

TWENTY YEARS OF FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Prior to independence in 1960, Nigeria's agricultural (Fisheries Sub-Sector) economy received little formal attention from government in terms of policies and programmes. Matters such as self-sufficiency in Food, Fisheries investment and Fishery employment were left at the initiative of the people. Government attention was focused on support to export crops. The post independence period, however, witnessed remarkable government efforts in matters of agricultural development, notably in the area of Fisheries Planning, Policies and programmes. These have varied from time to time depending on the experience gained, results achieved, the future expectation held and government changes.

Right from the colonial era to date, a number of development approaches have been employed in a bid to finding the optimal paths to Fisheries development.

2. FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Historical Background

Nigeria is a Coastal State with lots of fishery resources both in the marine and inland waters. Records have shown that the history of fisheries development in Nigeria dates back to 1914 when a Fisheries Development Branch headed by a Senior Agricultural Officer was established in Agriculture Department of the Colonial Office. It was charged with the responsibility of conducting a survey of the industry with a view to determining the potentials. Early in 1945, this Fisheries Branch was temporarily transferred to the Development Branch of the Secretariat and for the first time, a Fisheries

Development Officer was appointed. Following this, a five-year development plan for fisheries (i.e 1945 - 1950) was formulated and incorporated into the ten-year plan of Development and Welfare in Nigeria (1945 - 1955) which was tabled for consideration of the Legislative Council on 18th December, 1945. From December, 1945 to 1947, the Fisheries Branch was a section of the Department of Commerce and Industries with a Principal Fisheries Officer in charge of it. Apart from activities in experimental brackish water fish culture and canoe fishery survey, priority attention was accorded the acquisition of small motorised crafts for exploratory fishing in the Estuaries, Creeks and Lagoons. During this period, a Sub-Station was opened in Opobo and a start was made in fish pond culture in the inland areas by the establishment of the Panyam Fish Farm in 1951. In addition, an experimental fish farm was established in Onikan Lagos. Between 1948 and 1950, the Artisanal Fisheries Development efforts were intensified and consequently, the fisheries research activities were expanded to cover developmental responsibilities.

From 1954, the erstwhile Federal Fisheries Service (FFS), operated under the Ministry of Economic Development with a Director in charge and with laboratories and Headquarters offices at Lagos. It had the responsibility for fisheries development and research. It came under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture around 1966 when the Federal initiative to control the Nation's Agriculture was set in motion.

Following the expert advice given by the FAO to the Nigerian Government in the late sixties that four economic Development Sections should be established under the Federal Ministry of

Agriculture viz, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Livestock, the Federal Fisheries Service was upgraded in January, 1970, to a Department under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. On 1st April, 1976, three Fisheries research Institutes including the Nigerian Research Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research, Kainji Lake Research Institute and Lake Chad Research Institute were carved out of the old Federal Department of Fisheries. Thus the present development oriented Federal Department of Fisheries came into being. Since 1970, the activities of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture have centred around the four economic sub-sectors which are involved with food production namely Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry.

2.2 (A) Ten-Year Development plan (1945 - 1954).

In 1945, the British Colonial Administrator formulated a ten-year development plan for the then existing three provinces namely; Northern, Eastern and Western Provinces. The focus of the plan was mainly on the promotion and development of export crops such as cocoa, rubber, oil palm, cotton and groundnut, but Fisheries was not inclusive. Emphasis was placed on extension and research activities. Following the creation of Regional Governments in 1954, each region was responsible for the development of agriculture under its own jurisdiction. To this end, each region launched its own Development Plan. Some regions set-up Agricultural Development Corporations and special programmes. Also, a separate Plan was launched by the Federal Government. Since each region was mainly concerned with protecting its own right and jurisdiction under the new Federal arrangement, the different plans could not be integrated into a National Plan. The goals were essentially varying, uncoordinated and internally inconsistent.

(B) First National Development Plan (1962 - 1968)

The period 1962 - 1968 marked the formulation of the first National Development Plan. The Ministries of Economic Planning at each region was responsible for the collation of Plan for the region. Also at the Federal level, the Federal Ministry of Economic Development prepared its own

programme which together with the regional programmes was forwarded to a Joint Planning Committee (JPC) for scrutiny. The JPC was composed of Federal Regional officials. The draft Plan was then forwarded to the National Economic Council which was made up of the Federal Council of Ministers and the Regional Executive Council for their considerations and approval. The 1962 - 68 Plan stood out as the first Plan which had a national outlook. With the Plan, it became possible to set a minimum average growth target for the whole economy, and the agricultural sector (Fisheries sub-sector) in particular. Projects became more logically related to each other and it became easier to identify priority areas for development in the agricultural sector.

(C) Second National Development Plan (1970 - 74)

By the end of the first National Development Plan, there had been so many changes in the political structure of the country. 12 States were created from the four regions. Also there was an outbreak of civil war that disrupted many economic activities. It became clear that the Planning machinery adopted for the first Plan period had become in-operative and ineffective and therefore needed to be reviewed. To this end, a Second National Development Plan was drawn to cover the period 1970 - 74. This Second National Plan was a truly national and well integrated Plan because, it viewed the national economy as an organic whole. The Plans of the 12 States as well as the development programmes of the Federal Government were integrated sector-by-sector in order to minimise inconsistencies and duplication. It also contained specific national objectives for each sector. In the case of the Fisheries Sub-sector the plan was designed to:-

- (i) ensure Fish supplies in adequate quantity and quality to keep pace with increased population and urbanisation:
- (ii) expand production of export shrimp with a view to increasing and further diversifying the country's foreign exchange earnings:
- (iii) promote the production of fisheries raw materials for extensive domestic manufacturing activities:

- (iv) create rural employment opportunities; and
- (v) evolve appropriate institutional and administrative apparatus to facilitate a smooth integrated development of the Fisheries potentials of the country as a whole.

Major programmes launched during the Plan period was the National Accelerated Fish Production Programme (NAFPP) and Fish Technology Transfer (FTT). Most of the national objectives stated in the Plan could not be effectively achieved because, the Plan was regarded as ill-prepared and seen as public capital expenditure programme in an area which was primarily private sector. Also in some cases, goals were stated with no projects articulated towards such goals.

(D) THIRD AND FOURTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In the third and fourth National Development Plans (1975 - 80 and 1981 - 85) periods respectively, attempts were made to ensure that the Federal and States Fisheries programmes were carefully harmonised to reflect the problems characteristic of the various State/Regional locations and their socio-political activities. The Plans were also geared towards common overall national objectives as well as to ensure an intersectoral integration which recognise the multi-dimensional nature of Fisheries/rural problems. All the agricultural projects and programmes and the supporting services in the two plan periods were geared towards achieving a measure of self-sufficiency in Fisheries production in terms of food materials for the growing population and raw materials for the growing industrial sector. Although both the third and the fourth National Development Plans were guided by the same basic objective, the fourth plan went a bit further to highlight in considerable details, the opportunities and constraints in the Fisheries sector, as well as the institution-building strategy that will liberate the sector from the strangle-hold of vicious cycle.

The period from 1975 - 85 witnessed a much greater involvement of government, especially Federal Government, in Fisheries development efforts. New Policies, Programmes and Projects were launched at rates hitherto unknown in Nigeria. This was in a way, in reaction to the rapid

deterioration in the state of the country's Fisheries economy towards the end of 1960's and beginning of 1970's. It was also in response to the devastating effects of the Nigerian civil war and the near global drought of 1972/73 on the Fisheries economy in particular and the near global drought of 1972/73. More Fisheries development institutions were created and more special projects and programmes were launched during the period of the third and fourth National Development Plan than at any other corresponding period in the history of Nigeria. There was also a marked increase in the Federal Government budgetary allocation. During these periods, extension services were strengthened, credit and inputs were subsidised. The Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) was established to make credit easily accessible to the small-scale farmers (Fisheries inclusive). Important Programmes/Projects launched during the period included the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), Operations Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution Programme (GR), and the River Basins Development Authorities (RBDAs).

(i) National Accelerated Fish Production Programme (NAFPP)

This Project was launched in 1973 with the objective of accelerating the production of fish within a decade. The Programme involved providing a package of improved practices and inputs to selected fishermen, first in four pilot states and, later, in the whole country. Although very significant increases in yields ranging from 100 to 300 percent were obtained by pilot participating fishermen, these were not translated into significant national Fish production gain when the project was expanded nation-wide because the state governments which had the primary responsibility for fisheries extension did not adequately support the programme. The programme however, succeeded in introducing fundamental changes into extension service system in Nigeria. It gave prominence to fishing trials and Fish Farm operated demonstration farming population in Nigeria.

(ii) Operation Feed The Nation (OFN)

The OFN Programme was launched in 1975 with the objective to involve a much wider spectrum of

the Nigerian population in fish production and thereby rapidly increase domestic supply. The programme was backed up by massive publicity and a significant injection of funds to produce and distribute production inputs. In spite of the substantial financial and political backing of the programme, it did not succeed in increasing Fish production significantly because, the programme itself was short-lived and it was also designed to focus on the urban working population, rather than the rural masses.

(iii) The Green Revolution (GR)

This programme was launched in 1980 with the aim to take Nigeria to self-sufficiency level in the production of basic foods within five years. This led government to prepare a "Food Production Plan for Nigeria". The GR programme made possible the supply of fishing inputs such as boats, outboard engines, fishing nets and accessories. These inputs were sold to fishermen at subsidized rates. The programme witnessed increases in Fish Production.

(iv) Structural Adjustment Era (1986 - Date)

In the mid-1986, the Federal Government launched the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Government divested itself from direct agricultural production leaving it essentially in the hands of the private sector. The roles of Government in agricultural development became essentially supportive, regulatory and stimulatory. This was to create a conducive and profitable environment that will enhance the prosperity of the private entrepreneur. Among the efforts made by the government during the SAP era (1986-93) included the introduction of the unified extension system in 1989, introduction of the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) to provide rural feeder roads, potable water, rural electrification and rural housing schemes; Better life for rural women to address the problems faced by the rural women so as to enable them realise their full potentials. The Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIC) was also set up to provide insurance cover for fishermen and fish farmers against natural disasters and other risks and to encourage financial institutions to be more liberal in giving credits to fishermen/Fish Farmers.

The broad goals of the economic policy especially as from the early 1990s was to restore macro-economic stability, rekindle growth through economic recovery, while consolidating the gain that have been made in the course of the economic reforms. Despite some visible gains, the Nigerian economy has been experiencing severe imbalances and aggravated distribution since 1991. This state of affairs was brought about by both inappropriate conceptualisation and faulty designs of some of these policies compelled by poor and half hearted implementation. The economy has thus witnessed increased macro-economic instability, declining productivity, low utilisation of installed industrial and agricultural capacity, severe constraints of capital flows and debt servicing in the balance of payments.

In 1993, economic performance was further affected by the tense political environment. This further exacerbated the already strained economy resulting in further reduction in the tempo of economic activity. This non-conducive macro-economic environment resulted in decline in the growth rate of the GDP from 4.6% in 1991 to 3.6% in 1992 and an estimated 2.9% in 1993, in comparison with an average of 8.5% during the period 1998-1990 (CBN statistics). This scenario clearly demonstrates the enormous task which would be involved in resuscitating and revamping the economy. The performance of the economy in 1993/94 can be further examined by disaggregating the overall growth of activities in agriculture, manufacturing and petroleum sectors. Production in all the major sectors was severely constrained by high and unstable interest rates, fast depreciation of the naira exchange rate and a high and rising rate of inflation. Precisely, economic policies since 1992 have been designed with a view to instilling growth through lower rate of inflation, reduction of pressures on the balance of payments, maintenance of a stable exchange rate as well as increased productivity. However, the interplay of these factors affected both the supply and demand side of fishing inputs and raw materials for manufacturing as prices of imports and final consumer product increased phenomenally, while the purchasing power of consumer continued to deteriorate with the rise in the average cost of basic need (Naira depreciation and inflation). Overall, available data shows that the domestic inflation rate accelerated to a record 44.6% since 1992 compared to the rate of

13.0% and 7.4% recorded in 1991 and 1990 respectively. The unemployment situation also worsened as the composite rate, as compiled by the FOS rose from 2.9 to 4.0 percent. All these developments in the economic sector put pressure on the balance of payment situation with the overall balance saving from surpluses in 1990 and 1991 to a sharp deterioration in the capital account.

These situations have not since changed for the better as the economy has continued to show another year of serious macro-economic instability characterized by large deviations of financial aggregates from policy targets, increased pressures in the domestic and external sectors of the economy and a marginal decline in the performance of the real sector. In the fisheries sector, irregular and unreliable distributions of rainfall especially in the far north and the inefficient distribution of subsidised fishing inputs also accounted for the low performance of Fish Production.

In order to arrest the continued deteriorating trend of the economy, the Federal Government organised a pre-budget workshop in November, 1993 under the Shonekan Administration to identify and address key issues of the 1994 budget. This pre-budget workshop had arisen from the umbrella Nigerian Economic Summit from which an Economic Agenda was drawn. It was because the agricultural sector was not properly covered in the Economic Agenda that an Agricultural Summit was therefore organised by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture in December, 1993 to provide an opportunity for dialogue between the public and private sector, so that policy issues for improved performance of the sector could be fully identified for the 1994 budget and beyond. During the agricultural Summit, the following issues were addressed:-

- (i) Production and investment;
- (ii) Policy stability and implementation;
- (iii) Imports and Exports in Agriculture;
- (iv) Investment opportunities in Irrigated Agriculture;
- (v) Inputs subsidy and privatization of procurement and distribution;
- (vi) Land ownership and Land use decree.

Arising from the Agricultural summit, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture decided to re-appraise the incentives to make agriculture (fisheries inclusive) profitable after it had discovered that the existing incentives were not sufficient and could not revolutionize the sector. An Agricultural Forum was therefore organised from August 22nd to 23rd 1994 to consider existing incentives to make agriculture profitable for adoption by Government. The Forum which was well attended by representatives of the private sector, large-scale farmers, food processors, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and representatives of State and Federal Ministries recommended the following:-

1. AGRICULTURAL EXPORT

On Agricultural exports, the forum recommended that Government should institute zero tariff for the next ten years to support local industries involved in the manufacture of agricultural inputs, from predominantly local raw materials, such as Fisheries: Industries involved in the manufacture of fish feed, fish hooks, boat building and packaging of fish, shrimp and prawn for export.

2. AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS:

Government should institute zero tariff for importation of the following to stimulate fish production:

- (i) importation of premix components such as vitamins, microminerals, antibiotics and outboard engines.
- (ii) Instituting appropriate tariff as and when required on the importation of primary produce (i.e. Fin fish and shell fish).
- (iii) Lift ban on import of agricultural machinery, equipment and chemicals.

3. AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

On Agricultural Credit delivery, Government should institute the following:-

Increase credit to agriculture by increasing the volume of funds available to NACB. 75% of the funds should go to the medium and small-scale Fishermen and Fish Farmers.

4. INTEREST RATE

- (i) Government should provide concessional interest rate on loans to fisheries equal to the savings rate plus not more than 2% for administrative cost.

5. AGRICULTURAL CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (ACGS)

- CBN to pay outstanding claims to encourage further lending;
- Government to involve community Banks in the scheme to expand scope of credit and to ease fishermen access to credit.

6. AGRICULTURAL INPUT

Government to improve agricultural input delivery through the reactivation of cooperative movement or the formation of Mutual Guarantee Association (MUGA) and Farmer's Association to ensure bulk purchase and distribution of inputs.

7. AGRICULTURAL PRICING

Government to establish Guaranteed Minimum Price (GMP) equivalent to the cost of production plus 5% government in consultation with relevant agencies and operated by the proposed central marketing organisation which will be private sector activities.

8. LAND ACQUISITION

Government to ensure security of tenure of land used for agricultural purposes by standardising it to 99 years.

AREAS OF GROWTH

Soon after the establishment of the Department in 1976 both vertical and lateral expansions were witnessed. Vertically it has an administrative and technical structure comprising the Director's Office, the Deputies, Assistants and other supporting staff. Laterally the Departmental growth witnessed the establishment of technical Divisions, Sections, branches and Units. These comprised in order of emphasis of industrial Fisheries and Exploratory Fishing, Artisanal

Fisheries and input supply technology, Gear and Craft development, National data collection and statistical frame survey and at a much later date Aquaculture and inland Fisheries development.

In their implementation, the vertical structural arrangement witnessed the establishment of Field Offices in all the States of the Federation. Technically, the Industrial development services witnessed the purchase of some 45 fishing trawlers and a patrol boat. The fishing trawlers were sold at half the prices to the various fishing communities along the Marine Coast to boost fish production. The artisanal fisheries production witnessed a huge billion purchase of fishing inputs which were distributed to the artisanal fishermen nation wide, again at cost price or heavy subsidy. A chain of cold rooms were established nationwide in a bid to arrest the then high rate of post harvest losses incurred by the fishermen at the fishing sites. Smoking was of course a traditional method fully known by the fishermen. A National fisheries frame survey was conducted in 1975 thereby setting pace for the regular data collection by the States and Co-ordinated by the Federal Department of Fisheries. This was submitted to F.A.O. on regular annual basis as was the requirement. Aquaculture development on the other hand was a completely new technology. It was therefore necessary to set up model or demonstrations fish farms for would-be fish farmers to see and to learn, from 1979-81. Each State then of the 12 State structure was to have one such model or demonstration fish farm. Fish hatcheries were later added to these model fish farms. These growth promotion activities continued to increase and of recent 1993/94, Fish quality Assurance and Quarantine services has come on stream.

All these were government initiatives aimed at promoting fisheries development. The result of all these efforts by Government translated into private sector participation, effectively in the industrial fishing were several entrepreneurs invested in industrial fishing and little elsewhere in the subsector, because of its nature which was not fully understood as a result of near non-existence of effective fisheries extension delivery services. Other services continued to remain in the hands of the Government until of recent some few individuals tried their hand on fish farming with

unencouraging yields, because of poor technological services rendered in the establishment of such ventures at commercial levels.

Similarly the whole country witnessed a proliferation of homestead fish ponds with high concentrations in the South-East, South-West and generally medium sized commercial fish farms in the rest of the country. However, it is sad to note that with all these endeavours the dream of applicable domestic fish production continued to elude the nation and efforts were then directed at fish importation which hitherto has a negative impact on the national economy.

In order to effectively support Government effort, a large number of staff were trained in Latin America, South East Asia, India and Europe in various fisheries disciplines. The Department therefore grew in staff strength. Similarly for the middle and junior staff cadre, specific fisheries training institutions were established at New Bussa and Baga for Freshwater Fisheries Technology and at Victoria Island Wilnot Pond for the Marine Fisheries Technology. Research oriented activities, were taken-up by the research Institutes at New Bussa, Baga and NIOMR for freshwater and marine fisheries development respectively.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The past 20 years have witnessed phenomenal growth in Fisheries Development in Nigeria. However, in the past five years, actual local fish production has not significantly improved. This is due to a number of factors. Infrastructural facilities have been provided for the industrial marine fishing fleet including the establishment of fishing terminals in Igbokoda, Ondo State, Borokiri, Rivers State and Ebughu, Akwa-Ibom State. Appropriate

fisheries Decrees and fisheries Regulations have been promulgated both for the Inland and the Marine Fisheries in order to promote responsible and sustainable fishing as well as the recent Sea Quality Fisheries Regulation and the Inland Quality Fishery Regulations which are aimed at producing good quality fish and shrimps. Adequate measures are being undertaken to guarantee continued export of shrimps and fish products to overseas markets. In the artisanal fisheries, subsidised schemes have been undertaken to assist the small scale fishermen while projects with credit facilities have been introduced to some States. Strenuous efforts are geared towards the introduction of such projects to other States. There has also been the provision of infrastructures such as potable water, jetties, roads for fishing villages as well as organisation of training and extension service for artisanal fishermen. Serious attention is also being paid to the rapid development of commercial aquaculture.

Despite the efforts of government in providing these facilities, there are certain problems militating against increase fish production in the country. This includes the prohibitive price of spare parts and fishing inputs due to the value of the naira which has considerably dropped. In the industrial fisheries the increasing price and inadequate supply of Automatic gas Oil (GAS) has seriously affected fish production. However, with the recent introduction of harmonised price of AGO and direct allocation to the marine fishing fleet under the aegis of the fishing Trawlers Association, the situation in Marine fisheries Production will be improved. Also with rapid development of Aquaculture and the continued development of Lakes and Lagoons Fisheries Resources as well as the back up support for artisanal fisheries, the Nigerian Fisheries would have substantial growth.