


Evaluation of Agricultural Policies and Programmes for Sustainable Future Farming Intensification in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is enthusiastic with strong ambition and immense potential, which has been manifested in various agricultural frameworks and policies. Most of the agricultural frameworks and policies are meant by the government to attain food self-sufficiency and rapid economic development. Several studies have explored historical trends of government interventions and liberalization in the agricultural sector. However, the objective of the government has not been attained as a result of trajectory in efficient implementations of agricultural policies in the country. This paper therefore primarily aims at evaluating the agricultural policies and programmes for sustainability of future farming in Nigeria with specific focus on various determinants of sustainability of the agricultural sector, which will consequently bring food self-sufficiency, create employment, and bring about rapid economic growth in the country. The methodology used is qualitative content analysis of secondary data. The first part of the findings demonstrated that there is need to fill the gap in the existing agricultural frameworks and policies towards making future farming sustainable in the country. The second part of the result indicated that sustainability of agricultural sector for future farming intensification focused on the improvement of some major aspects such as viable implementation of agricultural policy, productive land for agricultural productivity, and government inputs to the farmers in reviving the agricultural sector. It is also noted that the interventions of the government through the building of shopping malls and establishment of national markets for marketability of various products such as groundnut, palm oil, rubber, cocoa, among others, can be instrumental in achieving sustainable future farming food domestic food production to attain food self-sufficiency and rapid economic development. In conclusion, the study showed that the implementation of agricultural policy is meaningful, and it can foster the sustainability of farming specifically in adequately utilizing unused land across the country. It is therefore suggested that the government needs to improve the input subsidies and to establish various national markets for selling different by-products and many others in order to achieve sustainability of the agricultural sector for future farming in the country.

KEYWORDS

By-Products, Food Security, Future Farming, Input Subsidies and Services, Policy, Productive Land, Sustainability

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INTRODUCTION

Agricultural sector is one of important determinants of economic growth in different parts of the world including Nigeria. Literature posits that, economic growth is referred to as changes in material production which results to annual increase in production that is explicitly manifested in the rate of growth in national income or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Fanny & Mathilde, 2011). It is thereby important to note that the setback in the agricultural sector has not reflected its important connection with economic growth. As a result of this, there is need to explore various agricultural policies and programmes in order to make agriculture sustainable in the country. There are several studies on agricultural investment as well as policies and programmes in Nigeria.

Yet, there is a gap to be filled in the existing body of knowledge. however, there is less attention on the investigation of agricultural programmes and policies in order to intensify the future of farming in the country. More importantly, the government initiated different programmes and policies on agriculture between 1976 and 1983 mainly for boosting production of domestic agricultural products. Nonetheless, exploration of oil and gas subsequently affected the development of agricultural sector which contributed to over-dependency on the importation of food items in the country.

Undoubtedly, Nigeria has immense potentials in agricultural sector, but the problem of continuity of various agricultural policies and programmes remained a great obstacle. Hence, there was an emphasis on strengthening the agriculture sector whereby in 1998, the government paid a meticulous focus on the enhancement of the sector. There was an adoption of agricultural policy that aimed at ensuring food security for the entire population of the country as well as trying to focus on the local or domestic production in order to boost economic growth as literature contends (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020).

Thus, there is a gap in the implementation of agricultural policy in the country. This study is motivated by the recent agricultural policy of the government (2016-2022) that advocates for agribusiness as an instrument for overall economic development in the country. This trend has been enviable between 2016 and 2022 which made the agriculture's share of labour force at 70%; its share of non-oil exports earnings reaches 75%; its share of federal budget is 2.0%. This is an indication that, there has been several initiatives such as policy framework, political commitment, agricultural technology, infrastructural deficit, finance and risk management, institutional reform and realignment among others (FMARD, 2020a).

In spite of the aforementioned efforts, there are still needs to do more in many aspects in order to make the agricultural investment sustainable and indemnifiable. Indeed, investing on farming by increasing domestic products is not sufficient but there is need for sustainable intervention by enormously providing (FMARD, 2020b). This paper attempts to fill this gap in the existing body of knowledge by specifically exploring sustainability of agriculture for future farming intensification in the country.

Problem Formulation

There are different problems hindering the effectiveness and efficiency of policies such as: inadequate coordination and implementations of the policies remain serious challenges that need to be addressed. The problems associated with problems of agriculture such as food insecurity, lack of affordable prices of various foodstuffs have not been meticulously analyzed specifically towards sustainability and intensification of future farming in the country. The implementation of agricultural policies in Nigeria remains a serious gap and sustainability of agricultural sector for future farming intensification has been strengthened. The current experience of high cost of living and inflation that cut across spheres of human endeavours including food items indicates that agricultural policy has not been adequately implemented. This inferably means that the fertile land endowed the country has not been judiciously utilized to proper agricultural productivity. In addition, inputs and supports necessary for farmers to maximize agricultural productivities are not adequately provided as expected and there is no serious

effort for the supply of the country's local products to the international market. Similarly, there is existing disconnection between rural development and national agricultural policy. Cordial interaction between farmers and customers is another challenge that affect agricultural policy in the country. Hence, performance of farmers in fostering agricultural sector in particular and socio-economic development in general is lacking in the recent time. On the basis of the foregoing problems ascribed with the agricultural sector in the country, it is noteworthy to posit that, the country's policies on agriculture have not been coordinated adequately to achieve a desired result or outcome specifically in achieving food security and foodstuffs with affordable price to the citizens (Obuks & Banake, 2015). It is also worrisome to note that, there is no clear roles among the three tiers of government namely: federal, state and local governments regarding areas of interventions or allocation of resources to the agricultural sector (Buba, Azhari & Muhammad, 2017). It is against the culminated challenges that this study aims at investigating enhancement of agricultural programmes and policies for the future of farming intensification in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

This part present review of related literature which are majorly sub-divided into two namely: Gap and previous agricultural policies in Nigeria and sustainability of agricultural sector for future farming intensification. Each of these would be explained in the subsequent sub-headings.

Gap and Previous Agricultural Policies in Nigeria

There had been shift from the agricultural cultivation to oil and petroleum in Nigeria. The focus on the exploitation of mineral resources such as: petroleum, oil, tin and gold have given a kind of setback to the agricultural sector in the country. It is noteworthy to say that, since several decades, the government has been trying to fosters different frameworks and policies that will serve as guidelines and plans to strengthen agricultural sector in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned frameworks and policies were very efficient and effective in rejuvenating the sector.

It is however unfortunate that despite the fact that, the policies are fantastic, there were still gaps in the existing body of knowledge. For instance, the government's programmes (i.e., Feed the Nation (1976-1979) and Green Revolution (1979-1983) were being implemented with negligence of the structural action and lack of transparency (Medugu, 2006). The country's aims at achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 but nonetheless, the multifarious challenges in the country hindered the country in attaining MDGs (Felix & Bassey, 2018). Similarly, the country also tried to achieve its plan for 2020 Vision and targeted at becoming one of the top twenty economies in the entire world specifically by 2020 but unfortunately, this could not be attained despite the fact that the present administration has been striving to improve agribusiness economy (FMARD, 2020a).

Prior to the discovery of oil in Nigeria, several studies have explored the immense potentials of agriculture as a central climax to the economic growth in the country. In the post-independence in 1960, there is an emphasis on the intervention in agricultural sector where the federal government of the country provided guidelines and plans for the development of the sector (FMARD, 2020a). More importantly, the government's plan and priority between 1962 and 1985 targeted on the boosting of domestic production of cash crops. It is not disputable to say that, the country is blessed with many resources specifically with potential of an arable land of 98.3million ha which consists of 72.2 million (72.4%) which also comprised almost 23% of all arable land across all the West Africa and only 27.1 million ha (27.4%) non-cultivable land (Felix & Bassey, 2018).

As a result of the government's meticulous and strong interventions in the agricultural sector, Nigeria was regarded as one of prime and top producers of groundnut, palm oil, rubber and second largest producer of cocoa in the entire world (Obuks & Banake, 2015). However, there was diversion of focus when there was intensive exploitation oil and petroleum between 1970 and 1986. This undoubtedly shifted the initial attention and interest in implementing and supporting the existing policies on the agricultural cultivation. It is as a result of the drastic shift of attention from agriculture

to oil, domestic farming and agricultural production drastically reduced and total dependency on imported foodstuffs were encouraged (Medugu, 2006).

More specifically, the policy on agriculture in the country has mentioned the paramount roles of the sector such as: providing adequate food for an increasing population; supplying adequate raw materials to a growing industrial sector; constituting the major source of employment; constituting a major source of foreign exchange earnings and providing a market for the products of the industrial sector (FMARD, 2020b). The indicators of the decline in the sector were noticeable shortfalls in food supply, rising of food prices, decline in foreign exchange earnings received from agricultural exports (FMARD, 2020b).

Apart from the foregoing, there are various policies on agriculture at the regional level specifically by ECOWAS in order to collaborate and promote efficient policies on agriculture in West Africa (Obuks & Banake, 2015). There were National Development Plans (NDPs) between 1962 and 1985 which provided guidelines and plans for agricultural interventions in the country. Redirection of economy from domestic agricultural production to oil and petroleum created a serious problem such as food crisis of 1976 (FMARD, 2020a). Thus, in response to the food crisis, the government embarked on various programmes and of such were operation Feed the Nation (1976-1979) and Green Revolution (1979-1983) as literature posits (Medugu, 2006).

The prime purpose of the aforementioned programmes was to boost and strengthen agriculture productivity in the country. As part of demonstration of government's commitment to this, there were provisions of subsidized inputs, access to credit among farmers in order to maximize productivity (Adebayo & Olagunju, 2015). It should be further noted that, as part of effort of the government to enhance agricultural sector, there was introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). The programmes aimed at reducing the over-dependency of the country's economy on oil and to ensure that the private section took a lead in driving the economic growth of the nation (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020).

Onwards, during the regime of the former president of Nigeria, in 1999, Olosegun Obasanjo launched Presidential Initiatives with specific focus on seven major agricultural products namely: cassava, rice, vegetable oil, sugar livestock, cultivated trees and dry grains). The reason for the aforementioned initiatives, is to ensure that country works within the provision of World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as complying with boosting the economy according the frameworks of Economic Partnership Agreements between European and African-Caribbean-Pacific countries ((Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). It specifically targeted on the regional market for selling the farm products.

Furthermore, in 2001, there was strategic planning frameworks for fostering agricultural sector which led to the provision of an important document titled: "Agriculture in Nigeria: The New Policy Thrust". This provides ambitious role in enhancing agricultural sector in order to reduce poverty in the country. In 2007, there was 7-pointing Agenda as medium-term policy documents aimed at economic reform in the country. Similarly, another strategic plan for reduction of poverty in Nigeria termed as National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2008-2011) (Fanny & Mathilde 2011; Felix & Bassey, 2018).

More specifically, in August 2008, the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources initiated a programme of the National Food Security Programme (NFSP) which aimed at making accessing quality food by all citizens. Similarly, the agricultural investment was emphatically stressed specifically in making the country is one of major exporters of foodstuffs in the world (FMARD, 2020a; FMARD, 2020b). For instance, the programme had specific area of focus by prioritizing crops such as wheat, millet, rice, cassava in order to achieve food security by identifying the supply chains associated with the food production. In addition, it is also noted that, there is an emphasis on attaching value and importance to production by improving different facilities such as storage, processing and easy access to markets where farm products are being sold (FMARD, 2020). Also, as part of dedication to the agriculture, there were plans for irrigation schemes (450, 000 ha).

Sustainability of Agricultural Sector for Future Farming Intensification

In spite of multifarious challenges, there were effort to make agriculture sustainable in the country. In 1978, the was an enactment of Land Use Act 1978 which provided a working template for proper use of land in the country. The prime target was to ensure that the land was judiciously utilized for agricultural cultivation. The word sustainability might be explained based on the context of usage as well as discipline of the user. It should be reiterated that the use of the word in this study is to assess the agricultural policy towards an effective and efficient implementation in attaining food security and abundance in foodstuffs and marketability of farm produce that will not only serve the current situation but will cater for the need of future generation in addressing insufficient food production and the problem of poverty in general. This assertion is also relevant to recent study by Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman (2020) which contend that:

Sustainable agricultural development was defined as a new approach to agriculture production that enhances the economic and social benefits for the generations without comprising the capacity of the future generation to fulfill their proper agricultural demands and without injuring the ecological process. (p.20)

The abovementioned quotation explicitly shows the paramount importance of sustainability of agricultural sector. This implies that, the current agricultural policy has been enviable towards provision abundant food to the citizens in particular and socio-economic benefits for the next generations in general (Felix & Bassey, 2018). This was an important landmark for reactivation of agricultural potentiality in the country. A number of factors are needed to be taken into considerations in order to achieve sustainable agriculture for future farming. For example, there is need for sustainable farming as a strategy for attaining sustainable agricultural productivity which can be contribute reduction of poverty in the society (Ajao & Oladimeji, 2013). In addition, sustainability of rural economy is also important for achieving sustainability of agriculture and farming. It should be reiterated to note that when farm produce is safe for human consumption which is an indication for sustainability of farming (Obuks & Banake, 2015).

Methodological Approach

Qualitative is used as a methodological approach of this study. The qualitative method combines both content analysis and desktop review approach which are used to major provide explanations on the variables of the study. Thus, the existing literature is reviewed and total number of 24 studies were used to come up with two (2) major themes that generated namely: gap in the agricultural policies in Nigeria and sustainability of agricultural sector for future farming intensification. More specifically, there are seven (7) sub-themes generated from the second theme which are as follows: viable implementation of agricultural policy, productive land for agricultural productivity, government's inputs to the farmers in reviving the agricultural sector, Nigeria's local products for regional market, linking of rural development with national agricultural policy, sustainable agriculture in enhancing interaction between farmers and customers and the agricultural performance in promoting agricultural sector. The justification for exploration of the factors identified in this study is due to the high hike of food items and general inflation emanating from injudicious use of fertile land for agricultural cultivation or productivity. The qualitative methodological approach depended large on secondary data which were obtained from different journals, online peer review, library among others. The use of the aforementioned methodology shall provide a meaningful direction for the future research towards intensification of agricultural programmes and policy in the country. The sub sequent sub-heading is the result of the study.

RESULTS

This part presents the overall results of the paper and it is primarily centered on the gap in the agricultural policies in Nigeria and sustainability of agricultural sector through various determinants for future farming intensification and each of these is presented in the in the subsequent sub-headings.

First, there is need for viable implementation agricultural policy in fostering the sector. During the inception of the present administration, the government was committed with investment in the agricultural sector with the closure of borders in the country. The policy received both positive and negative reactions from the citizens, Nonetheless, the prime focus of the government was to encourage local productions such as: cassava, rice, vegetable oil, sugar livestock, cultivated trees and dry grains in order to make the sector sustainable and contribute to economic growth (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). Furthermore, the vision of the present administration is to collaborate with the stakeholders in the agricultural sector in order to build a viable agribusiness that will improve the overall economy of the country (FMARD, 2020a). More specifically, with the effectiveness and efficiency of this vision, domestic food security will be achieved, export of farm produce will be improved and giving necessary support for sustainable income and job creation as an integral part of contributing to economic growth (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020).

Second, productive land for agricultural productivity is essential for sustainable agricultural policy. It is essential to ensure that the land and environment are judiciously utilized in order to maximize the benefits of agricultural productivity for efficiency in food crop production (Ojo, 2004). It is the responsibility of the government to support the farmers towards actualization of agricultural productivity in order to attain socio-economic development in the country (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). This is important because the sector is an important aspect of economy the needs meticulous attention. It is noteworthy to say that, for more than a decade, literature contends that there is inadequate attention on the proper utilization of land for agricultural productivity in the country (Medugu, 2006). This assertion is still a current challenge in the country where most of the lands are left unused for agricultural cultivation. It is not only to utilize the land but there is need to improve farming system in order to avoid the soil being worse off. It is acknowledged that, as a result of overpopulation, the use of traditional fallow system proves to be inadequate for production of raw food and industrial raw materials (FMARD, 2020a). Similarly, there is over-grazing of the land due to the demand for livestock products which also needs efficiency in order to achieve sustainable agricultural development in the country (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). Thus, the government needs to enhance the existing policy on the land use in order to address the problem associated with the land use especially the policy that will improve rural environment for agricultural cultivation for the improvement and sustainability of future farming in the country (Felix & Bassey, 2018).

Third, there is need for government's inputs to the farmers in order to revive the agricultural sector. Hence, several inputs that can be used are: improved seeds, fertilizer subsidy among others (. In so doing, concrete results can be acquired for the proliferation of local products in the country. It is unfortunate to say that, the level of subsidy between 1999 and 2009 fell to 25% as contrary to 70% and 80% during 1986 and 1998 was very low. Apart from the federal subsidies, the states also have their own subsidies for fertilizers to the farmers in order to foster the agricultural productivity to improve economic development (MLadan, 2015). More specifically, 50 to 150 kg of fertilizer bags were allocated to the farmer and the subsidies rates were between 10% and 50%. With this development, it is difficult to get quality inputs at a reasonable price. However, there is a challenge of adequate regulation and monitoring mechanism in order to avoid the diversion of the inputs given by the government.

Fourth, Nigeria's local products are important in regional market. There is need for country whose role in overall development of African continent cannot be underestimated in enhancing efficiency for local products. Thus, the country needs to foster its agricultural sector by making various farm products available at both regional and national markets. It is through this advocacy that sustainability of agriculture can be achieved. For instance, there was advocacy for Comprehensive African Agricultural Development (CAADP) initiated as a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) adopted in 2002 (FMARD, 2020a). The initiative provides a framework, policy and strategy for development of overall Agricultural development. The prime target is to bridge the gap between African continent and the entire world. With this role, Nigeria plays significant role towards actualization of overall

agricultural development. In 2005, ECOWAS adopted regional agricultural policy for West Africa and more specifically a regional action plan between 2006 and 2010. As a result of the ECOWA's regional agricultural policy for West Africa, National Agricultural Programmes (NAIPs) template was drawn in order to enable the stakeholders in the sector (FMARD, 2020b).

Fifth, linking of rural development with national agricultural policy is important for attaining sustainable agriculture for future farming intensification in the country. It is vital to reiterate that, there is to give support for small, medium and large-scale farming. For instance, there is need provision of water resources for irrigation. More specifically, support should be given to the farmers in the northern part of the country for cultivation of rice, millets, wheats, groundnuts (vegetable oil), while support should be given to the farmers in the southern part of the country for cultivation of cassava, cocoa, yam sugar livestock, cultivated trees and dry grains (Olagunju *et al.*, 2013; Ojo *et al.*, 2017; Okolo *et al.*, 2019). This can only be achieved by reviving the Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes in the country as initiated by IFAD since 1980s in Sokoto and Katsina States. It was the success of the initiative that gave rise to development of agriculture in the rural area in 2003. Consequently, management of natural resources of 'roots and tubers' in 2005 cannot be underestimated in the development of agriculture in the rural areas. Hence, the initiative made the country to achieve the top-ranking of cassava producer at the international level. It is however to note that this achievement has not be significantly sustained. Thereby, it is essential to revive this spirit in order to achieve the sustainability of agriculture in fostering socio-economic development. This is necessary in promoting an inclusive and democratic agricultural policy that will make the stakeholders responsible for multifarious initiatives and programmes that will consequently affect the living conditions of the masses.

Sixth, sustainable agriculture should manifest from the interaction between farmers and customers. There is need to encourage the farmers to maximize production of various crops in order to achieve sustainable agricultural development with an emphasis on the availability of different farm produce in the market in line with the advocacy for national markets for the sales of products (FMARD, 2020a). The farmers are expected to take the satisfaction of customers into consideration specifically in ensuring that the food security and availability of foodstuffs in the market. Thereby, marketability of different farm produce and the interventions of the government by building shopping malls for marketability of various products such as groundnut, palm oil, rubber, cocoa will significantly contribute to the support of the farmers in marketing their products and it will also encourage the customers to have access to various products such as palm oil in the markets as being achieved in Malaysian palm oil industry (Palm Oil World, 2020).

Seventh, the agricultural performance is an important for promoting of sector can be adequately evaluated in many areas. Agriculture is an important sector that contributes significantly to the economy of the country. It has been manifested from the fact that, agricultural outputs in the past contributed to resource productivity of the nation. It is unfortunate to say that, most of the farmers in the rural areas are ageing and the younger ones are not motivated to partake in farming which brings about limitations to their involvement in the farming. This is part of problems associated with the sector. However, the government has been trying to put in place strategies that will bring about increase in the size of farmers among the youth that will participate in medium/large scale farming in the country (FMARD, 2020a; FMARD, 2020b). In so doing, there will be an opportunity for consolidation of land for increased farm productivity. Also, there is potential of agriculture in creating employment in the rural areas if it is made sustainable, it will attract many youths to partake in the venture. There is need for efficiency of industrial crops expected to be supplied to industries as raw materials which can be subsequently utilized for export purposes (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). Thus, the government is expected to implement policy action in the areas of cereals (e.g., rice, maize, millets) which are useful for flour milling industries; roots and tubers (e.g., cassava) which can be used for bakeries as wheat flour and starch derivable from the Cassava can used by the textile industries; oil seeds and nuts can be used and processed in producing different vegetable oils.

In not shell, it should be stated that, if the government can strengthen the agricultural sector towards sustainability of the sector for future farming intensification in the country. In so doing, the roles of the sector such as provision of adequate food for growing population, supply of raw materials to the industrial sector and above all, the rate of unemployment in the country will be drastically reduced.

Discussion of Major Findings

This part presents the discussion of major findings of the study. The paper highlights the need to strengthen the existing agricultural policies and frameworks in order to intensify the future farming in the country. The paper has identified the need for a shift from farming to oil and petroleum as a major gap and challenge for maximum exploration of agricultural productivity. This serves as an impediment for enhancing socio-economic development because there is lack of utilization of fertile land the country is blessed with. The findings further demonstrated that inadequate implementation of agricultural policies and exploration of farming which affected the advocacy that the country aimed of attaining the top twenty economies in the world in 2020 (Felix & Bassey, 2018) but it could not be achieved-. The study also identified different agricultural programmes in the past such as Operation Freed the Nation and Green Revolution but it is argued that lack of structural action and transparency affected proper implementation of various programmes and policy in the country as the county contends (Medugu, 2006). This study argues that agricultural policy should be enhanced especially with specific attention on agribusiness as literature posits (FMARD, 2020a). Fundamentally, this study further buttressed previous study by Medugu (2006) that, there are several limitations to agricultural efficiency and more importantly, misuse of land in the mining of natural resources which consequently causes soil pollution that eventually affects the fertilization of the soil.

Furthermore, the study has explicated on the need for sustainable agriculture with specific attention on the use of land for farming. This position is in line with previous studies which regards sustainable development as a genuine approach for efficient agricultural productivity which will consequently improve social and economic benefits to the citizens (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). In so doing, it will be helpful to interested farming without demotivating or discouraging them in utilizing their capabilities in cultivating in investing in agriculture. This assertion has been further buttressed with the finding of Felix and Bassey (2018) who said that making agriculture to be sustainable inferably means that agricultural policy should be adequately implemented for provision of abundant food to the citizens. Similarly, the study by Ajao and Oladimeji (2013) contends that, sustainable agriculture and improvement of potentialities of farmers will drastically reduce unemployment and poverty in the society. The study by Obuks and Banake (2015) also in consonance with the research which contends that enhancing rural economy through support to the farmers as safety of agricultural products for human consumption are considered as part of sustainable agriculture which should be intensified for future farming in the country.

More so, it should be established that, adequate food has not been achieved with growing population of the country. This has been manifested in the hike of prices of different products in the market despite the fact that extant literature clamours for maximization of agricultural productivity outcomes through the use of agricultural innovation to improve the livelihood of the citizens (Adebayo & Olagunju, 2015). There has not been an efficient supply of raw materials for the industrial sector and the current rate of unemployment among the teaming youths have been indicated that the agricultural sector has not been improved to encourage the citizens to take part in the agricultural investment. However, there are different mechanisms and supports put in place by the government to motivate the farmers to participate in agribusiness economy, but the there is no adequate monitoring mechanisms to achieve this.

This is due to the fact that, the agricultural programmes are from top-down approach, however, the state governments are more effective than federal government regarding the participation of stakeholders. Nonetheless, this does mean that federal government is not giving necessary support to the farmers. Hence, the advocacy for Community-Driven Development (CDD) of agriculture which

is effective indicates the potential sustainability of agriculture as contrary to the existing approach of top-down system which does not sustainable impact to the living conditions of the beneficiaries (Felix & Bassey, 2018).

An inference can be made from the foregoing that various agricultural programmes aimed at enhancing food security and local production in the country have been initiated but strategies for implementation have not been translated into meaningful action in order to achieve desired results of agricultural productivity (FMARD, 2020a). It is thus essential to address this problem by advocating for sustainable agriculture in order to promote intensification of future farming in the country whose roles in the ECOWAS's agricultural intensification cannot be over emphasized (FMARD, 2020b). Fundamentally, lack of clear indicators in measuring sustainable agricultural sustainability made it hard in the previous studies to evaluate policy implementation in the country (Fanny & Mathilde, 2011; Obuks & Banake, 2015; Buba, Azhari & Muahmmad, 2017; Felix & Bassey, 2018).

Moreover, sustainability of farming system is paramount for maximization of benefits derivable from soil nutrients, soil organism, energy flow and water cycles which will bring better products from the agricultural cultivation (Felix & Bassey, 2018). However, the use of dangerous pesticides may affect the cultivation of various crops, therefore, avoiding the dangerous substance becomes very important in order to make various crops germinate well. It is acknowledged that organophosphates are commonly used pesticide for crop production and there is an emphasis that precaution should be taken in using it as a result of its danger which literature advocates for the restriction of its availability in the public (Emmanuel, Agwale & Usman, 2020). Hence, literature posits that implementation of agricultural policy in the country can be regarded as an integral part of improving on human resources through which the high rate of unemployment and poverty can be reduced. This is in line with the assertion of recent study that emphatically stresses on the significance of enhancing human resources through an effective practice (Arora and, Panchal, 2021). Hence, this study emphasizes on improvement of implementation of agricultural policies for intensification of future farming which shall consequently useful socio-economic development in the society. This position is also in consonance with previous studies that economic decision-making in private corporations and public sectors have great impact in the society and the risk cannot be underestimated while making decision (Galli, 2019; Galli, 2020). It can be inferred that, decision making that relates with agricultural productivity has significant impact in both private corporation and public sectors. For instance, some farm products such as Soya beans are supplied to the companies which consequently used for manufacturing of some goods for public consumptions.

Limitations of the Study and Policy Direction

This paper primarily aims at evaluating the various agricultural policies by identifying the gap in the existing programmes and consequently, solutions for implementation of policies in order to achieve sustainability and intensification of future farming in the country are highlighted. In this study, two major limitations are identified namely: methodological and content limitations.

First, the limitation associated with the methodology is that the study depended on the secondary data and no any primary data is used to have latest data to be used. However, the use of secondary data with specific attention on content analysis and systematic literature review (SLR) or desktop review provide substantial direction for future research on the intensification of agricultural programmes and policies in the country.

Second, from the results and discussions of the study, it is noteworthy to posit that, there is mismanagement of land in the entire country which hinder the sustainability of agricultural sector. For instance, mining of natural resources usually causes air, soil and water pollution which can consequently affect the fertilization of the soil (Medugu, 2006). Adversely, the soil pollution affects many things such as: reduction of crops, fish, livestock, wildlife production and more importantly, human beings in general and rural people in particular who might be prone to ill-health (Obuks & Banake, 2015). It is unfortunate that, there are serious limitations to the various agricultural policies

in the country. For instance, of such problems associated with the policies are: lack of coherence and continuity of different programmes, lack of interconnectedness of policy of agricultural sector with policies of other sectors of economy and lack of commitment to the implementation of agricultural programmes, initiatives and policies as literature posits (Fanny & Mathilde, 2011).

Similarly, there was no continuity by the subsequent governments which is one of major problems of the Nigerian political office holders. There are external factors such as banditry and climate change which affect an effective implementation of agricultural policy in the country. Similarly, there are several impediments to agricultural implementation especially most people assigned to be in-charge of supplying farm inputs and loans to the farmers tend to divert them for their own selfish monetary gains. This greatly affects the efficiency of agricultural activities in the country. As part of way forward, the government is therefore expected to improve on general security especially banditry that hinders the farmers to actively engage in farming and agricultural activities in the northern part of the country.

Thus, one of the best practices is that the government should directly interact with the farmers and proper monitoring mechanism should be put in place. Literature emphatically stresses on the strengthening of internal control environment as well as efficient flow of information (Pankaj, 2021). This is also useful for efficient agricultural activities in the context of Nigeria. It can be useful for operational and strategic benefits to the farmers in the country. Hence, purchase decision process of farm produce should be enhanced in order to attain adequate implementation of agricultural policy in Nigeria. This assertion is in line with the finding of recent study that advocates for the link between marketing and purchase decision process among consumers (Jalal, Mohammed & Haitham, 2021). Hence, this study demonstrates that commitment of farmers is paramount for the implementation of agricultural policy in order to maximize agricultural productivity in the country. This is in line with the finding of Khalaf (2012) who explored the organization commitment and its impacts on job performance.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the significance of agriculture in contributing to the economic growth in Nigeria. Similarly, various agricultural policies and programmes in the country have been elaborated. It is noteworthy to say that the agricultural sector had flourished prior to the discovery of oil and petroleum in the country. The paper also explained that, the discovery of oil and petroleum in the country led to the decline in the agriculture. The paper established further that the country is blessed with fertile land for cultivation of crops. The key issues in previous agricultural policies have been explored with specific attention on the National Development Plans (NDPs) between 1962 and 1985. More importantly, the policy of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2008-2011) has been elucidated. Effort of the present administration in making agriculture as a pivotal centre of economy has been explained. However, the gap in the existing policies and programmes have been identified such as negligence of the structural action, lack of transparency, lack of continuity by the subsequent governments; mismanagement of land, inadequate food production, efficient supply of raw materials for the industrial sector and the current rate of unemployment among others. The advocates that all the aforementioned challenges can be addressed provided there is prime focus on the sustainability of agricultural sector in fostering farming for socio-economic development.

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SUGGESTIONS

Based on the foregoing explications on the evaluation agricultural sector's policies and programmes for sustainability of future farming, the following suggestions are made:

1. In order to achieve sustainable agricultural sustainability and intensification of future farming, it is important that the government promotes bottom-up approach whereby the agricultural decisions will make sustainable impacts on the living conditions of the beneficiaries.
2. Sustainable agricultural policy for future farming should enable the farmers to have access to basic amenities such as water supply, healthcare facilities, schools, roads.
3. Promoting Community Driven Development can make the implementability of agricultural policy meaningful and can foster the sustainability of farming specifically by adequately utilizing unused land across the country.
4. There is need for making agricultural sector sustainable in order to provide food for growing population; address unemployment and solve the problem of poverty in the entire country.
5. There is need to provide loans to the farmers with the agreement to buy different farm produce and subsequent farm production of raw materials will be useful to the agro-industries.
6. There is need to entice the unemployed youth with an attractive agricultural incentive which will encourage youth to shoulder the responsibility of back-to-land programmes with the prime focus of new farming ideas that will serve as agents of change especially in the rural areas.
7. Both national seed service and State seed multiplication agencies should play pivotal roles in collaboration with commercial seed production with effort of making seeds available to the farmers for maximization and promotion of cultivation of different crops in order to make food available for increasing population in the country.
8. There is need to improve the input subsidies to the farmers in the areas of food crop production (e.g., fertilizers, water supply, pesticides); farm equipment (e.g., food crop processing, storage facilities) and farm services (e.g., bush clearing, machine hire, pest and disease control services etc.).
9. It is paramount to note that, the federal and state governments are expected to establish various national markets for selling different by-products with engagement or involvement of private sector activities. Quality control and price control should be put in place in order to drastically reduce freedom of high level of inflation in the country.

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