

A CHRONOLOGY OF NIGERIA'S AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND THE RESULTING EFFECTS EVIDENCED IN DOCUMENTORIES

Abstract

The study made use of secondary data accessed from bulletins and published researches whose primary focus was on various aspects of agricultural policies right from colonial rule to contemporary Nigeria and how it has impacted today's agriculture and economy in the country. The research showed Nigeria hadn't any explicit National Agricultural Policy before 1988. At independence in 1960, the country's planning and policies mostly targeted economic growth and development and largely unarticulated administrative pronouncements that guided the operations of agricultural activities. The 1988 National Agricultural Policy document by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FMARD) was an executive fiat of the then Federal Government that aimed at improving agricultural production and the development of export markets. A look at chronicled submissions in literature suggests Nigeria's agricultural policy was replete with limitations, showed a general lack of coherence, absence of continuity and an inadequate linkage to other sectors of the economy. Events suggest agriculture related policies were opportunistic and uncoordinated and many scholars bemoan the absence of continuity and lessons from preceding programmemes never adequately analyzed. These have made it difficult to track and evaluate policy effectiveness. At the institutional level, it is evident that roles are not clearly segregated among various administrative offices saddled with agricultural development. The study concluded that before the 1960s, the role of agriculture in Nigeria's economy was of little interest. However, with limited support from the government, agriculture thrived and provided food for the population, raw materials for the industrial sector, revenue and foreign exchange for government and employment opportunities for the citizens. Agricultural policies in Nigeria will be a success if perspective plans and policy discipline are tenaciously held on to. This will enable government link past policies and facilitate an orderly transition ensuring a seamless continuity

Keywords: Agriculture, Policy, Economy, Development.

Introduction

Agricultural policy in Nigeria has gone through many alterations and variations since independence. Shaibu (2023) submits Nigeria had no explicit document on National Agricultural Policy before 1988, indicating that at independence in 1960, the country's policies aimed at economic growth and development and mostly unarticulated political pronouncements guided the operations of agricultural

activities, noting that 1988 National Agricultural Policy document by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FMARD) was a mere executive fiat of the then Federal Government with the aim of improving agricultural production and export markets development. This document which became operational in 1989 was however branded a new Agricultural Policy document of 2001 having a broadened food self-sufficiency and security objective.

In the 1960s government involvements in agriculture with developmental guidelines and plans at the various tiers of government was raised and successively developed until the 1980s, however, it was an incoherent and inadequately articulated policies because they were always altered by preceding governments; no continuity. They aimed at boosting domestic agricultural production especially cash crops. This period launched Nigeria to prominence in the production of some commercial and food crops. 1970-1986 heralded petroleum exploration and exploitation and significant for initiating a decline in supportive agricultural policies, this affected domestic agricultural production making the country a significant food importer. The resulting food crisis ushered in programs like “Feed the Nation” (1976-1979) and “Green Revolution” (1979-1983) that aimed at strengthening agricultural production, subsidizing inputs and access to credit. However, they were bedeviled with inadequate organizational framework and successive government’s inadequate efforts to ensure continuity. These culminated in the enactment of the Land Use Act in 1978 which marked a turning point in land use and management in Nigeria ushering in a reversal in 1987 in structural adjustment programs (SAPs) whose objective was to reduce economic dependence on oil and encourage private sector engagement as the fulcrum on which the economy revolved. In 1998, the government again turned to agriculture. This time, the policy adopted aimed at ensuring food security through development of local production (Granval and Douillet, 2011).

Accessibility of agricultural inputs was a major constraint in our agricultural policy before Nigeria’s independence. To mitigate this, subsidy advances were introduced by the government to aid the farmers acquire them. Federal subsidy for inputs was estimated at 75%-80% in the 1970s and 30%-40% in the mid-1980s. This later rose to 70%-80% between 1986 to 1998 and fell to about 25% between 1999 to 2009. These variations affected the policy implementations. States also followed suit in subsidy advances. This however never improved the lot of the farmers, many still found it difficult obtaining adequate inputs at affordable prices and when needed. There was neither effective regulation nor monitoring system to address these issues (Granval and Douillet, 2011). To mitigate this, between 1976 and 1980, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Schemes, agricultural commodity marketing and pricing boards, and the land use policy were launched. Agricultural extension and technology transfer policy, input supply and distribution policy and the agricultural research policy also were birthed. In addition, the River Basin Development Authorities, agricultural cooperatives policy and the agricultural mechanization were established (Shaibu, 2022). These moves were laudable approaches because the agriculture sector is the driver of economic growth in many developing countries (Bjornlund and Andre, 2020) and must be subject to structural adjustments to be in tandem with evolving economic prospects needed to enhance agricultural production to positively influence economic growth. Hence, it is noteworthy for governments to encourage their development amid all economic obstacles through the initiation of good policies and programs.

The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of 1980–1989 was an initiative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It aimed at transforming agriculture from a subsistent culture to a commercial venture and raise the sector’s contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while serving as a tool for job creation and food self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the Green Revolution policy by the government midwived the establishment of several agricultural research institutes such as the National Cereal Research Institute (NCRI); National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (NAERLS); Veterinary Research Institute (VRI); Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN); Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN); and Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria (RRIN); that had the objective of increasing agricultural research and promoting the study of agriculture in tertiary institutions (Shaibu,

2023). The policy aims at the attainment of self- sustaining growth in all the sub-sectors of agriculture and the structural transformation necessary for the overall socio-economic development of the country as well as improvement in the quality of life of Nigerians (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), 2016)

A New Policy was designed and ushered in in 2001 that featured agriculture significantly developmental frameworks. The framework aimed at reducing poverty in Nigeria through the “National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy” (NEEDS II 2008-2011) which emphasized economic development championed by the private sector, and the “7-point Agenda” that envisaged economic reforms and adopted in May 2007 with medium-term policy documents whose aim was to help the Nigeria achieve the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 and its own home grown “2020 Vision” plan. Yet, Ogbeh (2016) in his plebiscite observed Nigeria is facing an inability to meet domestic food requirements and export at quality levels required for market success. By his assertions, the countries inabilities can be mitigated by synergizing with private investors, farmer groups and companies to develop sustainable value chain solutions that will receive government support as they make commitments to engaging contemporary farmers, enhance supply of specialized agrochemicals and high yielding seeds. The framework for NEEDS II culminated in the short-to-medium-term agenda integrated by the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources into their own “5-point Agenda” for agriculture, with sequential developmental stages to achieve the aims earmarked in the 7-point Agenda. (Granval and Douillet, 2011).

Between 2010 to 2011, Nigeria’s government committed to reforming the agriculture sector. She introduced the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, ATA founded on the concept that agriculture should be seen as a business hence, policy statement should be supportive and priority policy should be to redirect the country’s economy to be agriculture centered, sustainably and business-like oriented driven by the private sector. This was in place from 2011 – 2015 (FMARD, 2016). According to Shaibu (2023), 2011 which birthed the formulation of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) aimed at revitalizing the ailing agricultural sector. ATA aimed at mitigating hunger, drive income growth, ensure food security, generate employment and assist Nigeria become a leading global food market and enhance the income base of farmers. The Green Alternative: Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) of 2016–2020 of Buhari regime was developed as a national agricultural policy framework to drive the growth and development of agriculture in Nigeria and as a follow up to the doctrine of ATA. This was initiated to complement the successes of ATA while ensuring food security. However, in spite of this ambitious reforms and program Nigeria failed to achieve sufficiency in food production and Nigeria apparently became food insecure. ATA was seen as a veritable platform to re-engage important stakeholders in agriculture and strengthen self-sustaining agribusiness based economy (FMARD, 2016).

Finally, if we take a closer look at the chronicled submissions in literature, Nigeria’s agricultural policy is replete with limitations, bedecked by a general lack of coherence, absence of program continuity, inadequate linkage to other sectors, and disjointed implementation issues at various institutional levels. Agriculture related policies have been opportunistic and uncoordinated. Enlightened minds bemoan the absence of continuity and, successes, failures and lessons from preceding programs are never adequately analyzed. There is the absence of adequate mitigating strategies implementation. These have made it difficult to track and evaluate policy effectiveness. With respect to cross-sector policy coherence, agricultural policy remains poorly linked to rural development policy, enhancing small and medium sized enterprises is nearly absent with, inadequate management of resources. At the institutional level, it is evident that roles are not clearly segregated among various administrative offices saddled with agricultural development. Delimitation of responsibilities between the federal government and the component units is not clearly defined in both interventions and resource allocation. While agricultural programs by the states seem to have better prospects and more effective, some observers decried evident top down approach in these states with inadequate participation by stakeholders (Granval and Douillet,

2011). Based on the reports by sundry authors, this study seeks to chronicle agricultural policies by succeeding regimes from independence, track the various approaches adopted by various regimes in developing the sector and The Transformation Agenda ATA, assess the contemporary trends in agriculture and investigate the impacts of policies on the economy of Nigeria based on secondary data accessed from notable researchers.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study was based on secondary data accessed from bulletins and published researches whose primary focus was on various aspects of agricultural policies right from colonial rule to contemporary Nigeria and how it has impacted today's agriculture and economy in the country.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Agricultural policies by various regimes from 1960 to 2007 in Nigeria and their agenda

Table 1 showcases agricultural policies announced by various regimes from the point of independence till the 2000s and their anticipated and targeted agenda as presented by Akinboyo (2008)

No	Period	Duration	Head of government	Type	Programme/policy	Date	Aim
1	Oct. 1960 to Jan. 1966	6	Tafawa Balewa	Civilian	Nigerian Research Institute Act	1964	Promotion of researches in agriculture and related areas
2	Jan. 1966 to July 1966	1/2	Aguiyi-Irons	Military			
3	July 1966 to July 1975	9	Yakubu Gowon	Military	(i)Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria Decree (ii)Agricultural Research Institute Decree (iii)National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP) (iv) Integrated Agric. Development Projects (v) Nigerian Agric. and Cooperative Bank (vi) Specialized Marketing Boards (vii) National Grains and Roots Cultivation Programme	1971 1973 1973 1973 1973 1975 1975	i)coordination of agricultural research and establishment of institutes that conduct research in agricultural fields. ii)accelerate production of major staples crops iii) enhance adoption of new agricultural technology by farmers iv) to make credit available to farmers v) to fix commodity prices. vi) to accelerate production of grains and root crops.
4	July 1975 to Feb. 1976	1/2	Murtala Mohammed	Military			
No	Period	Duration	Head of government	Type	Programme/policy	Date	Aim
5	Feb. 1976 to Oct. 1979	3	Olusegun Obasanjo	Military	(i) Operation Feed the Nation (ii) River Basin Development	1976 1977	i) mobilization of the public to participate in agricultural

					<p>Authorities</p> <p>(iii) Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme</p> <p>(iv) Rural Banking Scheme</p> <p>(v) Land Use Act</p>	<p>1977</p> <p>1977</p> <p>1978</p>	<p>production</p> <p>ii) to develop land and water resources</p> <p>iii) reduction of the risk borne by commercial banks</p> <p>iv) credit availability to farmers.</p> <p>v) encourage rural banking habit.</p> <p>vi) make land available for agricultural purposes, etc.</p>
6	Oct. 1979 to Dec. 1983	4	Shehu Shagari	Civilian	Green Revolution Programme	1980	increase agricultural production
7	Dec. 1983 to Aug. 198	1	Muhamadu Buhari	Military	Increase in the number of River Basin Authorities from 11 to 18	1984	
8	Aug. 1985 to Aug. 1993	8	Ibrahim Babangida	Military	<p>(i) Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure.</p> <p>(ii) Reorganization of the River Basin Authorities</p> <p>(iii) Abolition of the Marketing Board</p> <p>(iv) Trade Liberalization Policy</p> <p>(v) National Directorate for Employment.</p> <p>(vi) National Agric. Insurance Scheme</p> <p>(vii) National Land Development Authority</p>	<p>1986</p> <p>1986</p> <p>1986</p> <p>1986</p> <p>1986</p> <p>1987</p> <p>1991</p>	<p>i) promotion of rural development.</p> <p>ii) enhance the earnings of farmers</p> <p>iii) encourage export employment</p> <p>iv) reduce the risk on farmers</p> <p>v) develop agricultural land in the country.</p>
No	Period	Duration	Head of Government	Type	Programme/policy	Date	Aim
9	Aug. 1993 to Nov.	1/4	Ernest Shonekan	Civilian	Merger of the Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure with	1993	-

	1993				Federal Ministry of Water Resources	
10	Nov. 1993 to June 1998	4 3/4	Sani Abacha	Military	Continuation of Babangida programmes	-
11	June 1998 to May 1999	10 months	Abdulsalami Abubakar	Military		-
12	May 1999 to 2007	8 years	Olusegun Obasanjo	Civilian	initiatives by the President targeted commodities to increase food production in tandem to Vision 2020, with a view to attracting highest political authority for special intervention in the commodity sector.	-

SOURCE: Akinboyo, (2008). Retrieved from Agricultural Policies in Federal Government Budgets:(1) Federal Ministry of Agriculture (2) National Planning Commission

Within 48 years of Nigeria's political history from the table above, (October 1960 to 2007), governance changed hands thirteen times with some regimes existing for just one year. The instability in governance of the country resulted in frequent changes in agricultural policy. Policies were made without recourse to data. Policy making was a mere Planning without facts. Some policies were introduced without articulated political or economic reasons. The only difference was just the name that was different from previous ones (Akinboyo, 2008). Other scholars viewed the frequent changes in policies differently. Nwagbo (2000) reported Agricultural policy in Nigeria has witness several changes and divided the history of agricultural policy into sub periods based on major characteristics of policy obtaining. Nwagbo(2000), citing Olayemi(1995) recognized three phases, a pre-1970 phase, a 1971 to 1984 phase and a post 1984 phase, technical and socio-economic forces determining each phase's policy. All these policies are categorized into four development plans. These are the first National development plan of 1962 to 1968, the second of 1970 to 1979, the third of 1975 to 1980, and the fourth National development plan of 1980 to 1985. (Shaibu, 2023). However, Nigeria remains a net importer of food.

It should however be noted that before the 1960s, the role of agriculture in Nigeria's economy was of little interest. However, with limited support from the government, agriculture grew and was able to provide food for the teeming population, raw materials for the industrial sector, revenue and foreign exchange for government and employment opportunities for the citizens (Federal Ministry of Agriculture Water Resources and Rural Development (FMAWRD) 2024).

Troubling issues in Nigerian agriculture started to emerge from the first decade of the country's independence (1960 – 69). To tackle these issues, a number of agricultural policies, program and projects, largely within the three successive national development plans from 1970 to 1985 were initiated. Issues from these policies were convincing enough that there is no alternative to well-articulated agricultural policies as instruments for promoting agricultural growth and development (FMAWRD), 2024). A faulty economic development plan before the mid-1980s led to an economic recovery plan – the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)- which aimed at diversification of the productive base of the economy;

diversification of the export earnings through other sources outside the role of oil in Nigeria's export earnings; minimizing domestic budget deficit and streamlining of government expenditures amongst others (Shaibu, 2023). Up till date, Nigeria is yet to get it right with novel policies been churned out with every passing regime

From the ongoing, Awoyemi, Afolabi and Akomolafe (2017) believe that majority of government policies on agriculture were mere lip service, full of inconsistencies, inadequate executions and maladministration of funds is highly plausible in view of the huge fund commitments by the World Bank and government to the agricultural sector without noticeable evidence. These monetary commitments were aimed at transforming the sector; however, funds utilization and management were largely unproductive. This has been the bane of investments in the agricultural sector that has decreased food production, raised unemployment rates and negatively impacted the industrial sector in Nigeria.

Table 2: Agricultural Transformation Agenda and its Achievements (ATA) (2011 – 2015)

Agricultural Transformation Agenda as chronicled by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development are shown below (FMARD, 2016)

AREA	ILLUSTRATIVE ACHIEVEMENT
Input Supply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) was set up to register small holder farmers and provide needed input subsidies (E-Wallet) 2. GES database contains 10.5 million farmers (data integrity not verifiable) 3. Targeted means-based subsidies provided to 12 to 14 million farmers between 2011 – 2014 4. Farmers gained access to inputs such as fertilizer and seeds
Financing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. set up of Nirsal credit guarantees 2. Revival and recapitalization of Bank of Agriculture 3. Engagement with commercial banks to finance GES and boost lending to agriculture of all formal credit by 2015 4. Creation of special funds to support farmers.
Infrastructure & Logistics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designation of staple crop processing zones for cassava 2. Concession of Federal warehouses and storage assets
Production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of improved crop varieties 2. Domestic food production rose by an incremental 20.1M 3. Rice paddy production rose by 2.0 – 2.5 million tons 2. Creation of Federal Dept. of Agricultural Extension
Market Access	Re-establishment of select commodity marketing boards
Others	Reform of the Agricultural Research Network (ARCN)

SOURCE: FMARD, 2016

Awoyemi et al (2017) noted that Western countries trajectories in economic development was originated from structured alterations in the agricultural sector to a modern industrial and service sector with historical evidence. This ensured food security and manpower that expanded the industrial economy. Citing Reynolds (1975) the authors observed that agricultural development can enhance economic development through food security and thus releasing labour needed in the industries. Their position corroborates Myrdal (1984) who thinks the war for sustained economic growth is won or lost in the agricultural sector

		Value at 5%				Value at 5%			
LOG(RGDP)	- 2.240	-3.548	0.453	NS	- 4.383	-3.553	0.008	S	I(1)
LOG(AGVADD)	- 2.041	-3.54	0.559	NS	- 5.316	-3.553	0.001	S	I(1)
LOG(AGKP)	- 2.889	-3.548	0.178	NS	- 5.997	-3.553	0.000	S	I(1)
LOG(AGLP)	- 2.021	-3.548	0.569	NS	- 5.279	-3.553	0.001	S	I(1)
INFR	- 3.061	-3.581	0.135	NS	- 5.449	-3.568	0.001	S	I(1)

Source: Awoyemi et al, 2017). Central bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and World Development Indicator (WDI) Database, 2016. **NOTE:** Agricultural value added (**AGVADD**), Agricultural labour productivity (**AGLP**), Agricultural capital productivity (**AGKP**), Real Gross Domestic Product (**RGDP**) and Inflation rate (**INFR**)

Lavorel et al. (2013) approaching productivity and economic growth through value added per worker and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as key variables has shown agriculture has a relationship to economic growth in developing countries. This is confirmed by Pawlak and Kotodziejczak (2020) who noted the agricultural sector is a driver of economic growth in most developing countries. Therefore, the sector should be subjected to regular structural evaluation to keep pace with evolving economic environment. Nigeria's case seems intractable because of poorly articulated and implemented policies often without a data base. The contributions of the agricultural sector to the GDP instead of improving over time have declined wiping off earlier gains. It should be borne in mind that the growth of an economy is an aggregation of sectorial growth (Lencucha, Nicole, Appau, Thow & Drope. 2020) and growing the agricultural sector and its contributions to economic growth is a necessity and should involve articulated measures via fiscal policy to enhance economic activity.

Table 3b: Co-integration Test for Long run Relationship

No. of CE(s)	Eigen Value	Trace Statistic	Critical Value	Prob. **	Eigen Value	Max_Eigen Statistic	Critical Value	Prob. **
None *	0.644	96.152	84.378	0.013	0.644	33.088	35.581	0.177
At most 1 *	0.633	63.064	60.086	0.058	0.633	32.051	29.540	0.051
At most 2	0.408	31.013	39.755	0.443	0.408	16.797	23.441	0.475
At most 3	0.270	14.216	23.342	0.640	0.270	10.080	17.234	0.610
At most 4	0.121	4.136	10.666	0.722	0.121	4.136	10.666	0.722

Source: Awoyemi et al, 2017). Trace test indicates 2 co-integrating at the 0.05 level, * denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level **MacKinnon Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values.

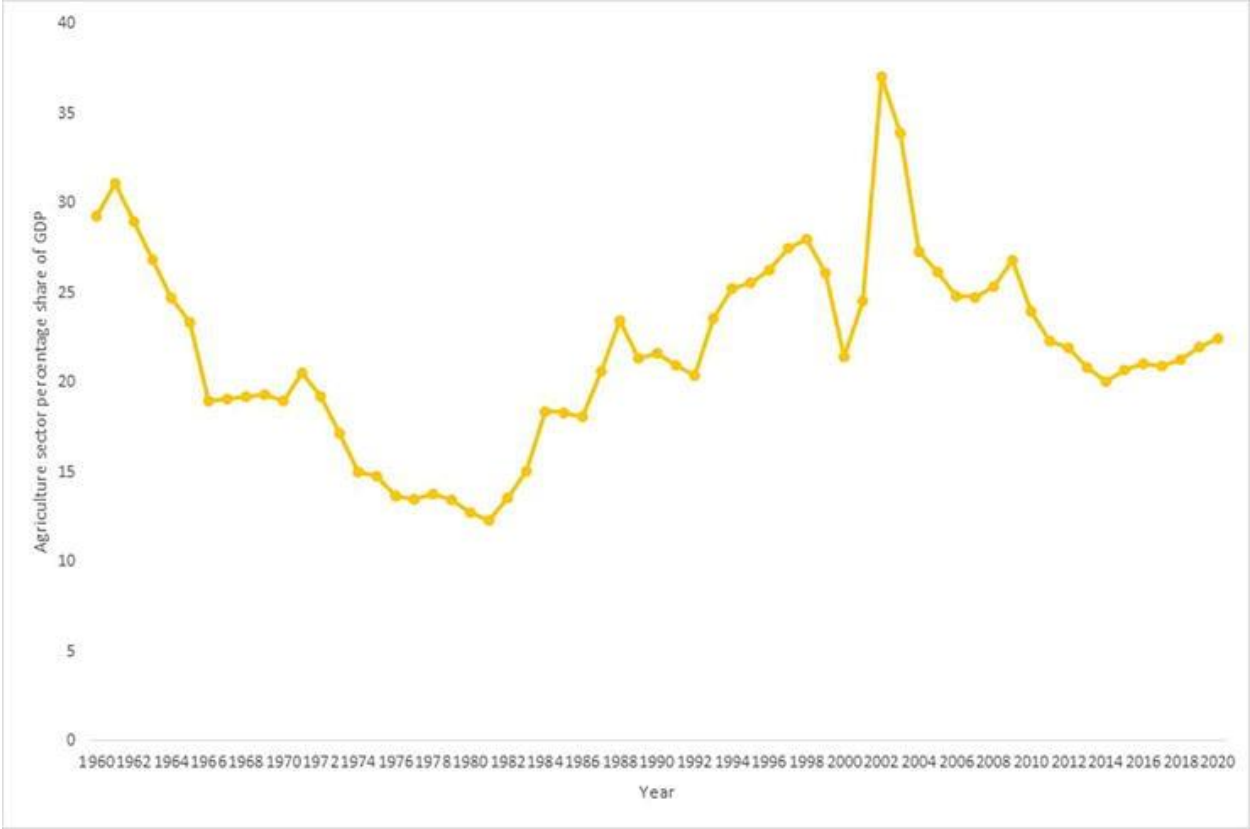
The researchers established agricultural productivity had positive impact on economic growth in the long run and bringing to the fore agriculture as a catalyst to enhancing economic growth in Nigeria under controlled inflation rate and concluding that policies that can enhance productivity of the sector especially

in manpower development are germane for economic growth. Based on the results, it was posited that labour participation in the sector be encouraged through enhanced investment. Severally, various regimes enunciated myriads of agricultural policies and program aimed at stimulating a sustainable growth and development in the agricultural sector. However, the achievements of these policies and program remain an issue of discuss and debate (Akinboyo, 2008). In realization of these uncertainties, successive governments have embarked on policy measures aimed at improving the sector to serve as the engine of growth for other sectors and, in most cases, a total deviation from previous ones with evidences of failures

Agriculture growth pattern under identified policy regimes

Shaibu (2023) graphically illustrated agricultural growth patterns in Nigeria to compliment trends on identified policy periods under various regimes and how the sector fared. Trend analysis was used to observe the percentage shares of agriculture in relation to GDP.

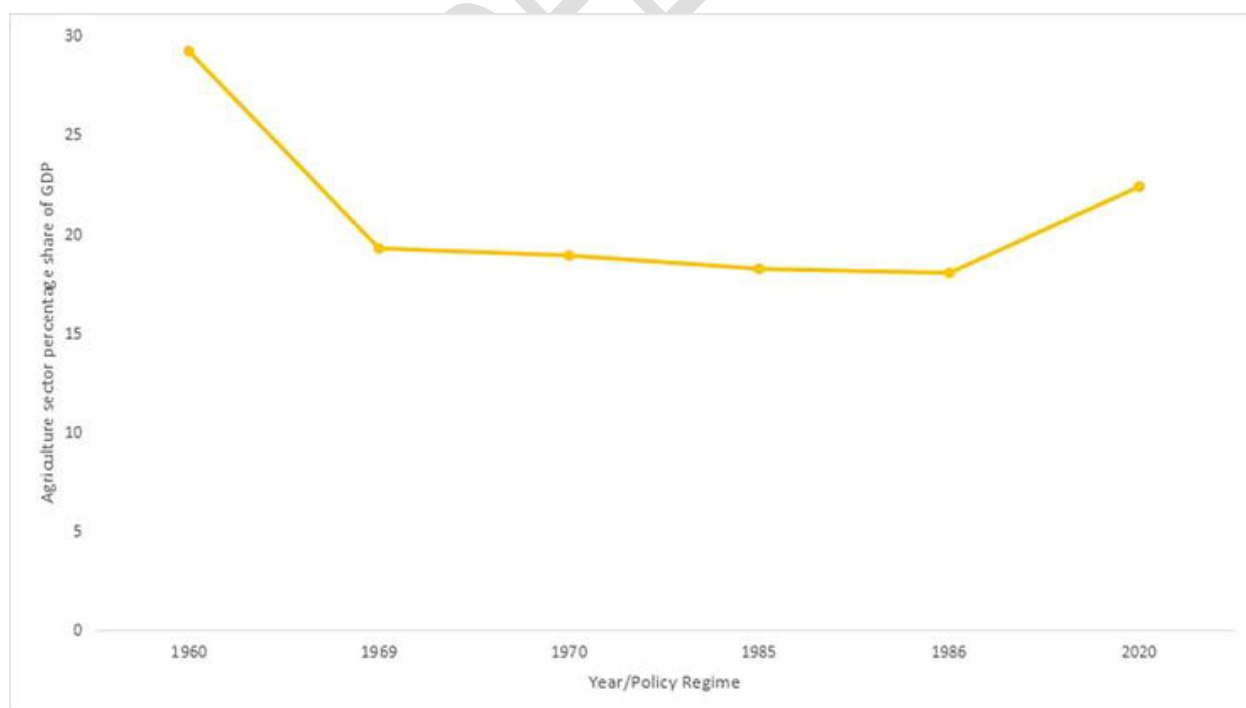
Figure 1: Agriculture growth pattern under identified policy regimes



Source: Shaibu (2023). Sourced and retrieved by Shaibu (2023) from trend of agriculture sector percentage share to Nigeria GDP, 1960–2020. Source: Researcher’s computation using FAO and WDI data, 2021.

Sekumade (2009) noted the debilitating effect of oil exploration on agriculture and pointed to a declining impact. This period witnessed extensive export of petroleum and its products however agriculture was dying. It could be seen from Figures 1 and 2 that there was a downward declining trend in the share of agriculture to the GDP up till the late 60s from the inception of crude exploration. This trend continued through to the 80s. Ahungwa, Aruna and Abdusalam (2014) had decried the undulating trend and its linkage and effects on the industrial sector of Nigeria from the early 70s to the late 80s. Studies within this period reveal public expenditure on agriculture within this period was also paltry. Wagner (1876) has demonstrated that public expenditure is an endogenous variable that can stimulate the economy and not necessarily cause of growth. So, agriculture had little stimulus and by implication its anticipated effect on the economy was also impaired.

Figure 2: A Trend of agriculture sector percentage share to Nigeria GDP, 1960–2020. : Researcher’s computation using FAO and WDI data, 2021. As published by Shaibu (2023)



Source: Shaibu (2023). Reportedly retrieved by Shaibu (2023) from Trend of agriculture sector percentage share to Nigeria GDP, 1960–2020. Source: Shaibu’s computation using FAO and WDI data, 2021.

The figure above suggests an increase in the contribution of agriculture to Nigeria’s GDP between 1986 and 2020. This was attributed to a national policy document that activated some program that enhanced agricultural production. Ahungwa et al. (2014) believed the gains were due to the involvement of Government in direct food production and subsidies to smallholder farmers aided by the institution of commodity boards for agricultural products and the subsequent national policy documents on agriculture. Shaibu (2023) is of the opinion that the findings corroborate the United States Department of State (2005) reports that the oil boom era resulted in the neglect of agriculture.

CONCLUSION:

Nigeria has severally at different era experienced stagnated growth in the agriculture sector with no visible continuity of preceding policies. This has become a regular pattern. There must be a conscious prioritization of the agricultural sector if food security must be achieved. This can be achieved through policy approaches that guarantee sufficiency in food production. The policies must have a defined beginning and specific lifespan with stated objectives. Agricultural policies in Nigeria will be a success if perspective plans and policy discipline are tenaciously held on to. This will enable government link past policies and facilitate an orderly transition ensuring a seamless continuity. This will make possible easy identification of conflicts in objectives and articulated policy and lead to an easy resolution. Finally, perspective planning will make it easy to modify program and the target projects.

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