
Trends in Development Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Anambra State, Nigeria

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v24i2.13>

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Abstract:

The study examined trends in development activities of the Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development between 1991 and 2013. The study identified the trends in policy and programme initiation, staff recruitment and development, and funding, in the ministry. It employed secondary data through records, documents and annual reports. Results show variation in the percentages of programme initiated and implemented within each year between 1991 and 2013. The ministry did not participate in formulating policies in 46% of the programmes implemented in the state. However, 46% of all the programmes initiated had been concluded, while 54% of all the programmes initiated in the state are still active. The results showed that a total of 403 staff were recruited within the period into the various departments, with the highest number of recruitment (252) occurring between 1991-and 1995 and the least (22) took place from 2006 to 2010. The majority (91) of staff recruited had the ordinary national diploma (OND) and only 30 and 3 persons had the bachelor of science and doctor of philosophy, respectively. The trend in the funding pattern dwindled over time. Out of the five listed human capacity building programmes, staff trainings were organised only between 1991-1995 and 1996-2000). There is need for a change in government commitment to agriculture in the area of funding, human resource and policy as these are key drivers of development. Government should increase the proportion of manpower and create adequate opportunity for training and development of staff of the ministry.

Keywords: Policy and programmes of the ministry of agriculture, funding of ministry of agriculture, staff recruitment and capacity building.

Introduction

The changes in the structure of ministries of agriculture in Nigeria are associated with changes in the political structure of the country from a three-region structure in 1960 to four regions in 1963, 12 states in 1967 and 36 states presently. Historically, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) was created in 1966. The ministry has the responsibility of developing the agriculture sector with a view to driving growth of income, accelerate food and nutrition security, generating employment and transforming the country into a leading global food market. (FMARD, 2017). It oversees formulation and implementation of agricultural policies, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives, programmes and projects in agriculture. It follows the policy, initiatives, and interventions of different administration targeted at sustainably growing agriculture as the single largest economic sector (Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC), 2017) and the mainstay of Nigeria's economy (Ayodele, Obafemi, & Ebong, 2013).

The Nigeria agricultural development process and the activities of the ministry is punctuated with implementation of various policy, programmes and projects by successive government at federal and state levels. According to Nwalieji, Uzuegbunam, & Okeke, (2015) Nigerian government since independence in 1960 has established and launched several policies, programmes and projects in agriculture in order to be self-food sufficient, food reliant and food secure. The first post-colonial development era of 1962-1968 period, emphasized the introduction of more modern agricultural methods through farm settlements, co-operative, plantations, supply of improved farm implements and greatly expanded agricultural extension service.

Between 1990 to early 2000's, federal and state governments efforts towards repositioning and improving the performance of the agricultural sector was through the implementation of some programmes and projects namely; the National Agricultural Land Development Authority, (NALDA) (1991), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) (1999), National Fadama Development programme (1999), Root and Tuber Expansion programme, (RTEP) (2000), National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) (2007) among others. These programmes and projects, though with varying features, share common goal and similar structure, targeted at improvement of the agriculture sector. The NALDA was used to open up more areas for agricultural production with supporting credit and land development. The overall goal of NALDA was to encourage farmers to plant above what they can consume, so that the surpluses could be sold at the local markets or exported to other countries for foreign exchange earnings; and it involved the use of subject matter specialist from the universities and financial credit staff of banks to back up the extension services of the Agricultural Development Programme. The NAPEP was tailored towards subsidized credit to farmers, and consisted of four schemes namely, youth empowerment scheme (capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment, credit delivery); rural infrastructures development scheme (provision of portable water, rural electrification, transportation and communication development); social welfare service scheme (qualitative education, primary health care, farmers empowerment and provision of social services, provision of agricultural input and

credit delivery to rural farmers); and natural resources development and conservation scheme (programmes for environmental protection through conservation of land and space, development of agricultural resources, solid minerals and water resources). Also, the National Fadama Development Programme (1999) was designed to promote simple and low-cost improved irrigation technology under World Bank financing and empowered farmers' associations with resources, training and technical know-how to properly manage and control the resources for their own development. Similarly, Root and Tuber Expansion Programme was established to commercialize root and tuber crop production and improve living conditions, income, food security and nutritional health of the poorest small holder households (Christian, 2020). At the local level, the programme aimed to achieve economic growth, improve access of the poor to social services and carry out intervention measures to protect the poor and vulnerable groups; while at the national level, it was designed to achieve food security and stimulate demand for cheaper staple food such as cassava, *garri*, yam, potato as against more expensive carbohydrate such as rice. The state ministries ministry of agriculture played critical roles in the administration, coordination and implementation of these programmes.

Apart from the policies, projects and programmes initiated by the federal government and implemented in the states, there were some agencies, programmes and projects initiated by the Anambra State government within the period under study. These include the Grain Production Agency (1991); Poverty Alleviation Programme (2002); Volunteer Service Agency (VSA) (1991); Anambra State Tractor Hiring Company (ASTRAC) (1991); Small Holders Management Unit (1991); State Agricultural Credit Scheme (SACS) (1991); State Loan Implementation Committee (SIC) (2006) among others. In addition to the administrative and institutional functions performed by the state ministry, other important activities through its technical units include organizing short duration seminars and workshops for farmers, providing credit, subsidies and other incentives, conduct market surveys to determine current prices of agricultural inputs and products, carry out technical implementation of all agricultural loan schemes and pest control services.

Based on the above trends and processes in the development of the agriculture sector, the Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, has undoubtedly undergone series of changes in its efforts to effectively carry its mandate. Since then, the expectation is that some changes would have occurred, particularly in the areas of policy initiatives, programmes implemented, funding, manpower development, and services rendered. To inform policy, it is necessary to examine the dynamic nature of the ministry in enhancing the capacity for administering and promoting the course of the agricultural sector.

The study:

- identified trends in policies and programmes;
- described trends in manpower recruitment and development; and
- examined trends in funding of the ministry;

Methodology

The study was carried out in the Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture, Nigeria. Anambra State lies between latitudes 5° 38' and 6° 47' North and longitude 6° 36' and 7° 21' East and occupies a land area of about 4,416sq km with an estimated population of 4.18 million people (National Population Commission, (NPC), 2006). It is bounded on the East by Enugu State, on the North by Kogi State, on the West by River Niger and Delta States and on the South by Imo, Abia and River States. There are eight departments in the State Ministry of Agriculture which include: Administration; Planning, Research and Statistics; Accounts; Veterinary Service; Engineering; Produce; Animal Production; and Agricultural Extension Department.

Data for the study were collected from documents in the Ministry of Agriculture, Anambra State including annual reports, and records in the budget office. Information sought include trends in policies, initiatives and programmes, (forms of participation, initiation, counterpart, implementation and status of the programme in term of its completion), funding, manpower recruitment and capacity development and linkages with agencies, (research institutes, universities/polytechnics/colleges of education, private extension organizations, farmers). The time period of the data collected and analysed was conditioned by the availability. It was difficult assessing data for current periods.

Results and Discussion

Trends in Policies and Programmes Initiated

Table 1 shows a sharp reduction of the policies and programmes implemented by the MOA from nine (1991-1995) to three between 1996 and 2000. It slightly rose to four programmes between 2001 and 2005 and to six programmes, representing 50% between 2006 and 2010. The programmes dropped to two between 2011 and 2013. It reflects government concerns within a strategic planning period. Conventionally, it is the responsibility of the ministry to make policy and implement government programmes for agricultural development. The ministry formulates, coordinates and oversees all initiatives, and interventions in agriculture. There were lack of continuity and multiplication of programmes, which could lead to duplication, overlapping of objectives and activities. Apparently, lessons from previous programmes were rarely explored for development of future policies and programmes.

Table 1: Policies and programmes initiated (1991-2013)

List of policies and initiatives	Year of commencement					Participation in policy formulation	Status	
	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2013		Existing	Stopped
Agricultural credit guarantee schemes		✓						2000
Agricultural credits support scheme					✓	✓	1	
Large scale agricultural credit scheme						✓	1	
Supervised agricultural loan board	✓					✓	1	
Root and tuber expansion programme				✓				2010
Fadama 1		✓				✓		2000
Fadama 111					✓	✓		2013
Presidential initiative on rice				✓				2005
Presidential initiative on cassava					✓		1	
Presidential initiative on palm				✓		✓	1	
Directorate for food road and rural infrastructure	✓							1994
Input supply and distribution	✓					✓	1	
Input subsidy	✓						1	
Agriculture mechanization	✓					✓	1	
Agricultural cooperatives	✓						1	
Agriculture water resource & irrigation development		✓				✓	1	
Growth enhancement scheme						✓	1	
National programme for food security					✓		1	
National food reserve agency					✓	✓	1	
National poverty eradication programme				✓		✓		2002
Volunteer service agency (VSA)	✓					✓		
State loan implementation committee (SLC)					✓	✓		
Small holder management unit	✓					✓		
Grain production agency (GPA)	✓					✓		2000
Total per intervals	9 (37%)	3 (12%)	4 (18%)	6 (25%)	2 (8%)	14 (58%)	13 (54%)	

✓ = initiated

The ministry did not participate in formulating 42% of the programmes implemented in the state. Forty-six percent of all the programmes initiated, had been concluded. Some of the programmes ended as planned, while other were abandoned. One of such programmes that ended as planned was Fadama 1 that transited to Fadama 11 and 111. Also, the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the Grain Production Agency, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme and the National Poverty Eradication Programme were concluded, while the Presidential Initiatives on Rice was abandoned. Fifty-four percent of all the policies and programmes initiated in the state were active. They include the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, the Large Scale Agricultural Credit Schemes, the Presidential Initiative on Cassava and Oil Palm, Input Supply and Distribution, Input Subsidy, Agricultural Mechanization, Agricultural Cooperative, Agricultural Water Resource and Irrigation Development, the National Food Reserve Agency, among others. The abandonment and lack of continuity of programmes could be linked to instability in government, poor funding, bureaucracy and administrative malady. Above all, most of these programmes and policies were top-down and highly centralized with little or no participation by farmers at the planning and implementation stages. This could limit effective implementation and impact of the programmes. Others, like the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural infrastructure has been criticized for lack of proper focus and programme accountability. (Christian, 2020). Odunze (2019)

reiterates that efforts to revive the agricultural sector of Nigeria through these policies have repeatedly failed over the years resulting in a sector with the majority of the smallholder farmers trapped in poverty and a nation suffering from food deficit and high dependence on food importation.

Trend in Staff Recruitment and Development

A total of 403 staff were recruited within the period under study into the various departments (Table 2). Agriculture department (185) had the highest, followed by administration (118), while research statistics (4) recruited the least number of staff. The manpower strength of the department is a function of the role and activities of the units. Thus, it is not surprising that agriculture department, the centre of activities in the ministry, recruited the highest number of staff. It is the hub of major activities, initiations, implementation and coordination activities.

Similarly, the highest recruitment (252) of staff was done between 1991-and 1995 and the least (22) took place from 2006 to 2010. The trend in recruitment over the years was undulating, but more consistent between 2006-2013. The changes in the proportion of recruitment could be associated with the period, volume of activities, programmes and overall government commitment to agriculture development. The instability in the government, poor funding, bureaucracy and ad-hoc attention given to agriculture may have largely contributed. The early recruitment between 1991-1996 was significant and may be explained by the challenge of structuring and developing a relatively new and important parastatal.

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Table 2: Trend in educational qualification of staff recruited

Department/Educational level	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2013	Total	% with Department	All department %
Administration department								
First school leaving certificate	40		2		5	47	39.8	
Secondary school certificate	14	1	5	3	5	28	23.7	
Ordinary national diploma	19	5	3	2	4	33	28.0	29.30%
Higher national diploma			2			2	1.7	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	4	3				7	5.9	
Doctor of philosophy		1				1	0.8	
Administration total	77	10	12	5	14	118	100	
Planning Research Statistic department (PRS)								
Secondary school certificate						1	25	
Ordinary national diploma	1					1	25	0.99%
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	1		1			2	50	
PRS total	3		1			4	100	
Account department								
Ordinary national diploma	3					3	42.9	1.74%
Higher national diploma	2					2	28.8	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	1	1				2	28.8	
Accounts total	6	1				7	100	
Veterinary department								
First school leaving certificate		1				1	6.3	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	1		1			2	12.5	3.72%
Diploma in veterinary services	8	1	3			12	81.3	
Veterinary total	9	2	4			15	100	
Engineering department								
craft training education			1		7	8	29.6	
Secondary school certificate			2			2	7.4	
Ordinary national diploma	1		6			7	25.9	6.70%
Higher national diploma	3					3	11.1	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	3	1	2			6	22.2	
Master in Science/Biology			1			1	3.7	
Engineering total	7	1	12		7	27	100	
Produce department								
Secondary school certificate	3					3	13.6	
Ordinary national diploma	4					4	18.2	5.50%
Higher national diploma	4					4	18.2	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	6					6	27.3	
Master in Science/Biology	5					5	22.7	
Produce total	22					22	100	
Animal production department								
Secondary school certificate	1				2	3	12.0	
Higher national diploma	4	3	2	3		12	48.0	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	3	1		2		6	24.0	6.20%
Master in Science/Biology	2			1		3	12.0	
Doctor of philosophy				1		1	4.0	
Animal production total	10	4	2	7	2	25	100	
Agriculture department								
First school leaving certificate	19	6	4			29	15.7	
Secondary school certificate	3	5	8	7	2	25	13.5	
Ordinary national diploma	24	6	1			31	16.8	45.91%
Higher national diploma	39	10	1			50	27.0	
Bachelor of Science/Engineering/Agric.	24		4			28	15.0	
Master in Science/Biology	8	5	5	3		21	11.4	
Doctor of philosophy	1					1	0.5	
All department total	252	50	54	22	25	403		

Over the years, the majority (91) of staff recruited had OND and only 30 and 3 persons had bachelor of science and doctor of philosophy, respectively. The proportions of staff with higher national diploma(HND), (52), bachelor of science (43) and masters of science (15) were highest in 1996 compared to other years. There was no recruitment of persons with HND, bachelor of science and doctor of

philosophy from 2011-2013. On the contrary, staff with secondary school certificate (9), craft education (7) and first School leaving certificate (5) were in the majority the same year. The number of persons with different qualification declined over time. This suggests poor human resource development and low capacity to perform their roles and combat the challenges in the agricultural sector. It could be attributed to many factors including limited opportunity for staff development, unattractive remuneration and career prospect, high staff mobility and embargo on employment. The poor manpower resource both in terms of quality and quantity is anti-productive for such an important and dynamic system in the state.

Furthermore, agriculture department had the most qualified staff, followed by produce department, while the administrative staff were least qualified. The agriculture department had the highest proportion of staff with ordinary national diploma (24), higher national diploma (39), bachelor of science (24), and master of science (8). However, the proportion drastically declined over the years; and there was no recruitment of persons with OND, HND and BSc between 2006 and 2013. This shows gaps in quantity and quality of manpower required for effective execution of functions by the ministry. It reflects the overall neglect of the agricultural sector in Nigeria and greatly explains the widely criticised low performance of the ministry in driving the agricultural sector. Invariably, this results to low agricultural productivity, food insecurity and increasing incident and severity of poverty and malnutrition in the country Razaq Fiona, Anita, 2018). Literature shows that these issues are tied to incessant poor funding and policy inconsistency in the agricultural sector. (Ihugba, et al., 2013; Dul, and Evbuomwan, 2017; Uramadu, Ariwa, Uramadu, 2018).

Human Capacity Development

One staff training took place between 1991 and 1995, and another between 1996 and 2000 (Table 3). No staff training took place in the periods; 2001-2005, 2006-2010 and 2011-2013. However, agriculture show was conducted once throughout the years (1991-2013), but conferences, workshops and seminars were not conducted over the years. This suggests that the ministry has not conducted any capacity building training between 2000 and 2013. This means low capacity for planning, policy analysis, and policy evaluation in the SMARD. It also indicates limited capacity building and interaction with farmers at the grass root. Poor training of staff could be attributed to poor funding of the ministry and neglect of the agriculture sector in general. Over time, the sector has not received commensurate support from the government, given its applauded importance to the economic growth of the nation. Enhancing the quantity and quality of staff requires improved organizational management capacity, setting annual work plans, and monitoring staff performance. Staff training helps to maintain and upgrade competence of staff for higher performance of tasks related to their jobs, which aid the organization to reach its goals within its stated mission.

Table 3: Number of human capacity activities

Human capacity building programme Organized/sponsored by the ministry	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2013
Staff training	1	1	-	-	-
Agricultural shows	1	1	1	1	1
Conferences	-	-	-	-	-
Workshop	-	-	-	-	-
Seminars	-	-	-	-	-

Trends in Funding

Table 4 shows trends in the overall funding pattern of the ministry of agriculture based actual funds released. In 1994/1995, 1.4% of state released budget of N4,522,600,000 went to ministry of agriculture (N63,050,000). From 1996 to 2000, 0.67% (N256,046,790) of N38,28,836,000 disbursed by the state government, was the ministry. Similarly, releases to the MOA between 2001 and 2005 accounted for 0.56% (N622,899,500) of the actual state budget released (N110,261,189,000). Proportion of allocation reduced to 0.16% (N469,851,460) of N302,522,959,000, from 2006 to 2010. The trend (0.2%) continued from 2011 to 2013, of the state actual release, (N261,139,000,000). Consistently, the proportion of total fund released to the Ministry of Agriculture over time, dropped, while the overall budget of the state significantly increased over the same periods. This is a reflection of the general punctuated ad hoc attention and commitment given to agriculture, despite the increasing awareness and promotion of the sector as a key driver of economic growth. Olusola and Lere (2019) reported 2.6% share of agriculture in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Okeke (2013) reported that in Anambra State, the trend in growth of actual expenditure in agriculture over a period of 1991 to 2003 was upward sloping, rising sharply first, then following an irregular pattern as it progressed. Government expenditure on agriculture contrast dramatically with the sectors importance in the Nigerian economy and the policy emphasis on diversifying away from oil (Okezie, Nwosu, & Njoku, 2013).

Table 4: Trends in amount of fund released

Released Fund****	Released funds in Naira*				
	1991-1995 **	1996-2000***	2001-2005***	2006-2010***	2011-2013****
Actual State budget (over period)	4,522.600****	38,528.836	110,261.189	302,522.959	261,139.000
Actual State Budget (Annual/ (average)	4,522.600	9,632.209	27,565.297	75,630.739	130,695.000
Actual fund to Ministry of agriculture (over period)	63.050	256.047	622.900	469.851	623.959
Actual fund to Ministry of agriculture (Annual/ (average)	63.050	64.011	155.725	117.851	311,799
% of state to ministry of agriculture disbursed	1.39	0.67	0.56	0.16	0.24

* multiply by 1,000 **= one-year (1994/95),. *** = four-year, **** two-year,

Budgetary allocation to agriculture in Nigeria remains below the 10% suggested by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) (Ani, Biam, & Kantiok., 2015;). According to Olomola, Tewodaji, Olofinbiyi, Nwoke, *et al.*, (2014), spending on agriculture as a share of total federal spending averaged 4.6% between 2008 and 2012 has been trending downward precipitously. More recent report shows that the proportion of the federal budget allocated to agriculture in 2016 was only 1.25% (Olabukunola, 2016 in Downei, 2017). Expenditure on agriculture is one of the most important government instruments for promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty in rural areas of developing countries (Okezie et al., 2013; Apata, Sanusi, Obaisi, & Ajani, 2016).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development implemented several agricultural programmes and projects in the state. However, the number of programmes executed declined over time, while some were abandoned. Similarly, the quality and quantity of manpower recruitment in the ministry decreased over time, leaving critical gap in personnel required for effective performance of the multiple activities of the ministry. Budgetary allocation to the ministry was consistently low and showed a downward trend in proportion. Early development stage of the ministry witnessed significant recruitment, perhaps due to initial challenges of growing the ministry, but manpower development opportunity was limited. There is need for a change in government commitment to agriculture and specifically the ministry of agriculture in the area of funding, human resource and policy. Government should increase the proportion of manpower and create adequate opportunity for training and development for ministry staff. Serious attention should be given to departments that are directly linked to productive activities, and users of agricultural knowledge. Agricultural extension experts should target more research attention on the ministry of agriculture, so as to identify challenges facing the ministry for the attention of policy makers, and enhancing the development of agriculture.

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