

GOVERNANCE AND CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA IN THE ERA OF ECONOMIC RECESSION IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to explore the impact of governance on food security challenges in Nigeria in the era of economic recession in an emerging economy. The paper relies essentially on secondary source of data. Achieving food security is central to a reduction in starvation and hunger as well as attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Food security has been conceptualized in different but complementary ways. The World Bank defined food security as a condition where everyone has access to sufficient food to live a healthy and productive life. As the world population increases, the need to feed more people becomes a serious issue that attracts the attention of virtually all on the planet earth but in different perspectives that has a unique description with relevance to the people, environment and general survival of the system. A broad based definition of food security is when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. Food security is the access of man to affordable, healthy, good and quality food without restrictions. In addition to growth in population, the attendant challenges of hunger and hardship experienced by people as a result of gloomy economy and the indirect effect which increase in taxation VAT inclusive and closure of border is manifested on the quality of life which people lived. Most of these identified factors are subsumed in the ability or inability of the government to deliver good governance to the citizens. It is in the realization of the long term effects of some or all of the aforementioned factors on the people that prompted this research topic. The paper therefore examined the impact of governance on food security in Nigeria.

Key words: Governance, food security, food, security, food insecurity, healthy life and Value added tax.

Introduction

Nigeria is a nation blessed with natural resources and well endowed in agriculture. It has a land area of about 92.4 million hectares out of which 1.3 million hectares is made up of water bodies (Adetunji, 2006). However, these abundant resources have not led in any way to increased food production in Nigeria. The consequences of 'food insecurity' have far reaching effect on the people and the general development of the nation. When people have restricted access to good quality food, the children and the youth generally are the first casualty in this circumstance. Malnutrition becomes the order of the day which eventually leads to child mortality as a result of the incidence of all forms of diseases. The control or eradication of hunger and diseases through food security is achievable by good policy formulation and implementation by any nation. Moreover, there is a growing awareness that for the government to govern the people effectively in any given society, Nigeria inclusive, there is need for adequate provision of food in abundance and other infrastructural facilities through proper governance.

Access to good quality food and water is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). However, the efforts of the political leaders especially in the developing nations to reduce hunger are yet to meet the targeted goals. In the last twenty years, there has been a global upward trend in the number of people afflicted by hunger. As at 1990, about 824 million people were reported to be undernourished or underfed globally, but this has increased to about 1020 million people in the year 2009 (FAO, 2004-2009). However, studies have shown that the incidence of hunger is more prevalent and having very serious impact in the sub-Saharan Africa and South – Asia. For example, in Nigeria, localized issues in the North East and the Delta region as well as rural conflicts elsewhere in Nigeria, have led to significant consequences for the country as a whole, increasing vulnerability and exacerbating a range of existing challenges food security inclusive. The main thrust of this paper is therefore to examine the impact of governance on food security. It also discussed the problem of food production and food security in Nigeria, solution to food insecurity in Nigeria, discussion on emerging economies and economic recession and finally, conclusion and recommendations on how Nigeria can be self-sufficient in food production and be food secured.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS:

ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNANCE, FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC RECESSION

Concept of Administration:

The word administration may simply be defined as the coordination of the activities of different people or units within a complex organization or social system, a public or private bureaucracy, an international organization or government parastatal for the purpose of achieving rationally designed objectives which have economic incentives, among others (See Lawal, 2008). What this means is that administration either as profit-making or non-profit making services are quantifiable based on the amount of profits or effects of social services of an organization or individual beneficiaries of such services. Administration implies managing, organizing, supervising, monitoring, controlling, motivating, discipline, and coordinating human activities and behavior within internal and external environment of the organization.

Generally speaking the term administration like most other concepts in the social sciences has no universally accepted definitions. However, this is not to say that all the various definitions ascribed to them have nothing in common. In the field of public administration or the management of public affairs, the predominant emphasis among scholars and policy-makers has been to focus on the state and its formal structures of administration. Scholars have over the years become very accustomed to relying on the state and its institutions for all that happen not only in the field of public administration but in the area of socio-economic transformation and advancement. The performance of the state has thus become the major operational variable for determining the level of success which developing societies, according to this belief, can achieve in the fields of both governance and the attendant security challenges. According to Adebayo (1989), administration is the organisation and direction of persons in order to accomplish a specified end. Gulick in Bamidele (2016) described administration as taking place when two men cooperate to roll a stone which neither of them could roll alone. Among the many definitions of the term administration outlined in Webster Third New International Dictionary, one stands out as generic and relevant to this study; and that is the one which defines administration as the principles, practices and rationalized techniques employed in achieving the objectives or aim of an organisation.

The term administration is defined by earliest administrative thinkers in line with its functions of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, staffing, reporting and budgeting. From the foregoing, therefore, administration is far from being a monolithic affair. It involves two or more persons. Equally, administration has a lot to do with orderliness and the fulfillment of set objectives. Hence, synthetically, we can broadly define administration as the art and science of achieving set objectives through the efforts of persons by effectively and efficiently utilizing available resources in the form of man, machine, money and material (the four Ms). In other words, administration is the coordination of all organized efforts for the purpose of implementing and/or executing decisions, policies and programmes in order to attain given purposes. To Nigro (1945) in Sharma (2012), the core of administration is the basic service which is

performed for the public such as police and the protection of the citizens, public works, education, recreation, sanitation, social security, agricultural research, national defence and others.

According to Dimock (1968) in Sharma (2012), he views administration as being concerned with 'the what' and 'the how' of the government. The 'what' is the subject matter, the technical knowledge of a field which enables the administrator to perform different task. The 'how' is the technique of management, the principles according to which cooperative programmes are attained. Each is indispensable; together they form the synthesis called administration. Administration is the organisation and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. It is also used in a narrower sense to refer to those patterns of behaviour that are common to many kinds of cooperative groups and that do not depend upon either the specific goals towards which they are cooperating or the specific technological methods used to reach those goals.

Sharma et al (2012) posited that administration includes all types of work necessary to achieve the goal in view, but considered as a skill or art, it implies adeptness in the function of management which are common to all rational group endeavour. As a complex of activities, administration assumes myriads of shapes and forms in the various subjects matter and fields, but considered as a skill or art, it is the same everywhere. Fayol buttressing this universality of administration maintained that it is the same administrative skill that is required in industry, government as well as home management, and the administrative process is universally identical.

We must quickly and briefly to point out here that administration has universal application. In other words, administration is practiced in all kinds of organizations by all levels of workers. The concept of Universality of administration holds that the principles and functions of administration are the same everywhere in all organizations and businesses public and private, philanthropic, religious, etc.

In his paper, "The Administrative Theory in the State", Fayol asserted as follows, "The meaning that I have given to the term administration embraces enterprises of every size and description, of every form and purpose. All undertakings require planning, organization, command, coordination, control and in order to function properly, all must observe the same general principles. We are no longer confronted with several administrative sciences but with one alone, which can be applied equally to public and private affairs.

The concept of administration is ubiquitous, meaning that it features everywhere whether in the micro or macro organization such as family, community, Church, Mosque, Local Government, State, Federal and the United Nations Organisation just to mention a few. It is unarguably a fact that, there is no any human organization where the rudiment of the concept of administration is not available.

According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia, administration is a cooperative human effort towards achieving some common goals. Thus every group activity involves administration, whether in a family, factory, hospital, university, or a government department. Whenever two or more people cooperate in view of doing a thing that cannot be taken up alone, the concept of administration appear. The word administration has been derived from the Latin words 'ad' and 'ministrare' which means to serve. In simple language, it means the management of affairs 'or looking after the people'. To administer is to manage, direct and serve'. Managers in this type of environment are expected to galvanize available resources and translate their knowledge of commerce and the economy into capital. Woodrow Wilson in (Ibodje, 1999) sees public administration as the meticulous application or implementation of public law while Leonard White in (Ibodje, 1999) views public administration as consisting of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy as declared by competent authority. From the above definition clarifications, we deduce that, Public Administration is that part of the science of administration which has to do with government and thus concern itself primarily with the executive branch where the work of government is done, though there are obviously problems also in connection with the legislative and judicial arms of government.

Governance

Governance can be defined as the process and practices through which an entity organized self to achieve its mandate. It is a concept as old as human history, but nevertheless a concept still evolving. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter in the determination of how man administers his fellow man, it has

attracted much attention, especially from the mid 20th century to date, than any other issue in the world (Omoleke, 2013). Governance is concerned with the structures and procedure for decision making, accountability, control and code of conduct. It has to do with the way power is exercised to meet the defined organizational goals. The concept of governance is as old as human civilization. There are many schools of thought stressing different perspectives on governance. Governance has however acquired new meaning in the last two decades. Globalization and the wave of changes that swept across the globe since the 1980's have brought about some changes in the public administration paradigms (Agagu, 2010). It simply means the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance, and local governance. Ordinarily, it means how public institutions manage public affairs to ensure effective use of resources to achieve the good life expected of citizens in a good state.

Governance is defined by the World Bank as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". Good governance will, in effect, mean the use of power by the government, the president, and his ministers, senators, members of House of Representatives and how the service operates:

- (a) to promote democracy, accountability and transparency;
- (b) to formulate and implement good policies; and
- (c) to effectively and efficiently manage human and financial resources in order to achieve sustainable national development, so as to achieve economic prosperity to alleviate poverty (Yahaya, 2000).

Thus, development of the objectives of good governance is heavily dependent on the caliber and variation of the political leaders in government and a competent, well trained, and motivated public service. From the World Bank definition, it is obvious that good governance can be guaranteed on a platform of a plural democratic system and a public service that can work and achieve results. Good governance includes a broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open and transparent and more democratic. It involves the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised.

These include:

- (i) The process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced;
- (ii) The capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement some policies; and
- (iii) The respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that give economic and social interaction among them (Kanfinan, Koray and Zoido-Lobart 1999:1).

Good governance becomes very fundamental and imperative when viewed against the backdrop of the massive deterioration of government institutions, pervasive poverty and widespread unemployment, corruption, as well as the near total collapse of moral and ethical standards empowered by nearly three decades of military rule in the country, which saw governance capacity weakened at all levels (World Bank, Looz; Ujomu, 2004). Former president Obasanjo vividly captured the country's deplorable national experience in the following words:

“The parlous state of our infrastructure, huge debt and poverty combined with the moral decay in our society, the pervasive corruption, lawlessness, selfishness and cynicism that have taken over all areas of national life have led to a persistent deterioration in the quality of governance and the functioning of all public institutions. This has led in turn to the attitude of indifference to the common good or welfare” (Obasanjo, 1999).

F According to (USAID, 2009), “governance issues pertain to the ability of government to develop an efficient, effective, and accountable public management process that is open to citizen participation and that strengthens rather weakens a democratic system of government”. European Commission on the other hand,

observed that ‘‘governance is concerned with the state’s ability to serve the citizens. It refers to the rules, processes and behavior by which interest are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in society. The way public funds are carried out, public resources are managed and public regulatory powers are exercised is the major issue to be addressed. Governance is a basic measure of the stability and performance of a society. As the concepts of human rights, democratization and democracy, the rule of law, civil society, decentralized power sharing and sound public administration gain importance and relevance, a society develops into a more sophisticated political system and governance evolves into good governance’’ (EC, 2006). On the whole, good governance implies an efficient and predictable public sector incorporating participation and the rule of law (SIDA, 2002). The rule of law here implies a legal maxim whereby governmental decisions are made by applying known legal principles and decision are taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows laid down rules and regulations. It is a state of order in which events and decision making and execution conform to the law (Omoleke, 2013).

Food Security

Food security is usually defined in terms of food availability, food access and food utilization. The two commonly used definition of food security come from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2003) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 1995). Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security is a phenomenon which is multidimensional with economic, environmental and social aspects. A household is considered food secure when its occupants do not lives in hunger or fear of starvation. According to the World Research Institute, global per capital food production has been increasing substantially for the past several decades. The number of people who are overweight has surpassed the numbers who are undernourished- the world had more than one billion people who were overweight, and an estimated 800 million who were undernourished.

The World Food Summit in 1996 defined food security as existing when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. The concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people’s dietary need as well as their food preferences. No doubt, food is life, hence food has become an instrument of national power. The concern for and the awareness on food security are increasing daily and public discussion on it is now more focused while the Nigerian populace is becoming skeptical about the acclaimed success of government food security initiatives. From the scenario painted above, food security entails production of diverse, safe and nutritious food that can sustain the consumption demand of the population. It also requires that availability of food is backed by consumer’s purchasing power and ability to acquire desired food varieties that promote their well being and wellness. Meeting this goal in the face of myriad development challenges confronting Nigeria remains a daunting exercise.

Despite Nigeria’s vast agricultural resources and potentials, the country is a net importer of food with the vast majority of people engaged in agriculture operating at a subsistence level. To reduce importation and smuggling the Nigeria government closed the border in September 2019, this step was taken to discourage importation of all sort of goods including food. The irony of the situation however, was that the home grown food is not enough to satisfy the teeming consumers in the country. Thus, the border closure is more of a burden to the downtrodden poor people in the country. The price of rice widely consumed in Nigeria has now skyrocketed in the market. The common man could no longer buy rice, a staple food for consumption from the Nigeria market.

According to Olawumi (2010), food security is built on three pillars viz; a. Food availability i. e sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis b. Food access i. e. having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate food for a nutritional diet. c. Food use i. e. appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation. In other words, food security is a complex sustainability development issue, linked to health through malnutrition but also to sustainable economic development, environment and trade. Issues such as whether households get enough food, how it is distributed within the households and whether that food fulfils the nutritional needs of all members of the

households show that food security is clearly linked to health. It stands to reason that proper development of agriculture would assist the health sector since food security improves quality of life. Agriculture remains the largest employment sector in most developing countries and international agricultural agreement are crucial to a country's food security. Some critics argue that trade liberalization may reduce a country's food security by reducing agricultural employment levels.

Successful food security and poverty – oriented programmes not only assist poor rural population to produce more and diversified products but to produce a surplus that can be marketed and thereby generate income for the purpose of improving quality of life through improved diet and nutrition investment in productive activity and as collateral for credit to purchase inputs and other supplies to enhance agricultural or non agricultural enterprises. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain food security in a world beset by a confluence of “peak” phenomena, namely peak oil, peak water, peak phosphorous, peak grain and peak fish (Olawumi, 2010). More than half of the planet's population's numbering approximately 3.3 billion people live in urban area as of November, 2007. Any disruption to farm supplies may precipitate a uniquely urban food crisis in a relatively short time. The ongoing global credit crisis has affected farm credit a boom in commodity price.

Food security is a complex topic, standing at the intersection of many disciplines. The stages of food insecurity range from food secure situations to full scale famine. Famine and hunger are both rooted in food insecurity. Food insecurity can be categorized as either chronic or transitory. Chronic food insecurity translates into a high degree of vulnerability to famine and hunger ensuring food security presupposes elimination of that vulnerability. Chronic hunger is not famine, but it is similar to undernourishment and is related to poverty existing mainly in poor countries of the world. Worldwide, around 852 million people are chronically hungry due to extreme poverty, while up to 2 billion people lack food security intermittently due to varying degrees of poverty (FAO, 2003). Six million children die of hunger every year i.e.17, 000 children every day. As of late 2017, increased farming for use in biofuels world oil prices at more than \$100 a barrel, global population growth, climate change, loss of agricultural land to residential and institutional development, and growth consumer demand have pushed policy implementation and food security.

Every policy formulated for any sector of the economy is interrelated. There have been several attempts by government at different levels to improve on food production primarily with a view to prevent hunger within the society. The security of such policy or actions is always oriented because of the dismal failure of the past and the seriousness that greets the intentions. In the recent past, government at the federal and the state level participated in the National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS) initiated by the Food and Agricultural Organisation in which other 42 African countries were involved (FAO, 2006). The main thrust of the programme was to ensure food security and reduce poverty. This programme was set up to have impact on fish production, poultry, small ruminant production and most importantly integrated farming systems such as rice- fish production, poultry- fish production, water control and biogas production. There has not been any feasible and documented evaluation of this programme to back up government claim of success recorded.

Solution to Food Insecurity in Nigeria

Generally, an administration gets credits or blame for the state of economy during its time. Consequently, modern government administrations attempt to take steps to solve various problems including food security problems. Food security means having reliable access to enough food, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. Food security is socio-economic (financial and cultural), while hunger is psychological (physical). On the other hand, food insecurity captures the reality of individuals and families who struggle to get enough food. Inability to have enough food is insecurity. It is widely believed that Nigeria is not a poor country except that it has been poorly managed by those entrusted with leadership positions. It is also widely accepted that Nigeria is rich to feed herself and the rest of Africa.

It is on record that FAO's assistance in Nigeria focuses on five broad priority areas, namely, improvement in national food and nutrition security, support for agricultural policy and regulatory framework, support to the agricultural transformation agenda for priority value chains and promote decent

employment for youth and women, increasing agricultural productivity and creating an enabling environment for increased market access, sustainable management of natural resources, improved disaster risk reduction and emergency management FAO (2019).

However, the efforts of government at improved food production through the provision of fertilizer to farmers have been frustrated by corrupt officials who divert fertilizers meant for farmers to other places for sale. In addition, the ethnic and religious conflicts which claimed many lives and the destruction of food crops with able men and women staying in refugee camps for three to five years. These coordinated attacks on farmers by Fulani Herdsmen in the North and in some parts of the South have also affected food production in affected areas resulting in food insecurity. Unfortunately, those who rule Nigeria appear not to believe in Nigeria because they lack the political will and patriotic zeal to deal with the problem of food insecurity in Nigeria. Although, if all these man made problems are properly addressed, sanity will return and people's confidence in food production will be restored. Also for the problem of food insecurity to be abated in Nigeria, government should pay attention to the natural disasters such as flood, drought and pest control.

Emerging Economies and Economic Recession Defined

Emerging economies are those regions of the World that are experiencing rapid reformation under conditions of limited or partial industrialization. These countries are considered to be in a transitional phase between developing and developed countries. These are countries that are investing in more productive capacity and they are rapidly industrializing and adopting a free market or mixed economy. Whereas, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), an American private non-profit research organisation defines a recession as ‘a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy lasting more than two quarters which is six months, normally visible in real gross domestic product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production, and wholesale retail sales’.

According to Wikipedia, recession is a business cycle contraction when there is a general decline in economic activity. Recessions generally occur when there is a wide spread drop in spending i.e. an adverse demand shock. It is a situation when the economy declines to a low productive level. This may be triggered by various events, such as financial crisis, an external trade shock, an adverse supply shock or the bursting of an economic bubble. Recession has psychological and confidence aspect. A recession has many attributes that can occur simultaneously and includes declines in component measures of economic activity (GDP) such as consumption, investment, government spending, and net export activity. Consequences of a recession include unemployment which is particularly high during a recession. Many economists working within the neo- classical paradigm argue that there is a natural rate of unemployment which, when subtracted from the actual rate of unemployment can be used to calculate the negative GDP gap during a recession.

Productivity tends to fall in the early stages of a recession, and then rises again as weaker firms close. In the aspect of social effects, the living standard is reduced to the lowest level. People who are dependent on wages and salaries are not heavily affected by recession compared to those who rely on fixed incomes or welfare benefits. The loss of a job is known to have a negative impact on the stability of families, and individuals' health and well being. In the long run, it is the poor who are unable to feed their families adequately that will bear the brunt and burden of recession.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that food insecurity is a global phenomenon. It is more prevalent in the developing nations including Nigeria. Fortunately, Nigeria is blessed with abundant fertile land for agricultural practice and enormous human resource. However in the early 60s Nigeria abandoned agriculture after the discovery of oil in the Niger-Delta region. Nigeria and Nigerians were distracted from its agricultural blessings as all their attention was diverted to oil resources. The proceeds were diverted to unproductive channels thereby leading to hunger, malnutrition and abject poverty across the land. These problems and challenges could be tackled by the government through promoting decent employment in the agricultural and non- farm sectors through good governance architecture as well as providing credit facilities to serve as a platform for the poor

peasant farmers who are scattered all over the country to cope with the economic realities particularly in the rural communities. For the dream of food security to be realized in Nigeria, the government must pursue agricultural policies that will target these peasant rural farmers.

Recommendation

As part of recommendation to this paper, there is need for the government to come up with food policy to ensure adequate food production in the country. Food is not like any other commodities, it is an indispensable and an important factor in nation's quest for economic growth and development. Being an inevitable commodity, all efforts must be geared towards ensuring its availability for sustainable economic development and human survival. At present, policy makers only pursue merely an agricultural policy that still suffers enormously from a wide gap between intent and actual practices. There is also a need for the government to formulate broad based food policies, application of bio- technology in agriculture, collaboration and cooperation with external agencies and foreign trade partners, as well as job creation to tackle persistent poverty in the country. This persistent poverty in the land limits access to safe and nutritious food. For any nation to be food secure, the environment must be an enabling one for effective and viable policy formulation, implementation and development in every sector of the economy. To achieve this, there must be human development and capacity building with special emphasis on the local farmer. Farming must be made to be of interest to the populace both upstream and downstream. In addition, the farmer's knowledge must be updated regularly through research, training, retraining and veritable network of extension methods. Government at the three tiers level must do all possible to teach the local farmers to be at best to understand the various variables that will bring about higher productivity.

The government should also encourage foreign companies such as China rice companies to relocate their milling machines to Nigeria and start production in Nigeria. This will lead to price reduction and it will improve employment opportunities to our teeming population. It is only through these steps that the border closure policy could be meaningful to the entire Nigerians. In addition, agricultural mechanization should be encouraged with adequate equipments so as to increase food production in the country.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurship skill in the farmers must also be reawakened and improved upon. Though, it is recognized that government alone cannot possibly do all, it must create an enabling environment for non-governmental organizations to operate and assist to increase food production. A good macro- economic policy that will empower the generality of the population and enhance their spending capacity will further create job in the area of storage of food, processing and value addition. Artisans, skilled and unskilled labour will be adequately engaged and challenged to develop locally adaptable technology apart from job creation, unrestricted access to food through purchase will be guaranteed for the individuals or family. There must be adequate provision of road network for ease of transportation and marketing of farm produce from the rural to urban communities. Basic amenities such as electricity, water, security of life and property must be vigorously pursued by government to invite entrepreneurs into agricultural business. By such good and favourable environment, the economic climate will be less distressed with available discretionary cash to create wealth and live a better secured and comfortable life.

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