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RETHINKING NATIONAL DEVLOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN ACCELERATING AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Umar Elems MAHMUD, PhD Nasarawa State University Keffi Nigeria
Yusuf Abdullahi OGWUZEBE, PhD Nasarawa State University Keffi Nigeria
Shehu Ibrahim YAKUBU Nasarawa State University Keffi Nigeria

Abstract

A review of the evolution of Nigeria'snational development indicates a coincidence of the political and economic symmetry. Central in the trajectory was the nonchalant attitudes of the colonialists and even the successor-nationalists, particularly toward rural development. Upon attainment of independence in 1960, successive administrations attempted to redress the huge deficits by initiating various developmental programmes targeted at rural development. Unfortunately, most of the efforts were largely symbolic, resulting in massive failure. Using growth-centre and classical neo-classical models, this paper x-rayed the utility or otherwise of the development programmes, adopting documentary and expository analyses, in alignment with previous studies. The paper concluded that previous government efforts at rural development in Nigeria were largely inefficacious; and therefore recommended that government should prioritise rural development, by committing commensurate resources, to leapfrog Nigeria over the acute rural underdevelopment.

Keywords: National Development, Agricultural and Rural Development, Programme Failure, Colonialists, Nationalists.

Introduction

The evolution of Nigeria's national development coincides with the history and evolution of the country's political development. As a corporate entity, Nigeria was formed in 1914 by Sir Frederick Lugard, Governor-General, through the amalgamation of the erstwhile distinct but co-existing Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria. The amalgamation formalised the birth of the political state, Nigeria. Until the amalgamation, the Protectorates were administered separately by the British Crown, after the takeover of the area known as Niger Delta Region from the Royal Niger Company (RNC) in 1900. RNC, to be sure, held sway in the Delta after establishing trade relations and overlordship in the area. The formal authority to rule Nigeria indeed derived from the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference which ceded the Niger Delta to Britain in 1885.

Given the nod to rule, Britain retained the political and economic authority over Nigeria for the succeeding 46 years, from 1914 to 1960 when, on October 1 of the latter year, Nigeria secured independence. Before the new dawn, several constitutional promulgations were made: Clifford Constitution in 1922, Richards Constitution in 1946, Macpherson Constitution in 1951and Lyttelton Constitution in 1954. The 1960 Independence Constitution marked the new era of post-independence constitution-making in Nigeria, with 1963 Republic Constitution following, upon attaining republican status.

Richards Constitution is remarkable because of the novel introduction of regionalism in Nigeria. With the division of Nigeria into three Regions (North, West and East), the country experimented the first confederate political arrangement in 1946. Due to various deficits, succeeding constitutions were amended and subsequently replaced with improved versions by subsequent administrations.

Because the constitution is the basic platform upon which national development is grounded, this review is conducted to expository examine the evolution of Nigeria's national development and the corollary phases of economic and political development; and the implications for rural development. The rest of this paper is presented in the order: conceptual review, trajectory of Nigeria's economic and political development, state intervention in economy and the rationale, theoretical framework and methodology, review of government development programmes in Nigeria, discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

A review of empirical studies in rural development in Nigeria suggests a deficit in the true intention of policy makers, particularly actors in the political and administrative classes. Much emphasis had therefore been placed by previous studies on the number and frequency of policy and programmes, as a measure of effort at development. The contention of this study aligns with the view of Ake (2001: 42-55) that development in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, was not at any stage, colonial or nationalist and post independent eras, in the agenda of the leaders, although symbolic policies and programmes were initiated and abandoned in quick succession: colonial rural development policies and programmes; Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, School-to Land, among the myriad of programmes by Federal and State Governments. Re-examining development against the backdrop of the shambolic policies and programmes, not the rapidity of turnover, is the major departure of this paper.

While the major objective of this study is to generally examine the critical factors in the pervasive failure of rural development policies and programmes in Nigeria, from the colonial to post-independence periods, the specific objectives include: to analyse the programmes against the achievements of the two most government-acclaimed rural development-centric programmes, namely, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution (GRV); and to proffer policy antidotes for accelerated rural development.

Flowing from the objectives, the following questions were posed, to guide the analysis:

i. Were successive governments in Nigeria committed to rural development, beyond symbolic policy and programme initiatives?

ii. Were the development programmes rural-oriented; or urban programmes clothed in rural connotations?

iii. What critical factors contributed to the failure of the rural programmes, as widely viewed by the target rural beneficiaries and analysts?

iv. What are the policy antidotes for improvement?

Salient among the propositions are that effective rural development is achievable when the commitment of government is sincere, focused and germane; when policies and programmes are implemented free of political manipulations and hijack; when adequate resources are committed to the ideals of the programmes; when resources budgeted for projects are judiciously applied; and when the extensive inclusiveness and participation of the target populace are guaranteed.

Conceptual Review

Several concepts adopted in this review require clarifications, in order to elucidate the contexts in which the concepts had been used. In this regard, the salient concepts include national development and development planning; economic and political development, rural development and government development programmes.

National Development and Development Planning

Nwekeaku (2015, p.14) referred to several activities or actions and inactions which can culminate in poverty, hopelessness, illiteracy, severe famine, disease, malnutrition, homelessness, political instability and social disorder, among other indications, particularly in less developed countries (LDCs); in contradistinction to superior or better life enjoyed by the advanced and developed countries (ADCs). Although no specific definition was provided, implicit in Nwekeaku (2015) is that national development refers to the gamut of concerted actions by state actors and citizens directed at removing the causes and consequences of those factors which produce the undesirable socio-economic conditions, in order to attain the superior status of well-being for all.

Since overcoming developmental obstacles must be a concerted and deliberate effort, it follows that state policies aimed at achieving national development must be carefully planned, to meet the long term or strategic developmental goals of the state. Such planning process will naturally contain programmes, strategies and policies directed at attaining a superior well-being of the state over a long period. Without doubt, this visioning requires diligence, intelligence and expertise. The process will naturally produce a comprehensive plan which generally should envisage as much as possible the developmental goals and objectives; and the strategies and policies, for goal attainment (Anyanwu,Oaikhenan,Oyefusi&Dimowo, 1997, pp.21-24). In a nutshell, the process can be described as development planning.

Economic and Political Development

Jhingan (2008, p.4) contended that economic development refers to the problems of LDCs. He adopted the definition offered by Schumpeter, who defined development as “a discontinuous and spontaneous change in the stationary state which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state preciously existing” (Jhingan, 2006 p.4).

Rodney (1969) cited in Ujo (2008) defined development as a many-sided process which, at the level of the individual, means increase in skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline and material well-being. Todaro (1982) aptly defined economic development when it was stated that development is a multi-dimensional process that involves a reorganisation and reorientation of the entire economic and social system, leading to improvement in income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures, as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs. Development is a nullity if questions which bother on vices such as poverty, unemployment and inequality are not resolved; or are answered in the negative, even if per capita income doubled, according to Seers (1969), cited in Ujo (2008).

With regard to political development, Habu (2018, pp.5-7) suggested that it is the process of transformation or progression of political norms, values and institutions from one stage to another across epochs; for example, as in the various phases of the political development of Nigeria, and other countries of the world.

Rural Development

For universality, the definition of rural development provided by the World Bank (1975:31) cited in Ujo, (2008) adopted a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. This group includes small scale farmers, tenants, the landless, etc.Implicit in the definition is that rural development is a policy involving the process of uplifting the poorest people who inhabit the rural areas, so that they may enjoy the benefits of development and modernization.

Chikeleze and Ezenwaji(2003: 37-64) advocated a strong case for government’s intervention in the economy and rural development. Salient among the needs are: strategic development, deficit in investment capital, development of the entrepreneurial clan, rural development and managing externalities.

Theoretical Framework

Economists have identified several models or theories of development. The models or theories traverse the Basic Resource, Growth-Centre, Rural Economy, and Classical and Neoclassical, among others (Todaro, 1982:51-55). All models are of direct relevance to rural development in LDCs, as Nigeria. However, this paper adopted a hybrid of the Classical, Neoclassical and Growth-Centre models.

The Classical and Neo-classical models, widely favoured by classical economists: Keynes, Ricardo, Rostow, Lewis, Parsons, Apter, etc, posit that rural development is impeded due to lack of sufficient capital in LDCs. To the protagonists of this theory, huge capital investment and massive labour employment are therefore the fulcrum and tonic for growth and development of a country. Without doubt, LDCs, more precisely the rural areas, are plagued by poverty, low capital formation and unproductive employment of labour in subsistence agriculture. Injecting capital is therefore a *sine qua non* for leapfrogging rural underdevelopment in Nigeria, and other LDCs. The need to invest hugely in rural facilities is the cardinal utility of the classical model of rural development.

Against the backdrop of acute resource deficit in Nigeria, Growth-Centre model, which favours the designation of specific areas as development centres, from where further development can be spread into the hinterland, is complementary to the Classical Theory. Thus, the strategy of farm settlements during theFirst Republic in Nigeria (Igbariam Farm, Ada Palm Settlement, Moore Plantation in Ibadan, Adani Rice Farm Enugu,etc), illustrated the application and relevance of this model of rural development as adopted in Nigeria, particularly during the First and Second Republics (Nwakeaku, 2015).

Methodology

This paper adopted eclectic approach consisting majorly of descriptive design, with focus on expository and documentary analyses. Content analysis of records obtained from literature and relevant government publications provided useful sources of information.

Trajectory of Politico-Economic Development of Nigeria

Akinsanya (2018: 20-25) aptly delineated the political and economic development of Nigeria, in-tandem with the phases of the historical evolution of the country, pre and post-amalgamation and independence. Brief synopses of the characteristics of the phases are provided.

Pre-Colonial Stage

Pre-colonial Nigeria operated a predominantly agrarian economy, with production limited to subsistence output. The diverse ethnic groups: Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Benin, Efik, Ibibio, etc, engaged in farming mainly for the production of food crops.

On the political arena, the various major ethnic nationalities operated diverse forms of self-government characterised by differences in the degrees of political ideology. Thus, while the Igbo were republican, the Yoruba kingdoms were semi-centralist. As for the Hausa nation, centralisation of authority around the person and institution of the Emir characterised political administration. Even the vassal or sub-emirate political units derived authority from the Emir or Caliph and, therefore, owed allegiance to the institution. Upon amalgamation and birth of Nigeria in 1914, the British consolidated the grip over the political landscape of Nigeria, following which a Governor-General, Lord Frederick Lugard, was appointed.

As a corollary, European firms, led by the Royal Niger Company (RNC), established business offices in Nigeria, to promote trade, majorly in export and import. To establish the requisite control, the colonialists replaced the indigenous political systems with new ones, after they had conquered the erstwhile independent chiefdoms. This paradigm shift developed into the major system through which Britain subsequently governed Nigeria as Indirect Rule.

Colonial Era

The debut of British trading companies in Nigeria, and elsewhere in Africa, and indeed other developing continents, came with new developments, major of which included the monetization of the colonial economies and the development of capitalism.

To entrench monetisation, several strategies were adopted, chief of which included the replacement of the local currencies with the new colonial currencies. As it were, the bulk of the resources needed in European factories, particularly raw materials, were available in Nigeria and other LDCs. On the other hand, the huge population of Nigeria, even though characterised by low per capita income, provided the market for finished products from the European factories. These favourable conditions gravitated British imperialist multi-nationals to Nigeria, in a bid to tap the opportunities, given that the colonial leaders had established dominion over the country in the political and economic spheres.

Other strategies for monetisation were the introduction of taxes which were payable in the newly introduced European currencies; encouragement of wage labour for which payment was affected in the new currencies; introduction of modern lending facilities to farmers, with conditions skewed in favour of European interests; and establishment of banking institutions (Bank of British West Africa in 1894 and Banque Nationale d'Africa Occidental in 1919).

To consolidate the economic position over Nigeria and LDCs, British trade was extensively used. Export of cash crop to Europe, to feed the industrial concerns, was actively promoted; while importation of manufactures reciprocated export business. Very rapidly, trade became a veritable tool of imperialism. Even the pattern of foreign investment complemented the trade pattern. Thus, most of the foreign investments were directed toward and focused at specific areas of European interests. By and large, investments were geared toward producing agricultural cash crops needed in European factories. Unfortunately, no efforts were made at local processing of agricultural produce into finished goods with competitive advantage in the international markets; In a nutshell, the colonial economy was characterised generally by disarticulation in all sectors; pervasive neglect of the real sector, particularly manufacturing; monopoly of markets, and high dependency on British economic systems(monetary, financial, technological, trade, etc), among others.

Post-Colonial or Independence Era

Ake (1981) posited that post-colonial Nigeria was in no manner different from the predecessor-colonial country, particularly because the successor-nationalists had no desire to change the colonial status-quo. Corroborating Ake's position, Nwekeaku (2015:95) noted that no radical change was witnessed with respect to post colonial Nigerian economy; because the leadership that succeeded the colonialists did not initiate radical restructuring. The author cited several reasons to support the assertion: continued promotion of export cash crops to Britain; continued retention of colonial monetary system, until the system was abrogated by General Yakubu Gowon's administration in 1973, when Nigerian Naira was introduced, to replace British currency, etc.

In the light of the disarticulation and contradictions inherent in colonial administration and as retained by Nigerian nationalists, most rural development programmes have remained bundles of contradictions in the various communities, since the country's political independence in 1960. Against the backdrop of the foregoing, a critical examination of the various rural development programmes enunciated in Nigeria by different administrations, post-independence, is undertaken.

Review of Post Independence Government Development Programmes in Nigeria

Goaded by the widespread low level of rural development across Nigeria, successive governmental administrations initiated several programmes, aimed at bringing the much desired development, in order to improve the well-being of the citizenry, particularly the economically and socially vulnerable rural dwellers. Accordingly, numerous programmes, some of which are highlighted, were initiated and executed. However, because of space and time constraints, this paper merely browsed through most of the programmes, while focusing on theassessment of two cardinal programmes, namely, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and its rebranded Green Revolution (GRV) successor, in view of their peculiar relevance and focus on rural areas.

To begin, cooperative movements aimed at pooling the efforts of rural dwellers who were mainly farmers or agro business entrepreneurs were formed. Thus in the West and East Regions, the number of cooperatives grew to 276 and 313 respectively (Nwekeaku, 2015:100). Several governmental administrations established farm settlements, with models premised on the Isreali “Kibutz” and “Moshau”, similar to commercial plantations. The regional farm settlements were supported with training facilities that provided improvement in the education of farmers. In the East, Colleges of Agriculture were established at Umudike and Igbariam. Farm settlements were also established at Igbariam, Ohaji-Egbema, Ulonna, Uzo-Uwani, and Abakaliki, where cash crops including oil palm, citrus, rubber and rice were cultivated.Establishment of farm settlements was highly favoured in the First National Development Plan which spanned the period 1962-1968. The objectives included rural agricultural development and training of young people who were to develop into commercial farmers.

In the West, Moor Plantation in Ibadan, Idanre Cocoa Farm and NIFOR Oil Palm Settlement, near Benin City, were notable. Northern Region had the Funtua Cotton Belt, Badegi Cereal Farm and Mokwa Farm, among others. Due to poor access to credit facilities and other operational hitches, the farm settlement scheme suffered a regression and failed to achieve the objectives.

Community self-help programmes dominated the Second National Development Plan (1970-74)in agricultural development efforts. In contradistinction to the farm settlement scheme, the community self-help programmes recorded huge success, as noted by Idode (1989).Under the Second National Development Plan, the World Bank provided substantial assistance for the development of agriculture by funding several projects. The World Bank-assisted Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) were first launched in 1976. Over 244,000 farmers in Funtua, Gombe, Gusau, Ayangba, Jalingo, Lafia and Ilorin participated from the Northern Region; while in the Western Region, participants were drawn from modern day Oyo and Ekiti States. Without doubt, the ADPs recorded success in increasing food production, although they faced some challenges, as noted by Idachaba (1980).

Under the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, the Third National Development Plan (1975-80) focused on achieving even development, by bridging the gap and reducing the inequality in development between the rural and urban areas of Nigeria. Agricultural development remained critical as a tool for rural development and transformation. In order to harness the full potentials of Nigeria’s agriculture by developing water resources for all-year farming, the Irrigation Degree of 1976 and the Nigerian Basins Development Authority, also of 1976, were enunciated. The latter decree established several River Basin Development Authorities across Nigeria, initially including Anambra-Imo River Basin Authority, Hadeja, Jama’are Authority, Sokoto-Rima River Authority, Lake Chad Basin Authority and Upper Benue River Authority. Other River Basin Authorities included Lower Benue, Cross River Basin, Niger Basin, Ogun-Oshun River-Benin, Owena River Basin and Niger-Delta River Basing, Benin.

The primary functions of the Authorities were to develop and provide regular supply of water to farmers; control and management of flood and erosion sites; construction and management of dams, wells, boreholes, irrigation and drainage systems; and control of environmental pollution from rivers, among others.

Laudable as the objects of establishing the Authorities were, corruption, inter-state boundary disputes and political interference, among other problems, militated against the smooth operation and performance of the Authorities (Moghalu, 1991). On their own, Akintola and Omotayo (2017), remarked that notwithstanding the problems of the Basin Authorities, the Authorities were the centre-piece of the Green Revolution Programme of Shagari Administration in 1979.

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

Without doubt, OFN was one of the most widely publicised public programmes in Nigeria. The programme was a cardinal tool deployed by government for achieving the rural development objective of the Third National Development Plan. A radical departure of OFN was its vision beyond isolated agricultural development. Instead, OFN stressed the adoption of an integrated approach, with harmonisation of all development projects and programmes into a unit of rural development.

To give the needed impetus to the integrated rural development paradigm, the Federal Development of Rural Development, under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, was established in 1976, with the core objective to integrate science, technology, education and agriculture into one whole unit, "for easy transformation of the rural areas".

Against the backdrop, OFN was launched in 1976, with specific objectives to, among others, mobilise Nigerians for effective and active participation in agriculture, by returning to the farms. The essence was to increase food production through active engagement in farming by all Nigerians, irrespective of education and social status. To this end, all traditional factors militating against agriculture, be they cultural perceptionsor practices, were to be eliminated; while modern farm practices were to be developed and deployed. All available human and material resources were also to be fully harnessed for increased food production.In terms of structural establishment, OFN was effectively operationalised at all tiers of government. Administrative and Management Councils and Committees were similarly established at every tier of government, for effective drive and focused implementation of the programme.

Like most governmental programmes, OFN waned in effectiveness over time. Precept, corruption and entrenched cultural dislike for agriculture took several tolls on policy sustainability. Beyond the jingles and rhetoric by government officials, nothing motivating followed, to sustain the momentum (Ikupolati, 1979:12). Critics of OFN opined that much emphasis was placed on propaganda, with government sponsoring special musical jingles and concerts, to propagate the message of OFN.

Nevertheless, the Programme was widely commended for creating much awareness about the importance of agriculture, and the need for participation by all, irrespective of social status. As a result, many highly placed Nigerians engaged in poultry and fish farming.The development gave rise to substantial increase in the output of poultry products and fish protein between 1977 and 1980 (Ikupolati, 1997: 15-16).

In contradiction of the essence of OFN, government liberalisedthe importation of food commodities such as rice, maize, beans, etc, to diminish output by the less competitive local farmers. In this regard, Yorama (2015), wrote that despite the huge amounts expended on OFN, annual food import bill increased continually, with no significant impact on the bid to change the poor attitude of Nigerians, particularly the youth, towards agriculture. Generally, as noted by Yorama (2015) and commentators, OFN made no fundamental impact on Nigerians. The situation prevailed in 1979 when Shagari Administration, repackaged or rebranded the failed OFN into a new programme code-named Green Revolution.

Green Revolution (GRV)

To show the poise of the new administration in improving the lots of agriculture as a veritable strategy for rural transformation, Alhaji Shehu Shagari on inauguration as President of Nigeria on October 1, 1979, indicated a new direction in agricultural production and management in Nigeria. On April 14, 1980, the President inaugurated the National Council on Green Revolution, comprising of the Ministers of relevant portfolios. In a nutshell, the Council was to coordinate and monitor all activities of MDAs in the efforts at attaining government's goal of self-sufficiency in agricultural production in Nigeria.

Pursuant to the goal, Federal Ministry of Agriculture (FMOA) was also mandated to supply raw materialinputsfor agro-allied industries; while the Industry counterpart was charged with the responsibility of providing agricultural machinery, chemicals and other agricultural inputs. By June 3, 1980, the National Committee on Green Revolution was inaugurated, with a general mandate to provide advisory support for the Council, with regard to programme implementation, among other specific responsibilities.

Of note and departure, GRV was to go beyond boosting agricultural production to total rural development, by "establishing agro-based industries, construction of feeder roads, provision of housing, educational and health facilities, water and electricity in the rural areas.

Commenting on the performance of GRV, Ijere (1991) noted that the huge monies committed to the programme were unjustified, given that programme objectives were unrealised, because of policy inertia that rubbished agriculture generally and any agro-related programme particularly. Ijere (1991) also noted that with the reign of oil, the contribution of agriculture to Nigeria's GDP previously at 45 per cent plummeted to 27 per cent by the early 1980's. Even the effects on production and export assumed a negative status, with annual production and export of cocoa, rubber, cotton and groundnuts declining by 43 per cent, 29 per cent, 65 per cent and 64 per cent respectively. The adversity compelled farmers to shift resources to the production of food crops, away from cash crops. Commenting, Emechebe (2017) reported that GRV as a programme that failed at implementation, particularly because it did not revolutionalise agriculture or rural development anywhere in Nigeria.

Among the myriad of other government's developmental programmes are as enumerated:

1. National Directorate of Employment (NDE);
2. National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme (NYEVSFP);
3. Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Programme (SSIGEP);
4. Agricultural Sector Employment Programme (ASEP);
5. Special Public Works Programme (SPW);
6. Directorate for Social Mobilisation (MAMSER);
7. Better Life for Rural women Programme (BLP);
8. Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (BPN); and
9. Community Banks (CB)

Recent Efforts at Agricultural and Rural Development

The federal and state governments have continued to emphasise agriculture and rural development as cardinal focus, in the efforts at transforming the rural areas, ensuring food sufficiency and engaging the largely unemployed youth. To this end, several empowerment programmes had been initiated, aim at supporting farmers, particularly in the rural areas. Key among the programmes is the Anchor Borrowers Programmes (ABP), established by the CBN on November, 17, 2015. The aim of the Programme is to create the necessary linkage between anchor companies engaged in agricultural processing and small holder farmers (SHFs) producing key agricultural commodities.

In terms of operation, ABP provides farm inputs, majorly in kind, with little cash complement to SHFs, in order to increase production of the commodities. Upon harvest, the SHFs deliver the produce to the anchor agro-processors, who in turn remit the cash values to the farmers' accounts.

As at November 2018, #55.526 billion had been disbursed to over 250,000 SHFs, with about 300,000 hectares of farmlands cultivated with maize, cotton, soya beans, cassava and rice, among others. In terms of employment, an estimated 890,000 direct labour and 2.6 million indirect jobs had also been created (Toromade, 2018).

Other programmes of FGN include the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI), established in December 2016, as a partnership programme between Nigeria and Morocco and implemented on public-private basis. The Programme is led by Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority and Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria; the Youth Farm Lab; Presidential Economic Diversification Initiative; Agricultural Transformation Agenda and Food Security Council, all launched at various times to March 2018 with diverse objectives, aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, improving food insecurity, encouraging youth participation in agriculture as an engagement with profitable potentials, among others.

Notwithstanding, the laudable objectives of the policies and programmes, experts reported that the policies although had Nigeria's interest but were poorly implemented by either the proposing administrations or successors (Ayok, 2020; Tanko, 2020). Experts also reported that the policies were to serve as relief to Nigeria and promote the growth of the agricultural sector, but the plans had no reasonable effects on the economy. The experts believed that, above all, the policies failed to add meaningful quota to the economy, due to lack of interest of successive administrations to implement them for selfish reasons (Ayok, 2020; Tanko, 2020).

In effect, even the more recent policies were as unimpactful as the previous policies. Given the continued reliance on imported food in the face of inadequacy of domestic supply, the practical contributions of the various efforts are therefore suspect. To be sure, the astronomical rate of youth unemployment calls to question the efficacy of the programmes in addressing issues in agricultural and rural development in Nigeria and rural youth unemployment.

Factors in the Failure of Agricultural and Rural Development Policies and Programmes

Several factors have been identified as central in the consistent failure of policy and programme intents of various administrations in Nigeria. Fundamentally, the overriding influence of lack of sincerity might have underpinned government's attitude towards determination and commitment to succeed (Ake, 1981; 2001).

More specifically, the key contributory factors in the failure of OFN and GRV the case study programmes can be coalesced into several broad views as highlighted:

1. Policy Focus: OFN departed radically from previous policy approaches by seeking to adopt an integrated rural development approach that harmonised all projects and programmes into a single unit of rural development, midwifed by the newly established Federal Ministry of Agriculture in 1976. The cardinal objective to integrate science, technology, education and agriculture into a one-purpose vehicle capable of easily transforming the rural areas wasat least, a fusion of distinct functions. The policy resulted in diminution of division of labour, the attendant specialisation and expected benefits of efficiency. This view is not to contest the role of science, technology and education in agricultural development; rather, the contention is that submerging the new approach in the octopus Federal Ministry of Agriculture negated the desirability of a structure most suitable for delivering micro-projects at the rural level. When it became noticeable that the

clumpsyministerial apparatus was incapable of achieving programme objectives, government resorted to much propaganda and rhetorics, powered by media jingles, against practical programme implementation, visible to the raked eye, (Emechebe, 2017).

2. Policy Incongruence and Somersault: While the policy intents of the various agricultural andrural development programmes were coalesced into the core objective of encouraging massive cultivation of food, through wide participation by all and sundry, FGN, during the tenure, liberalised the importation of staple food commodities (Yorama, 2015). The policy contradiction reversed the intention of the programme and plunged the expectations into abyss.

   As a corollary, agriculture, the-centre piece of rural economy, waned in productivity, appeal and contribution to GDP, from 45 per cent to 27 per cent in 1980 (Ijere, 1991); while on commodity specific performance, annual production and export assumed a steady decline, because the demand for the primary commodities had fallen; and also because the urban industries for which cash-crops were cultivated faced challenges. Consequently, notwithstanding the budgetary allocations, “Green Revolution did not revolutionalise agricultural and rural development in Nigeria” (Emechebe, 2017)

3. Corruption: A generic problem of policy and programme implementation in Nigeria is the inevitable component of corruption. As has been widely reported in literature and studies; and as it is tritely known, the assumption of corruption has remained a complement of every endeavour in Nigeria, be it public or private. The vice has been more prevalent in public programmes, where ownership and control are amorphous. Agricultural and rural development programmes did not escape the scourge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rural development, and indeed development, was not a major interest and focus of the colonialists and the nationalists who succeeded the British rulers across Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Ake (1981) and indeed Lord Lugard were apt when they posited that the colonialists were in the colonised territories to, primarily, seek their interests. If along the line the colonists benefited, it was not the ultimate goal. In-tandem with this position, the colonialists and nationalist collaborators were care-free about the development of the colonies. Therefore, development programmes enunciable were largely symbolic, instead of being transformational. This situation was aptly demonstrated in the shambolic conception, implementation and management of the various programmes, leading to massive failure. It will be of interest if anyone can pointedly identify surviving legacy projects under virtually all the programmes and schemes in the more contemporary era.

To change the traditional thinking and attitude toward development, for desirable performance, it is recommended that government should reprioritise rural development with high sincerity of purpose. In this regard, improved funding, superior programme management, substantial inclusiveness of the rural populace in development planning and programmes and project implementation should be institutionalised.Very important,eradication of the pervasive corruption, particularly at the level of government and the officials, should be vigorously pursued.

Furthermore, the requisite legal and institutional framework for the effective implementation of policies aimed at achieving rural development should be re-engineered. Very stiff sanctions should be prescribed and meted for any proven case of policy infractions, irrespective of the status of the offender.

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