

# A Critical Review of Rural Agricultural Development Innovative Programmes in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This review is to examine the different Agricultural development innovative programmes in Nigeria and the factors that led to their failure. In the last decade, poverty and malnutrition still remain the major challenges of most of the countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa despite the significant efforts that successive Government had made, example is the case in Nigeria. With reference to the estimates from experts in 2010, the unabated rising cost of food in the sub-saharan Africa had resulted to increase in the population of poor people who mostly resides in the rural areas to about 44 million. It has also been established that, adoption of innovation is the only way to go if the problems of poverty and malnutrition is to surmounted because, increase in Agricultural productivity will translate to an increase in the availability of food most especially in the rural areas where over 80% of Africa's population resides and where these foods are largely produced by the smallholder rural farmers. The projection that the global population will reach 9 billion by 2050 is enough to create fears in mankind especially the under developed countries in the sub-saharan Africa like Nigeria due to the failures of all the efforts by their Government to solve the problems of poverty and malnutrition in the rural areas through the different developmental innovative programmes that have been implemented. Some of these developmental innovative programmes are the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), The Green Revolution Programme (GR), Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life Programme (BLP), National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS) and Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP).

**Keywords:** Agricultural Programmes, Review, Innovative, Critical, Food Production

## 1. Introduction

Rural development is a strategy that was designed to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor which involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest in the rural areas. Rural development is the promotion of the welfare and productivity of rural communities, their scope and quality of participation of the rural people in that process, and about the structure, organization, operations and interactions and facilities that will make it possible [1]. This development needs to be accelerated due to the global growing population which involves integrating all efforts on rural development to ensure effective and speedy attainment of stated objectives. The challenges of sustaining our food agriculture systems due to an ever-increasing and urbanized world population to deteriorating natural resources and loss of biodiversity, to climate change impacts; these challenges combined threaten the livelihoods of millions of small holder farmers across the globe. Hunger and

malnutrition are on the rise [2, 3]. To meet this growing food demand from a projected population of close to 10 billion people in 2050, agricultural output will need to increase by about 40 percent led to the concepts of agricultural innovations by the Federal Government NU, (2018). Agricultural innovation can be described as the process whereby individuals or organizations brings new or existing products, processes or ways of organization into use for the first time in a specific context in order to increase effectiveness, competitiveness, resilience to shocks or environmental sustainability thereby contributing to food security and nutrition, economic development or sustainable natural resource management. It should also be seen as historical perspective.

Agricultural innovation involves a change that requires significant imagination, break in the established ways of doing things, and creating new production capacity, however it is

difficult to adopt new idea of doing things which may more or less be incompatible with prevalent norms and values: some may be perceived as relatively difficult to use and understand (i.e., complex), while others are good and simpler. The costs and advantages of innovations varies in both economic and social terms (e.g., prestige, convenience, satisfaction). Innovation provides opportunity for agriculture producers to increase productivity and effectively management of their natural resources by making them to do more and better with less; which helps to ensure long-term viability and reduce the negative environmental impacts of production, such as pollutants and waste [4, 5].

### 1.1. Characteristics of innovation system

- Its processes and systems are context specific.
- The role of the institutions, in terms of norms, rules, laws and organizations is very key to its success.
- An analytical tool which can be used for policy making and planning [6].

Majority of the countries, Nigeria inclusive, after independence neglected the development of the rural areas and concentrated on urban areas only being the first point of contact of any nation however, the outbreak of famine and various diseases which challenged the living conditions of the urban dwellers forced the governments to look in the direction of developing the rural areas especially the third world countries. Since the bulk of the population lives in the rural areas, the grassroots where development is most desirable due to the level of poverty hence there is need to accelerate the development of the rural areas which involve integrating all the efforts on rural development to ensure effective and speedy attainment of stated objectives; which has to do with putting the entire act together, clarifying the objectives and bringing all the agencies, facilities and programmes involved into a common framework of action for the attainment of the objectives [7]. However, sustainability is central to all rural development effort without which all the investments and effort geared towards rural development will be short lived and will have no effect. Great disparity existed since independence to date between successive government pronouncements and the establishment of various development agencies towards attaining rural development and the actual results of implementation efforts. According to World Bank (2008) a vast majority of people across countries live in the rural areas, Nigeria has 60% of her population living in the rural areas. The improvement in the welfare of the average Nigerian will therefore require substantial increase in rural income [8].

Development is globally measured mostly on the scale of per capita income of nations, which is the ratio of the gross national income to entire population hence the development of rural area will signal to a greater extent the level of national development and the situation of the nations in the development ladder. Up to the early 1980s, apart from the National development plans, policy understanding and direction was narrowly focused on agricultural improvement and productivity such as agriculturally based programs which includes The River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) in 1976, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

in 1976; Green Revolution (GR) and the large scale irrigation programmes among others. Therefore, in the allocation of scarce resources, in the course of plan implementation, priority was given to programmes and projects that directly.

Benefits the rural population especially those that increased the income of small holder farmers which invariably improve the economic and social infrastructures of the rural areas. Different administrations in Nigeria after independence adopted various innovations were that aimed at the improvement of the rural areas of the country. Not much impact was made despite the huge amount

of money that have been with decree spent on implementing rural innovative programmes and the proliferation of rural development agencies [9].

Each innovation came with new promise which raised hopes that were never fulfilled. From by the identified lapses in the developmental innovative programmes of the Federal Government from post-colonial era, it shows that sound agricultural policies are phenomenal for the improvement in the processing and marketing of agricultural products. Also, the post-independence period in Nigeria can be seen as an era that was full of the conception for planning and implementation of agricultural programmes that focused on job creation, agricultural and rural development, food security and productivity indicating the good intention of all the administrations that were involved. The failures of these laudable innovative programmes which were meant to create socio-economic balance particularly among rural households populace for the purpose of improving their living standard necessitated this review [10].

***The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP):-*** The Federal Department of Agriculture in 1972 during the regime of General Yakubu Gowon NAFPP initiated which focused on bringing about a significant increase in the subsistence production of maize, cassava, rice and wheat in the northern states for specified period of time as it was designed to spread to other states in the country after the pilot stage that were established in Anambra, Imo, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Benue, Plateau and Kano states which involves three phases viz Mini, production and the adoption. However, the following lapses were discovered during the implementation of the programme:

- The farmers were discouraged from further participation because they were the ones that sponsored the last two phases of the programme.
- The programme relied on disbursement of credits and farm inputs only through the
- cooperative societies which led to leaving out of some farmers that do not belong to any cooperative society.
- 3. The funding of the programme stopped due to the introduction of Operation feed the nation by the Federal Government
- The non-participation of the farmers reflected in the results of the demonstration trial that was carried out on some selected farmers' plots by the research and extension personnel.

**The Agricultural Development Projects (ADP):-** ADP programme is an offshoot of Integrated (ADP) established in the North Funtua to cater for the North East; Gusau for the North West and Gombe for the North Central which were used for the pilot scheme. It was the success story that made the Federal Government to do similar thing in the nineteen states of the federation. The approach of collaborative efforts and tripartite arrangement of the Federal Government, State government, the World Bank and the level of ADP development has made it to be accepted as the main agricultural and development programme in Nigeria. The objectives of the programme are:

- The small holder farmers that brought about the increase in food production were resilient
- The process of making decision on the feedback was decentralized to allow the farm families or households to participate in the whole processes which also enable them to respond to innovations or technology, incentive and subsidies. However, the programme encountered the following problems
- Lack of funds as a result of the decline in the prices of oil in 1982 that brought delays in the recruitment of staff and the slow implementation of projects due to lack of materials that are required for the take-off.
- It emphasized modern technology such as sole cropping; unfortunately, the
- small holder farmers' practiced more of mixed or relay cropping.
- The subsidized inputs were not supplied on time.

#### Others are

- The mobility of labour was too frequent of labour
- Input agencies were not fully involved
- The funding policies of the Government and counterpart funds from the development partners were not steady.
- The intricacies of technology transfer

**River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA):-** For the purpose of enhancing the economic potentials of the water bodies, the Federal Government in 1976 during General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime launched RBDA with the focus on irrigation and fisheries using hydroelectric power generation and domestic water which was later extended to include production and infrastructural development by establishing twelve River Basin Development Authorities across the country [11]. The development authorities saddled with these responsibilities are Lower Benue River Basin and Rural Development Authority, Upper-Benue River Basin and Rural development Authority, Sokoto-Rima river basin and rural development authority; Lake Chad basin and rural development authority; Kano-Ja'amare river basin and rural development authority; Benin-Owena river basin and rural development authority; Niger river basin and rural development authority among others. The programme however failed because the rural people were excluded from decision making, misconception of the core mandates, inadequate funding, neglect by successive past military regimes [12]. Also, according to Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012), the operations of some of them suffered political interference and

misappropriation of funds for the purpose of disposing their non-water assets.

**Operation Feed the Nation (OFN):-** In 1976, the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo designed OFN in order to actively increase food production in Nigeria by creating awareness about the importance of agriculture, mobilizing the nation towards self-sufficiency in food production by encouraging everybody to be actively involved and participating in farming irrespective of your discipline thereby making Nigerians to be directly or indirectly feeding themselves. The scheme permits cultivation on every available land irrespective of their location; Government provides free inputs to Government establishments while individuals get them at subsidized rates. OFN faced

#### Challenges such as

- Indiscriminate use of land for farming activities irrespective of its suitability for agriculture
- Lack of knowledge on farming experience by the participants in the programme and there was no provision for formal or informal training for them
- In terms of input supply preference were given to Government establishments and influential people rather than the real farmers that produce the food.
- Production was so high with abundant output which led to less demand for food products.

**The Green Revolution Programme (GR):-** President Shehu Shagari established Green Revolution in 1980 in replacement of OFN with focus on increasing food production and raw materials so as to ensure food security, self-sufficiency in basic staples and aspired to boost production of livestock and fish in order to meet both home and export needs. The production and the processing of export crops were earmarked for the expansion and diversification of the nation's foreign exchange earnings. He made available incentives such as provision of agrochemicals, improved seedlings, irrigation facilities and credit facilities for smallholder farmers in the rural areas and also improved the marketing and pricing policy. The programme failed according to Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012) because project execution were delayed and lack of provision for the monitoring and evaluation for it.

**The Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI):-** The administration of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1986 established DFRRI seek to improve the quality of infrastructures and the living standard of the people in the rural areas with the following objectives

- Identify, involve and support viable local community organizations in the effective
- mobilization of the rural populace for sustainable rural development
- Construct, rehabilitate and maintain rural feeder roads to facilitate food production and rural development
- Support rural water supply and on-farm storage in cooperation with the local people
- Identify and support the production of food and fiber crops

- To encourage contributions of labor, time and materials from local communities which were complemented with grants

Using the community-based approach for its implementation, their resources were harnessed the available resources to develop their socio-culture, politics and economy and ensuring deep-rooted self-sustaining development process. DFERRI succeeded in the provision of basic amenities of life and the development rural-urban center access roads. The project was suspended by the administration as a result of the allegations of DFERRI taken credit of past administrations, embezzlement, poor management and infrastructures that were provided, policy inconsistency and non-accountability by the initiators and organizers.

**Better Life Programme (BLP):-** BLP was initiated by Her Excellency, Late Dr. (Mrs) Maryam Babangida (wife of General Ibrahim Babangida) in 1987; according to Ozoani, with focus on making the rural woman to be self-reliant, relevant to her family and the society at large with following the objectives [13].

- 1. To raise the consciousness of women on their rights
- 2. To expose them to income generating opportunities in agriculture/cottage industries; social and political activities and economic responsibilities
- To alleviate poverty through motivation and empowerment of the rural women through adult literacy and skills acquisition training
- 4. To integrate rural women into national development plans.
- 5. To reduce maternal/child mortality rate

The programme though criticized for over publicity of its activities however failed as a result of inhibition from cultural and religious factors which led to the low level of participation by the rural women.

#### **National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)**

NALDA was established with the following objectives in 1992

- To give strategic public support for land development in Nigeria
- To assist and promote better use of rural lands and their resources in Nigeria
- To boost profitable employment opportunities for rural dwellers
- To raise the standard of living of the rural dwellers
- To target and assist in achieving food security through self-reliance and sufficiency.

The highly placed officers used their positions usurp the lands that belonged to the rural poor people.

**Family Support Programme (FSP):-** This metamorphosed from Better life for rural people (BLP) in 1994 with the same objectives and which later became Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) in 1996 under the new administration of late General Sanni Abacha with support of his wife Mrs. Maryam Sanni Abacha, though with the same concepts and objectives but

differ by embracing all the members of the family. Emphasis were placed on the children and the socioeconomic activities of youths and women in the society. This programme led to the creation of the Ministry of women affairs and social welfare. The programme however failed despite the good intentions and the resources made available for it due the exit of the administration that initiated it.

**National Fadama Development Project (NFDP):-** With the financial support from the World Bank, this project was first designed in the 1990's to promote a simple but improved irrigation innovation at a low cost of implementation. The objectives of NFDP are

- To sustain the increase in the income of Fadama users through high added value output by expanding the farm and non-farm activities
- To cover the States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kebbi, Imo, Niger, Kaduna, Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Taraba and the FCT
- To adopt the community driven development (CDD) approach with the massive
- participation of the stakeholders at the early stages of the project.
- The outcome of the pilot phases based on their appraisal brought about the introduction of another phase of the programme. The challenge of the project was the unskilled handling of water application through irrigation which brought about the degradation and depletion of the productive capacity of the soil. However, according to Agriscope (2001), the environmental impact assessment carried out on behalf of NFDP revealed that, there are no threats from the programme on the environment [14].

**National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS):-** In January 2002 NSPFS was launched in all the thirty six states of the federation during the regime of president Olusegun Obasanjo's with following objectives:

- To increase rate of food production and eliminate rural poverty
- To assist the farmers in increasing their output, productivity and income
- To strengthen research works and extension service
- To train and educate farmers on farm management.
- Support governments efforts in the promotion of simple technologies for self sufficiency

The programme failed due to

- Majority of the beneficiaries not paying back their loans as at when due
- The programme were complex and at same time not compatible with the innovation
- Insufficient knowledge of credit usage
- Poor extension agent-farmer contact
- Lack of modern storage facilities
- High cost of farm input

**Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP):-** RTEP,



launched on 16 April 2003 under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo to address the problem of food production and rural poverty: 26 states were selected for the programme which was targeted at small holder farmers that has less than two hectares of land per household with special attention on women who play a significant role in rural food production, processing and marketing. It was designed in a way that, it will bring about economic growth, improve access to social services and implement intervention measures at the level of the local farmers while at national level, designed to achieve food security and demand for cheaper staple foods.

**National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS):-** Though initiated by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 but was however launched in 2004 with the objectives of poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation with a 6% performance target set for 2007. NEEDS was a blessing to the industries, agriculture, small and medium scale enterprises and the oil and gas sector. It helps farmers to improve on irrigation, use of machinery and cultivation of crop varieties to boost agricultural productivity and tackle poverty squarely in the rural areas since the majority of the farmers stays there, It was replicated in the States and known as the States' Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) for the implementation of the integration of rural development programme to reduce rural-urban migration.

**The 7 point Agenda (Agricultural Development & food security):-** Two of the 7point agenda of late President Yar'adua were targeted at Food security and land reforms. The objectives are as follows:

- Power and energy - To develop an adequate power supply so as to ensure Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy by the year 2015
- Food security - The emphasis is on the development of modern technology, research, financial injection into research, production and development of agricultural inputs leading to a 5 to 10-fold increase in yields and production
- Wealth creation - This reform is focused on wealth creation through diversified
- production especially in the agricultural and solid mineral sector
- Transport sector - The transportation sector in Nigeria with its poor road networks is an inefficient means of mass transit of people and goods.
- Land reforms - While hundreds of billions of dollars have been lost through unused government-owned landed assets, changes in the land laws and the emergence of land reforms to optimize Nigeria's growth through the release of land for commercialized farming and other large scale business by the private sector.
- Security - An unfriendly security climate apparently "precludes both external and internal investment into the nation". Thus, security will be seen as not only a constitutional requirement but also as a necessary infrastructure for the development of a "modern Nigerian economy".
- Education - The two-fold reforms in the educational

sector were supposed to achieve the "minimum acceptable international standards of education for all." With that achieved, a strategic educational development plan "will ensure excellence in both the tutoring and learning of skills in science and technology" by students who will be seen as the "future innovators and industrialists of Nigeria."

**The Transformation Agenda of President Jonathan's Administration:-** This started on May, 2010 after the death of late President Umaru Musa Yar'dua on May 5, 2010 with the aim of developing and repositioning the Nigeria's Agricultural sector with the focus on seven core areas viz:

- To eliminate all forms of corruption in fertilizer and seed distribution by ensuring that they are sold directly to genuine farmers at approved rates to prevent diversion and exploitation.
- To establish Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme by which E-Wallet will be developed for ease of input delivery to farmers.
- Revolutionized Food Crops and Grains, especially the rice reform programme in the words brought about the establishment of 13 new Rice Mills with the capacity of producing two million Metric tons yearly; cassava value chains with the establishment of two large scale cassava processing plants through the support of 6 billion US dollars and the 6 billion investment commitment from a large US investor to produce ethanol and sorghum to boost output to reach over two million Metric tons per year.
- To introduce Cash Crop Production Reform, especially Cocoa Transformation Agenda with target output of 500,000 metric tons by 2018 through sustainable production systems by maintaining the existing farms, rehabilitation of old plantations, and expansion programmes through intensification and good agricultural practices. The purpose was to create about 400,000 jobs in the Nigerian cocoa sub-sector by increasing the cocoa processing capacity of factories; transform the cotton production sub-sector to enable it to raise output
- from 125,000 metric tons of cotton seeds in 2011 to 500,000 metric tons in 2015 and to raise Nigeria's export capacity from 22,500 tons of 2011 to 170,000 tons by 2015.
- To attract private investors of which over 18 billion US dollars of private investment commitments already deployed to the Agribusiness ventures and the
- attraction of large indigenous and global multinationals into the promotion of the agricultural sector [15].
- According to the Presidency (2013), to establish institutional reforms whereby the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will be decentralized with the appointment of State and Regional Directors.
- To attract funds from the International Agencies according to the Presidency (2013) to develop the Agriculture sector.

**Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA):-** Former President Jonathan's transformation agenda identified seven sectors as the main growth drivers between 2011-2015 which of course included the Agricultural sector prompted by their performance

as a result of the challenges which includes low productivity, inadequate funding, low investment in research and development, poor development of value chain and low value addition, policy instability and discontinuity.

**Presidential fertilizer initiative (PFI):-** The Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI) of the Buhari administration was launched on December 14, 2017 on the outcome of a partnership between Nigerian Government and Morocco of which the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority and the Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN) represented Nigeria for its implementation. The purpose was for the local production of one million metric tons of blended Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (NPK) fertilizer for the 2017 wet and dry season farming. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) launched the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing Systems for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) to curb the racketeering in the fertilizer distribution.

**Food Security Council (FSC):-** The objectives FSC were to provide a sustainable solution to the farmers-herders' clashes, climate change and desertification; and to ascertain the level of their impact on farmland and grazing areas. To also address the problems of agricultural research institutions and extension services and the challenges of smuggling due to the interest in regional and global policies for the purpose of achieving food security in Nigeria. Membership includes almost all the Government functionaries and the Governors.

**National agricultural technology and innovation policy (NATIP):-** A six year programme (2022-2027) to enhance agribusiness in the country under President Buhari's administration (approved but to be launched) has as its objectives; to achieve sustainable development of national technological and innovative capacity to fast-track import substitution by prioritizing the reduction of rice, dairy and fish imports, to also promote agricultural investments by increasing resilience and digital agriculture, extension service delivery revitalization and livestock development, strengthen crop value-chain, fisheries and aquaculture and to modernize the agriculture sector in accordance with the changing global food systems and supply chains.

## 2. Discussion

From the above review, each of the development innovations came with renewed hope which the people usually key into due to the trust and believe that they have in their leaders. Different developmental innovative programmes were introduced by different administration with good intentions behind them unfortunately all of them were faced with almost similar challenges or problems which are captured under the identified major ones described below

- Use of Professionals and Stakeholders and excluding the rural farmers made it Top-Down approach in the formulation of the Policy which had been shown to be ineffective because the people do not take responsibility of such innovations; Inconsistency, Poor planning and its poor Implementation and lack of understanding of its core mandates coupled and ineffective communication.

- The programmes were always discontinued by subsequent administration or introduce a conflicting programme resulting in abandonment as soon as the initiator leaves the office. Iwuchukwu & Igboke (2012) stated as an example the following programmes that were initiated almost at the same period: Family Support Programme (1994) and Family Economic Advancement Programme (1996); Operation Feed Nation (OFN) and River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) in 1976 [16].
- There was high level of corruption and embezzlement in the programme, a monster that is no respecter of any sector of the economy that has eaten so deep into the fabrics of the Nigeria like cankerworm which is still prevalent among Government officials today.
- Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Government officials saddled with the responsibility of Monitoring and Evaluation usually do so from the capital, be it the National or State level.
- The Manpower were grossly inadequate Manpower such as Sociologists while those that were engaged lack the Technical Know-how of how to implement the programme. The settings of the rural community were not studied for proper understanding hence the people's norms, values, beliefs etc. we're not taken into consideration during the formulation of the policies.

## 3. Conclusion

Going by the identified lapses in the developmental innovative programmes of the Federal Government from post-colonial era, it shows that sound agricultural policies are phenomenal for the improvement in the processing and marketing of agricultural products. From the above review, the post-independence period in Nigeria was an era that was full of the conception of innovative agricultural programmes that focused on job creation, rural development and food security indicating the good intention of all the administrations that were involved. Continuity should be handled with all seriousness by the current and future administration if the effects of the innovative policies are to be felt in the Nigeria economy. Developmental Innovative programmes are so important considering the increasing complexity of social issues and societal changes. According to Otten (2018), policy should be designed with the people's need being at the central focus. Concerted efforts should also be made to ensure that any policy or programme initiated is accomplished to the letter by mobilizing all critical stakeholders (including the people), relevant MDAs, organized private sector and development partners in the planning and implementation of the programmes which will help to prevent the inconsistency problem that programmes do suffers [17]. This will also make the people to own the programme thereby giving it the necessary attention it required [18-21].

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