Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development www.iiste.org
ISSN 2222-1700 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2855 (Online)
Vol.6, No.17, 2015

Analysis of Agricultural Programmes and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria, 1960-2012

HUMPHREY NWOBODO AGBO, PhD
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

Abstract
The paper examined various agricultural policies and programmes that had been implemented by successive Nigerian governments and its impact on poverty reduction/alleviation. Scholarly literature have identified among other things, poor policy formulation, policy inconsistency and inadequate implementation as reasons why agricultural policies and programmes have failed to eradicate poverty. However, what has not been given satisfactory attention is the non-inclusion of the relevant people in decision-making concerning programmes that impact on their existence. The problematic of the paper was to determine why various Nigerian governments have not expanded the political space to involve the people in decision-making regarding poverty alleviation. The paper adopted the qualitative method of data collection together with descriptive qualitative method for our data analysis. The basic propositions arising from the Rentier State was appropriated as our theoretical framework of analysis. The paper concluded that because successive Nigerian governments depend essentially on oil rent for its revenue and not on taxes, it reduces the value it attaches to its citizens and therefore do not involve them in decision making. The paper recommends a multi-sectoral and multi-faceted approach to poverty alleviation as a short-term solution; and the widening of the political space to include the people in decision making that concerns them as a more lasting solution to poverty alleviation in Nigeria.
Keywords: Agricultural Programmes, Poverty Alleviation, Rentier State, Nigerian Government

INTRODUCTION

> In the 1960s, Nigeria was the world's second largest producer of cocoa, the largest exporter of palm oil and a principal producer and exporter of cotton, rubber and groundnut. Working traditional tools and practices, Nigerian peasants contributed 70% of export revenue and 60% of GDP in the same period. The total food requirement was met almost entirely by local produce and agricultural imports were to the bare minimum.
> **http://www.articledashboard.com/Article/Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria.**

The above citation expresses in clear terms the contributions of agriculture to national development. Agriculture as the foundation of all economic sectors has the capacity to advance beyond its primary function of supplying food and fibre, to being the industrial and economic springboard from which a country's development can take off. As contended by Ogen (2003), a strong and efficient agricultural sector would enable a country to feed its growing population, generate employment, earn foreign exchange and provide raw materials for the secondary sectors of the economy. The agricultural history of Nigeria is intertwined with its political history. The period of colonial administration in Nigeria (1861-1960) witnessed considerable emphasis on research and extension services, with the establishment of a botanical research station in Lagos by Sir Claude Mcdonald in 1893, and many other significant achievements of the period

http://www.onlinenigeria.com/links/agricadv.asp?blurb=481. The post-1960 was one of extensive planning and regional competition in agriculture as emphasis was placed on commodity exports. Under regional independence, the agricultural history of Nigeria entered another phase of modification of traditional practices to enhance surplus food production. There was enormous collaboration between the government and the people, and the modernization of agricultural sector was an additional impetus that enhanced agricultural productivity. Yet, in spite of all these seemingly contributions of agriculture to the economic development of Nigeria, particularly its contribution of about 45% to GDP and employment of about 90% of the rural population, it has not been able to eradicate poverty (UNDP, 2010).

Poverty is the denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It is the lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It further denotes insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, household and communities. It also means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water and sanitation. Meanwhile, absolute poverty denotes a condition in which a person or group of persons are unable to satisfy their basic needs as elementary requirements for human survival.

In spite of Nigeria's vast oil wealth as the sixth largest producer of petroleum in the world, the eight largest exporter and the 10th largest proven reserves in the world, the majority of Nigerians are poor with 71% of the population living on less than one dollar a day and 92% on less than two dollars a day (UNDP, 2007). The 2007 United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Nigeria 158 out of 177 countries; this is a significant decrease in its human development rank of 151 in 2004. About 64% of household in Nigeria consider themselves to be poor while 32% of household say their economic situation had worsened over a period of one year. Life expectancy has decreased from 47 years in 1990 to 44 years in 2005. Infant and under-five mortality rates are high.

The study of economic history provides us with ample evidence that an agricultural revolution is a fundamental pre-condition for economic development (Eicher and Witt, 1964:239; Oluwasanmi, 1966: 7-15; Jones and Woolf, 1969: 123). Notwithstanding that the above assertion is not disputable; the inability of the government to properly integrate agricultural development to meet the needs of industrialization is the bane of poverty eradication in Nigeria. To be sure, successive Nigerian governments have implemented various agricultural programmes within the framework of eradicating poverty since independence; yet, the incidence of poverty has continued to rear its ugly head in the lives of majority of the population. Some of these programmes include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, Better Life for Rural Women, etc. What could be responsible? Is it that the policies and programmes were not designed to alleviate poverty? Or, did such policies and programmes fail at the level of implementation? There is already plethora of scholarly works done to provide answers to these questions, particularly, as it relates to efforts of the government in poverty alleviation. In fact, scholars like Ogbuagu (1995), Obi et al (2008), among others, appear to be unanimous that in spite of all the poverty eradication policies and programmes that have been implemented since independence, no meaningful reduction has been achieved in the war against poverty. The cause has been variously attributed to poor implementation, inconsistency on the part of successive governments, etc.

Deriving from the above, the factors enumerated could either in isolation or in combination contribute to the inability of agricultural programmes to eradicate poverty, yet, a more serious problem that has not been satisfactorily addressed by scholars is the non-inclusion of the people in decision-making concerning poverty alleviation programmes. As a result of the above, the paper explores the missing link between agricultural programmes and the growing incidence of poverty in Nigeria. Further to that, the paper shall attempt to explore why, in spite of all the policies and programmes directed towards poverty eradication, it had been difficult, if not impossible for the state to eradicate poverty. The discourse will be anchored on the basic propositions of the rentier state that are applicable to Nigeria's social formation. It is in fact, on the basis of this propositions that the analysis will interrogate the problematique of the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In an attempt to explore the problematique of this paper, we shall anchor our investigation on the theoretical frame of the rentier state. The major proponent of this theory was Hussein Mahdavy (1970), an Iranian Economist. He tried to explain the behaviour of states that depend on unearned income. Accordingly, Mahdavy (1970) argued that a rentier state is usually blessed with abundant mineral resources. As a result, the state essentially earns substantial portion of its income by capturing economic rent through manipulation or exploitation rather than by earning profits through economic transactions and production of added wealth. More so, Beblawi and Luciani (1987) stated that rentier states referred to those states that earned all or a substantial portion of their revenue from the rent paid by external clients and which creates in the same process a rentier mentality. According to Yates (2009), rentier state lives on unearned income, that is, it is a state that receives on a regular basis substantial amount of external rent. The outcome of such rent, particularly, oil rent, is that such a state assumes financial autonomous status. The implication of this is that government becomes autonomous from domestic taxpayers and does not depend on them and is not accountable to them. With this state of affairs, what is paramount is getting access to oil rent through political power. This tendency cultivates a rentier mentality whereby the government abandons its responsibility to the people, particularly, the implementation of people-oriented programmes that could help to eradicate poverty.

The core of our discourse is anchored on the basic propositions emanating from the analysis of the rentier state which are applicable to Nigeria's social formation. These include the following:

1. That rent predominate the revenue capacity of the state.
2. That the economy relies on a substantial external rent, and therefore does not require a strong domestic productive sector.
3. That a small proportion of the working population is actually involved in the generation of the rent.
4. That the state's government is the principal recipient of the external rent.

Meanwhile, rentier states are shaped by a combination of colonial legacy in the state structure and also the luxury of natural resources revenues. In low-income extractive economies, rentierism produces a predatory hegemonic elite as well as a convoluted culture of accumulation. And because rentierism is characterized by external economic rent that is unrelated to entrepreneurial, innovative and meritorious activities, it often displaces other sectors of the export economy such as agriculture, manufacturing, etc. In fact, the more leaders can finance state activities through rent, the more likely predatory behaviour follows (Dijohn, 2003).

Following from the above, there is a very strong connect between rent seeking states and increased incidence of poverty, essentially because the state is financially autonomous and therefore does not depend on the people for its finances which leads to complacent attitude in the implementation of policies and programmes that are meant to alleviate poverty. As contended by Skaperdas (2002); Torvik (2002); Mehlum and Moene (2002) and Olsson (2006), there is the tendency for a rent seeking state to abandon its responsibilities with an increase in the size of rent it generates. The implication of the above is that it is only when such rents are threatened that the state becomes desperate and reverses itself to people-oriented poverty eradication programme with a view to generating financial resources through taxes.

In the application of this theory to the investigation of the problematic of the paper, the interface between agricultural programmes and poverty alleviation can be better understood within the context of the theory of rentier state. To begin with, the theory assumes the predominance of external rent as the crux of revenue to a rentier state. Essentially, citizens of every country are expected to contribute their quota through payment of taxes, and because government earns substantial revenue from oil rent, it does not bother its citizens much to pay taxes and is not bothered by its citizens in the implementation of whatever it calls poverty alleviation programmes. Again, because rentier states are not essentially productive states, only a small proportion of the population are involved in the generation of the rent, and these reproduces themselves as predatory hegemonic elites with a rentier mentality. This mentality permits them to abandon people-oriented poverty alleviation programmes and the provision of other essential amenities to the citizens. But most importantly, because the government is the principal recipient of the rent, it has at its disposal enormous financial resources with which to repress opposition of its programmes, and therefore implements such policies and programmes to pacify the people.

ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

The continent of Africa has been decimated and ravaged by poverty for over five decades since she got her political independence. Particularly of note is that Nigeria, the giant of Africa, has acquired the unenviable distinction of being among the poorest countries in the world. This was however after the discovery of large deposit of oil together with the oil boom of the 1970s, which turned the fortunes of Nigeria overnight. The discovery, exploitation and sell of oil transformed Nigeria's agricultural landscape into a gigantic oil field crisscrossed by more than 7, 000 km of pipelines connecting more than 6, 000 oil wells, four refineries, innumerable flow stations and export terminals. http://ezinearticles.com/?Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria-Through-Agriculture-and-Enterprise-Revolution&id=3474906.The colossal investment in the oil sector paid off with enormous revenue accruing to the government. However, this affluence soon turned into affliction. The over-dependence on oil wealth impacted adversely on other sectors of the economy, particularly agriculture. The new oil wealth eventually enthrones massive corruption in the government circle, which culminated into political instability and subsequent violent civil war. With the dominance of oil in the economic calculations of Nigeria, agriculture paled into insignificance and thus became one of the first casualties of the oil regime, with a contribution of 39.1% to GDP in 1988, and progressive decline of cultivation accounting for mere 5% of GDP in 19990s http://ezinearticles.com/?Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria-Through-Agriculture-and-Enterprise-Revolution&id=3474906. Subsequently, the support for agriculture continued to remain low on the list of government priorities as vast stretches of rural Nigeria gradually plunged into poverty and food scarcity.

By 1999 when the Obasanjo administration came to power, a World Bank report indicated that Nigeria's Human Development Index (HDI) was only 0.416 and that about 70 per cent of the population was vegetating below the poverty line http://www.nigeriafirst.org/printer_263.shtml. In 2007, Nigeria was ranked 80th in a UNDP poverty survey covering 108 countries. Nigeria has plummeted to the bottom in world economic ranking, and the continued increase in the level of absolute poverty demanded that something drastic should be done. By absolute poverty, we mean, a condition where a person or groups of persons are unable to satisfy their most basic requirements for survival in terms of food, clothing and shelter. Accordingly, Soroka and Bryjak (1992: 185) stated that poverty can be measured as income that fall below the amount of money needed for a minimally adequate supply of material resources such as food, clothing, and shelter. On the other hand, relative poverty compares different groups in order to determine the economic circumstances of one group relative to others. Thus, it is the situation of being deprived compared to some other particular groups (Soroka and Bryjak, 1992: 185). In fact, the core of relative deprivation is comparison (Offiong, 2001: 97).

Looking at Nigeria over time, one could not but wonder how poverty has engulfed the greater proportion of the population and what is being done to arrest the trend. It has been stated that at independence in 1960 and for the better part of 1960s, poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria centred on education, which was seen as the key to economic, technological and intellectual development of the nation. As was often quoted in those days, a popular mantra by Nigeria's first president, the late Nnamdi Azikiwe was, "show the light, and the people will find the way". As laudable as this mantra appears to be, it was not targeted at poverty alleviation, rather, it was a political gimmick for the mobilization of the people against the colonialists, and subsequently was used as a strategy for the consolidation of political power by the emerging ruling elites. Otherwise, with a significant proportion of the population being educated, the continued increase in poverty contradicts the notion of poverty alleviation through education as we were meant to believe by 1960 scholars. For instance, by 1960, about 15% of the population was poor but by 1980, the number of people considered poor in Nigeria had risen to 28%, notwithstanding the increased level of education. More so, Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) estimated that by 1985, the extent of poverty was about 46%. However, it dropped to 43% by 1992. Then again, in spite of various poverty eradication policies and strategies that had been implemented by successive Nigerian governments like Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Better Life for Rural Women, etc, the incidence of poverty continued to increase. In 1996, poverty incidence in Nigeria was 66% or 76.6 million Nigerians out of a population of 110 million. Moreover, in 1999, the UN Human Poverty Index credited Nigeria with 41.6% and placed her among the 25 poorest nations in the world. It was estimated that two-third of the country's 120 million people in 2000 or 80 million are said to be poor, notwithstanding the fact that since independence, Nigeria has adopted and implemented various agricultural policies and programmes. The table below shows the relative poverty headcount from 1980-2010.

Table 1: Relative Poverty Headcount, 1980-2010

Relative Poverty Headcount from 1980-2010 **Year**	**Poverty Incidence (%)**	**Estimated Population (Million)**	**Population in poverty (Million)**
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.47

Source: National Bureau of Statistics. HNLSS 2010

The table above indicates that the incidence of poverty has been very pervasive using the relative poverty measurement index. For example, in 1980, the population of Nigerians living below the poverty line was about 17 million people, but in 2010, it has increased to about 112 million Nigerians. In fact, when measured with the absolute poverty index, many more Nigerians would become poor. This trend has continued for more than three decades notwithstanding the implementation of policies that are targeted at alleviating poverty without any end in sight.

The official poverty measurement approach in Nigeria is the relative poverty measurement. The major component in its computation is the household expenditure. This refers to all goods and services for use of the household, and therefore, household expenditure is an indicator for measuring relative poverty. It also includes all monetary transactions like donations, savings, etc. Accordingly, poverty line becomes a line that divides the poor from non-poor. Using the mean per capita household expenditure, one-third of it separates the extreme or core poor from the rest of the population while two-third of the mean per capita expenditure separates the moderate poor from the rest of the population. The cumulation of the core poor and moderate poor gives the poor population while the non-poor are the population greater than two-third of the population. The adoption of the per capita expenditure, which is the total expenditure per household size, is apt since the measurement of poverty is about individuals in poverty.

Table 2: Relative Poverty: Non-poor, Moderate poor and the Extremely poor, 1980 - 2010

Year	Non-Poor (%)	Moderately Poor (%)	Extremely Poor (%)
1980	72.8	21.0	6.2
1985	53.7	34.2	12.1
1992	57.3	28.9	13.9
1996	34.4	36.3	29.3
2004	43.3	32.4	22.0
2010	31.0	30.3	38.7

Source: National Bureau of Statistics. HNLSS 2010

A glance at the table above shows the pervasiveness of poverty in Nigeria. For example, in 1980, the percentage of non-poor was 72.8% and by 2010 it had decreased to 31.0%. This implies that about 41.8% of the population who were previously non-poor had their economic situation worsened and admitted into the moderately poor and perhaps, the extremely poor. On the other hand, there is no indication that those who were extremely poor had moved out of their unenviable economic status; rather, they had been joined by 32.5% of the population. The implication of this is that many more Nigerians have become vulnerable to all the measurement criteria of poverty notwithstanding various poverty alleviation policies and programmes that had been implemented by various Nigerian governments.

Among these was the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), which was instituted in 1979 by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. The specific objective of the progremme was to increase food production on the ground that availability of cheap food will mean higher nutrition level and invariably lead to national growth and development. Notwithstanding this laudable objective, the growing incidence of poverty could not be halted by OFN. Then again, between 1979 and 1983, the then civilian government of Shehu shagari implemented almost the same poverty reduction strategy with his predecessor which he named the Green Revolution. This also emphasized food production, yet, the incidence of poverty continued its upward movement. It is often argued that lack of continuity of poverty alleviation programmes by successive governments was responsible for its failure; but, we are convinced in this paper that the cause of lack of continuity is the main culprit. This conclusion emanates from the fact that successive governments never depended on such programmes for its financial resources, hence, the lips service paid to it. The military regime of Gen. Mohammed Buhari (1983-85) implemented a war against indiscipline arguing that it is tantamount to poverty alleviation programme in the sense that indiscipline and corruption were partly the reason why many Nigerians are poor. This was quickly followed up by series of poverty alleviation programmes by the government of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida between 1985 and 1993. These include the Peoples Bank, which provided loans to prospective entrepreneurs with soft conditions. This also necessitated the emergence of community banks, which serve as adjuncts to the Peoples Banks. The government also initiated the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), whose main focus was to open up rural areas by construction of feeder roads and provision of basic amenities for enhanced national economic development. Notwithstanding the implementation of these programmes and objectives, the incidence of poverty, even in the rural areas could not be abated.

In the search for a way out of this quagmire, the government of Gen. Sanni Abacha (1993-1998) implemented the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) as this period marked the unenviable ranking of Nigeria as one of the poorest 25 countries in the world. At any rate, in spite of N7 billion received by FEAP, of which N3.3 billion was disbursed to targeted cooperative societies, the pervasiveness of poverty continued unabated. There was also gender dimension to poverty alleviation, which led to the establishment of Better Life for Rural Women and the Family Support Programme (FSP), which were pet projects of Nigeria's former first ladies.

At the inception of democratic governance in 1999, the government of Olusegun Obasanjo established the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), which would serve as a central coordinating point for all anti-poverty efforts in the nation, with the sole aim of eradicating absolute poverty in Nigeria. Among these anti-poverty schemes are: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS) and Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). In spite of all these efforts, Programmes and strategies, the road to poverty eradication is still a "bridge to far" . The target of National Poverty Eradication Programmes was to completely wipe out poverty from Nigeria by 2010. However, by the last quarter of 2010, Nigeria has plummeted more into one of the few poorest countries in the world, and four years later, that is, in 2014, the story has not changed.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

That Nigeria is a poor country is not in doubt. Empirical evidence abounds to establish the poverty situation in the country. It is on UNDP record that Nigeria is ranked 146 out of 174 poorest countries in the world in 1997 (UNDP, 1997: 3). It is equally on good account that a greater percentage of Nigerians cannot adequately cater for their basic necessities of life like food, clothing and shelter; and many more are vulnerable to disease and insecurity. In fact, the incidence has taken an alarming proportion, which requires efforts by the government. It is to be noted that successive Nigerian governments have adopted and implemented various agricultural policies and programmes aimed at eradicating poverty; yet, the incidence of poverty appears to defy every antidote.

The problem of poverty eradication is both simple and complex. It is simple because on the surface, it appears that enhancing food production will eradicate poverty, hence, the implementation of various agricultural policies and programmes. Food poverty is an aspect of absolute poverty measure which considers only food expenditure for the affected household. The food poverty line was put at N39, 759. 49 by the NBS in 2010. Absolute poverty measure considers both food expenditure and non-food expenditure using the per capita expenditure approach. The dividing line for absolute poverty was N54, 401. 16. On the other hand, the relative poverty line separates the poor from the non-poor. Accordingly NBS (2010) states that all persons whose per capita expenditure is less than N66, 802. 20 are considered to be poor, while those above the stated amount are considered to be non-poor. Again, the NBS put the dollar per day poverty line at N54, 750. This measure considers all individuals whose expenditure is less than a dollar per day using the exchange rate of Naira to Dollar in 2009/10. However, to the extent that those policies and programmes succeeded, they had not been able to alleviate poverty. This is because poverty eradication is not limited to food production alone; therefore, in spite of the successes recorded by some of the agricultural programmes, the incidence of poverty has continued to permeate the Nigeria society. The table below shows other indicators for measuring poverty

Table 3: Overview of poverty and other related indicators in Nigeria, 2000-2011

Poverty indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011
Population	123.69	139.82	150.67	154.49	158.42	162.47
Life Expectancy	46 years	49 years	50 years	51 years	51 years	53 years
Access to improved water	53%	57%	58%	58%	58%	NA
Access to sanitation	34%	32%	32%	31%	31%	NA
Access to electricity	-	-	-	50.60%	51%	NA
Absolute poverty	-	54.7%	-	-	60.9%	61.9%

Source: Noble Mission for Change Initiative (NMI) 2014

Even with the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes that are targeted on food production, the attitude of government is so complacent. This complacency is occasioned by the fact that in Nigeria, external rent predominate the revenue for embarking on governmental programmes, which are oftentimes imposed on the people. Government earns substantial proportion of its revenue from external rent and therefore is not obligated to the people in the use and allocation of the revenues. More so, because small proportion of the working population is needed to earn external rent, very little emphasis is paid to agriculture that require huge population to generate very little in comparison to external rent. This tendency implies that most of the agricultural programmes embarked by successive Nigeria governments were mere palliative measures, and not targeted at poverty alleviation/eradication. In the same vein, enormous external rent that is generated by the government as the principal recipient have created a predatory hegemonic elites with a rentier mentality, whose interest is in amassing wealth through manipulation and exploitation rather than production. Consequently, very little attention is devoted to the development of agricultural sector at the detriment of poverty alleviation. The people who are meant to benefit from these programmes are abandoned, unable to agitate against government insensitivity because part of the enormous financial resources at the disposal of the government is used to repress any recalcitrant behaviour against the state.

Again, the complex aspect of poverty eradication relates to the fact that successive governments do not depend on those programmes for financial resources, and therefore do not pursue them vigorously. Such programmes are not productive because the people do not contribute anything to its workability. The programmes are not implemented with taxes from the people, and as a result, the people cannot mount pressure on the government in both decision making and implementation of such programmes. The government merely allocates funds to implement such programmes, which is a process of co-opting the populace to support the government in power. Now, because the people have not made any contribution to the programmes in terms of taxes, they are easily coerced by the government to support the programme. This situation further necessitates a complacent attitude on the part of the government because it generates substantial revenue from external rent and uses such to embark on palliative agricultural programmes, which pacifies the people and renders them incapable of being incorporated in decision making concerning them.

Meanwhile, as a result of the predominance of oil rent, the government becomes autonomous from the people and is not accountable to them. Any form of agitation or revolt from the people is usually repressed with minimal or absolute force. In fact, a government that depends heavily on rents is usually autocratic. More so, because the economy of the rentier state relies on a substantial external rent, the government does not require a strong domestic productive sector. Hence, all the programmes that had been implemented with a view to eradicating poverty are indeed meant to pacify the people in order to elicit legitimacy. It is therefore not surprising that in spite of fifty years of combating poverty, the incidence has continued to increase. In fact, poverty eradication programmes are not really meant to eradicate poverty, but, as it appears, it constitutes one of the avenues through which the incumbents in political and governmental offices manifest their convoluted culture of accumulation and appropriate oil money to themselves.

However, this is not to say that poverty can not be eradicated in Nigeria. The eradication of poverty is possible from two major dimensions. First, poverty could be eradicated through a multi-sectoral and multi-faceted approach. This involves the integration of agricultural (primary sector) programmes with the development of industrialization (secondary sector). It is through the integration of these two sectors that the economy can become productive, and the state ceases to be an allocation state. The state becomes a productive state because the revenues generated by various industries will be channeled back to sustain production. As a result, the government can extract income from domestic economy through taxation; and the people that sustain the economy with their enormous taxes will partner with government in both decision making and implementation of programmes that affect them. In fact, it is this pattern of people's involvement in agricultural programmes, integrated of course, with other aspects of the economy, particularly, industrialization, that can make the government to be accountable and therefore, lead to poverty eradication.

Second, without attempting to be pessimistic, but to relate the incidence of poverty to the existing realities on the ground, the end of poverty in Nigeria is not in sight. This is because, in so far as the economy depends on oil rent and the state continues to become autonomous from the citizens financially, the government will continue to have a complacent attitude towards agricultural policies and programmes; and the citizens will lack the will power to mount pressure on the government in respect of decision making and implementation that affects them. Therefore, the eradication of poverty is only possible from this dimension when the state becomes relatively autonomous financially. It is only this condition that can enhance the value of the citizens, as government depends on their taxes for its existence, thereby enhancing the participation of the people in decision making and implementation of programme that can eradicate poverty. But unfortunately, the only condition that can make the state to have limited financial autonomy is when it ceases to depend on rent from oil, which implies possibly, when the Nigerian oil finishes.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion therefore, the contribution of agriculture to national development cannot be over-emphasized. It has contributed in feeding its growing population, generated employment, provided raw materials for the growing industries and also provided foreign exchange for enhanced economic development. By providing food for the teeming population, it has contributed to poverty reduction, at least, by providing one of the basic necessities of life, which include food, clothing and shelter. Yet, in spite of these enormous contributions of agriculture to national development, it has not been able to eradicate poverty. Several reasons have been adduced to why various agricultural policies and programmes have failed to eradicate poverty. Among these are bad/poor policies, inconsistency in policy implementation, etc.

However, the paper finds out that because successive governments depend on oil rent for its revenue, it does not really need a productive domestic sector. Again, such over-dependence on oil rent reduces the value the government attaches to its citizens because they (the citizens) do not contribute much to the economic development. This situation necessitates a complacent attitude towards the citizens by the government.

Following from the above, the paper recommends that while the state continues to depend on oil rent, which undermines agricultural development, a multi-sectoral and multi-faceted approach to poverty alleviation remains a short-term and immediate solution to the deepening incidence of poverty. However, a more complex solution to poverty eradication is the involvement of the people in both decision making and implementation of policies and programmes that affect them. This should be in concomitant with their ability to pay taxes to government, which will enhance their value in the political system. This tendency is capable of reducing the autonomous status of the state because the people who contribute enormous financial resources to government must necessarily have a say in agricultural policy making and implementation that can eradicate poverty.

REFERENCES

BOOKS

Beblawi, H. & Luciani, G. (1987) *The Rentier State and the Integration of the Arab World*, London: Croom Helm.

Obi, E. A. et al (2008) *Public Policy Analysis and Decision Making*. Onitsha: Bookpoint Educational Ltd,

Offiong, D. A. (2001) *Globalization: Post-Neodependency and Poverty in Africa*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.

Ogbuagu, C. S. A. (1995) *Nigeria: Development Policies and Programmes*, Calabar: University of Calabar Press.

Soroka, M. P. and Bryjak, G. J. (1992*) Sociology: Cultural Diversity in a Changing World.*
Boston: Sllyn and Bacon.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Ogen Olukoya (2003) "Patterns of Economic Growth and Development in Nigeria since 1960" in S.O. Arifalo and Gboyega Ajayi (eds.) (2003) *Essays in Nigerian Contemporary History.* Lagos: First Academic Publishers.

JOURNALS

Jones, E.I., and Woolf, S.S. (eds.) (1969) *Agrarian Change and Economic Development: The Historical Problems*. London: Methuen.

Mehlum, H. and Moene, K. (2002)" Battlefields and Market Places" *Journal of Defense and Peace Economic. VOL. 6. No. 3.*

Oluwasanmi, H.A. (1966) Agriculture and Nigeria's Economic Development Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Olsson, O. (2006) "Conflict Diamond". *Journal of Development Economics,* Vol. 1. NO. 3.

Skaperdas, S. (2002) "Warlord Competition". *Journal of Peace Research*, 39.

Torvik, R. (2002) "Natural Resources, Rent Seeking and Welfare". *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 5 No. 67.

Yates, D.A (2009) Enhancing the Governance of Africa's Oil Sector. Occasional Paper No. 51 on Governance of

Africa's Resources Programme. South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

CONFERENCE/BRIEFING PAPERS

Dijohn, J (2003) Mineral-Resource Abundanceand Violent Political Conflicts. Briefing Paper No. 2.

GOVERNMENT/OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Federal Office of Statistics (FOS).
National Bureau of Statistics. HNLSS 2010
Noble Mission for Change Initiative (NMI) 2014
United Nations Development Programme (1997), Nigerian Human Development Report. New York: United Nations.
United Nations Development Programme (2010), Nigerian Human Development Report. New York: United Nations.

INTERNET MATERIALS

http://www.articledashboard.com/Article/Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria. Retrieved on 29/3/13
http://www.nigeriafirst.org/printer_263.shtml. Retrieved on 29/3/13
Wikihttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rentier_statepedia, the free encyclopedia Retrieved on 4/4/13
http://www.nigeriafirst.org/printer_263.shtml Retrieved on 14/10/13
http://ezinearticles.com/?Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria-Through-Agriculture-and-Enterprise-Revolution&id=3474906 Retrieved on 15/10/13
http://www.articledashboard.com/Article/Poverty-Eradication-in-Nigeria-through-Agriculture-and-Enterprise-Revolution/1318093 Retrieved on 6/2/14
http://www.cenbank.org/out/Publications/efr/RD/2002/efrVol39-4-3.pdf Retrieved on 8/2/14
http://www.onlinenigeria.com/links/agricadv.asp?blurb=482 Retrieved on 13/2/14
http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Ogen.pdf, Retrieved on 16/2/14