

UNIT 5 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is primarily an agrarian nation. However, the agricultural history of Nigeria evolved with its political history in three phases, namely pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. In spite of the persistent influence of political changes, agriculture has witnessed dramatic transformations from the colonial era. In this era, agriculture was tied to intensive production of choice crops for export to the colonialist's nation for processing into highly diversified advanced products, such as beverages. Specifically, the post-colonial period is characterized by the establishment of increasingly sophisticated and notable schemes and institutions of agricultural development.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to understand:

- the trend of agricultural development during Nigeria's political history
- the evolution of agricultural development schemes and institutions which have facilitated food production
- the current status of agriculture, and the opportunities for profitable investment in the agricultural sector.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Phases of Agricultural Development

- i. Pre-colonial era: Agriculture was the mainstay of the traditional economy during this period.
- ii. Colonial era: During this era (1861-1960), the British colonialists paid an *ad hoc* attention to agricultural development, in favour of considerable emphasis on research and extension services.
- iii. Post-colonial era: The first national development plan (1962-1968) was drafted. The plan emphasized the introduction of more modern farming techniques, establishment of farm settlements, co-operative plantations, supply of improved farm implements such as hydraulic hand presses for oil palm processing and considerably expanded agricultural extension service.

Thus, two major specialized development schemes were implemented during this period, namely Farm Settlement Schemes and National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP, which was launched in 1972). Also, within the same period, the following agricultural development interventions for improving food production were experimented upon:

- a. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN, 1976);
- b. River Basin & Rural Development Authorities (RBRDA), established in 1976;
- c. Green Revolution Programme (1980), and
- d. The World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Programmes/Projects (ADPs, early 1970s), which constitute the most practical demonstration of integrated approach to agricultural development in Nigeria.

In addition, several research institutes and extension research liaison services were also established. These are the Agricultural Extension Research Liaison Service (AERLS), in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria (1963), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, and International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA) located within IITA.

3.2 Growth of Agriculture

3.2.1 Contribution of Agriculture to GDP

- i. In 1960, agriculture contributed about 60% the GDP, a figure which is considered typical for developing agrarian nations.

- ii. From 1975-1979, there was a sharp decline in the contribution of agriculture to 25% of the GDP. This sharp decline was attributed to the phenomenal growth of the mining and manufacturing sectors and the disincentive created by the macro-economic environment during the period.

3.2.2 Growth Rate of Agriculture

From 1972-1980, agricultural production stagnated at less than 1% annual growth rate, compared to the annual population growth rate of 2.5-3.0%. During this period, export crop production declined sharply while food crop production increased slightly. The ultimate result of these situations was the need to augment domestic food supply by large food imports. This accounts for the considerable increase in food import bill from as low as ₦112.88 m per annum from 1970 to 1974, to as high as ₦1964.80 m in 1991.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learned that:

- i. agricultural development in Nigeria evolved in phases during the country's political history,
- ii. increased food production during the post-colonial era arose from the implementation of several development schemes, and
- iii. agriculture makes the largest contribution to the national GDP.

5.0 SUMMARY

Agriculture is the largest contributor to national GDP in Nigeria, and its development is greatly influenced by the nation's political history, culminating in increased food production through several intervention schemes, particularly the Agricultural Development Projects.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Indicate the three phases of agricultural development in Nigeria.
2. Enumerate the high points of post-colonial development of agriculture in Nigeria.
3. Which post-colonial agricultural development intervention is most impacting on agricultural growth in Nigeria, and why?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

‘Opportunities in Nigeria’s Agricultural Sector’. In <http://www.nigeriabusinessinfo.com/agric.htm>