructure development and maintenance.
- iv. Conservation and improvement of the rural physical environment as basis of sustainable development. And
- v. Intensified of support specifically aimed at women and youths.

Implementation of the New Agricultural Policy and Integrated Development policy are hampered by resources and capacity constraint, poor implementation of Federal Government budgets for specific of agricultural programmes, pervasive corruption, lack of budgetary knowledge by the people of Nasarawa State of Nigeria and hence it's tracking by the Civil Society Organizations, farmers and non-Governmental Organizations.

Strategies to realize the Agricultural Policy Objectives are:

- i. Creating conducive environment by ensuring internal consistency of policy and synchronization of the macro-policies that affect agriculture with the agricultural policy.
- ii. Harnessing and conservation of natural resources especially land forest and water.
- iii. Adequate funding of the agricultural research system and strengthening the extension system for technology generation, dissemination and adoption.
- iv. Adequate funding of agricultural development in agriculture and agro-industry by the private sector, effectively controlling agricultural pests and diseases and minimizing post-harvest losses.
- v. Promoting gender sensitive, appropriate field-tested technologies to reduce the drudgery in agricultural production and processing activities.
- vi. Promoting the development of an effective and efficient agricultural input supply and output marketing system.
- vii. Making the rural environment attractive by undertaking rapid development of rural infrastructure, providing micro-finance, and promoting profitable agricultural production especially among small –scale producers; and
- viii. Prompting capacity and information, communication technology and management.

The strategies through which the integrated Rural Development policy are to be implemented among others include:

- i. Promoting of rural productive activities through provision of rural financial services, agricultural research and extension delivery and promotion of resource-based, small scale productive activities. Agricultural, minerals, metal- based rural industries, craft and acts aimed and creating wealth and general gainful employment in the rural areas.
- ii. Support to human resources development through community organization and mobilization, community based mass literacy, training and skills development, enhancing awareness in the rural environmental management, nutrition education and HIV/AIDS awareness in the rural areas and increase availability, and affordability of rural technology.
- iii. Enhancement of enabling rural infrastructure through providing and stimulating sustainable growth and development such as rural travel and transportation, feeder roads, stock rate and jetties, rural energy including electrification, solar, wind mill and bio-gas, rural water supply and sanitation, rural market for local goods and postal telecommunication facilities.
- iv. Special programmes for target groups such as women, youths, the elderly, the retired, victims of natural disasters involving rural dwellers.

RECENT AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Several programmes in Agricultural and Integrated Rural Development have been put in place to realize the broad objectives of these two policies. Several of these programmes are ongoing. Some are National and others are International. Sponsorships are either by Nigerian government, or other world government, non- governmental organizations and individuals. It is important to realize that commencement period is from 2001. Some may last till 2015 while others do not have terminal dates. These programmes are listed below:

1. The National Food Security Programme (NESP) pilot phase (2002-2005) and Expansion phase (2005-2008).
2. National Fadama Development Project II (NFDP-II) 2004-2009.
3. Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) 2004-2009.
4. Community Based Natural Resources Management Programme (CBNRMP).
5. Roots and Tuber Expansion Project (RTEP)2002-2010
6. Public Irrigation Sub-sector Study (PIS) 2002-2004.
7. Large Scale Irrigation Infrastructure (LSII) 1997- (ongoing)
8. Rural Recess and Mobility Project (RAMP) 2995-2010.
9. Rural Slaughter Project (RSHP) 2004-2008.
10. Agricultural Market Support Services (AMSS) 2005-2008.
11. On- Farm/Rural Storage Project (OFRSP) 2005-2008.
12. Presidential Initiative on Crop Processing, production and Export:
 - i. Rice Production, Processing and Exportation Project (RPPEP) 2004- 2007.
 - ii. Cassava Production, Processing and Exportation Project CPPEP) 2004-2007.
 - iii. Vegetable Oil Processing and Marketing Programme (VOPPMP) 2004-2008.
13. Castle Breeding and Multiplication Project (CBMP) 2005-2010.
14. Small Ruminant and Multiplication Project (SRMP) 2005-2008.
15. Animal Vaccine Production and Vet Drugs Manufacture (AVPVDM)2005-2010
16. Aquaculture and Integrated Fish Farming Project (AIFFP) 2004-2009
17. Fisheries Terminal development Project (FTDP) 2004-2004
18. African Agriculture centre (ARAC)
19. Feed Seed Development Industry Project (FCDIP) 2004-2010
20. Crop seed Development Programme
 - i. i. Foundation Seed Multiplication programme (FSMP) 2004-2007 ii.
 - ii. National Seed Quality Project (NSQP) 2004-2007
 - iii. Community Seed Development Project (CSDP) 2004-2007

21. Market Information System (MIS) 2003-2010
22. Multi Commodity Development and marketing Companies (MCMC)2005-2007
23. Export Promotion Village Project (EPVP)2003-2010

The North Central States beneficiaries from the following on –going projects.

1. Second National Fadama Development Projects, SNFDP II Niger, Kwara, Kogi, and Plateau.
2. Kagara Dam, Niger.
3. Rural Energy –Ugah, Nasarawa State.
4. Community Based Agricultural and Rural Development Project- Niger State.
5. Promoting Pro Poor Communities from Community and Service Market (Pro Op COM)
6. Rural Electrification –Nasarawa State
7. Root and Tuber Expansion Programmes- Niger, _plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi and Kwara.
8. Pilot Songhai Model, Niger
9. Framers- to-farm Niger and Plateau
10. Local Empowerment, Environment Management Programme –Niger.
11. Fadama II (Second Fadama Development Project)- Kogi, Benue, Kwara Plateau
12. Root and Tuber Expansion Project (RTEP) – Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Plateau and Niger.

It is evident from the list of beneficiaries of the North Central Zone in the on –going projects are few. A part from Niger State that appears 8 times in these projects, all the rest of the states within the Zones appears only 4 times each. Comparing to other Zones of the federation and given the abundant importance of agriculture in the Zone, more project will be assigned to the zone.

POVERTY, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT INTERFACE

Reducing Poverty is a fundamental objective of economic development. In 1999, it was estimate that 70% of Nigerian was below the poverty line. But we need to know more of government approach to adopt meaningful poverty alleviation, PA, strategies and effective policies and programmes for sustainable development. Poverty is traditionally viewed in terms of insufficient income for securing the necessities of life such as food, portable water, clothing and shelter. At the national level, poverty is measured by indicator such as Gross Domestic Product, GDP, and the Gross National Product, GNP. However other measure include for example the united Nation’s Human Development Index, HNDI, which attempt to give indications of poverty and prosperity for each country globally.HDI measures a combination of a country’s socio-economic condition by using indicators such as life expectancy, level of education and real GDP per capita. The range of the index is between zero and one. Countries having HDI below 0.5 are considered to have low level of human development while those between 0.5 to 0.8 are considered to have medium level of development. Those above 0.8 have high level of human development.

Poverty is also measured by the income or expenditure level that can sustain a bare minimum standard of living. Poverty can equally be measure in relative or absolute term. World Bank (1990) used an upper poverty line of U.S. \$370 (in1985 purchasing power, parity dollars) per capita as a cut off for absolute poverty. People whose consumption levels fall below that level are considered poor. Health, life expectancy, access to clean water and so on, is central dimensions of reference. For this reason, the World Bank supplemented consumption based measures with others such as nutrition, morality and school enrolment rates.

Nigeria basic social indicators place it among the poorest twenty countries in the World. In addition, Nigeria has a low value of HDI which in 1992 was 0.348 and ahs marginally risen 1997/1998 to 0.393. These numbers indicate that Nigeria has a low level of human development. Equally. In the consumer survey conducted by the Federal Office of Statistics, FOS, between 1980 to 1996 the highlight of the poverty trend in Nigeria is that the incidence of poverty increase between 1980 and 1996. In fact, the incidence of poverty increases sharply both between 1980 and 1985 and between 1990 and 1996. There was a decrease in poverty level between 1985and 1990. THE DATA WERE 8.1, 46.3 4.8 and 65.6% for 1980, 1985, 1992, and 1996 respectively. The 8.1% for 1980 translated to 18.3 million persons where as there were 34.7 million poor peoples in 1985. Despite the drop in poverty level in 1990. The population in poverty in that year has about 5 million higher than the 1985 figure. By 1996, the population of poverty had increased sharply to 67.1 million (FOS 1999).

However, poverty levels vary from state to state with the states in the far North having the highest levels and those in the South having the lowest level. Most of the poor live in the rural areas hence poverty is higher in the rural than the urban areas as shown in the table below.

Year	Urban			Rural		
	Non Poor	Moderately Poor	Core Poor	Non Poor	Moderately Poor	Core Poor
1980	82.8	14.2	3.0	71.7	21.8	6.5
1985	62.2	30.3	7.5	48.6	36.6	14.8
1992	62.5	26.8	10.7	54.0	30.2	18.8
1996	41.8	33.0	25.2	30.7	38.2	31.6

The occupational analysis of poverty in Nigeria presents the disparity in poverty status of operators in Agriculture and non- agriculture sectors. The comparison shown that poverty is higher among farming households. Poor families are in higher proportion inn farming household that in non-farming household for all years –noting that the proportion was highest at 76% in1996. The gap in poverty level in of the farming and non –farming households were highest in 1985 amounting to 22% and lowest in 1992. The gap was 13% in 1996 and in term of gender analyses farming male headed households are poorer groups than in female headed for all the years. The gap between proportion of the poor in male and female farming households is particularly high in 1985 and 1996.

STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANING

The current feature of government is the preference for the development of the rural areas as strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable overall national development. With this view, national development initiative will require effective grassroots mobilization participation and empowerment. In Nigeria successive administrations seems to have approach the issue of rural development using the grass root as the base in which sustainable national development was expected to flow thus, the grass root is expected as to serve as facilitating overall national development.

The bottom – up approach development in Nigeria is reflected in numerous polices enunciated by the successive administrations. Despite constituting hub of development initiative however, rural development still remains in a parlous state in Nigeria and this has often triggered the exodus, especially the youths and school leavers to the city in search of scarce jobs and a better living conditions; a situation which has also accentuated the rural poverty and under development. With the increase in rural urban drift, the effort of the successive administrations in Nigeria to correct the imbalances between the urban and rural areas in terms of infrastructural facilities and development in general has proved abortive. It therefore becomes apparent that there exist some fundamental problems with the development initiatives of the successive administrations In Nigeria in which the grass roots had remain largely neglected and underdeveloped despite the fact that by virtue of the concentration of productive forces in it has more development potentials than the urban centre's.

Empowerment including participation relate to the process in which the rural dwellers are equipped with the necessary tools to have a control over the affairs of their areas. Participation is consider as part of empowerment because there can be no better ways to empowering a people than making such people the architect of their own fortunes, participation is a crucial variable in the successive of development initiatives in Nigeria because for rural development to be viable and achieve the desire ends, local people must be involved for the successful utilization of both human and material resources.

Titilola (1997:3) noted that the merit of participatory development lies in the fact that it among others takes the recipient of the development effort as partners in:

1. Identifying problems and opportunities
2. Analysis and selection of implementation method
3. Monitoring progress and
4. Evaluation programmes.

Thus, one of the best strategies for sustainable rural development is the use of participatory rural appraisal, PRA. According to NIPRANET EDITORIAL (1997:1) and advocacy for the use of participatory rural appraisal stems from its cost effectiveness timeliness, flexibility and informal and interactive nature of the approach. It notes that development in many sectors of the Nigeria society

has been a top-down approach which leaves no room for initiative and contribution to rural people. This has no doubt lead to the failure of many well articulated projects.

People's participation means the active involvement in development of the rural people that forms the mass of the rural population and have previously being excluded from the development process. Experience has shown that through participatory programmes and activities it is possible to mobilize local knowledge and resources for self reliance, development, and in the process, reduce the cost of government of providing development assistant. People's participation should therefore be viewed as an active process in which people take initiative and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and which they can effusively influence. Participation is therefore, more than an instrument of implementing government projects. It is a development approach which recognizes the need to involve disadvantaged segment of the rural population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their well being.

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