

Challenges of Rural Development and Food Security in Nigeria: A study of Ebonyi State Agricultural Development Programme (EBADEP)

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Abstract

The study examines the Challenges of Rural Development and Food Security in Nigeria with special focus on Ebonyi State Agricultural Development Programme (EBADEP). This becomes imperative because of the problems of rural underdevelopment and food insecurity in the country. The research seeks to find out why rural development has continued to elude Nigeria in general and Ebonyi State particular despite of efforts by government and individuals, why there is an unending food insecurity even when various agricultural and food security programmes were introduced among others. The researchers adopted the survey research design method. Data were collected through questionnaire distribution to EBADEP field staff and some group of rural farmers. The questionnaires collected were analyzed using tables, frequency distribution and chi-square (X^2) method was used in testing the hypotheses. The study found that more than 80% of the rural areas of Ebonyi State are still underdeveloped; agriculture receives less than 10% of the annual budgetary allocations, farmers in Ebonyi state lack access to credit facilities which lead to low productivity, EBADEP has not lived up to the expectation of teaching the rural farmers and Ebonyi State has not fully exploited its rich agricultural potentials. The implications of the aforementioned are that rural development and food security will continue to be a mirage if a more practical approach is not adopted. More households in Ebonyi State will die of hunger as only the imported goods (costly) would be the last resort. The study therefore recommended that "rural-urban integration" approach through aggressive rural infrastructural provision should be adopted. Government at all levels should

collaborate with experts to encourage food security, Ebonyi State should produce those crops they have comparative advantage in, increased budgetary allocations to agriculture, farm demonstration centres should be established in all the 13 local government areas of Ebonyi state.

Keywords: Rural Development, Food Security, Agricultural Development.

Introduction

The current emphasis on rural development by the federal, state and local government of the country is perfectly in order. This is because; rural communities are the most important sectors of the Nigerian economy. Rural and agricultural developments are crucial for the structural transformation and economic development of Nigeria. The rural population represents an average of over 60% of the total population of Nigeria and over 75% of Ebonyi State in particular and, with about 90% of the rural labour force engaged directly or indirectly in agricultural activities, but has been neglected over the years, Most rural have not been provided with basic social amenities and governments effort to this effect is not much.

Since 1960, agricultural development has remained the principal component of the country's rural development package (Aguene ,204). This is because of the role of agriculture in the economic growth and development of many economics especially the developed ones.

Though agriculture contributes 42% of the GDP, provides employment and a means of livelihood for more than 60% of the productivity engaged population, it receives less than 10% of the annual budgetary allocation, (Obi, Okoli and Obikeze, 2005). This has led to the crisis of food production and food insecurity in Nigeria

making the country to depend so much on imported food. Compounding the problem is the lack of political will in government policy formulation and implementation strategies. And so, achieving food security in its totality continued to be a challenge to many developing countries like Nigeria.

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, every administration has made efforts to achieve food security through different programmes strategies with minimal results, in 2008, Nigeria released its national special programme for food security (NSPFS), outlining the constraints to food security and adopted a value chain approach to address these constraints. The vision of National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) is to ensure sustainable access, availability and affordability of good quality food to all Nigerians and to be significant net provider of food to the global community (NSPFS EBADEP, 2005).

National Programme for food Security evolved as an aftermath of the November 1996 world Food Summit and request for assistance by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Food NSPFS was extended to the 36 states of the country including Ebonyi State.

Ebonyi State Agriculture Development Programme (EBADEP) came into existence following the creation of Ebonyi State in 1996. It is charged with the mandate of ensuring improved and sustained agricultural productivity and food security in the state through adaptive research and extension support as well as provision of modern inputs to farmers. Three National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) sites were situated in each of the three zones of the state, namely, Ebia Unubu in Abakaliki local government area (north zone), Ogbojiin Ezza Dorth local government area (central zone) and Akaeze in Ivo Local government area (South Zone) respectively were selected. Field activities in the three sites

commenced in April 2002 with participatory rural approach which provided baseline data and indicators for subsequent monitoring and evaluation. The overall objective of National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) is to attain food security sense and eliminate hunger and rural poverty in Nigeria but the extent to which this aim has been achieved is undefined.

Rural underdevelopment and food insecurity have been affecting Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular. Various policies and programmes have been introduced to alleviate the problems of the rural dwellers. Some of these policies and programme have ended up with the administration that introduced them such policies and programmes have ended up with the administration that introduced them. And inadequate training to junior staff for updates their knowledge on the job.

Over ten years of its existence, Ebonyi State Agricultural Development Programme (EBADEP) has endeavored to live up to its expectations, but faced with some constraints which include; irregular release of funds by government and agencies, inadequate field staff, lack of mobility for field staff, non-release of fund to Ebonyi State Agricultural Development Programme (EBADEP)

Unfortunately, most of the processing equipment located in each of the three sites in the state was either malfunctioning or beyond repair due to There is also problem poor maintenance of water Supply in each not minding the existence of borehole that does not Sustain water beyond the month of March. This made the villagers and their livestock depend on shallow wells

Review of Related Literature

The concept of rural development

Rural development is multi-disciplinary and the definition of each author depends on the area where they author focuses attention. The central theme in all the definitions is "improvement of the standard of living of the rural people". In the words Igbokwe and Agala (1995), the earliest attempt at rural development during the colonial era took the form of community development and later agricultural extension. In line with the foregoing, Diejomaoh in Ayichi (1995) asserted that rural development is a process of not only increasing the level of per capita income in the rural areas but also the standard of living of the rural population measured by food and nutrition level, health, education, recreation and security. It is therefore the process of rural modernization and monetization of the rural society leading to its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy.

Taking into cognizance, the economic growth and social upliftment as aspects of development, Ijere (1990) regarded rural development, as the process of increasing the per capita Income and the quality of life of the rural dweller to enable him become prime mover of his own destiny. Obinne in Ogidefa (2010) perceived rural development to involve creating for rural individuals to realize full potential through education and share decision and action which affect their lives. In agreement to Obinne, Aslam quoted in Ndukwe (2005), defines rural development as a process aimed at developing the rural poor, their economy and institutions from a state of stagnation or low level equilibrium into dynamic process leading to higher level of living a better quality Life. Which means rural development is 'developing the skills of the masses to make them self- reliant through induction which supply appropriate and relevant knowledge on the

methods of self- help" (Solomon, 2009). Features of rural areas include: Smallness in size, Intimate relationships, Agriculture is the main occupation, Social mobility and High social solidarity (Ndukwe 2005).

Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the people in rural areas, the main concern in the rural development is supposed to be the modernization of rural society through transition from traditional economy to equitable and balanced development of the nation. Rural activities can be taken by governments or an international agency, which may be private or public. It is different from development activities executed by through community efforts which are erroneously referred to as community development. Where government is properly playing its expected role community development should complement rural development, not replace it. Rural development constitutes a process of planned change for which one approach or another is adopted for improvement and/or transformation of the lots of rural populace.

Dunbamm cited in Abah (2000) in agreement with the above assumptions conceptualized rural development as involving four levels of functioning and organizing. They are:

- a. A planned programme of action through nationally formulated policies,
- b. Self-help through community mobilization participations,
- c. Technical assistance through a large pool of federally recruited professionals and
- d. Integration of various specialists through a systematic approach to rural development.

Rural Development Strategies or Programmes Implemented in Nigeria

In Nigeria, many rural development programmes have been evolved. Even though, such programmes have concentrated on agriculture, the execution appeared haphazard because their objectives were not attained. But majority of them centered on increased food production and water resources development. Although, some of these programmes were not yet on, at many other times, many of them were moribund. Some of such programmes according to Ogidefia (2010) include: Farm settlement and plantation programme - FSPP (1960), Operation - OFN (1976), Feed the Nation Agricultural Development Programme - ADP (1975), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme - ACGS (1977), River Basin Development Authority - RBDA (1978), Rural Banking System RBS - (1978), Green Revolution – GR (1980), Directorate for Food, Roads DERRI and Rural Infrastructure - (1986), Better life for Rural Women Programme (Now Women Commission, 1987), Community Banking Programme - CBP (1990), National Agricultural Development, Land Authority - NADLA (1991), Family Support Programme- FSP (1992), Family Economic Advancement Programme – FEAP (1994), and National Special Programme for Food Security - NSPFS(2001).

Among all the above enumerated programmes implemented in Nigeria, only Agricultural Development Programme ADP and National Special Programme for Food Security, (NSPFS) are still on now. As a result of successes recorded in these two programmes, the World Bank, Federal and State governments are still investing much to ensure the full realization of the objectives of improving the socio-economic wellbeing of the rural dwellers across the country.

Problems Affecting Rural Development in Nigeria

Ijere (1990) remarked that rural development will continue to be a basic problem to developing countries including Nigeria because of the following reasons: Lack of natural philosophical base: The Nigerian rural development strategy lacked a philosophical, ideological and holistic foundation, It had a body (policy makers and government functionaries) but had a soul to give it life and sense of direction, Lack of integrated pilot demonstration. Before 1976, there was no national rural development programme in Nigeria. What was a vogue was segmented or uncoordinated rural development where it is assumed that new programmes in one community will have ripple effects on other communities and institutions. To Abah (2000), the first department of rural development at federal level was established in 1976 to mobilize people, initiate local projects in local leadership, and promote agriculture, rural development and community projects, Lack of cohesive identity: Failures have occurred in rural development as people regard the social and cultural aspects of development as subordinates to the economic development. Any innovation that does not guarantee the cohesiveness of the group and respect for the history and beliefs have little hope of survival, Defective local economics: People tend to treat rural development projects as charity or welfare packages, Few people are interested in the costing, evaluating and ensuring that targets are met. Lack of core project leadership: The failure of project leadership to come from within to sustain the development projects has led to the falling apart of things in rural development. The tendency has been to rely on official leadership for carrying out rural projects.

Our field survey in Ebonyi State revealed that the following also constitute challenges to rural development:

- a. Inadequate community participation: The top-bottom approach to rural development employed by government functionaries makes it unenthusiastic.
- b. Lack of grass root planning: There is little or no attempt to allow the rural communities to identify the problems and goals, analyze their own needs and commit themselves to the achievement of targets. Local experts, chiefs and country leaders, were taking for granted in deciding what projects to embark upon, and where and how to execute them. The planners do little or no consultation to the interest groups, cooperatives and professional organizations.
- c. Inability to optimize local resources: Due to Nigerians penchant for foreign made goods, local resources are neglected for the imported goods. Local talents and manpower as well as other resources are also ignored, thereby loosing the opportunity of evolving appropriate technology.
- d. Neglect of community structural approach: The pattern of rural development programmes in Nigeria centers on the imposition of imported schemes whether or not they are related to the cultural and Sociological life of the people. Examples of these areas of neglect include appointing new leaders were such leaders, already exist, not making use of youth organizations, age grades, women's groups in the initiation and implementation of programmes.

The National Programme for Food Security was launched in August 2001, principally to curb the high incidence of food scarcity in the country. The programme is located in every senatorial district of Nigeria. The Federal Government and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United

Nations handled the programme. Its functions include: food crop production, irrigation, livestock, food processing etc.

Emphases on food security at family, household, and community, sub-national and national levels are highly needed in Ebonyi State in particular and Nigeria in general, In other words, food availability and peoples access to food Supply is the goal. At the national level, food security implies assured food availability to meet current minimum requirement per capita. "The determining variables are production inputs, exports and stock exchanges. Food production is determined by land availability, crop yield, environment as well as funds" Ayodieji (2010).

Individual and household require the availability and adequacy of food intake to enable them contribute meaningfully to national development, Food security therefore, is the state achieved when food systems operate such that "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life", (Ekpo and Olaniyi, 1995). Food security diminishes when food systems are stressed. The components of foods system with their main elements are as follows:

- i. Food availability - production, distribution, exchange.
- ii. Food access affordability, allocation, preferences
- iii. Food utilization nutritional value, social value, food safety

A food secured household is one that has enough food available to save a necessary minimum in take by all the members of the household.

The World Food Council (BAO, 2001:55) defined the minimum to relate to body size, weight, sex and nature of Work and for women pregnancy or location status. According to the council:

Availability for a household is guided by such variables as net food production, land, labour, capital, knowledge, technology and social production, relations, food prices, food Supply in the market, cash flow, income, wages, and profit from enterprise.... Any adverse shift in any one or more of these variables will adversely affect food security of a household.

Transitory and chronic food insecurity could result if the adverse shifts are temporarily whereby the household coping strategies fail, but if such shifts emanate from structural problems and linger for a period, chronic food insecurity results (Adeyeye, 1992). Food insecurity, whether transitory or chronic is a big threat, particularly the chronic type.

Given the spate of unemployment, poverty, hyperinflation and hunger in Nigeria today, the pertinent question is: how long would it take Nigerian government to attain food security? The programme is presently faced with many problems including mobilization, finding, provision of farm inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, machines, pesticides etc. These have to be made available at the right time and in reasonable amount. Furthermore, macro credit framework, which is functional and affordable, should be established by government to assist small scale farmers to invest in food production activities. Since the programme is new and ongoing, it is still no ripe time to make assessment of its successes or failures. But, from all indications, one is worried over then that the programme may not quite succeed for lack of tenacity of purpose

both on the part of its facilitators and participant farmers. Again, its concentration on selected areas makes it difficult for other farmers in the state to benefit from the programme.

Activities of the Food Security

Programme

The activities of the food security programme according to the annual report (2005) of the achievements of NSPFS in Ebonyi State are: Crop production, processing, utilization and marketing, Livestock production and marketing (a) background broiler production (b) ruminant upgrading, Agro processing Fishery production and management, Agro forestry, Health Nutrition, education and management, Distribution of improved seed varieties to the sites, and Disbursement of funds to the SPFS participants and recovery of loanable amount from the beneficiaries.

Challenges to Food Security in Nigeria

Yemisi and Aisha (2009) enumerated the following as the major challenges to food security:

- 1) **An Underdeveloped Agricultural Sector:** The major challenge to food security in Nigeria is its underdeveloped agricultural sector, The agricultural sector that is characterized by over reliance on primary agriculture, low fertility soils, environmental degradation, significant food crops loss both pre-and post-harvest and inadequate food storage and preservation that result in significant commodity price fluctuation.

- 2) **Barriers to market access:** Access to market is the second hurdle that smallholders have to overcome. The problem is many fold; they include, poor infrastructure and barriers in penetrating the market caused by their limited resource base, lack of information, lack of or inadequate support institutions and poor policies in place among other factors.
- 3) **Effects of globalization:** Globalization is a concept that allows countries to benefit from capital flows, technology transfer, cheaper imports and target export markets in the long term. The effect of globalization on any country depends on the country's level of economic development, structure in place during the implementation stage and flexibility of its economy. With globalization, comes liberalization of markets. The food security threats caused by liberalization are due to dumping of heavily subsidized produce in developing countries.
- 4) **Disease and infection:** Disease and infection continue to plague Nigeria. Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIVADS not only reduce the man-hours available to agriculture and household food acquisition, but also increase the burden of household in acquiring food.
- 5) **Poor policies:** Poor policies have greatly affected the food security in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular. The problem arises when the focus on policies, structures and institutions is put above that of the people themselves.
- 6) **Methodology**

This study adopted a survey research design. This means that the subject under study was carried out in the local setting and information were

received through questionnaire. In the context of his work, EBADEP field staff and some group of farmers in the rural areas under study were the representatives of farmers in the state in respect of survey design method. More so, as quantitative research, the questionnaire collected for the study were analyzed using tables, frequency distribution and simple percentages to determine the results. The initial population of 600 was later reduced to a simpler researchable size of 230 who formed our respondents through the application of Yaro Yameni formula Which is: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; n= sample size (?); N= total population (600); e= error margin

(0.05).

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H: True development especially rural development is now guaranteed through government and individual efforts nationwide.

Contingency Table

Response	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	41	17.8%
Agree	180	78.3%
Disagree	5	2.2%
Strongly disagree	4	1.7%
Total	230	100%

Source: Research' field survey, 2014

Decision Rule

If the calculated chi-square (X^2) value is greater than the critical value, that is, degree of freedom at 3, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected and vice versa.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Expected frequency (E),} &= \\ \frac{230}{4} &= 57.5 \end{aligned}$$

It should be noted that all mathematics below: were carefully solved and presented or summarized in the chi-square table

The chi-square (X^2) method was used from the contingency table drawn from simple percentage.

The formula for chi-square (X^2) is given as

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where X^2 = chi-square

? = summation

O = observed frequency

E = expected frequency

Below:

Option (O)	Exp.Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
180	57.5	122.5	15006.25	<u>260.98</u>

41	57.5	-16.5	272.25	4.74
5	57.5	-52.5	2862.25	47.95
4	57.5	-53.5	2862.25	47.97
Total				363.47

Therefore, calculated frequency = 363.46

To compute the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value,

$$=DF= (R - 1) \times (C - 1)$$

Where; R = number of rows which is 4 = number of columns which is

$$2: DF = (4-1) (2-1)$$

$$= (3) (1)$$

$$DF = 3 \times 1$$

$$= 3$$

The researchers assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance. At 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (DF) at 3 = 7.815 which is equal to 7.82 approximately.

Conclusion

From the above computation, the null hypothesis (Ho) was accepted since the calculated frequency value (X) (363.46) was greater than the value on the critical value (7.82). So, the scenario has confirmed that despite government and individual efforts, true development especially rural development has not been guaranteed nationwide.

Hypothesis 2

H: There is food security nationwide as a result of the adoption and implementation of various agricultural and food security programmes.

Contingency Table

Response	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	10	4.3%
Agree	40	17.4%
Disagree	80	34.5%
Strongly disagree	100	43.5%
Total	230	100%

Source: Research' field survey, 2014.

Decision Rule

If the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Expected frequency (E)

$$\frac{230}{4} = 57.5$$

4

All mathematics were solved and summarized in the chi-square table below:

The chi-square (X) method was used from the contingency table drawn from simple percentage. The formula for chi-square (X) was

given as:

$$X^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

E

= chi-square

Where X^2

$$\chi^2 = \text{Summation } \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

O = observed frequency
 E = expected frequency

frequency

Option (O)	Exp.Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
40	57.5	-17.5	306.25	5.33
10	57.5	-47.56	2256.25	39.24
80	57.5	-22.5	506.25	8.80
100	57.5	-42.5	1806.25	31.41
Total				84.78

Therefore, calculated frequency = 84.78

To compute the degree of freedom, Df

$$Df = (R - 1) (C - 1)$$

Where Df = degree of freedom (critical value)

R = number of rows which is 4

C = number of columns which is 2

$$Df = (4 - 1) (2 - 1)$$

$$= (3)(1)$$

$$= 3 \times 1$$

$$Df = 3$$

The researchers also assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% of significance, At 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (Df) or critical value at 3 = 7.815 le 7.82 approximately.

Conclusion

From the computation and in agreement with the decision rule, the null hypothesis which states that; there is no food security nationwide as a result of the adoption and implementation of the various agricultural and food security programmes, should therefore, be accepted while the alternative which was in affirmation and against the decision rule is rejected. This is because; the calculated X^2 value (84.78) is greater than the critical value (7.82).

Hypothesis 3

Hi: Underdeveloped agricultural sector, barriers to market access and diseases and infestation are the only factors that challenge rural development, agricultural and food security programmes in Nigeria.

Again, the chi-square (X^2) method was used from the contingency

table drawn from simple percentage. The formula for chi-square (X^2) is given

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where X^2 = chi-square
O = summation
= observed
Frequency
= expected

Contingency Table

Response	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	8	3.5%
Agree	30	13.0%
Disagree	157	68.3%
Strongly disagree	35	15.2%
Total	230	100%

Decision Rule

If the calculated chi-square

Value is greater than the critical value,
 that is degree of freedom at 3, the null
 hypothesis is accepted is rejected and

Vice Versa.

$$\text{Expected frequency (E)} = 230 = 57.5$$

4

All mathematics were solved and
 Summarized in the chi-square table
 Below:

Option (O)	Exp.Freq (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
30	37.5	-27.5	756.25	13.15
8	57.5	-49.5	2450.25	42.61
157	57.5	-99.5	9900.25	172.18
35	57.5	-22.5	506.25	8.80

Total				236.74
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Therefore, calculated frequency = 236.74

To compute the degree of freedom (DF)

Or critical value,

$$= DF = (R - 1) (C - 1)$$

Where; R = number

of Rows which is 2

$$DF = (4-1) (2-1)$$

$$= (3) (1)$$

$$= 3 \times 1$$

$$= 3$$

The researchers also assumed

95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance. At 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value at 3 =

7.815 le 7.82 approximately.

Conclusion

The calculation showed that the value of chi-square (236.4) was greater than critical value (7.82) which means that the null hypothesis which said that, underdeveloped agricultural sector, barriers to market access and diseases and infestation are not the only factors that challenge rural development, agricultural

and food security programmes in Nigeria, should be accepted while the alternative should be rejected.

Findings

- Based on the analysis of the data, the following findings were made: The three Hypotheses of the study which were all tested using chi-square (χ^2) tables in data presentation showed that rural development and food security programmes In Nigeria were still far from being satisfactory and a lot still needed to be done.
- The study revealed that although agriculture was the mainstay of every economy as It embraces rural development, creates employment and Increases the national income, It has been abandoned as it received less than 10% of the annual budgetary allocations. It was discovered that men were more engaged in farming activities than women because of the strenuous activities Involved. Lack of fertilizers, lack of improved seeds, Inadequate capital storage facilities, bad roads etc, were some of the numerous problems facing agricultural sector leading to food insecurity
- From the study, it was discovered that more than 80% of the rural areas of Ebonyi State were still underdeveloped as virtually all lacked electricity, where they exist, the epileptic nature of supply, good drinking water, motorable roads, communication and other basic necessities of life. Government has not helped matters either because of wide spread corruption or lack of political will.
- Farmers in Ebonyi State lack access to credit facilities which leads to low productivity.

- EBADEP has not lived up to the expectation of teaching the rural farmers In the language they would understand through the demonstration farms.
- The study established that Ebonyi State has not actually exploited Its rich agricultural potentials and that is why it is still suffering from insecurity
- Rural development and food security will continue to be a mirage if a more practical approach is not adopted in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The findings of his study leave nobody in doubt of the rich agriculture potentials of Ebonyi State especially in the area of food production. The state is endowed with mineral and human resources that cannot only facilities rapid rural development but will also make her the food basket of Nigeria.

Unfortunately, these natural gifts are not properly exploited and harnessed to achieve the optimal benefits therein, Most farmers in the project area are within the productive age group of 55 60, a situation that shows that in no distant future, agriculture will go into extinction. There is the dominance of married male farmers in the three project areas surveyed.

The low level of educated farmers marks it difficult for them to adopt and apply the new farming techniques/methods. This has made the state to be a victim of food insecurity. Government and individual efforts a ensuring rapid rural development and food even though commendable have been far from being huge success. Successive administrations have devised different measures of ensuring food security but, with litter or no success. And so, there is no doubt that all the

available resources for agricultural production have not been adequately harnessed. The large hectares of irrigable land are there calling for tilling, most especially during this period of climate change and threat by the vagaries of weather. The expectation is, that, with a full commitment of all the three tiers of government to agriculture, through the proposed framework for. Irrigation projects and subsidized fertilizers, the projects will bring out the best from both the small scale and large scale schemes all over the country. The scheme will be more. Functional, efficient, generate employment, enhance farmers' income and reduce poverty and at the end of the day, make food security sustainable and rural development attainable.

Recommendations

To achieve food security, the following recommendations should be implemented to the later.

- 1. Rural-urban integration approach:** this should be done through aggressive rural infrastructural provision. Same government ministries, agencies and parastatals should be located or sited in rural areas to discourage rural-urban migration.
- 2. Farm Demonstration Center:** Farm demonstration centers should be established in each of the local government headquarters of Ebonyi State, where all the new farming techniques will be Imparted to the farmers, to do this, Symposium, seminars. And workshops should be organized. These will help in Increasing food production and hence, food security in the state.
- 3. Establishment of Micro Credit Scheme:** A micro credit scheme should be established in each of the local government areas where small holder farmers can obtain loans not exceeding fifty thousand naira (N50,000) yearly to

complement their own saving in the efforts towards improving agricultural production thus, food security.

- 4. Extension Service Delivery:** More extension agents should be trained and posted to rural areas and effort should be made to educate and enlighten rural farmers with a view to teaching them in the language they will understand on the innovations in agriculture especially in the area of pest and disease control, when and how to apply them. This will help in preserving most of food crops from being destroyed by pests and other related diseases that attack both plants and animals.
- 5. Input Delivery:** Farm inputs and other Improved crop varieties should be made available to farmers an time and at cheaper rate too to boost food production and reduce food insecurity in the state.
- 6. Food security programmes** should be given more time to mature since it improves the lives of the rural dwellers.
- 7. The recent announcement** by the federal government to establish functional fertilizer plant throughout the country is a welcome development. This is because, It will go a long way in boosting agricultural production and reduce food insecurity and so, should be supported by all and sundry to extend the ideas from a mere good policy formulation to urgent implementation.

Government at all levels should collaborate with experts to encourage food security. In addition, power sector should be improved to facilitate food processing. The president Goodluck Jonathan launch of power sector roadmap

should be greeted with utmost sense of seriousness, patriotism and a true national spirit.

Since food security is a national security, it should not be treated with levity. Therefore, production of the Groups which Ebonyi State In particular and Nigeria in general have a comparative advantage should be encouraged. Example, the presidential master plan to Increase rice production by 80% in 2013 is a right step in the right direction and a welcome development that must be supported.

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