

## **Comparative Assessment of Public Policy Initiatives in the Agricultural Sector of Rivers State, Nigeria (2007-2020)**



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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examined how the second tier of government in Nigeria has been able to promote agriculture and food security through its programmes and policies using Rivers State as a paradigm. This responsibility is captured in the concurrent list as provided in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It adopts the political systems theory as its theoretical underpinning. Primary source of data were used through interviews of principal officers from the Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture, as well as Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency's Songhai Initiative. The study observed that within the period under review, the administration embarked on various agricultural programmes. Amongst other recommendations is the need for continuation of programmes and policies of successive administrations, as well as the need for more proactive measures in the execution of public policies for efficient service delivery.

**KEYWORDS:** Public Policy, Development, Government; Agricultural Sector; Good Governance.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

That the major responsibility of any government is to meet the socio-economic needs of the citizenry cannot be overemphasized. A government is deemed to have failed if it cannot provide the needed services; facilities and infrastructure that would enable the citizens achieve their aspirations and live a meaningful life. Evidently, citizens desire happiness, comfort, improved standard of living and look up to the government to provide programmes and policies that would make these possible.

The state provides for the security of lives and property of its citizenry, which, of course, is the primary reason for individuals submitting their natural rights of self-preservation to the state. When the individual does not get the needed protection and satisfaction, he certainly resorts to self-help in order to survive. This development does not augur well for the state. This as a matter of fact is antithetical to development. It has the capacity to create instability therein. Food is a basic necessity of man, and efforts by government to ensure food security is a veritable strategy to provide for the well-being of the citizenry. In this regard, this paper examines the policy initiatives of the Rivers State government of Nigeria in the agricultural sector over a period of eight (8) years. The economic, social and political sectors are the major spheres of activities of the state. Governments adopt programmes and policies within the spheres to achieve their objectives. The agricultural sector is a major sector in the economic sphere of governmental activities. Over the years, successive governments have striven to initiate programmes and policies in the agricultural sector to boost the economic lives of the citizenry. For instance, at the national levels, the Operations Feed the Nation and Green Revolution were introduced by the then General Olusegun Obasanjo administration and Alhaji Shehu Shagari regimes. In Rivers State, the School-to Land Scheme was introduced. The dedication of a Ministry to oversee agricultural activities in both the federal and state governments as well as agencies such as the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) go a long way to illustrate how important successive governments attach importance to agriculture. Despite the huge investment in the sector, agriculture is largely underdeveloped as most activities are carried out at the subsistence level. This has also resulted to the fact that there is still a high level of food importation into the country. The paper is divided into the following parts: Introduction; objectives of the study; statement of the problem, method of the study; theoretical framework; area of study; data presentation and analysis, conclusion and recommendation.

**Objectives of the study:** The objective of this study is to examine the process of initiation of policy by government using the agricultural sector in Rivers State as a case study; examine its objectives and effectiveness, as well as ascertain the extent to which such public policies have achieved the objectives of government

**Statement of the problem:** The agricultural sector is a very important sector in the economy of the state. This is why responsive governments invest so much on this sector. The sector apart from ensuring the availability of food which is the basic need of man, has also provided raw materials that has helped engender industrialization and the growth and development of the economy.

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However, the inadequacy of food and agricultural produce poses a major threat to the development of a state. The state in developing countries like Nigeria is characterized by poverty and unemployment. Agriculture has over the years being seen as a sector that would create employment and address the need of the economy. Where there is inadequate attention and lack of clear cut strategies and policies by government to boost the sector, it poses a problem to the development objectives of the state and ultimately fail to meet the welfare needs of the citizenry.

**Method of Study:** The study obtained secondary data from the Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture, Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), as well as the Rivers State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), for analysis and discussion of the programmes and policies of the Rivers State government within the period under review.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature of comparative public policy identifies: Group, Elite, Political System, as well as the Rational Choice Theory as theories of public policy analysis. This paper is anchored on the Political Systems Theory as developed by Easton, 1963. Easton's Political systems Theory sees the system in the form of an organism interacting with one another. He goes further to identify the input and output mechanism in the interaction within the political system. The input arises from the general conditions in the environment which produces demand and the resultant effect the support which is the response from the government produces output. These go through a filter and are processed into public policy and subsequently the results. There is also the feedback mechanism adopted in the theory. The applicability of this theory to this paper is x-rayed in the logic of the policy initiative identified by government during the period under discourse as a response from the demand for food security by the environment. The prerogative of government providing for the welfare of the people include policies that would ensure that the basic necessities of life- food, shelter and clothing are made available for the reach of the citizenry. The non-availability of these basic needs pose social, economic and political instability which makes it difficult for government to function effectively. To ensure that government meets its objective, such demands are responded to and the support being to evolve functional agriculture policy that would address the need to provide these basic necessities of life. To this end, the government of Rivers State under the period evolved a number of policies, including agricultural policies to meet the demands of a responsive government to the welfare needs and aspirations of the people.

### CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

**Public policy:** This refers to the programmes and projects which government intends to embark upon. Governments initiate and implement programmes and policies as part of the strategies to achieve their objectives. The major essence of any responsible government is to provide for the welfare and security of the citizens and to enable government achieve these, it evolves proactive measures. Public policies provide the framework that guide government in its objectives. While public policy is important, the implementation is also very vital in the achievement of the overall purpose of governance. In this regard, public policy initiation and implementation are veritable instruments to drive the developmental objectives of government. The world over, public policies are important and are necessary mechanisms for developmental purposes. Allen citing Sapru (2004) as providing a guide, informing action which may take any of the following form: Statement of goals; Assessment of course of action; Announcement of broad purposes as well as statement of authoritative decisions.

**Development:** This implies the improvement in the living standards of the citizenry. It has to do with the improvement and enhancement of his welfare and opportunity to have access to the basic needs and necessities of life. Development has to do with the impact of government policies and programmes on the living standard of the citizenry. As a matter of fact, any programme or policy that does not have any positive bearing on the lives of the citizenry cannot be regarded as development. To this end, governance must be directed at the people. In other words, development is a human oriented concept. Development also offers the individuals the freedom of choice and alternatives for improved living standard, free from fear of want and starvation.

**Agricultural Sector:** The agricultural sector is a major sectors of the economy. It is a critical sector that boosts food productivity and raw materials that help growth and productivity in the industrial sector. This sector is critical given the fact that of the three basic necessities of man- food clothing and shelter, agriculture plays a critical role in these three necessities. Over the years, the improvement in agriculture has stimulated the growth and advancement of economics. Globally, agriculture creates the needed wealth for a nation in that it provides for both food and cash crops that farmers and investors utilize to earn both local and foreign currencies. There is no doubt that the agricultural sector plays a strategic role in the process of the economic development of a country. The agricultural sector has a place in the economic history of the world as it is at the centre of the quest for man to survive. From the era of man's simple subsistence economic activity, to complex and advanced commercial activity of man in a technologically driven world, agriculture has played a veritable role in human existence.

**Government:** The institution of government in this regard implies the set of individuals or group of persons who are saddled with the responsibility of governance in a given state, society or territory. They are either elected or appointed. They bear the rule and ensure that they initiate programmes and policies that would enhance the living standard of the citizenry. They control the machinery

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of power in the state both human and material resources and common obedience of the citizens covertly or overtly. In a bid to explain the concept of government, Alapiki (2006) asserts that the concept has been examined from several main lines of inquiry such as the examination of the source and distribution of authority and the classification of types of government such as presidential systems and monarchies. He also identifies the analysis of levels of government which includes such units as national societies, clubs, trade unions among others. To him, government consists of individuals sharing a defined responsibility for exercising power.

**Good Governance:** This implies the ability of government to provide rule and leadership according to the rule of law. In other words it means that governance should be carried out in line and according to the wishes and aspirations of the people. The concept of good governance is a veritable instrument that brings about the development of the citizenry. Good governance shows the responsiveness of government to the needs and aspirations of the people. Such posture makes for enhanced participation of citizens in governance. The concept of good governance entails accountability, transparency, openness in governance and participation of the citizenry and responsiveness of government to the needs and aspirations of the citizenry. These basic principles promote harmony and stability in the polity, which in turn engenders development in the society.

### PUBLIC POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

The literature on public policy shows that there is a marked difference between the policy making process in developed countries and developing countries. All efforts geared towards the enhancement of the living conditions of the people and improvement of the society are achieved through implementation of policies. The policy direction of a government is indicative of its posture towards its citizens. Torjman (2005) in his attempt to explain what policy is stressed the importance of policy in the overall activities in a society. According to him:

Public policy determines the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. It affects the food we eat- how it is harvested, where it is distributed and sold and how much we pay. It controls the way in which we clean and monitor the safety of the water supply.

Onah citing the pragmatic approach of the Washington Municipal Research and Review Centre (1999) explains that if formally adopted, policy generally takes the form of a government principle, a plan or course of action. In the public sector, it generally evolves from a deliberate process and is adopted by ordinance or regulation. Public policy could be the adoption of a vision for the community, a comprehensive plan, a budget or a policy relating to a specific issue such as allowing or prohibiting gambling activities. The existing literature of public policy shows a variety of approaches such as: Rational, Incremental, Mixed Scanning Approach, Group Theory, Elitist Theory, Pluralist Theory and the Political System Model (Osman 2008). Osman further argues that of these approaches, it is popularly believed that Easton's (1965) Systems Theory can be employed to explain the policy making process of developing countries. Earlier, he was critical of the various approaches, describing them as tailored to suit the developed countries and hence not quite sufficient for understanding a comprehensive analysis. This is because most of the public policy making theories were derived from studies in industrially developed countries, which in most cases are insufficient to explain situations in developing countries, due to environmental differences.

In his contribution, Torjman (2005) identified various perspectives of policy as follows: substantive and administrative policy; vertical and horizontal policy; reactive and proactive policy, as well as current and future policy. He argued that reactive policy emerges in response to crises that must be addressed, while proactive policies are introduced and pursued through deliberate course to prevent an occurrence, particularly a negative one.

In achieving policy objectives, governments apply strategies to achieve such purpose. This is what Mackay and Shaxton (2005) described as policy instrument. They identify expenditures, regulations, partnerships, exchange of information, taxation, licensing, direct provision of services, doing nothing, contracts, subsidies and authority as examples of policy instruments. Each of these is applied in response to the policy direction of the government. They also asserted that government's choice of policy instruments is bound most importantly by past actions.

As noted earlier, the state is responsible to provide the needed social and economic infrastructure that would engender development and welfare of its citizenry. Construction of roads, houses, schools, hospitals, markets, power supply, utilities, amongst others are prerogatives of the state and are achieved through policy directives. This view, apparently, prompts Olashore (1989), to make a distinction between provision of social services for the generality and welfare of the citizenry and services that would boost the economic interest of private concerns that are profit oriented when he states that:

The major consideration of government in investing in infrastructural development is both social and political. Strictly therefore, the business community would rather invest directly in productive activities. These are activities that are profit-oriented for which the returns to investment is normally high. For such activities whose social overhead is high or which are indirect productive activities, government comes to the rescue. This explains why a great proportion of investment in infrastructural facilities such as highways, railways, power stations, irrigation schemes, sea ports, air ports, schools and hospitals in Nigeria are built by the government. It is the responsibility of government to ensure that these infrastructure serve the needs of the people (1984:24).

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It does not end in just provision of these infrastructure, but also to ensure that the citizens benefitted from their services. In better organized states, failure to provide public utilities and poor economic policies has always brought discontent amongst the citizens. This often results from poor implementation of economic and social policies or lack of such policies. The 2011 Arab Spring, which swept across Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, was as a result of discontent of the citizens due to failure of government to meet their social and economic needs. The scars of those civil actions are still manifest, while there are some skirmishes and pockets of unrests in several other countries today as a result of failure of governments to meet the welfare needs of the citizens.

The Nigerian Constitution provides for the promotion of good government and welfare of all persons in the country (FRN Constitution, 1999 iii5). It confers the legal power on the government to do all that is within its resources and capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure that could enhance the living standard of the citizenry. These are achieved through initiating programmes and policies.

The literature of public policy is filled with views of a lot of scholars on what public policy is. The most popular view is that public policy is what government chose to do or not to do. Dye, (1972:1) argues that government has the major responsibility in driving the citizenry to achieve what it wants. This simple definition encapsulates the essence of public policy and highlights the fact that it is an essential tool that enables government carry out its activities which, as already highlighted, should be geared towards promoting the welfare of the citizens. Dye went further to explain that:

Governments do many things. They regulate conflict within the society; they organize society to carry on conflict with other societies; they distribute a great variety of symbolic rewards and material services to members of the society; and they extract money from the society, most often in the form of taxes. Thus, public policies may regulate behaviour, organize bureaucracies, distribute benefits, and extract taxes of all these things at once...

Public policies may deal with a wide variety of substantive areas- defence, energy, environment, foreign affairs, education, welfare, police, highway, taxation, housing, social security, health, economic opportunity, urban development, inflation and recession and so on. They may range from the vital to the trivial.

Friedrich (1963) on his own part defines policy as a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment, providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose. Anderson (1976) sees policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. Public policies are those policies developed by governmental bodies and officials to achieve set objectives. Allen (2010) argues that public policy implementation is understood as the execution and delivery of public policies. He argues that governments may use institutions such as government agencies, companies, non-profit organization and other levels of government to implement its programmes. The special characteristics of public policies stem from the fact that they are formulated by what David Easton called "authorities" in a political system, namely: elders, paramount chiefs, executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councilors, monarchs and the likes." These are, according to him, the persons who "engage in the daily affairs of a political system and are "recognized by most members of the system as having responsibility for these matters, take actions that are accepted as binding most of the time by most of the members so long as they act within the limits of their roles." Easton (1965:212).

### **AREA OF STUDY**

Created on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1967, Rivers State has had successive leadership- both military and civilian that has evolved a number of agricultural policies in order to provide food for its citizens and even beyond. According to the 2006 population census figures, the state has a total population of 5,185,400 inhabitants. It is composed of both upland and riverine communities. In a bid to forge positive agricultural policies, one of the pioneer Ministries established in the State was the Ministry of Agriculture.

Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people of Rivers State. Before oil was discovered in commercial quantity in 1956, Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy of oil Rivers Protectorate, now Rivers State. However, the oil boom in the early 1970s accelerated the establishment of many business firms by government in its attempt to invest for the future, thereby causing a mass exodus of farm labour for blue collar jobs in the cities. It is the attendant consequences of this neglect that has necessitated the various efforts of government at reinvigorating the sector with a view to ensuring food security. Rivers State has a total of 1,940,000 hectares of land, out of which the cultivatable area is about 760,000 hectares which is approximately 30% of the landmass of the State. National statistical data shows that Rivers State is one of the leading states in the production of cassava, cocoyam, rice, maize, pineapple, mango, paw paw, guava, beans, pepper, banana, etc. The major tree crops in the State are: oil palm and rubber. Others are cocoa, arvensia, citrus and coconut.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE RIVERS STATE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

The Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture is a Ministry of the government of Rivers State charged with the regulation and formulating of policies related to the agricultural sector of the State and to secure food, improve the economy of the rural areas and protect the environment. Agriculture in Rivers State is an important sector of the economy of Rivers State, Nigeria. It is the main source of

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livelihood for the rural people. Agriculture creates employment, provides income and helps curb migration. The industry in the state is overseen by the Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Rivers State, 2018

The Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture has the responsibility of providing farmer-friendly agricultural policies with a view to achieving food security, developing the rural economy, as well as to ensure conducive environmental security/protection for improved agricultural productivity.

The Ministry has the vision to create a macro economic climate that stimulates greater private sector investment in agricultural and rural development, rationalizing the roles of the tiers of government, recognizing the institutional framework, implementing integrated rural development, increasing budgetary allocation, improving incentives to agriculture and promoting increased application of modern technology to agricultural production.

The mandates of the Ministry are:

- strengthening of all relevant agricultural stakeholders, participation/involvement in the State agricultural projects;
- Reinvigorate research extension-farmers linkage in the State;
- Intensifying agricultural sensitization/awareness in the State;
- Ensuring that provision of high yield and disease resistant varieties of crops and other planting materials are made available to farmers via the ADP extension officers;
- Assisting farmers to obtain the right type of input such as fertilizers and chemicals;
- Organizing seminars and workshops for agricultural teachers and farmers;
- Providing farmers with credits, subsidies and other incentives to boost total output;
- Treatment, control and prevention of animal/livestock disease;
- Promoting scientific management of forest reserves for sustainable growth;
- Survey and development of management scheme for wildlife resources in the State;
- Maintenance of an agro-data bank in collaboration with the Information Technology Department of the Governor's office;
- Conduct market surveys to determine current process of agricultural inputs and products;
- Carry out the technical implementation of all agricultural loan scheme;
- Policies formulation and implementation for the development of the fisheries sub sector;
- Provision of professionals guidance in decision making in all matters affecting fisheries;
- Facilitate access to funds for Rivers State indigenes to establish agro-base and agro allied industries;
- Enter into partnership with private investors to engage in large scale fishing, livestock farming and other farming activities to create jobs and to increase the revenue base of the State. (MOA Rivers State, 2019)

The Agriculture Department is the largest and forms the nucleus of the Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture. The Department implements projects and programmes aimed at increased production of food and fibres in the State. It performs the function through the following units:

1. Crop Development Unit
2. Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Unit
3. Pest Management Unit
4. Agricultural Land Resource Unit

The policy mandate is to promote farmers friendly agricultural policies with a view to achieving food security, eradicating poverty and developing the rural economy and protecting the economy. (MOA, Rivers State, 2018)

### **AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ADP)**

The Rivers State Agricultural Development Programme was established to increase the agricultural productivity and income of small holder operators and consequently improve the living conditions of the rural population. The programme therefore emphasizes the development of technologies for farmers in the areas of crop, livestock, fisheries, agro-forestry and grade specific activities of the rural dwellers. Rural farm roads, mini water schemes and linkage with credit institutions are some of the activities of the ADP. The Rivers State ADP was established on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1987, but it had legal backing with the promulgation of Section 1 of Edict No1 of 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1988. It is a semi-autonomous, self-accounting unit within the Ministry of Agriculture.

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To increase food and tree crops, livestock and fisheries production of the small scale fisherman in Rivers State;
- To help streamline the extension services and the input delivery system;
- To help improve the network of rural roads;
- To make available safe potable water supplying to the rural population, and
- To improve the quality of life in the rural areas of Rivers State.

Source: Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture, 2018.

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### **AGRICULTURAL POLICY INITIATIVES OF RIVERS STATE GOVERNMENT FROM 2007-2015**

During the period under review, the government initiated various policies and programmes in the agricultural sector. These policies and programmes consist of various objectives. Ultimately, the major objective is to boost food production and enhance food security. Between 2013 and 2015, the government under its Transformation Agenda on palm oil value chain which was carried out in collaboration with the Federal Government embarked on oil palm nursery and cultivation. This was to boost palm oil production in the State. The objective of the programme was to increase vegetable oil production in order to achieve import substitution and cancel the deficit of 800,000 metric tons, which is annually met through import. Under this programme, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and rural development supplied 109,560 sprouted nuts to the Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture from the Nigeria Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), Benin. At transplantation stage, these seedlings were sold to accredited farmers of the state at subsidized prices. The aim was to boost oil production and its products.

There is also the banana and plantain project located at Bunu Tai in Tai Local Government Area. The initiative is a banana plantation project in partnership with a Mexican firm, Sam Carlos Group, under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) to cultivate, produce and export banana for commercial purposes in a 2000 hectares of land.

The oil palm development project established in Ubima in Ikwerre Local Government Area was aimed at rehabilitation and replacement of 16,000 hectares of Risonpalm oil palm plantation through processing of products under public private partnership. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with a Belgian firm, SIAT and work has commenced.

Rice production and processing is yet another initiative of the Rivers State government during the period under review. The State in partnership with some foreign investors were to engage on the cultivation of 10,000 hectare rice field with provision for modern processing facilities at Rumuewhor in Emohua Local Government Area.

There was also the seed multiplication scheme. The project is aimed at helping in the multiplication of hybrid seedlings and make them accessible to farmers for cultivation.

There is also the out grower scheme which was aimed at complementing the seed multiplication scheme already established.

The government also established the accelerated cassava multiplication scheme in Atali, Obio/Akpor Local Government area to help boost and enhance the cultivation of hybrid cassava stems and made available to the local farmers.

### **THE RIVERS STATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (RSSDA) SONGHAI INITIATIVE**

A major policy initiative of the administration within the period under review is the establishment of the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA). The Agency was established with the mandate to identify and evaluate the existing development gaps and intervention programmes through the acquisition, warehousing and analysis of socio-economic development data, formulate and implement plans, initiatives, strategies, intervention models and specific measures to achieve sustainable socio-economic development, capacity building, skills acquisition and alternative source of livelihood in an environmentally sustainable manner in Rivers State, as well as collaborate with government, including local councils, the communities, international development agencies and organized private sector in the pursuit of a sustainable development agenda for Rivers State. (RSSDA Annual Report, 2011).

The Agency underscored the importance of Agriculture/Agro-Allied and Business Development services as the most viable ways to provide food security and address poverty in Rivers State. This is to be achieved by enhancing sustainable livelihoods, promoting rural growth, creating employment and increasing household incomes. The Songhai Rivers initiative was established to provide a veritable means for improving agriculture, thereby ensuring food security in Rivers State. The Farm located at Tai Local Government area is the hub from where the six regional integrated farm centres benefitted from technical support, including new adaptable agrotechnologies, product value chain transformation, entrepreneurship training and SME development

### **RIVERS STATE CASSAVA INITIATIVE**

The administration's policy in taking lead in cassava production, initiated the cassava initiative. The cassava initiative is an intervention aimed at helping local cassava farmers build their capacity and provide opportunity to generate greater income. This is to be achieved by increasing cassava yield for local farmers from 10 to 20 tons per hectare. It was expected that under the Initiative, the DADTCO Rivers Cassava Processing Company would establish a 30,000 ton cassava processing factory at Afam. This factory will use a split processing technology for on farm processing of cassava roots. The Automotive Mobile Processing Unit (AMPU) will produce cassava cakes from fresh roots. These cakes could then be used directly by breweries or taken to the main processing plant for further processing into high quality cassava flour.

The project is a major private sector-led intervention which started in 2010 when the RSSDA signed a partnership with Shell, Dutch Agricultural Development and Trading Company DADTCO, Stanbic-IBTC Bank and the International Fertilizer Development Company to transform the cultivation and production of cassava in Rivers State from subsistence to commercial levels. The investment is equivalent to approximately 1 million Euros, 70 percent was to be invested in building and operating the 15000 tonnes cassava processing factory.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture is a very important sector that provides for the development of a country. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. Food security and availability of raw materials to feed the available industry provided a veritable means to enhance the living conditions of the people as well as provide jobs for the unemployed.

There is no doubt that during the period under review, the government of Rivers State embarked on a robust agricultural scheme. This was a move to enhance the production of agricultural produce and boost food production in the State. The Ministry of Agriculture cooperated with other agencies to ensure that the programmes and policies succeeded. It was evident that the long term gains of these agricultural policies were enormous. However, it is observed that the lack of continuity that has characterized programmes and policies in the underdeveloped countries such as Nigeria has affected the outcome of these policies. The agricultural programme and policies have since been abandoned.

In view of the finding from this study, the study recommends as follows: There is need for continuation of government programmes and policies, particularly in the agriculture sector. This is to consolidate on the gains already recorded in the implementation of such policies; Given the importance of agriculture in ensuring food security, there is the need for more investments in terms of budgetary allocations to the agricultural sector; professionals in the agricultural sector should be engaged to implement and advise government on programmes and policies related to agriculture.

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### APPENDIX

#### AGRICULTURAL POLICY INITIATIVES OF RIVERS STATE GOVERNMENT FROM 2007-2015

#### TABLE SHOWING AGRICULTURAL POLICIES OF RIVERS STATE FROM 2007-2015

S/N	Title of project	Description	Location	Year
1	Transformation Agenda on oil palm value chain Federal Government project in collaboration with the Rivers State Government.	The objective of the programme is to increase vegetable oil production in order to achieve import substitution and cancel deficit of 800,000m which is annually met through import. The federal ministry of agriculture and rural development supplied 109,560 sprouted nuts to the Rivers State ministry of Agriculture from NIFOR Benin. At transplantation stage these seedlings were sold to accredited farmers of the state at subsidized prize. The aim is to boost oil production and its products.	Rumuodomaya in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, and Bori in Khana Local Government Area.	2013-2015
2	Banana plantation project	A banana plantation project in partnership with a Mexican firm, Sam Carlos group, under Public Private Partnership (PPP) to cultivate, produce and export banana for commercial purposes in 2000 hectares of land.	Bun Tai, Tai Local Government Area.	
3	Oil palm development	Rehabilitation and replacing of 16000 hectares of Risonpalm oil palm plantation through processing of products under public private partnership. An MoU was signed with a Belgium firm, SIAT and work has commenced.	Ubima, Ikwerre Local Government Area	
4	Rice production and processing	The State is in partnership with some foreign investors on the cultivation of 10,000 hectares rice field with provision for modern processing facilities.	Rumewuhor, Emohua Local Government Area.	
5	Seed multiplication scheme	The project is aimed at helping in the multiplication of hybrid seedlings and made accessible to framers for cultivation	Rumuodomaya, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area	2016-2017
6	Out grower scheme	To complement the seed multiplication scheme		
7	Accelerated cassava multiplication scheme		Atali, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area	2015-2017

Source: Rivers State Ministry of Agriculture, 2018