

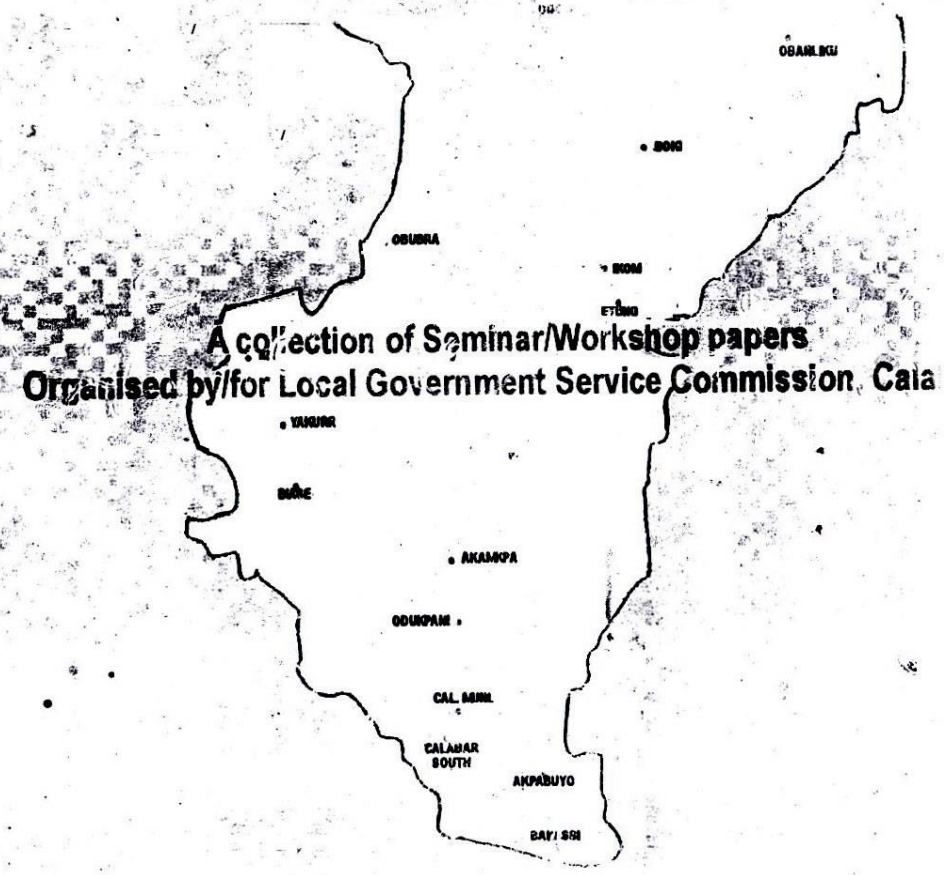
Dynamics of Local Government Administration in Nigeria

Chapter Thirteen

Statistics for Agricultural Policy Development at Local Government Level

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1.0 Introduction

Agriculture has been defined as the application of all-relevant arts, sciences and management principles to the production of crops and the rearing of animals and fish for the provision of food for man, raw materials for our industries and for foreign exchange. Statistics on the other hand is the art and science of gathering, analyzing and making inferences from data.

1.1 Agricultural Policy Development

At a very general level, it is probably true that there was a major shift in agricultural policy in nearly all African Countries during the 1930s. Basically this was a shift from the encouragement of the export crops to

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concentration on food production for the local market. The causes of the change of emphasis were no doubt manifold and complex, but two main factors were probably dominant. First, the dramatic fall of export prices during the slump of 1929-34 damaged faith in export crop production as a route to prosperity. Secondly the population of most countries was steadily growing and with it the demand for food.

More significantly, the urban component was growing much more dramatically.

Thus even in the 1930s and 1940s these expanding urban markets for foods enabled many farmers to leave export production and to concentrate on serving these local markets.

Not only basic cereals like millet, sorghum, maize and rice were needed, but also a wide range of perishable products such as fruits, vegetables, eggs, cheese and meat. Agricultural policy shifted accordingly and usually with benefits.

1.2 Nigerian Agricultural Policy

The Federal Government Agricultural Production Policy Statement is as follows:

A real solid foundation is yet to be laid at the Nation's grassroots level from which the Nation's food and Agriculture sector can attain rapid and self-sustaining growth and development and in the process fulfil all the objectives assigned the sector by the Nation's Agricultural Policy.

This has to be done Nation wide effectively and immediately. Very high majorities of our peasant and

small scale farmers, who produce the bulk of the food we eat are yet to be effectively reached with solutions to their technical, socio-economics and organizational problems that can assist them enhance their productivity and productive capacity.

1.2 Objectives of Nigerian Agricultural Policy

The objectives of the Nigerian Agricultural Policy include the following:

- (i) To contribute to efforts aimed at laying solid foundation at the grassroots level, for the rapid growth and development of the Nation's Food and Agricultural sector.
- (ii) To contribute to efforts to promote self-sufficiency in the production of national staples within the shortest time possible.
- (iii) To contribute to efforts to expand agricultural production generally for export and the earning of foreign exchange as well as the diversification of the Nation's export base.
- (iv) To contribute to efforts to make the food and Agricultural Sector create, at the grassroots level far greater employment opportunities than hitherto since the overriding policy objective on employment at the grassroots level, is to achieve full employment there in the shortest time possible.
- (v) To contribute to efforts to increase the income generating capacity of rural dwellers who take advantage of these employment opportunities in the Food and Agricultural Sector very competitive.

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- (vi) To forge from the grassroots level the desired strong link between the food and Agriculture Sector and the Technology, Industrial and Manufacturing Sectors.
 - (vii) To minimize post harvest losses.
 - (viii) To contribute to efforts to make the small-scale farmer in all parts of the Nation true centerpiece of the Nation's Food Production Effort.

2.0 Agricultural Statistics

2.1.0 Land use Survey and Land use Planning

Land is a basic resources and there is no physical project, be it private or public, that can be undertaken with the exclusion of land. It is required for a variety of basic needs – houses, roads, public institutions, airports, and defense purposes etc.

It should be emphasized that land is a fixed resource and highly immutable except under restricted condition and it is very expensive. Land can be extended in some place by reclamation, either from the sea or from mining areas.

The demand for land keeps escalating because the human beings that use land increase in geometric progression. For the purposes outlined above, planning the use of land is very essential.

Land use survey has to do with the collection of data from existing land use patterns the percentage occupied by industrial establishments, public institutions, private houses and farm lands as well as its distribution both by type and texture.

Land use planning is an exercise aimed at ensuring that land is used for an enterprise, which will yield the maximum benefit. In order to do this, we must carry out what is known as land capability classification.

2.1.1 Socio- Economic Classification

The ultimate factor, which should decide the use to which land is put, is economic i.e., the people who occupy the land and their economic wellbeing should be constantly borne in mind by the planner.

It should be remembered that the over-riding objective of any land use plan is improvement of the wellbeing of the people.

The socio-economic classifiers have attempted to classify land by taking into account not only the land itself, but also the nature of the society, which occupy and use the land. In most cases they have been concerned with financial returns.

They consider things like:

- (a) The condition and size of farm buildings, hospitals, schools and farm locations.
- (b) Tax delinquency
- (c) Land ownership
- (d) Quantity and quality of labour
- (e) Financial ability of operator
- (f) The operator's scale of preference

2.1.2 Credit Mobilization

Inadequate access to credit facilities continues to pose major obstacle to the activities of rural producers in agricultural, rural, industrialization, trade, land services

e.t.c. thereby limiting rural population output and incomes. Proper record of the number of farmers in each Local Government Area that are given agricultural loans and the rate of loan repayment should be kept.

2.1.3 Agricultural Products

Records should be kept on the different agricultural products which include:

- (a) arable crops – Number of hectares and number of tones annually produced
- (b) Oil seeds- Number of hectares and number of tones produced annually.
- (c) Seed processing facilities – Number of industries and their capacity.
- (d) Horticulture- Number of fruit seedlings produced tons of vegetable produced.

2.1.4 Forestry

- Volume of timber produced
- Quantity of timber and non-timber forest products consumed locally
- Quantity exported
- Non- timber Forest Products
- Tons of vegetable salad produced
- Tons of various fish species produced annually
- List of medicinal plants utilized

2.1.5 Aquaculture

- Number of fish farms
- Number of ponds, total area
- Tons of various fish species produced annually.
- Production and sale of fingerlings
- Quantity of fish farming inputs

2.1.6 Livestock

- Number of sheep and goats, rabbit, cattle and poultry birds.
- Incubators – Number and capacity
- Veterinary extension services, location and number.
- Record of outbreak of disease if any, record of inoculation of animals, number of animals treated of various diseases

2.1.7 Wildlife

- Quantity of snails gathered
- Quantity of honey produced
- Quantity of bush meat produced

3.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is clear that to make a very good agricultural policy, a lot of data is required. This includes data on the land use pattern, population of the area and its structure, current quantity of various food