

National Development Strategies and Challenges of Peasants Agriculture in Nigeria

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Abstract

The main concern of this paper is to examine the various development policies or strategies of the government and its effects on the growth of peasant agriculture on one hand and the challenges hindering the advancement of peasant agriculture in Nigeria. This paper is of the view that there have been bitter experiences of the peasants of this nation over the failure of the country to better their lots by enhancing agricultural production despite various articulated developmental/agricultural policies and projects initiated by each succeeding administration. Why has these developmental policies/strategies not engendered or ensured sustainable peasants' agricultural development and food security in Nigerian economy? This is also the concern of this work. There is not enough literature in this area. Data were collected through secondary sources. The institutional theory of analysis propounded by Emily Durkheim and Douglas North was adopted as theoretical framework. The paper reveals poor implementation of developmental/agricultural policies and programme designs as the bane of the growth and development of the peasants' agriculture in Nigerian economy. It also identifies efforts of government towards increasing agricultural productivity through the establishment of agricultural programmes and projects from the early 70s to date. It recommends careful planning and scientific forecasting and institutionalization of improved implementation mechanisms and the inclusion of the peasant farmers in the formulations of agricultural policies as the main factors that would bring about the desired growth, improvement, transformation as well as development both in agricultural sector and over-all development of the economy. This study will be beneficial to the government and her relevant agencies, students, agriculturalists, interventionist agencies and scholars.

Key Words: Peasants, Agricultural policies, Development, State, Economy.

Introduction

Nigeria like most African countries is highly endowed with both human and natural resources and in all aspects of human endeavours. Previous administrations in Nigeria both the military and the civilians obviously had introduced as well as attempted various comprehensive plans which were geared towards achieving development in the nation- state.

According to Abasilim (2015:3) these plans encapsulated programmes that were to enhance the general welfare of the citizens and the nation at large. Obviously, development and growth has been, as it seems, government's top priorities since the attainment of flag independence in Nigeria. In agricultural sector, the story is similar. This is so because as early as the 1970's the then government and subsequent State actors had rolled out policies and strategies towards improving the agricultural sector, which they hoped would have engendered the development of the economy. It therefore goes without saying that despite all the development strategies by the Nigerian government, in the area of agriculture in particular, there have been a lot of setbacks that have been encountered in the development of peasant agriculture.

According to Osakwe (2010:17) the nature of Nigeria's development strategy, generally, has contributed to the slow pace in achieving poverty and unemployment reduction in the country, as such, the country has not gone through the normal process of structural transformation. Accordingly, this implies that the strategies employed by Nigerian government over the years have not led to the growth of productive capacities and structural transformation which are the pivot for generating any productive employment opportunities and reducing poverty to a minimal level. Thus, the efforts made by various governments to transform peasant agriculture to achieving optimal dividends has not been worthwhile as unemployment, poverty and hunger, malnutrition and malnourishment is still on the increase.

Following from the above therefore, this study wants to unravel why various developmental strategies has failed to ginger peasant agricultural development and achieving desired result so as to accommodating the teeming unemployed youth, provision of food security and reduction of poverty to the barest minimum. It is therefore against this background that this paper intends to carefully examine what development entails, evaluate government developmental strategies and its implementation, expose challenges facing peasant agriculture, while also proffering possible and practicable remedies through its recommendations.

Furthermore, it entails examining critically how the national developmental strategies or national economic cum political policies of government have facilitated the development of peasants' agriculture or hindered its growth in this contemporary era.

1. MEANING

The following terms will be explained as it relates to this Paper. The terms are: (a) Development; (b) Peasant/peasantry.

(A) Development:

Mansell and Wehn (1998:10) state that development has been understood since the Second World War to involve economic growth, increase in per capita income and attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialized countries. Economic development refers amongst other things, "...to social and technological progress...implies a change in the new way goods and

services are produced, not merely an increase in production achieved using the old methods of production on a wider scale”.

Mansell and Wehn further added that while economic growth implies only an increase in quantitative output; it may or may not involve development. Economic growth is often measured by rate of change of gross domestic product (e.g. percent GDP increase per year.) Gross domestic product is the aggregate value-added by the economic activity within a country's borders.

Therefore, to that extent, it was pointed out that economic development “...typically involves improvements in a variety of indicators such as literacy rates, life expectancy and poverty rates...A country's economic development is related to its human development, which encompasses among other things, health and education”.

The University of Iowa's Center for International Finance Management and Development, states that: “Economic development is a term that economists, politicians and others have used frequently in the 20th century. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries. Modernization, Westernization, and especially Industrialization are other terms people have used when discussing economic development. Although no one is sure when the concept originated, most people agree that development is closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism and the demise of feudalism”.

According to Kuznets (1966:9) the development of a nation-state has been connected to the economic growth through higher productivity. In the views of Shepsle and Bonchek (2010:67), development is associated with the political systems that represent as accurately as possible the preferences of its citizenry.

One of the indices of development according to Rodney (2009:19-20) has to do with the amount of calories and proteins an individual consumes a day. It was pointed out that each individual needs a certain quantity of food per day measured in calories. The desirable amount is 3,000 calories per day. Rodney noted that no African country comes anywhere near to that figure. Illustratively, it was pointed out that: “...Algerians consume on average only 1,870 calories per day, while Ivory Coast can consider itself very well off within an African context with 2,290 calories as the national average”.

It was pointed out that, “... one also has to judge the protein content of the food; and many parts of Africa suffer from ‘protein famine’-which means that even when calories are available from starchy foods, little protein is to be found”. Comparatively, therefore, Rodney explained that: “Persons in developed capitalist and socialist countries consume twice as much protein food as those in underdeveloped countries. Such difference help to make it clear which countries are ‘developed’ and which are ‘undeveloped’”

Development accordingly to Bingham (2000:13) includes amongst others the extension of rights to all social groups and the opportunities to get and exercise those rights and privileges in full.

From the views of Acemoglu and Robinson (2012:10) development includes the proper functionality of institutions and organizations that are able to attend more technically and logistically complex task – for instance, to increase taxes as well as delivery of public services. These development concepts and processes describe the states capabilities to managing its economy, polity, society and public administration.

According to Myint and Krueger (2009:12), economic development is seen as, “the increase in the standard of living in a nation's population with sustained growth from a simple, low-income

economy to a modern, high-income economy. Also, if the local quality of life could be improved, economic development would be enhanced.

Elsewhere, Blair and Carroll (2009:31) on their own part stressed that the scope of economic development includes the process and policies by which a nation improves the economic, political and social well-being of its people.

According to the United Nations, the concept of development includes many aspects and has changed over time. The first paragraph of the UN Agenda for Development ([A/RES/51/240](#)) states *inter alia*:

"Development is one of the main priorities of the United Nations. Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

"Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries. Through such growth, which should be broadly based so as to benefit all people, countries will be able to improve the standards of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy, the provision of adequate shelter and secure employment for all and the preservation of the integrity of the environment.

"Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, and effective participation by civil society are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development.

"The empowerment of women and their full participation on a basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental for development."

(B) Peasants/Peasantry.

The words peasants and peasantry are intertwined. In fact they have been generally linked with a way of life and mind-set that is at cross-purpose to or the opposite of modernization. Earlier, the two terms were referred, to as small-scale agricultural producers, also known as serfs. They comprised the majority of the populations of Western Europe from the fall of Rome in the fifth century and during the Middle Ages. The medieval peasants derived their source of livelihood mainly, but not exclusively, from agriculture, but depended heavily on landlords to whom they had sworn an oath of allegiance, loyalty and servitude or subservience on one hand and on whose land they lived and farmed on the other hand. They were therefore expected to provide certain goods and services, so to say, and to meet specified obligations such that include amongst others paying rent and taxes, in cash or in kind, and providing free labour as well as giving tithes to the Church. Lords, on their part, were obligated to protecting the peasants under their care.

Following from the above therefore, Wolf, (1966:3-4) defined peasants as "rural cultivators whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers". Though most peasants lived directly off the land, some of them earned their living from non-agricultural activities, such as blacksmiths, tavern owners, or millers. However, dependence on small-scale agriculture, lack of ownership of land, and subservience to a dominant class to which they gave their surplus were, thus, early and dominant characteristics and features of peasant societies and actually influenced the manner in which scholars perceived and described them.

Similarly, Kincaid (1993: 145) stated amongst others that peasants were "rural cultivators from whom an economic surplus is extracted, in one form or another, freely or coercively, by non-producing classes"

In this modern world, however, the peasantry as mainly concentrated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, has been defined differently by various scholars, depending on the degree of emphasis placed on any one of several characteristics associated with peasantry.

Definitions of the peasantry embrace some of the following characteristics: ownership and use of land, production methods, subordination to other social sectors, and the degree of integration into the market.

According to Alain (1981:19) therefore, peasants are agriculturalists who control most of the land they work, produce for the market, and who have obligations to other social classes.

Klain (1980: 20) posits that peasants are farmers who lack control over the land, labour, and capital they need to produce crops. From this perspective, most peasants are associated with poverty; primitive production methods using little if any, modern technology; small-scale production, mostly for subsistence purposes; and economic exploitation by and political and social subservience to a dominant elite class such as landlords or urban elites. They also lack capital and other production resources and, often, do not have control over the land on which they live and work. Where they do own the land, they tend to regard it as family property and not a commodity. The family, in peasants societies tends to be the central economic unit of production, consumption, reproduction, socialization, and welfare, while socially and culturally, peasant communities tend to be isolated from mainstream society and have a distinctly local culture, as opposed to the dominant wider or higher national culture. Peasant communities are sometimes looked down upon by other social sectors that regard or disregard them as not only poor, ignorant, and subservient, but also backward, parochial, and closed.

Dalton (1964: 378) among other scholars makes a distinction between Closed peasant communities and Open peasant communities. Dalton posits that Closed peasant societies means being highly exclusive, suspicious of outsiders and new ideas, separated from wider society, and determined to protect their way of life by, among other things, discouraging the accumulation and display of wealth. Open societies, on the other hand, are characterized as being linked into the modern capitalist economy and made up of individuals who own their own land, embrace change, and are largely integrated into the main stream, or larger society. Open peasant societies are therefore relatively independent actors who produce for the market and exercise considerable autonomy in deciding or agreeing on what to produce, depending on their analysis of inputs that have to be sourced outside the community, rent and tax requirements.

From his own perspective, Archie (1977: 412) noted amongst others that peasants are farmers who control the land they work as tenants or smallholders and who produce for the market and have obligations to other social classes.

2. Theoretical Framework

The institutional theory of analysis propounded by Emily Durkheim, Douglas North and others was adopted as theoretical framework.

According to Center for the Study of Institutions (2005: 5) this theory deals amongst others with how individuals and groups construct institutions, how institutions function in practice, and the effects of institutions on each other, on individuals, societies and the community at large.

Furthermore, Aranson, P. (1998: 744-753) pointed out that, a new focus is to explain how organizations and individuals within organizations make economic and managerial decisions, particularly by investigating the non-rational, non-economic, and non-psychological factors. This movement produced what is known as the New Institutional Analysis.

It is obvious that most national development problems in Nigeria arises as a result of poor implementation of policies by institutions/agencies of government established to carry out developmental programmes but fail to do so or perform abysmally low contrary to the expectations of the generality of the populace. Sometimes there are evidences of lack of adequate and reliable human resources to carry out developmental activities. In other words this theory exposes or analyses the institutional failures of the governmental agencies/ parastatals towards engendering developmental process.

For instance, Agbogo (2011:1) evaluating the performance of the institutions in policy implementations, reveals amongst others that poor implementation of policy and programme designs by institutions and agencies is the bane of the growth and development of the Nigerian agricultural sector.

3. National Development Strategies

In the beginning, it is important to recall the views of Ake concerning Africa, Nigeria inclusive, with regards to development and there from one can understand why particular strategies were adopted. Also understand how such strategies had systematically eroded or brought untold hardship and backwardness to peasant agriculture in Nigeria.

Ake (1993: 1,3) clearly stated that some of the factors attributable for the apparent failure of development enterprise in Africa among other things include: colonialism and its legacy, corruption of leaders, lack of entrepreneurial skills, poor planning, low levels of technical assistance, and low level of savings and investment etc. Yet, the assumption that there has been a failure of development is, in Ake's mind, not only wrong but misleading.

The problem therefore is not that development has failed, per se, but that it was never actually on the agenda in the first instance. By all indices therefore, "...political conditions in Africa are the greatest impediment of development"

According to Adeniyi (2014:51) the Nigerian government has aspired to achieve development through the use of various types of plans, namely short term (Annual Budget), medium and long term plans. However, most development strategies ever adopted for use in Nigeria have been the same, with slight differences or adjustment in their objectives, they are just mere nomenclature, and that is why the problem of development had persisted. This has to a greater extent hindered the survival and progression of the peasants' agriculture in Nigeria.

The Following are the various Developmental Strategies that has been adopted at one time or the other.

a. The First National Development Plan Period (1962-68): This plan had no clear blue-print on rural infrastructural development, as agriculture was still an important sector that generated income from external sources; the plan's objectives were to encourage the assemblage of agricultural produce for export purpose. In other words it failed to produce any developmental strategy for the peasants' agriculture as it was not in its agenda ab initio.

b. The Second National Development Plan Period (1974-1980): This plan came into effect immediately after the civil war. It obviously wanted to rehabilitate economic activities in the war-affected areas. It had five principal national objectives meant to achieve a united, just, strong and self-reliant nation. But just as in the first plan; government did not make any clear statement on rural infrastructural development. However, it was stated in the plan that government was committed to village regrouping. This was perhaps to reduce the cost of providing economic and social infrastructure such as health, electricity, water and educational facilities for the rural areas. The sum allocated to rural development looks too paltry.

c. The Third National Development Plan Period (1975-80): This plan shows serious concern for rural development. The objectives of the plan were similar to those of the second national development plan. The plan emphasized the need to reduce regional disparities in order to foster national unity through the adoption of integrated rural development. The plan provided for rural electrification scheme, the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs). The construction of small dams and boreholes for rural water supply and the clearing of feeder roads for the transportation of agricultural produce and the supply of electricity to rural areas from large irrigation Dams. At the State level, some governments exhibited their intention to transform the rural areas through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities.

d. The Fourth National Development Plan Period (1980-85): The Fourth National Development Plan showcases several distinguishing features. First, it was formulated by a civilian government under a new constitution based on the presidential system of government. Second, it was the first plan in which the local government tier was allowed to participate fully in its own right. The plan emphasized among other things the need for balanced development of the different sectors of the economy and of the various geographic areas of the country. It emphasized the importance of rural infrastructural development as a vehicle for enhancing the quality of rural life.

In order to increase the access of rural dwellers to safe drinking water, rural water supply schemes were planned apart from the huge boreholes drilling Programme.

At the state level, the various state governments spelt out different policy issues in the fourth development plan.

e. Post Fourth Plan Period (1985 to 1990): The post fourth plan period witnessed the establishment of the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1985 for the purpose of providing rural infrastructure in the country side. The laws establishing the Directorate was promulgated under Decree number four of 1987. The core of the Directorate's Programme is the promotion of productive activities. Besides, the directorate recognized the provision of rural infrastructure such as feeder roads, water, electricity and housing as essential for the enhancement of the quality of life in the rural areas.

The Programme of the directorate includes:- The organization and mobilization of the local people to enhance or facilitate closer interaction between the government and the people. In addition the local communities were asked to form unions or associations for the purpose of providing common facilities for themselves; - The provision of rural infrastructures such as rural feeder roads, rural water and sanitation, rural housing and electrification; - The promotion of productive activities such as food and agriculture, rural industrialization and technology; - The promotion of other extracurricular activities such as socio-cultural and recreational programmes, intra and inter community cohesion activities. The plan for the implementation of DFRRI programmes was organized into two phases- the target was to provide water for 250 communities in each of the states of the federation, to construct 90,000km of feeder roads, and to promote rural housing, health and agriculture.

According to Edwin (1972: 46) this programme is to facilitate industrial growth, and improve the attractiveness of the rural environment, the Directorate planned to commence its rural electrification Programme in the second phase starting in June 1987. In pursuit of its objectives, DFRRI also planned to co-operate with organization.

f. The Agricultural Development Project: The Agricultural Development Project (ADP) This initiative was on the advice of the World Bank in 1970. The objective is to improve the living conditions of the low-income earners resident in rural areas, particularly peasants' farmers. According to Ogundele (2008: 19) this implies the supply of farm inputs like fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and high yielding variety seeds, credit facilities in cash and kind, land clearing services, the development of feeder roads and extension services. Ohagwu (2010:34) noted that this brought about significant growth recorded in the agricultural sector in the late 1980's to early 1990's but the main challenge was the withdrawal of fund by world Bank.

g. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN): Operation Feed the Nation was introduced just as the time the National Accelerated Food Projection Programme (NAFPP) was introduced by the Federal Military Government in 1976, with the objective of creating awareness about the importance of agriculture in National development. Alanana (2005:12) opined that the Programme was designed to involve all the segments who were engaged during the long vacation, it was for a cross breeding of ideas from school and traditional knowledge. Sadly, it was noted by Ndukwe (2005: 9) regretted that the Programme faced out at the expiration of the regime that introduced it. The problem with the Programme was that its birth was spontaneous without specific and measurable objectives.

Other developmental strategies include: National Directorate for Employment (NDE), Green Revolution; Mass Mobilization for Self-reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), River Basin Development Authority; National Accelerated Food Production Programme; The National Livestock Development Programme and The Integrated Rural Development Programmes etc.

h. In contemporary Nigeria, the following were the development Programmes in the wake of the return to democratic government: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Seven Points Agenda in the Yar' Adua's administrations, Vision 2020, the Goodluck Jonathan transformation agenda, the adoptions of the Millennium Development Goal. According to National Planning Commission, The Nigeria Vision 20: 2020 is a perspective plan; an economic business plan intended to make Nigeria one of the top 20 economies by 2020, with a growth target of not less than \$900 billion in GDP and a per capita of not less than \$4,000 per annum. The three Pillars of the Nigeria Vision (NV) 20:2020 are: (a) guaranteeing the well-being

and productivity of the people; (b) optimizing the key sources of economic growth and; (c) fostering sustainable social and economic development.

Nigeria Vision 20:2020 is Nigeria's second attempt at driving the attainment of her national aspirations using long term perspective plan.

4. Challenges of Peasants Agriculture in Nigeria

From the fore going, one can state categorically that one of the challenges facing peasant agriculture in Nigeria amidst or in spite of all these national development strategies over the years is lack of will to implement and lack of faith on the path of past and present leaders/implementers to implement the strategies to develop not only peasants' agriculture in particular but the economy as a whole.

The beauty of any development plan is the faithful implementation of such plan, which its success lies with the implementers, most of the past development plans failed as a result of implementation problem and lack of committed leadership.

The question that easily comes to mind is: why would a government draw up a strategy to ginger development only to fail to execute same.

To this Ake (1993: 3) earlier cited, noted that the struggle for power acquisition and its consolidation and retention and quest for continued relevance, politically, was so absorbing that development was relegated to the background. According to him, those in power could not address the problem of development, yet they could not abandon it. Why? "...it could not abandon it because it was the ideology by which political elite hoped to survive and to reproduce its domination" as "...development was the justification for rallying behind the current leadership, for criminalizing political dissent, and for institutionalizing the single-party structure, to abandon it would undermine the power strategy of the elite". According to Ake, it was not that African leaders wanted development per se for their respective African countries. Rather, it was more or less "...something to replace the nationalist ideology of self-government, something that would, they hoped, create a sense of common purpose". Hence, "...they settled for the ideology of development..."

Seniyi (1998:32) opined that the various developmental strategies failed because of lack or insufficiency of knowledge and equipment to carryout activities that agriculture as an enterprise demands. Some of the previous development plans failed because; there was little or no consultation of the general public. Planning is supposed to involve even the peasants in the villages. Therefore, Nigeria's developmental hiccups are the total rejection of the cultural pattern of transformation, that is, a complete rejection of the peasant route for the external bureaucratic (capitalist) route.

This capitalist route has been one of the cogs in the wheel of the development of peasant agriculture in Nigeria. For instance, The Agricultural Development Project (ADP) was initiated based on the advice of the World Bank in 1970. The primary objective is to improve the living conditions of the low income earners resident in rural areas. This implies the supply of farm inputs like fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and high yielding variety seeds, credit facilities in cash and kind, land clearing services, the development of feeder roads and extension services to peasant farmers to make life meaningful and develop peasant agriculture. This brought about significant growth

recorded in the agricultural sector in the late 1980's to early 1990's but the main challenge was the withdrawal of fund by world Bank.

According to (Ogundele 2008:51), this attitude of the Bretton Wood institution propels, the Neo-Marxist to dismiss state efforts for developmental purposes by arguing that they were not intended to create broad-based development. To Ogundele, the primary purpose of development policies was to help the capitalist system survive the periodic crises it created for itself. This is a great challenge against the development of peasants' agriculture in Nigeria as it leaves agricultural development at the peasantry level at the whims and caprices of the capitalist nations.

Exploitative Marketing Boards and Lack of Access to Market: Marketing involves getting the agricultural products from the farmers to the consumers. Access to markets is one of the biggest challenges faced by smallholder farmers which directly affect their income and living standards. Lack of market facilities and poor government regulations poses serious threats to farmers, where after harvesting they are unable to sell off their produce at good prices. Hence, this leads to massive post-harvest losses and food wastage which is entirely another challenging issue facing the agricultural economy.

Similarly, earlier in the 1970's, it could be recalled that marketing, pricing and taxation of agriculture produce is the best known area of peasant interaction with the government. The high point of this interaction is in the marketing export crops handled exclusively by the Marketing Boards. Its function also includes the so-called stabilization of prices and incomes.

Unfortunately, and according to Onimode (1983:29), "These Boards stabilize neither producer prices nor incomes..." Rather, "One abiding feature of the Marketing Board System is its transformation since the colonial era into an instrument of crushing taxation and unremitting exploitation of the peasantry. As peasantry producers have no representation on these bureaucratic Boards, they have no say in the determination of its exploitative and arbitrary pricing and surplus disposal policies"

Illustratively, Onimode pointed out that: "These peasants pay as much as 62 percent implicit tax on the world prices of their products in the form of differential between world prices and prices offered the peasants by the Boards, before, in addition, they pay produce, income, community, development, tenement and other oppressive multiple taxes. Yet the accruing huge Marketing Board surpluses and tax proceeds are used largely to finance selfish, elitist projects for the benefit of the urbanized petty-bourgeoisie"

It could be recalled that the AgbekoyaParapo Revolt of 1968-1969 popularly known as Agbekoya or the EgbeAgbekoya Revolt was a peasant revolt in Nigeria's former Western region which was provoked by such mindless oppression of the pauperized peasantry. It is the most well known peasant-driven political revolt.

Another challenge that has just emerged against peasants' agriculture in Nigeria is the issue of allocation of land for Rural Grazing Area, otherwise known as (RUGA) settlement for the Fulani herders. This means that the farms for the peasants will be grabbed forcefully by the powers-that-be thereby rendering them (peasants) farm less. This has become more worrisome and a great challenge to Nigeria's peasants when Shehu (2019:29) noted amongst other things that: "...land for RUGA settlement had been gazetted in all the States of the Federation..." However, Nwabueze (2019:10) responded that such a comment and decision is "...in disdainful disregard of the

stipulations of the Land Use Act, and without the courtesy of consultations with the State Governors and the Traditional authorities”.

Related to the above, is the issue of destruction of farmlands, and raping of women, girls and killings of farmers in their farm lands allegedly by Fulani herders. This has been frightening the farmers as they worry that they might be raped, killed or kidnapped in the course of farming thereby hindering agricultural activities and productivity with its attendant consequences.

Another challenge is the relevancy of strategies adopted for peasants’ agricultural development over the years, considering the main purpose of development as bringing about the total well-being of the people.

5. Conclusion

Despite years of propaganda about planning from the grassroots, it is crystal clear that the rural population is yet to be accorded any serious consideration in the provision of social security, education, health and social recognition. Spatially abandoned and isolated permanently, the Nigerian peasantry have been decimated by diseases, etc, and have also been estranged and alienated from the product of their own labour which created the urban havens that oppress them mercilessly.

6. Recommendations

The challenges against peasant agriculture have been lack of the impetus and the wherewithal to implementing these developmental strategies by several governments.

Thus a call is hereby made to government and its agencies to show more commitment to the implementation of the proposed developmental strategies, because most of the strategies ever adopted had been relatively the same, the major differences are just the change in the name given each strategy.

Therefore, once again, this work proposes total commitment and dedication on the part of the leadership, discipline and honesty on the part of project implementers in order to chart a new course.

Furthermore, improved market facilities and functional agricultural marketing boards that also have the concerns of the peasants as their goal and pursuit, coupled with good government regulations/policies can go a long way in helping poor smallholder farmers market and profit from their harvests.

Mbakogu (2004:57) asserts that an African development should begin with an identification of Africans agricultural and development condition as well as solutions for correcting these conditions, which should be formulated by Africans for Africans. And that as long as Africans, Nigeria, inclusive remain armchair recipients of western cultures, western strategies, without learning to do things targeted at their awakening, the development challenge will persistently remain an illusion.

Strategies to developing peasants’ agriculture have been formulated over the years without involving, consulting or considering the affected peasants. Planning is supposed to involve even the peasants in the villages for them to have maximum, meaningful, practical or empirical input towards developing peasants’ agriculture.

Therefore, it is being recommended here-in that hence forth, peasants in Nigeria should be comprehensively consulted in formulations of developmental strategies geared towards enhancing rudimentary agriculture.

On their own part, the peasants are called upon to form a united front by forming peasants union/ organization to act as a form of pressure group to present aggregated views to the government of the day concerning their affairs.

Insecurity works at cross-purposes with development. Any nation – state that lacks the capacity and the will to secure her citizenry and territory against insurrections and external aggressions respectively cannot engender developmental process. To this extent, Nigerian state has failed woefully to curtail for example, the menace of Boko Haram, kidnapping, armed banditry etc. Foreign development partners and local investors are scared and scared away. Therefore, the Nigerian state actors and other underdeveloped states are admonished to put in place and procure standardized protection for lives and property within and without areas of their political influence.

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