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# THE AGRICULTURE PROMOTION POLICY OF THE BUHARI ADMINISTRATION AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA. A CASE STUDY OF 2016-2023

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**Abstract**
*This study evaluates Nigeria's Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) from 2016 to 2023, employing a mixed approach that integrates both theoretical frameworks and methodological strategies. Grounded in the Political Economy Theory, the analysis probes the policy's implementation, challenges, and outcomes, shedding light on its impact on food security. Utilizing a documentary method of data collection, the study relies on secondary sources including government reports, scholarly literature, and statistical data. Content analysis techniques were adopted as the method of data analysis. The study found that despite the APP's ambitious objectives to enhance agricultural productivity and achieve food self-sufficiency, its execution encountered significant hurdles, including inconsistent implementation, corruption, and inadequate funding. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2023) reveals alarming trends in food inflation, reaching unprecedented levels of 33.9% in 2023, exacerbating food insecurity. Additionally, the monoculture emphasis on rice production overlooked other vital crops, leading to biodiversity loss. Security challenges and infrastructure deficiencies further impeded agricultural output, perpetuating Nigeria's high dependency on food imports. The application of Political Economy Theory underscores the interplay between political and economic factors, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive policy reforms and effective implementation strategies. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of political will and resource allocation in prioritizing the agricultural sector to address these enormous challenges.*

**Keywords:** Agriculture Promotion Policy, food security, Nigeria, policy implementation, Rentier-State theory,

## Introduction

Agriculture is a crucial sector for every state's economy, offering significant potential for job creation, food security, and poverty reduction. In Nigeria, this sector was the backbone of the economy in the early 1960s (Nweze, 2018), serving as a key driver of growth and development. Highlighting its importance, Kamil, Ugural, & Festus (2017) noted that agriculture is integral to the Millennium Development Goals Programme aimed at reducing poverty in Nigeria. Consequently, agricultural production is essential for any program striving to achieve food security. Food security exists when all individuals, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to enough safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2010). According to the United Nations Human Development Index (2022), Nigeria was ranked 161 out of 193 qualifying countries, with a score of 31.1, indicating a serious level of hunger. 70 percent of Nigerians live on less than $2.15 per day (Global Hunger Index, 2019). In 2012, Nigeria was ranked 40th out of 79 on the GHI and 156th out of 187 on the 2011 United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. Poverty is particularly severe in rural areas, where 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2021). Although Nigeria is the world's

largest producer of cassava, yam, and cowpea, it remains a food-deficit country reliant on imports of grains, livestock products, and fish (International Fund for Agricultural Development, (IFAD 2021).

Food security can be understood in terms of availability, accessibility, and affordability. Therefore, it involves physical and economic access to sufficient food for all household members without undue risk of losing that access (World Bank, 2001). Food security depends on agricultural production, food imports and donations, employment opportunities and income, intra-household decision-making and resource allocation, healthcare utilization, and caring practices.

Despite its potential, the agricultural sector has significantly underperformed. This underperformance is evident in the high rates of malnutrition, especially among children, and the high food prices nationwide. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2021), food insecurity, undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies are widespread across Nigeria. Since the discovery of oil, the agricultural sector has received less attention from the government, unable to compete with the economic impact of the oil industry. As a result, Nigeria has become heavily reliant on food imports Adeagbo, (2012), Hesham et al 2021 Rural areas are particularly vulnerable, experiencing malnutrition, erratic food supplies, high food costs, low-quality food, and sometimes complete food shortages. This issue is especially pronounced in many parts of northern Nigeria Akinyele, (2009), Adeolu B, (2019).

Successive administrations in Nigeria have implemented various policies to develop the agricultural sector. In 1973, the Federal Government introduced the National Food Operation Programme and established the Nigerian Agriculture and Cooperative Bank to support agriculture and assist farmers. This was followed by the Operation Feed the Nation initiative in 1976, aimed at revitalizing the agricultural sector, which had been declining in its contribution to economic growth. Other notable agricultural programs included the National Food Production Programme (1973), Agricultural Development Project (1975), Agricultural Credit and Guarantee Scheme (1977), the Green Revolution Programme (1979-1980), National Accelerated Food Production Project (1985-1999), National Special Programmes for Food Security (2003), National Fadama Development Project (2004), Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programmes (2001), and the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) (2011) (Nwaobiala, 2015).

The overarching goals of these initiatives were to achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food production, boost food output, foster linkages between agriculture and other economic sectors, and ensure fair income distribution among food producers. Additionally, they aimed to maintain good nutritional standards and revitalize the agricultural sector to generate employment for the vast number of unemployed individuals. Despite these ambitious objectives, many programs failed due to poor conception and implementation, and often duplicated existing efforts (Fasoranti, 2006).

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2023) highlighted that frequent policy changes and the poor performance of agencies responsible for implementing agricultural policies have significantly hindered food production and distribution. Each new government typically abandons previous agricultural policies and introduces new ones, without addressing deficiencies in existing programs to make them more effective.

In response to these challenges, the Federal Government under President Muhammadu Buhari introduced the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) in August 2016. This policy aimed to revitalize the agricultural sector to ensure food security, create jobs, diversify the economy, and increase foreign exchange earnings. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD, 2016). According to the APP (2016-2020), Nigeria faces two primary challenges in the agricultural sector: an inability to meet domestic food needs and a

failure to export at competitive quality levels. The first challenge stems from an inefficient input system and farming model, leaving an aging population of farmers without sufficient seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, and crop protection (FMARD, 2016 in APP).

The second challenge arises from an inefficient system for establishing and enforcing food quality standards, coupled with poor knowledge of target markets. Insufficient food testing facilities, a weak inspectorate system within FMARD, and poor coordination among federal agencies exacerbate these problems. FMARD (2016) stated that addressing these gaps requires producing enough high-quality food for the domestic market and successfully serving the export market to earn foreign exchange. The APP focuses on resolving core issues in food production and quality standards, aiming to improve productivity and elevate standards for all Nigerian food production, benefiting both domestic and export markets.

207 million people in Nigeria face acute food insecurity and require urgent assistance (FAO, 2021). The root of Nigeria's food crisis can be traced back to the agricultural sector's collapse in the mid-1970s. As the oil industry grew, the government's focus shifted from agriculture to petroleum. The 1970s oil boom and the influx of petrodollars led to increased food imports, replacing domestic production. When oil prices crashed and petrodollars dwindled, a food crisis emerged (Nwalie, 2017). Rural areas became particularly vulnerable, experiencing malnutrition, erratic food supplies, high food costs, low-quality food, and sometimes complete food shortages, especially in northern Nigeria (Akinyele, 2009).

The APP was developed to address these issues by revitalizing the agricultural sector, ensuring food security, creating jobs, diversifying the economy, and enhancing foreign exchange earnings. However, despite its implementation, food insecurity in Nigeria remains a significant issue. Reports suggesting that Nigeria has become the world's poverty capital highlight the severity of food insecurity in the country. Cable News Network (CNN, 2018; Agostini, 2018). Extreme poverty and acute food insecurity pose serious challenges to Nigeria's stability and development. This study aims to examine the impact of the APP on food security in Nigeria from 2016 to 2020, focusing on the policies and outcomes during President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

**Statement of Problem**

Despite Nigeria’s vast arable land and favorable weather for farming, the country faces significant food security challenges exacerbated by a high poverty rate, with over 70% of the population living on less than 2.5 dollar per day Akerele et al, (2016), World Bank (2023) While the nation has the potential for self-sufficiency in food production and export (National Security Strategy, 2019), the discovery of crude oil led to the neglect of agriculture, resulting in stagnation and increased reliance on food imports (Soludo, 2004). Various government policies and programs such as the National Accelerated Food Production Project, Operation Feed the Nation, and the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (Nwaobiala, 2015) aimed to revamp agriculture but often failed due to inconsistent implementation and duplication of efforts. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2023). The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) introduced in 2016 sought to address these challenges by integrating agricultural value chains and promoting sustainable resource use to enhance food security, job creation, and export earnings (FMARD, 2016; Ibeawuchi, 2018). However, food availability, accessibility, and affordability remain issues, with Nigeria still a food deficit nation despite being a leading producer of cassava, yam, and cowpea (GFSS, 2018). Scholars argue that inadequate funding, lack of access to credit, and government insensitivity to rural needs hinder agricultural productivity and food security (Albert & Isife, 2009; Eze et al., 2010). The APP’s focus on the international market and insufficient program funding have not adequately addressed domestic food security needs, as noted by Abdulrahaman (2013)

and Odunze (2018). This study seeks to examine the impact of the APP on food security in Nigeria from 2016-2020, questioning whether inadequate funding and the policy's international market focus have undermined food sufficiency and accessibility in the country.

## Literature Review

### Budgetary Allocation to Agricultural Policies and Food Sufficiency in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, all levels of government frequently allocate budgets for agricultural development. (2016 76.16 billion, 2017 135.6 billion, 2018 203.01 billion, 2019 322.29 billion, 2020 160.46 billion, 2021 280.32 billion, 2022 215.87 billion, 2023 228.43 billion). Source: Budget office of Federation 2023. However, the extent to which these budget allocations enhance and promote agricultural growth and food sufficiency remains questionable Ita, Ukpong, (2013), Ekpebu, (2020). A major reason for food scarcity and poverty in many developing countries, including Nigeria, is reduced agricultural production due to insufficient capital, inadequate technology, farmers herders conflict and poor-quality inputs. These issues could be addressed through increased budgetary allocations and efficient management (Taiwo, 2001). Proper utilization of allocated funds for the agricultural sector could ensure lasting valuable outcomes, significantly impacting productivity and economic development in the country.

Various past administrations in Nigeria have implemented policies aimed at improving the agricultural sector. Many of these policies have been undermined by poor funding and mismanagement. For instance, Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012) noted that the National Accelerated Food Production programme of 1972, which sought to end the food crisis, failed primarily due to financial issues. They observed that the program's downfall was due to cost-sharing arrangements that excluded non-cooperative society farmers, sudden withdrawal of funding by the Federal Government, and demonstration trials that did not accurately reflect the introduced technology. According to Agber, Iortima, and Imbur (2013), the River Basin Development Authorities, established in 1973, aimed to provide irrigation facilities, potable water, land clearing services, rural infrastructure improvements, and fish pond construction. Despite a budget of N32.8 billion, the program faced problems such as political interference and wasteful spending to streamline the authorities' sizes and functions (Iwuchukwu & Igbokwe, 2009).

The Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) initiated in 1975 aimed to boost food production and raise small-scale farmers' incomes, but failed due to poor financial management, funding shortages, unsuitable technologies, untimely supply of inputs, high labor mobility, limited agency involvement, inconsistent funding, and technology transfer issues (Agber et al., 2013). Operation Feed the Nation, launched in 1976, aimed to encourage all Nigerians to engage in agriculture for commercial and home consumption, aiming for self-sufficiency by 1985. However, the policy faced problems such as indiscriminate land use, inexperienced participants, reliance on hired labor, lack of market access, and livestock diseases (Agber et al., 2013). The Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure, established in 1986, sought to improve rural living standards through resource utilization and mass participation. Despite substantial budget allocations, it suffered from fund mismanagement, poor infrastructure quality, and lack of focus (Idachaba, 1988; Iwuchukwu et al., 2012; Nweke et al., 2018). The Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) introduced the National Economic Empowerment and Development Programme and the National Special Programme for Food Security to enhance food production and reduce rural poverty, but faced issues such as loan repayment delays, insufficient credit use knowledge, labor shortages, lack of modern storage facilities, and high input costs (Agber et al., 2013; Iwuchukwu et al.,

2012). The Yar'Adua/Jonathan administration (2007-2010) launched the Agricultural Transformation Agenda to improve agricultural yields and income, continuing under Goodluck Jonathan's Vision 20:20. In 2016, President Buhari replaced the ATA with the ongoing Agricultural Promotion Policy (Nweke et al., 2018). Despite these efforts, the Nigerian government has not adequately funded the agricultural sector, resulting in limited impact on sector growth (Ihugba, 2013).

**The Market Focus of the Agricultural Policies and Food Accessibility in Nigeria**

According to Amalu (1998), Yusuf (2016), Nigerian agriculture has suffered due to the resource curse of oil and inappropriate policies, with unpredictable government interventions leading to short-term investment decisions and rent-seeking behavior. These persistent failures reveal the fundamental weaknesses in agricultural policies and the inability of various administrations to address core agricultural development issues. NAFFP, initiated in 1972, aimed to increase maize, cassava, rice, and wheat production but was limited to northern states and focused on subsistence production (Iwuchukwu et al., 2012). Operation Feed the Nation (1976) sought to increase food production nationwide, but faced issues like indiscriminate land use, inexperienced participants, and lack of market access (Agber et al., 2013). The Green Revolution (1980) aimed for food security and increased livestock and fish production, supported by government-provided inputs, but struggled with implementation issues (Iwuchukwu et al., 2012). The National Agricultural Land Development Authority (1992) sought to support land development and rural employment but faced similar challenges (Agber et al., 2013). The National Economic Empowerment and Development Programme (1999) aimed at poverty eradication and agricultural productivity, yet faced limitations in funding and implementation (Iwuchukwu et al., 2012). The FMARD (2016) highlighted issues such as domestic food supply shortfalls and quality problems for international markets, with multiple constraints across the agribusiness system, including inadequate infrastructure and market information (Nwibo and Okorie, 2013). Odunze (2019) noted that successful privatization of the agricultural commodity exchange could enhance market linkages and economic opportunities. Despite being Africa's leading rice consumer and producer, Nigeria remains a major rice importer due to insufficient local production (FAO, 2019; Metu et al., 2016). High tariffs on rice imports have led to increased smuggling from neighboring countries (Tyohmba, 2014). Ultimately, Nigeria's agricultural development policies aim to ensure food security, but domestic production has not kept pace with demand, leading to reliance on imports (Metu et al., 2016).

**Methodology**

To generate relevant data to test and validate our hypotheses, we relied on documentary method of data collection. The study adopted and employed secondary data. These include reports by agencies of government, books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and internet sources. The data generated in this study was analyzed using descriptive analytical tools for presentation and content analysis for interpretation.

**Theoretical Framework**

Political Economy Theory provides a comprehensive lens through which to evaluate Nigeria's Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) from 2016 to 2023, emphasizing the interconnectedness of political and economic factors that influence policy outcomes. By applying this theory, the study can better understand the complexities and challenges inherent in the APP's implementation and the broader socio-economic context.

Firstly, the theory highlights the role of political institutions and governance structures in shaping economic policies. In Nigeria, the efficacy of the APP is significantly influenced by

the country's political landscape, characterized by frequent changes in leadership, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and corruption. Political Economy Theory suggests that these political dynamics can hinder consistent and effective policy implementation. The APP's ambitious goals of enhancing agricultural productivity and achieving food self-sufficiency are contingent upon stable and transparent governance, which has often been lacking. Inconsistent policy application and corruption have diverted resources away from intended agricultural projects, undermining the policy's objectives.

Secondly, the theory's emphasis on the distribution of power and resources is crucial in understanding the APP's challenges. Nigeria's agricultural sector is deeply affected by the power relations between federal and state governments, as well as between government officials and local farmers. The political elite often control resource allocation, leading to inequitable distribution and insufficient funding for critical agricultural initiatives. This centralization of power has resulted in inadequate support for smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of Nigeria's agricultural workforce. Political Economy Theory posits that such disparities in power and resource allocation can perpetuate inefficiencies and impede comprehensive agricultural development.

Moreover, Political Economy Theory underscores the importance of addressing both economic and political barriers to achieve policy success. For the APP, this means tackling issues such as food inflation, which reached 33.9% in 2023, and the monoculture emphasis on rice production that has led to biodiversity loss. These economic challenges are exacerbated by political decisions and priorities that have not adequately diversified agricultural investments. The theory suggests that without a holistic approach that integrates political stability, effective governance, and diversified economic strategies, the APP's goals will remain unattainable.

Furthermore, the theory highlights the impact of global economic forces and international relations on national policies. Nigeria's dependency on food imports, despite the APP's aim for self-sufficiency, can be analyzed through this lens. Global market fluctuations, trade policies, and international financial institutions play a significant role in shaping Nigeria's agricultural economy. Political Economy Theory encourages a critical examination of how these external factors interact with domestic policies and the extent to which they influence Nigeria's food security and agricultural sustainability.

Finally, the theory's application underscores the necessity of political will and strategic resource allocation in prioritizing the agricultural sector. The study finds that despite the APP's well-intentioned objectives, the lack of political commitment and inadequate investment in agricultural infrastructure, research, and development have severely constrained its impact.
Political Economy Theory examines the dynamic relationships between politics and economics, emphasizing how political institutions, the political environment, and the economic system influence each other. This theoretical framework posits that economic policies and outcomes cannot be understood in isolation from the political structures and power dynamics that shape them. Central to this theory is the belief that economic decisions are deeply embedded within political processes, and that political power and economic resources are often intertwined, influencing policy formulation and implementation.

Prominent proponents of Political Economy Theory include classical and contemporary scholars such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, and more recent thinkers like Douglass North and Amartya Sen. Adam Smith, often regarded as the father of modern

economics, argued for the benefits of free markets and the 'invisible hand' guiding economic efficiency and wealth creation. His seminal work, "The Wealth of Nations," laid the groundwork for understanding how market forces operate under minimal government intervention. However, Smith also acknowledged the role of the state in providing public goods and addressing market failures.

Karl Marx, in stark contrast, critiqued the capitalist system, highlighting its inherent inequalities and the exploitation of the working class. In his work "Das Kapital," Marx elucidated the concept of surplus value and the class struggles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He argued that the capitalist system would inevitably lead to its own downfall through revolutionary change, necessitating a shift towards a classless, communist society.

John Maynard Keynes introduced a different perspective by advocating for active government intervention to manage economic cycles and mitigate the adverse effects of economic recessions. His groundbreaking work "The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" challenged the classical economics notion of self-correcting markets, suggesting that aggregate demand is often insufficient to ensure full employment and economic stability. Keynesian economics thus supports the use of fiscal and monetary policies to stimulate demand and promote economic growth during downturns.

Contemporary political economists like Douglass North and Amartya Sen have further expanded the theory. Douglass North emphasized the role of institutions in economic performance, arguing that economic development is contingent on the effectiveness of legal and political frameworks. His work on institutional economics highlights how property rights, political stability, and governance structures influence economic outcomes. Amartya Sen, on the other hand, focused on development economics, integrating ethical considerations into economic analysis. His capability approach redefined development as the expansion of individuals' freedoms and capabilities, advocating for policies that address social justice and human well-being.

Political Economy Theory also delves into how globalization, governance, institutional quality, and power relations impact economic development and policy efficacy. It examines the influence of multinational corporations, international financial institutions, and global trade on national economies, highlighting the interplay between global and local factors. This theory underscores the importance of understanding the political context and the role of state actors in shaping economic policies. It provides a robust framework for analyzing policies such as Nigeria's Agriculture Promotion Policy and its multifaceted challenges, emphasizing that successful policy implementation requires not only sound economic planning but also political will, effective governance, and the equitable distribution of resources.

**Application of the Theory**

Political Economy Theory provides a comprehensive lens through which to evaluate Nigeria's Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) from 2016 to 2023, emphasizing the interconnectedness of political and economic factors that influence policy outcomes. By applying this theory, the study can better understand the complexities and challenges inherent in the APP's implementation and the broader socio-economic context.

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**Data Analysis**

Agriculture has always been vital in Nigeria's economic development, providing employment for both skilled and unskilled labor and significantly contributing to national and state GDP. It supplies raw materials to the country’s industrial sector and foreign agro-allied industries, while also enhancing food security at both levels. However, since the discovery of crude oil in the 1960s, there has been a consistent neglect of the agricultural sector at the national and state levels (IFAD, 2013). Public spending on agriculture remains low, regardless of the indicator used. Budgetary allocations to agriculture, compared to other key sectors, are also insufficient despite its crucial role in combating poverty, hunger, and unemployment, and driving economic development.

Table 1 illustrates the trend in federal budget allocations to agriculture. The data shows that Nigeria decreased its budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector from N203 billion in

2018 to N138 billion in 2019, even as the government aimed to achieve food security. Although these amounts may appear substantial, they represent only a small fraction of the total annual budget, which is inadequate for the sector's needs. This under-funding consequently affects agriculture's contribution to Nigeria's GDP, as shown in Figure 1.

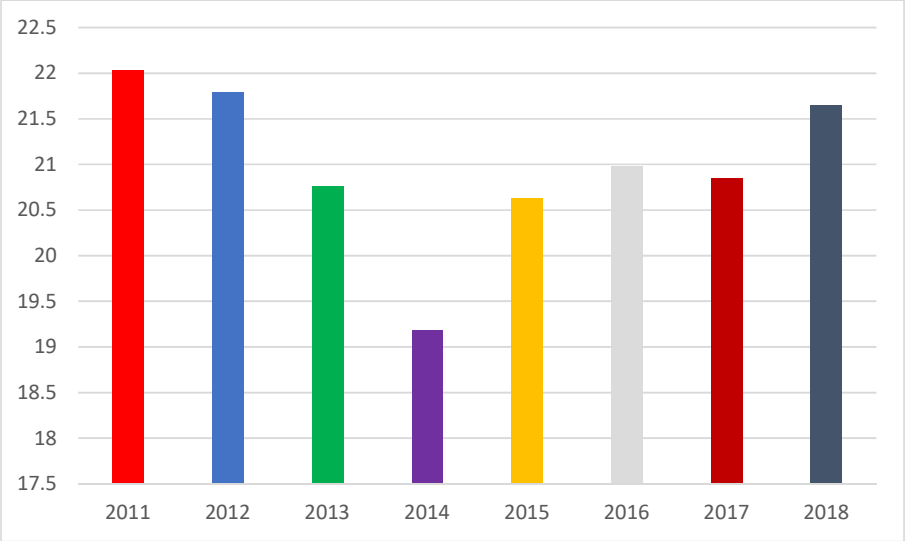
*Table 1: Allocation to Agricultural Sector in Nigeria's Annual Budget, 2011-2019*

| **Year** | **National budget (trillion in ₦)** | **Allocation to agriculture (billions in ₦** | **Agriculture contribution to GDP in percentage** | **Percentages of allocation to agriculture** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2011 | 4.07 | 81.2 | 22.03 | 1.81 |
| 2012 | 4.69 | 7.89 | 21.79 | 1.66 |
| 2013 | 4.92 | 81.4 | 20.76 | 1.77 |
| 2014 | 4.67 | 66.6 | 19.19 | 1.48 |
| 2015 | 4.49 | 39.1 | 20.63 | 0.9 |
| 2016 | 6.07 | 76 .7 | 20.98 | 1.25 |
| 2017 | 7.4 | 135 | 20.85 | 1.8 |
| 2018 | 9.12 | 203 | 21.65 | 3.2 |
| 2019 | 8.8 | 138 | | 1.56 |

Compilation by Author

Table 1 empirically shows that there have not been steady growth from agriculture's contribution to Nigeria's GDP annually. This therefore suggests there is a crucial need for government to improve on the pattern of funding to the agricultural sector in order to achieve APP's goal of food security for Nigerians.

*Figure 1: Annual Contribution of Agriculture to GDP in Nigeria*




It is clear that the percentage of budget allocation to Nigeria's agricultural sector falls below the 20% international standard recommended by the FAO. Additionally, Nigeria is a signatory to the Maputo and Malabo declarations of 2003 and 2014, respectively. According to Ibirogba (2018), during the African Union's second ordinary assembly in July 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, African Heads of State and Government endorsed the "Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa." A key commitment of the declaration was allocating at least 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development within five years. However, fifteen years later, Nigeria had yet to fulfill this commitment, with only 3.2% of its 2018 budget dedicated to agriculture (Ibirogba, 2018).

Eke (2019) notes that budget allocations to the agricultural sector have fluctuated over the years, increasing from 1.25% in 2016 to 1.82% in 2017 and to 3.2% in 2018. However, in 2019, the allocation dropped to 1.56%, even as the government planned to diversify the economy away from crude oil and invest in critical sectors like agriculture. This decrease indicates that agriculture was deprioritized in the 2019 budget, which is concerning to stakeholders (Eke, 2019).

**The Impact of Export Orientation Focus and Availability of Locally Produced Commodities.**

Several efforts have been initiated by President Mohammadu Buhari's administration to secure Nigeria's position in the export market. According to a report by the Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM) (2019), the export development facility is being introduced to stimulate funding, particularly for small and medium enterprises, to facilitate regional industrialization and enhance value-added exports. This initiative, backed by a 50 million naira investment from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), aims to broaden Nigeria's export basket and market destinations. However, despite the administration's focus on exports, there is a misplaced priority concerning domestic consumption. Nigeria has yet to produce enough food to satisfy its population. The FAO (2017) estimates that Nigeria loses USD 10 billion annually in export opportunities from groundnut, palm oil, cocoa, and cotton due to declining production. Food production has not kept pace with population growth, resulting in increased food imports and decreased national food self-sufficiency.

Data from the NBS (2019) shows that in 2018, Nigeria had a trade deficit of N548 billion in agricultural goods, with imports far exceeding exports. Of the N1.15 trillion in agricultural

trade, imports accounted for 73.82%, while exports accounted for only 26.18%. In 2018, Nigeria imported agricultural goods worth N852.11 billion, a 4% decrease from N886.7 billion in 2017. However, the 2017 figure was a 35.09% increase compared to N656.4 billion in 2016. In contrast, Nigeria exported N302.24 billion worth of agricultural goods in 2018. The first quarter of 2018 saw agricultural goods exports of N73.25 billion, representing 1.56% of total exports, while imports cost N184.49 billion, representing 7.33% of total imports. Overall, agricultural goods accounted for N257.74 billion and 3.57% of total trade in the first quarter of 2018.

In the first six months of 2019, Nigeria's agricultural exports rose to N152.3 billion, as indicated in NBS reports for the first and second quarters of 2019. Major agricultural exports included Sesamum seeds, cashew nuts, fermented cocoa beans, raw cocoa beans, frozen shrimps and prawns, ginger, and natural cocoa butter. Agricultural exports increased by 18% from the second half of 2018 to the first half of 2019. Specifically, in the second half of 2018, agricultural exports were N128.5 billion, compared to N152.3 billion in the first half of 2019. Comparing the first half of 2019 with the corresponding half of 2018 (N148.1 billion), agricultural exports rose by 3% (Adesoji, 2019).

Sesamum seeds have been Nigeria's largest agricultural export earner in recent years, continuing this trend in the first half of 2019 with exports worth N60.6 billion. Sesame oil and its fractions also ranked among the top 10 agricultural exports, with N928.1 million. Fermented cocoa beans were the second most exported agricultural product, with exports estimated at N31 billion in the first half of 2019. Other cocoa-related products included raw cocoa beans (N17.15 billion) and natural cocoa butter (N2.26 billion). Cashew nuts were the third-largest agricultural export, generating N8 billion. Nigeria's major markets for cashew nuts in the first half of 2019 were Vietnam, India, Tanzania, Russia, and the Netherlands. Other significant agricultural exports included ginger (N2.26 billion) and agro-food items (N1.8 billion) (NBS, 2019).

Despite the significant rise in agricultural exports in the first half of 2019, Adesoji (2019) warns that this should not distract the government from the reality that Nigeria still imports a large number of agricultural products. The agriculture trade balance showed a deficit of N176.4 billion, with Nigeria importing N249.9 billion in agricultural products in the second quarter of 2019, while exports were only N73.4 billion. This highlights that despite the sector's potential, Nigeria remains heavily reliant on imports (Adesoji, 2019).

Nigeria's food production does not meet the needs of its population, which exceeds 200 million. The Global Hunger Index indicates that Nigeria is among the food-deficit states. Table 5.1 illustrates Nigeria's poor performance in the global hunger index, revealing significant food insecurity. This insecurity results from inadequate local food production. Without access to agricultural technologies, local farmers cannot increase food production, and Nigeria's ranking on the GHI will not improve.

*Table 2: Surveys of Nigeria's Hunger Index, 2010-2019*

| Year | Nigeria Global Ranking | Index Score |
|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 47 | 17.8 |
| 2011 | 40 | 15.5 |
| 2012 | 40 | 15.7 |
| 2013 | 39 | 15.0 |
| 2014 | 38 | 14.7 |
| 2015 | 88 | 32.8 |
| 2016 | 84 | 25.5 |
| 2017 | 84 | 25.5 |
| 2018 | 103 | 31.1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 93 | 27.9 |

Author's compilation from GHI 2010-2019.

**Evaluating the Success and Failures of the APP**

The Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) of the Buhari administration, implemented from 2016 to 2023, aimed to diversify Nigeria's economy by enhancing agricultural productivity and achieving food security. This policy focused on improving access to finance, technology, and market infrastructure for farmers. Notably, the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), launched under the APP, provided credit to smallholder farmers, boosting production of staple crops like rice and maize. Between 2016 and 2023, Nigeria saw a significant increase in rice production, with local production rising from 3.7 million metric tons in 2016 to over 5 million metric tons by 2021. Food and Agriculture Organization, (FAO 2021)This growth contributed to a reduction in rice imports by 60%, thereby improving the country's food self-sufficiency. Additionally, the APP emphasized the adoption of modern agricultural practices and mechanization, leading to enhanced yields and productivity. Despite these advancements, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent policy implementation, and security issues in farming regions hindered the full realization of food security goals. Nonetheless, the policy's impact on agriculture was evident in the increase in agricultural GDP, which grew by an average of 3.58% annually during this period, compared to 2.6% in the preceding years. (National Bureau of Statistics 2021).

The Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) of the Buhari administration, from 2016 to 2023, faced significant challenges and fell short of achieving its ambitious goals, casting a negative light on Nigeria's food security landscape. Despite efforts to boost agricultural productivity, the policy's implementation was marred by inconsistent execution, corruption, and inadequate funding. For instance, the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), intended to provide credit to smallholder farmers, was plagued by bureaucratic inefficiencies and loan repayment issues, resulting in limited impact on crop yields. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2021) indicated that food inflation soared to unprecedented levels, peaking at 33.9% in 2023, exacerbating food insecurity among the populace. The APP's emphasis on rice production led to a monoculture approach, neglecting other critical crops and contributing to biodiversity loss and soil degradation. Furthermore, persistent security issues, including armed conflicts in key agricultural zones, disrupted farming activities and displaced thousands of farmers, significantly reducing agricultural output. Infrastructure deficiencies, such as poor road networks and lack of storage facilities, further hindered the efficient distribution of agricultural produce, leading to high post-harvest losses estimated at 20-30%. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2023). Consequently, Nigeria's dependency on food imports remained high, with the country importing over $3 billion worth of food annually. These issues highlight the APP's failure to create a resilient and sustainable agricultural sector, leaving Nigeria grappling with heightened food insecurity and underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive policy reforms and more effective implementation strategies.

**Conclusion**

This study was aimed at systematically analyzing the APP and food security in Nigeria. Evidence shown by this study indicates that a lot still has to be done in the agricultural sector of Nigeria. The financial commitment from government towards the agricultural sector is poor and inadequate making it difficult to achieve stipulated goals of agriculture in Nigeria. The structure of the Nigerian economy is highly disincentive to the agricultural sector given that huge priority is given to the oil sector because of the rent it accrues to the ruling elite. Even though the administration of President Mohammadu Buhari preaches diversification from oil sector to other sectors such as Agriculture, there are still lapses in the implementation process of the diversification. This is evident in the trend of national

allocation allocated to the agricultural sector. This has brought about shortfalls in the area of food production, processing and distribution in Nigeria. The farmers lack the wherewithal to produce enough food for domestic consumption. This has accounted the rate at which food commodities are smuggled and imported in Nigeria. Therefore, if this shortfall is not checked, importation will always be a way out for Nigeria's teeming population to eat. The recent border closure will amount to nothing in Nigeria's economy if the local farmers still cannot access various agricultural technologies that will aid food production that will satisfy domestic consumption in Nigeria. Two critical measures can show that a state is still far from prioritizing a sector. They are as follows; either the state is not listening or paying attention to the problem by way of evident political will to match all that the policy has presented or that the state is not channeling enough resources to that sector in order for the problem to be addressed in tandem with all that have been envisaged in the policy. Hence, the agricultural sector of Nigeria is yet to receive adequate prioritization from the government because the political will and enough resources are still channeled towards oil. However, until the aforementioned priority given to oil is given to Agriculture, this policy and other subsequent agricultural policies are bound to fail.

**Recommendations**

From the foregoing, the study recommends the following:

1. **Evolution of a Robust Micro Credit Framework and Adoption of Targeted Rural Farmers Financing Policy:** The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should partner with state governments to develop and implement a robust agricultural micro-credit system. This system should ensure that credits are available to farmers in a transparent and flexible manner, enabling them to purchase necessary inputs for mechanized farming. Ensuring adequate funding for the agricultural sector is crucial, particularly for implementing agencies like the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB). The federal government should also institute a rural finance policy specifically targeting rural farmers and establish research institutes nationwide to provide vital information on agricultural issues, thereby enhancing food accessibility across the country.

2. **Demonstrable Political Will for Diversification:** The Nigerian government must demonstrate strong political will to prioritize the revival of the agricultural sector, treating it with the same level of importance as the oil sector. This involves providing adequate resources to fully implement agricultural policies. By committing sufficient resources and ensuring the prudent utilization of appropriated funds, the government can significantly boost agricultural productivity and achieve food security.

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