

AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study reviewed several agricultural policies and food security set out by four different regimes in Nigeria since 1999-2015. The objectives in realizing the programme outcomes were considered, likewise the research questions and problems which this research sought for solution. We applied the content analysis method and used secondary data for this work. The path dependence policy change theory was identified as been applied in the 4th republic and adopted for this study. Our findings lead to plausible recommendation proffered based on the identified gap in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation in attaining food security, as a guide to future policy invention and food sufficiency in Nigeria. It is our take that with policy consistency especially in implementation, Nigeria could meet it food needs and export excess.

Keywords: AGRICULTURAL POLICY, FOOD SECURITY AND NIGERIA.

1. BACKGROUND

Agriculture in the context of the economy is tied with the various sectors and is essential for generating broad based growth necessary for development. The way and manner the societies succeed in increasing agricultural production is the degree they define themselves (FAO 2004). Agriculture is fundamental to the sustenance of life and is the bedrock of economic development, especially in the provision of adequate and nutritional food vital for the human survival, development and materials for industry. Sustainable food security is propelled by agricultural policy. A policy is a deliberate plan of action to guide decision and achieve rational outcomes (www.rnonster.ca). Nigeria agricultural effort has been that of subsistence farming and effective adjustment in the area of increased land cultivated.

Nigeria have a population of 160 million people and 84 million acres of arable land out of which only 10% is been cultivated and the country import rice for its food sufficiency (www.finardgov.ng). Since Nigeria new democracy, 1999-2015, agriculture has been growing but the growth is unsustainable and agricultural policy continues to change with one policy interventions and reforms. The first National policy on agriculture was adopted in 1988 and was expected to remain valid for about fifteen years, which is up to year 2000 (www.arcnigeria.org).

Agricultural policy is a statement of action and a fundamental tool employed by any nation in achieving agricultural development (FAO 2004) while Agricultural policy change refers to incremental shifts in existing structures, or new and innovative policies (Bennett and Howlett, 1992). It is a generalized statement that Nigeria's agriculture has suffered some neglect due to reliance on oil and gas resources and inappropriate policies and institution. Also, in the recent time, there have been a lot of concerns expressed over the looming danger of food crisis in many nations, including Nigeria. The Food and Agricultural Organization, among others have been persistent in expressing these concerns for the global food crisis over the years. According to Food and Agriculture Organization, food security obtains when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 1996). The main goal of food security therefore, is for individuals to be able to obtain adequate food needed at all times, and to be able to utilize the food to meet the body's needs.

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Nigeria agricultural policies have undergone changes especially in the 4th republic. These changes have been a mere reflection of changes in government or administration (Amalu, 1998). This is because these policies vary only in nomenclature and organizational network. The study will look at the various regimes' agricultural policy since 1999 to 2015 and the adopted policy changes aimed at ensuring food security. Balancing these two variables of policy changes and food security for the citizens is the essence of this research.

Objectives of the Research:

The agricultural policy and food security in Nigeria since the fourth republic reflects the plan of action taken by policy makers and actors to ensure food sufficiency in the country. The study will achieve the following objectives:

- a) Review the various policies in agriculture initiated in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015 (Fourth Republic) and its implementation and outcomes in terms of food security for its citizens.
- b) Ascertain the policy gaps and the way forward based on policy learning.

Statement of Problem:

Policy deficiency and somersault is in common in the agricultural sector of Nigeria's economy and as such they have been incessant agricultural policy changes. Further, the ever growing population and the increasing demand for food, ageing small hold farmers with crude farm implements, and lack of improve mechanized and chemically agricultural revolution, have created the lack of adequate food security. This is well captured by World Bank (2001), when the body said "A nation whose food production level is unable to satisfy food availability, accessibility and utilization is said to be food insecure for its citizens." It becomes necessary to find solution to these problems and close the identified gaps. This study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the ideal agricultural policy and how best to attain food security?
- 2) Does agricultural policy translate to food security in Nigeria?
- 3) Why are there, expectation gaps in outcomes of agricultural policy and meeting food sufficiency of the citizens?
- 4) How does agricultural production meet the food needs of the people, achieve improvement in the value chain and export excess output? Or how has Nigeria food production level been able to satisfy food availability, accessibility and utilization?

2. METHODOLOGY

We shall examine the Nigeria agricultural policies between 1999 to 2015 and food security for the same period and also investigate if the agricultural policy implementation results to sufficient food production for it citizens using content analysis method and Path Dependency policy theory. We shall review scholarly ideas in current agricultural policy and find answers to the research question of whether or not the agricultural policy implementation assisted in meeting the food needs of the Nigeria people. The study relied on Secondary data from literature and text books. Journals and internet access were used to compliment this work.

3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Policy makers and actors adopt various policies to deliver outcome and the government of the day strive to meet the food need of its people. Different regimes introduce various policy changes especially in the Agricultural sector which is the focus of this study. We shall look at the various agricultural policy changes (1999-2015), adopt the policy change theory that best suit the various regime in an effort to meet the food need of Nigerians. Beginning from President Olusegun Obasanjo regime (1999-2007), It adopted the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and its state counterpart — State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) to President Musa Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan (2007- 2015) Agricultural Transformation Agenda and currently to President Muhammadu Buhari (May 2015 to Date) continuing Agricultural Transformation Agenda and Youth Empowerment in Agricultural Programme (YEAP) (www.fward.gov.ng).

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This study shall look at theories that provide us with a range of ideas about how policy occurs and choose effective strategies that will help us focus evaluation effort at the right outcomes. The Path Dependence theory emphasizes on incremental change which is common with many governments or regimes. When there is a changeover of government, they just continue with the previous policy and sometimes modify it a little. As Pierson (2000) notes, public policies and formal institutions are usually designed to be difficult to change so past decisions encourage policy continuity. Levi, (1997) laid emphasis on the cost of changing policy that usually leads to the current regime continuing with the previous policy. This model argues that it is generally difficult to change policies because institutions are sticky, and actors protect the existing model (even if it is suboptimal) (Greener 2002). The major advantage of this theory is that policy continuity is better explained than policy change and once a nation follows a particular policy path, it becomes difficult to change this path since actors and policies have become institutionalized which involves great efforts and costs especially to those who desire change. On the other hand the shortfall of this theory is the lack of initiative by the new actors and it is slow in producing outcomes as it is difficult to show the costs and incentives created by the initial policy choice and how it affects decisions about future policy choices.

The Advocacy Coalition framework (ACF) is a different theory of change, based on Sabatier (1988) and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993). Policy change occurs through interactions between wide external changes or shocks to the political system and the success of the ideas in the coalitions, which may cause actors in the advocacy coalition to shift coalitions. 'Change comes from the ability of these ideas to adapt, ranging around a whole series of operational questions and what works in any one time or place' (John 2003).

The policy sub-system is composed of different advocacy coalitions with their own beliefs and resources, and their own strategies. Policy brokers are concerned with keeping the level of political conflict within acceptable limits and reaching some reasonable solution to the problem (Sabatier 1988).

Advocacy coalitions within policy sub-systems - these are actors from a variety of public and private organisations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue - are a critical vehicle for understanding the role of policy analysis in policy-oriented learning and the effect of such learning on changes in governmental programmes (Sabatier 1988). These people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers) shape the particular belief system — a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions - and exemplify a significant degree of coordinated activity over time (Sabatier 1988).

The decisions by policy-makers influence governmental programmes and thus affect policy outputs as well as policy impacts. Feedback effects are strongly present in the policy sub-system.

The ACF has been designed especially for policy areas characterised by high goal conflict, high technical uncertainty about the nature and causes of the problem, and a large number of actors from multiple levels of government (Hoppe and Peterse 1993). But the ACF also has a number of challenges. In particular, it is difficult to determine the beliefs of the main actors, map the advocacy coalitions and establish all the external and internal factors which can affect the policy sub-system.

Another theory of policy change is Policy learning and it refers to:

“relatively enduring alterations of thought or behavioural intentions which result from experience and which are concerned with the attainment (or revision) of policy objectives” (Hecl 1974) “.

Some Authors like Rose (1991) calls it lesson drawing.

In addition, learning is considered a process by which networks learn from past experiences, and thus is mostly about techniques and processes in order to improve policy (Bennett and Howlett 1992).

Similar to policy learning, policy diffusion is a process in which policy innovations spread from one government to another (Shipan and Volden 2008). In other words, the 'knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place' (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996).

4. FINDINGS

OLUSEGUN OBANSANJO REGIME 1999-2007:

In an attempt to tackle the problems facing the Agricultural Sector in Nigeria, Government has put in place the National Agricultural Policy, which was jointly formulated by the national stakeholders and International Development Partners and approved by the Federal Government in 2002. The major components of the National Agricultural Policy feed the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document was a response to the demands and strategies of the Millennium Development Goals (MPG).

Specifically, the National Agricultural Policy assigns supportive roles to the government, while investments in the sector are left to the private sector initiative. At the State level it is known as the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (SEEDS). The broad objectives of the National Agricultural Policy include:

Promotion of self-sufficiency in food and raw materials for industries; recognition that agriculture is business, hence a private sector concern where the role of government is to facilitate and support private sector initiatives; promoting reliance on local resources; diversification of the sources of foreign exchange earnings through increased agricultural exports arising from adoption of appropriate technologies in food production and distribution, which specifically responds to the needs of women, bearing in mind that they constitute over 50% of the labour force in agriculture.

The National Agricultural Policy again, does not seem to address the food crisis as there is no deliberate attempt to properly reposition the peasant farmers to facilitate their production activities. As it is observable, what is obvious is the emphasis on the private sector participation, the usual capitalist approach.

The third republic (Obasanjo 1999-2007) initiated several food policies such as the National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS) lunched in 2002 in all the 36 states with the objectives of increased food production and elimination of rural poverty and also Root And Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP). However, inadequate funding and lack of institutional arrangements especially deviant for database policies for implementation hampered some of them. The initiative generated interest and production increased but there were no concurrent provisions for storage and processing resulting in large post harvest losses and apathy on the side of the farmers.

MUSA YAR'DUA ADMINISTRATION 2007-2009:

Agricultural policy therefore involves not only activities in agricultural production but also includes feeding the industries, food processing and manufacturing, distribution and marketing, trade and consumption with the output from the major employer of labour, the sector raises the level of industrialization by providing food for the labour force. This is true because a poorly feed worker cannot supply efficient labour services which high level industrialization entails. This is elaborately manifested especially when viewed against the background that food is the source of energy and energy by definition is the ability to do work.

During the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, he made food security and agriculture one of his seven point agenda.

At the inception of his administration, president Umaru Musa Yar' Adua who succeeded chief Olusegun Obasanjo earmarked on a seven-point agenda so that the nation can move forward and be among the 20 largest economies by the year 2020. This also lead to the ambitious vision 20:20- a twenty-year plan for Nigeria. Briefly, the seven-point agenda include energy and power, food security and agriculture, wealth creation, education, land reforms, mass transit and the Niger Delta issue.

Like the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) the thrusts of the policy direction for agriculture and food security within the seven-point agenda include;

- Creating the conducive macro-environment to stimulate greater private sector investment in agriculture so that
- The private sector can assume its appropriate role as the lead and main actor in agriculture.
- Rationalizing the roles of the tiers of government in their promotional and supportive activities to stimulate growth.

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- Reorganizing the institutional framework for government intervention in sector to facilitate smooth and integrated development of agricultural potentials.
- Articulating and implementing integrated rural development as a priority national programme to raise the quality of life of the people.
- Increasing agricultural production through increased budgetary allocation and promotion of the necessary developmental, supportive and service-oriented activities to enhance production and productivity and marketing opportunities.
- Increasing fiscal incentives to agriculture, among other sector, and reviewing import waiver anomalies with appropriate tariffication of agricultural imports.
- Promotion increased use of agricultural machinery and inputs through favourable tariff policy

Arising from the redefined role of the federal government, its thrust of activities will be directed to obviate the technical and structural problems of agriculture in the following aspect; Development activities, Animal vaccine production, Veterinary drug manufacture, Agrochemicals manufacture, Water management, Agricultural development, Supportive activities, Input supply and distribution and Credit and micro-credit

GOODLUCK JONATHAN REGIME 2009-2015:

The Jonathan administration came up with Agricultural Transformation Agenda. This key policy was been driven by the then Minister of agriculture — Mr Akinwumi Adesina an Agricultural expert now the Chairman of African Development Bank (ADP). The government also continued vision 20:20. The Agenda focus on supplying fertilizers directly to the rural farmers and not through middle men; provide seeds with high yield directly to the small hold farmer, provided telephones to the rural farmers for easy communication and encouraged value chain in such a way that agricultural produce are being processed locally to finished produce and export. The regime further has the programme of providing storage facilities and exporting perishable goods such as tomatoes, etc by the provision of infrastructure such as perishable sheds at major airports in Nigeria. The Youth Empowerment in Agriculture Programme was initiated by the Jonathan Administration before the lost the 2015 General Election to the opposition Party who are now in Government.

MUHAMADU BUHARI REGIME MAY 2015-DATE:

After a retreat of Federal Government Ministers sworn in by President Obasanjo on the 11th of November, 2015, the new Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development — Audu Ogbe has this to say “We shall continue the Agricultural policy of the past regime, improve on seed yield and fertilizer distribution, emphasis export and make agriculture as a business by mechanisation, and the value chain of transformation through production, and marketing and also funding Research Institute.’ (Channel 10PM News accessed 15/11/15).

On the YEAP programme the Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Agriculture — Arch Sonny Echono on 10/11/15 said the Federal Government through the Youth Empowerment in Agriculture programme (YEAP) has commenced the process of empowering 30,000 Youths along area based priority value chains and initially 12 states ate participating ([wvfmard.gov.ng/FMARD Policies](http://wvfmard.gov.ng/FMARD_Policies) accessed 10/11/15). The beneficiaries would be trained in different value chain namely; Rice, Aquaculture, Poultry, Maize, Tomatoes, Wheat, Sorghum, Apiculture, Soya bean, Cassava, Groundnut, Oil Palm. Snailry, Grasscutter and multiple value chain like wielding and fabrication, repairs and maintenance.

There is the School Feeding Programme which the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development plans model after Brazil nutritional smart agricultural school feeding programme. Brazil School Feeding Programme is second only to that of the United States of America in size and depth; 40 million school children are fed daily at an estimated annual cost of 2 billion USD, shared by the Federal, States, Local Government, communities and Private sector (www.fmard.gov.ng)

The Nigeria government is interested in how to increase productivity and yield of small holder farmers using cooperative model and technological advancement. Brazil has achieved self sufficiency in rice production and export 20% of her rice to more than 65 other countries. There is a yield gap of rice production of 1.5 metric tones of rice to 2 million tones of rice and the Nigeria government will adopt measures borrowed from Brazil to meet Nigeria’s self sufficiency in rice production and processing. Presently the Federal Government as banned the importation of rice that gulps foreign

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exchange, draw down on foreign reserves and increase inflation. Among the special plan for rice to meet the countries rice needs after banning rice importation is the engagement of China's Exim Bank to develop 40 rice mills throughout the states.

On the 17th of November 2015, the federal Government through the Central bank of Nigeria, started to implement its policy — Anchor Borrowers Programme designed to assist small scale farmers to increase the production and supply of feedback to agro-processors. The CBN has set aside N20 billion from the N220 billion Micro, small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF) for farmers at single digit interest rate of nine per cent. Implementations are hinged on three pronged approach. These are out-grower support programme, training of farmers, extension workers and bank as well as risk mitigation (Leadership Newspaper accessed 18/11/15).

Our finding shows that the ideal agricultural policy been adopted by the Buhari administration is that of Brazil model of cooperatives and school feeding as Brazil has food sufficiency and export just 20% of its agricultural produce to over 65 countries.

There have been four regimes between 1999 to 2015 with each regime adopting the path dependency policy change with little modification. The Agricultural Transformation Agenda of the Jonathan administration could be said to have a major shift especially in its policy implementation and empowering the small holder farmers.

5. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

While an expansive agricultural program is being pursued, there is also the need for adequate food security which seeks to assure all citizens access to food supply that is reasonably priced, relatively safe, adequate in quantity, and nutrition.

Value chain in all area of agric business should be encouraged. Emphasis should be laid on export of agricultural products in areas we have advantage so as to earn foreign exchange and the small hold farmers.

There should be policy consistency in policy implementation as era of importation of all sort of items from rice to can tomatoes to even tooth picks should be discontinued.

There is need for significant improvement on yields through high quality seed, good agricultural practices and robust extension system.

Furthermore, there should be far reaching agricultural policy that should stipulate safety guidelines for food production in the growing food industry; it will crystallize in food safety regulations, such as the minimum requirements of basic nutrients that must be present in the food, the conditions under which the food is produced, its packaging, and even the advertisement to promote the consumption of the food.

Mechanization of Agriculture for big time farming and industrialization that will utilize agricultural raw materials for finished product will reduce unemployment.

The Nigerian economy has what it takes to be food-secure given the enormous natural endowed. What is required is a re-orientation of the agricultural sector policy by properly repositioning the small holder farmers who are the providers of food in Nigeria. Nigeria could be food-secure if it adopts and faithfully implement the policies suggested above. This is because these policies do not only encourage these farmers but also promote their activities.

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