

ATTRACTING YOUTH
BACK TO GROUNDNUT
FARMING AND
AVOIDANCE OF
DRUDGERY AND
ACCIDENTS

By

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GRNERAL OVERVIEW

Agriculture as the dominant economic activity in Nigeria, currently Provides employment to more than 70% of our youth; It has remained the mainstay of economic livelihood for more than three decades. The energy crisis and the increased revenue from oil in the seventies, lead to the general neglect and decline in agricultural production. Although, some progress in selective crops has been recorded, the general quality of life for the poor is gradually getting worse.

Current FAO report puts Nigeria's farmlands from low to medium productivity, but notes that most of the country's arable land is cultivatable; and would have medium to good productivity if properly managed.

I have always believed that the level of education and commitment of the youth towards development and their perception of the future determine the economic well being of any Society. I am delighted to be part of this very important Summit, and to give my thoughts on how to motivate the youth into taking farming as a serious profession; and to highlight areas impeding their interest towards agriculture as an occupation.

This paper has nothing new to offer, but will attempt to remind us of the difficulties and frustrations of the younger generations in

modern Nigeria; and to give some suggestions on how to achieve sustainable development by setting up programs that motivates and tap on the psychological needs our teaming youth population. By providing enabling environment, we can redirect their goals towards self-reliance and out of poverty and despair, to a life of relative comfort and abundance.

In my working years with the Nigerian Agricultural Promotion Company in the mid 70s, and my subsequent life as a practicing farmer, I am fully conversant with the aspirations and frustrations of our young farmers.

This summit must explore every avenue and recommendations made by the professionals that are here today, and see how best we could get our youth back to the land that has tremendous economic opportunities, rather than into a land that will bring further hardships and poverty.

This paper will touch on the Human, Economic and Social factors that our agricultural policy administrators must re-examine, for any meaningful change in the way our youth perceive agriculture in general; and pave the way for the achievement of our national objectives.

ATTEMPTS

“With out involvement there is no commitment, mark it down, asterisk it, underline it, no involvement no commitment.” [Stephen R. Covey]

Our country has in its 45-year history, experienced at least five major agricultural visions, and sub visions, such as the DFFRI and the establishment of ADP’s. These in one way or the other supported our governments’ resolve, to promote and develop the potentials in our farming communities and influenced their attitude, and encourage them in making use of modern farming methods and technologies.

The first vision was what I call the “***Slave Labor***” characterized by the Colonial thirst for raw materials for their industrial growth. It was promoted by the Royal Niger Company under its founder Sir George Goldie and further actualized by the Colonial administrator Lord Lugard. The provision of railroad, water, and land transportation became the major thrust of the vision, in addition to promoting a more efficient cash crop husbandry and introduction of animal driven plough to reduce drudgery.

The second vision was based on the “***Regional Competition***” under the national leadership of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the three regional premiers. It was a continuation of the first vision;

except that the three regions were in direct competition with each other in the production of cash crops. It was also a period of the Marketing Boards, and appointment of indigenous businesspersons as LBA's; and the intensification campaign of the benefits of inorganic fertilizers.

The third vision was in the late seventies lead by General Obasanjo tagged "***Operation Feed the Nation.***" This vision was remarkably different from the first two as its focus was self-sufficiency in food production. Despite the massive campaigns, this vision failed to energize the youth, because the policy administrators did not take into account the complex interplay of social and economic realities of the time.

The second republic under President Shehu Shagari, termed the "***Green Revolution,***" politically motivated the fourth vision. This was the period of economic reforms or structural adjustment policy packages by the world financial institution. It encourages the withdrawal of subsidies, deregulated prices, devaluation of currencies, reduction of public sector employment, privatization or commercialization of public enterprises, commercialization of social services, increase in indirect taxation, and liberalization of labor laws were the key features of structural adjustment program.

The greatest set back to this vision was that, the SAP policies hampered any intention of the government to achieve its goals, by the opening up of cheap agricultural imports from Asia and elsewhere to the detriment of local production. Rice and other agricultural commodities became too cheap that farming became the greatest losing venture of the time.

The fifth vision is what I will call “*Survival of the fittest*,” which aims at promoting the production of selective cash and food crops that could favorably compete in the world market. Crops that have no appeal to the global market will therefore only rely on local market or become out of production. Charles Darwin theory [1859] of natural selection or survival of the fittest characterized the global trade termed “*the new world order*.” The ultimate goal of globalization is not only crops with no global appeal will diminish; but also people, companies, and national economies that will not be able to stand the rigors of global competition will banish.

Although all the five visions recognize mechanization and credit facilities, as the prime mover to agricultural development, it has achieved very little in providing appropriate technology to the subsistence farmers. This was a serious oversight and lack of due considerations to details in our agricultural planning and execution. Here I will put the blame on our policy implementation, for failing

to take into account the complexities and interplay of the opposing agrarian and capitalist systems operating in our society and indeed throughout the world. The result of which, lead to the compounding failures of our agricultural initiatives. Today many young people perceive farming as the employer of the last resort, only for those at the lower level of society, or retired government officials who have no trading skills or wish to hide their loot in remote areas.

CENTRAL ISSUES

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle; the other is as though everything is a miracle. [Albert Einstein]

There are several reasons why despite the efforts of governments over the years, to promote development through agriculture, it has continuously been on the decline. It is obvious that any future agrarian policy formulation that fails to recognize, understand, and avoid past mistakes is bound to suffer the same fate. I will discuss here briefly some of the issues that are central to the success or failures of any agricultural reform; and see how they relate to the global complexities of political-economics.

1. *Corruption in public and private sectors*
2. *Policy mistakes and failures*
3. *Infrastructural - deficiencies.*
4. *Globalization affects marketing of groundnut.*
5. *Human Resource Development.*
6. *Political manipulation and propaganda.*
7. *Educational curriculum.*
8. *Socio-economic factors.*
9. *Environmental and ecological degradation.*
10. *Population density and urbanization.*
11. *Industrial- inefficiency .*
12. *Use of inappropriate technologies.*
13. *Drudgery and accidents.*
14. *Family Structures and kinship.*

Let us take them one by one to see their contribution to the general development and or decline of agriculture, and public attitude towards farming in Nigeria.

1. CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.” [Robert Louis Stevenson]

In today’s Nigeria; ones position in society is not judged by what he or she planted in his life, but by what he or she harvested out of society.

The issue of ranking our country as the second most corrupt nation on earth is not in dispute as a fair ranking; it is a fact which none of us here in this hall will deny. The pro-independence nationalists, accused the colonialists of corruption and nepotism, which in those days was no more than the inflation of mileage claims, receiving gifts of chicken and rams from the village chief. Etc. The soldiers in 1966, accused the first republic politicians of collecting up to 2% gratification on government contracts; which they themselves increased to 10% to 20%, then to 40%, to 60% , and by the time they handed over to the civilian government in 1999 it was usual to collect 80%. Now under the guise of democratic change, the vogue is 100% plus commission, or what is popularly referred to as the “*national cake.*”

During my working years in industry in the late 70s, we used to include as part of our production costs, substantial percentage to compensate for compulsory gratification to officials from law enforcement to service agencies. Including but not limited to the water board, Nepa, Nitel, immigration, customs, health, weight and measures, police, price control, labor union, NPF, VIO, Traffic wardens, import license officers, Road Transport workers Union. Any small official from any of these organizations can cause an irreparable damage to our target production. We use to refer this period as the “*terrorism of the small officials.*” TSO.

2. FAILURES IN POLICY

“You can issue all the presidential orders, but in the final analysis the only way to achieve development and eradicate poverty is by instituting proper implementation strategy.”

Bill Clinton- UN poverty Summit. September, 2005.

In all the five visions named above, only the colonial policies really met most of the target of its initiators. The failures were mainly due to lack of understanding or taking account of the various variables that could make the policy unachievable. Even President Obasanjo admitted in an Agricultural leadership forum at his farm in Otta that failures of OFN and Land Use Decree were because of policy implementation failures.

“We diagnosed correctly and the policy was right, but the implementation was wrong. If the implementation had been followed the way we believed it should have been, we might not have had much of a problem as far as the land is concerned in terms of helping agriculture.”

What this statement meant briefly is that the policy makers of the time did not take into account of one of the most central issues in promoting food production in Nigeria; that is the Land ownership structures. If the policy was right, it will have considered Land as the most important variable when conceiving the policy. The assumptions of the initiators were that the policies themselves would take care of all the variables not the other way round. This like all the other visions was conceived by people who either are not fully qualified to draw up an agricultural policy plan, or are too engrossed in bureaucracy that they are out of touch with the realities. None of these visions attempted to incorporate the views of the people the policy meant to serve, let alone its effect on complementary issues.

A good agricultural policy to my mind is one that besides, focusing on the results is able to focus into all the linkages of socio-political, economic, and environmental concerns for public good; and must be able to answer these three basic questions.

[A] what are the conditions and circumstances under which policy reforms and policy implementations are likely to be beneficial?

[b] Under what conditions would policy changes lead to improvements in efficiency or reduction of hardships?

[c] And under what conditions are the reforms likely to be sustained under existing environment?

To achieve real goals of agrarian reforms, our planners need to put together a landscape of theories and models of political scientists, economists, behavioral scientists; and material conditions such as capital and labor, wealth distribution, technology, endowments and population on a radar screen; and project into the future.

Economists worldwide have reached a consensus over policies conducive to economic development in three broad areas that are-

[i] an appropriate macro economic framework.

[ii] The right set of sectoral policies and investments.

[iii] The integration of the domestic markets, into the global economy.

Economic development is unlikely to occur unless policies produce a stable macroeconomic environment in which inflation

remains reasonably low, the real exchange rate is competitive and stable, devoid of debt crises.

3. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES

“ For two or three generations, we can show the Negro what we are, then we shall be asked to go away. Then we shall leave the land to those it belongs to, with the feeling that they have better business friends in us than in other white men.”
Lord Lugard. Commissioning a railway project in east Africa.

The problem of insufficient maintenance, misallocated investment, and technical inefficiencies, are the major challenges and constrain to our provision of services that respond to effective demand. Any policy reform not complemented by investments in key infrastructural services is bound to fail, as infrastructure is the main vehicle that can deliver major benefits in economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability when adequately provided to accommodate growth.

The colonial administrators had always understood the importance of infrastructural facilities as the backbone that supports agricultural policies. Even though our pre-independence economy is not as complex as it is today; nevertheless, they put in the relevant infrastructures to support their vision. First they opened up the river Niger to trade with the inhabitants of the hinterland; and then

they laid down a railway line to transport out produce to the ports, and bring in manufactured goods from England. To make the system even more efficient, they established a telephone and telegraph line along the railroad. One can go on and on to show, how they succeeded in achieving their goals by first laying the relevant infrastructures to support their policies.

Since independence, our policy initiators and planners have taken a different attitude and approach to policy development and implementation. Although we have achieved substantial infrastructural development, nothing was done to synchronize it with the overall development goal. To understand this better is to look through our history of agricultural development, and see how disjointed our agrarian visions were conceived and implemented. The OFN for example not only avoided the Land issue, but also the role of marketing as a tool for achieving its policy objective.

I presented a memo to the federal ministry of agriculture, which was reproduced by the New Nigerian Newspaper of Tuesday 10th august 1976, calling on the policy initiators to give marketing an important role in achieving food self sufficiency in Nigeria. Likewise, if we look into the subsequent visions, The Green Revolution for example really did not only missed important social issues central to our quest for agrarian reforms; but also paid no serious attention to special characteristics of the rural economy

that has strong influence on our socio-political environment. Because the political process that determines the key policies were faulty right from onset; the outcome of the initiative was equally non-achievable. It was ironic, that a government that wants to promote agricultural production will open its doors to all sorts of cheap agricultural imports without giving adequate protections to local producers.

4. GLOBALISATION AND LIBRALIZATION

“wild beast- the leopards- killed some of us while we were working away in the forest and others got lost or died from exposure or starvation and we begged the white men to leave us alone, saying we could get no more rubber, but the white men and the soldiers said: Go. You are only beasts yourselves. You are only [Nyama] meat.” - Testimony of Congolese plantation villagers interviewed by Consul Casement, in 1893.

Anticipating the expansion of the market-driven society, the 19th century social economist Karl Marx foresaw the entanglement of all nations into a global market, where the developed nations will transform their economies to the disadvantage of the developing countries. The globalize market system popularly called the New World Order [NOW] has introduced an epoch in which social inequalities are aggravated by the extent of economic growth in

most developed countries and the increasing exclusion of the poorest regions of the earth. ***Global Order created the fall of price of agricultural output by 50% in real terms over the last 20 years. Wealthy elite of 250 people own a combined wealth, which is equal to the annual income of 50% of the world's population.***

The globalization of world trade and developments in science and technology; has affected every facet of our life, and has changed our outlook forever. While the [WTO] replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade {GATT} in 1995; the latter is a more powerful organization whose membership is 125 to 7 developing countries and industrialized countries respectively. The greatest irony is that the volume of trade in the 125 third world member countries generates only 0.03% of total world trade flows.

Almost all third world member country economies are in one way or the other dependent on US, EU, or Japan in terms of imports, exports, economic aid, etc. Any decent from any third world country will therefore be disastrous to its economic and or political survival. In addition, trade negotiations are done on the principle of reciprocity, or “trade offs.”

This type of bartering only benefits large and diversified economies that can get more by giving more. For the most part

therefore, negotiations and trade-offs take place between the developed nations, to the exclusion of third world countries.

Commenting on the famous “*Uruguay Round*” Nelson Mandela once said “*The developing countries were not able to ensure that the rules accommodated their realities....it was mainly the preoccupations and problems of the advanced industrial economies that shaped the agreement.*”

5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In achieving sustainable development, it is not only important to overcome the savings and foreign exchange constraints, but also essential to focus on human resource development. Indeed, human resource rich countries have demonstrated that they can develop even if they are poor in natural resources. I must emphasize here that improvement in the quality of people, as productive agents must be central objective of development policies. Theodore Schultz, the Nobel agricultural economist said in accepting the prize “*The decisive factors of production in improving the welfare of the poor people are not space, energy, and crop land; the decisive factor is the improvement of the population quality.*”

The task before our planners therefore is not only to design for the youth a program for skill acquisition; but also must ensure their motivations and values are modified to suit development efforts.

How do we achieve improvement in human infrastructure is the most difficult question this paper is attempting to find answers to; but in a nut shell even the economists have only recently begun to analyze this question systematically. Perhaps the greater part of their difficulty, however, is that an answer to the question entails not only economic analysis, but also sociological, psychological, and political considerations.

We have always taken for granted that agricultural labor need not to possess any skill to operate as everyone learns from his parents over the generations. It is also assumed, that there is always unlimited number of hands to till the land. One thing we always forget is that every youth in the world aspire to full-participation in the life of his or her society. The increasing incidence of diseases such as, Malaria, HIV/AIDS, is not only a threat to the individuals and their capacity to contribute, but also a great loss to society as a whole.

Agriculture like any other profession could not develop without skilled hands, but due to inadequate opportunities for vocational education and training, many of our youth roam around aimlessly in the streets with degrees and diplomas that have no real economic value.

The UN world hunger report for the year 2005, has put the number of these unemployed youth between the ages of 15-24 in the sub Saharan Africa earning less than \$1/day to about 70 million; those earning less than \$2/day 102 million, while those undernourished are estimated to be 40million. When we compare with the world total of 209 million, 515million, and 160million respectively, we can see that the bulk of the poor youth in the world are in our region.

6. PSYCHO - POLITICAL MANUPULATIONS

“The planned use of propaganda and other actions designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of enemy, neutral, and friendly foreign groups in such a way as to support the accomplishment of national aims and objectives” - United States Psychological Warfare Casebook

In the early years of the cold war, United States recognized the importance of exploiting propaganda as tool of psychological control to achieve super power status. It took steps to influence the thinking of intellectuals, the behavior of political and potential leaders, and the attitudes of other influential segments of humanity in foreign lands. In the 1950s, the Psychological Strategy Board began the global ideological offensive with the sole purpose of first building the credibility and authenticity of their propaganda. Forty

years later, they did not only achieve the dismantling of socialist system, but also became the only super power in the world today.

Politics and political culture of any given country plays an important role in determining the successes or failures of its policies. Globally, there is intense competition between nations on how to protect their farmers and farm outputs from the vagaries of weather and the international politics. Farmers in any country are a political force that could bring down any government whose policies are not favorable to farmers and agricultural support benefits.

The EU common agricultural policy and that of the US are some of the best examples, even though the percentages of farmers in those countries are less than 10% of the total populations. In Nigeria, farmers form the largest segment of our population between 65% and 75%. However, since the majority of these farmers are illiterates and uneducated; their numerical strength is of no value to them politically or economically. When they form any union, it is for the sole purpose of securing fertilizer from government agencies. Moreover, those enlightened farmers attempting to form a political pressure group are viewed as troublemakers; and therefore, subject to destabilization.

One of the pitfalls of the political manipulations is that farmers were deliberately put against each other in competition for agricultural inputs that are not even technically subsidized. Our government functionaries understand the power of farmer's organizations; and therefore will do everything possible to manipulate their unions, and dominate their thinking. Unless farmers become more politically active, in using their democratic rights to determine their future, Nigeria's agriculture will continue to remain in the background in economic development efforts.

7. EDUCATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

“For this emancipation, higher education in particular – is obviously strategic. It is among other things an apparatus for affecting belief and, hopefully, inducing more critical belief.”
J. K. Galbraith- The new Industrial State.

In a world that defines power in terms of knowledge, the priority of setting up a curriculum that will enhance the power of our youth is of great importance in achieving sustainable growth. Our country has just recognized the need to extend basic education to nine years in order to enhance and develop in our youth pro-active education.

Every one of us recognizes that for any meaningful development to take place in any society, education is the solid foundation to its

achievement. Education is not only the essential tool for development, but also for its sustainability. If we understand sustainability of education as defined by the “Brundtland Commission” as a development that meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to their own needs; then we must orient our youth to relevant education that will not only enhance their ability to contribute to society’s goal, but also to be responsible for their actions.

In order to achieve sustainable agricultural development in our country, we will need to re-examine our school curriculum at all levels from Pre-school to Universities and see how it will meet the needs of a modern society. A relevant education is the pre-requisite for creating jobs in agrarian as well as industrial revolutions. Education is therefore about the only means to which we can raise the standard of living of the generality of our youth in a sustainable manner.

8. SOCIO-ECOMIC FACTORS

“Economic growth without Social Progress lets the great majority of the people remaining in poverty, while a privileged few reap the benefits of rising abundance.” John F. Kennedy, message to Congress on the inter-American Fund for Social Progress march 14, 1961.

Economic considerations are by far the most important reason that determines the success or failure of any commercial endeavor. Our desire to improve and to encourage the population to take up farming as a real profession which competes with all others in lifting their living standards could only be met by giving due considerations to sources of finance and marketing systems. How a farmer secures his finances and how he markets his produce is what determines how much efforts he puts in the actual production.

The concept of how to dispose of the agricultural surpluses is central to farmer's choice of which crops to plant in his small land holding. The higher the prices he gets in a particular crop determines his decision to look for credit facilities that will enhance his investments in inputs. The current agricultural produce marketing in Nigeria is simply a zero sum game full of market imperfections. There is a serious disparity in the economic powers between the peasant farmer and the commodity trader. While the former is generally poor and uneducated, the latter is urbanized and has more access to credit facilities. The commodity trader determines the price level not the farmer's inputs.

Governments in the federation have a greater role in regulating, and establishing commodity exchange markets to safeguard the peasant farmer from exploit, and to insure him from the vagaries of the weather. Of course, for our political leaders to change our

society for the better could not achieve these without a political will and genuine desire.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

“Many people live in ugly wastelands, but in the absence of imaginative standards, most of them do not even know it.” C. Wright Mills- Power Politics and People. 1963.

Due to the shift in climatic conditions, and increase in the general population, our agricultural environment has suffered serious degradation that it has become impossible for the small farmer to increase his yield per hectare in even the most resilient crops.

Our population is projected, to expand well into the next century; and an inevitable consequence will be the demand for new cropland for commercial and subsistence agriculture. How much additional forest and other land needs to be converted to agricultural activities will depend largely on how we maintain and enhance the productivity of existing arable land. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that the forests are fast disappearing while potentially arable lands are being lost through degradation and abandonment. If you drive from this Hall towards Zaria or Abuja, you see a real example of land degradation and abandonment.

The failure of our system to defend the forests and improve on the fertility of our marginal lands is not purely technical, that is of soil science or plant husbandry; but the continued degradation problem is encouraged by economic factors. Our poor peasant farmers often farm on marginal lands where land productivity is very low, and therefore affects their income. Consequently, they will look for easier alternatives either to sell off the land or encroach on forest reserves around resulting in further degradation.

10. POPULATION DENSITY AND URBANIZATION

“Over population is a phenomenon connected with the survival of the unfit, and it is a mechanism which has created conditions favorable to the survival of the unfit and the elimination of the fit.”
William Ralph Inge. The Dilemma of Civilization. -1922.

Few developmental problems evoke as much pessimism as does the rapid increase in population in poor countries. If economists value higher rate of development, they still fear as John Stuart Mill, said *“growth in population treads close on the heels of agricultural improvement and effaces its effects as fast as they are produced.”* It is not difficult to find the basis of this fear, in that a large part of the gain in aggregate income has been used simply to support a larger population at the same low per capita level of income.

It is extremely important to realize however, that the population problem is much more than a food problem; it has wider ramifications that make it a general developmental problem. The ever-increasing population particularly of the youth age between 15-24 years in the sub-Saharan Africa where women fertility is highest in the world; poses great implication to our development planning. Unless adequate care is taken, we may never achieve sustainable development. Likewise, unless the attraction to urban life by young people is deliberately discouraged, through the creation of conducive socio-economic environment in our rural areas; i.e. employment opportunities, social amenities, and security, Urban cities will continue to attract unemployed youth from rural areas for many years to come.

Ironically, when young people migrating to urban life fail to achieve their assumed goal for the migration, they engage themselves in drug abuse, delinquency, armed robbery, and health risks activities, making the urban areas more dangerous for decent people to live in. The consequence of these social problems leads to greater public danger, for the upcoming children that are brought up under such harsh environment.

11. INDUSTRIAL FAILURES

A country's technological dynamism in manufacturing is partly due to the capabilities of its individual manufacturing enterprise, and the interactions between individual manufacturers in an enabling environment. Firm level capabilities consists of skills, knowledge and institutional coherence which enables a manufacturer to identify and engineer viable projects; purchase the relevant technology and capital goods; and execute his investment efficiently. Secondly, to master the process of product technology, achieve efficient level of quality, maintenance, and operating procedures. Additionally, adopt those technologies to local materials and customer needs through the improvement of the technology overtime. Thirdly, establish efficient flow of knowledge and information with suppliers, customers, and consultants.

Some of these capabilities can be acquired by an enterprise from the market; however, most of the skills needed to handle high technologies do not exist in Nigeria. Our agro-industrial development has been to some extent in the down turn due to inconsistent industrial policies that make investment in agro-industrial sector very uneconomical. The groundnut failures were partly due to weather conditions accelerated by pest destructions; but more importantly was the failure of our ergonomic policies.

For an agricultural industry to survive; there are three basic infrastructural requirements that could not be compromised; power, water, and raw material supplies in addition to local/international demands of its output. The failure of our system to provide the first two has hampered the third.

Nigeria has a simple industrial structure with simple technological needs. Our industrial growth started with strong protectionism and inward bias; later defeated by liberalization forces due to investment and technological powers of the developed countries. While our ergonomic skill base is still low, it is further acerbated, by low output of high-level technical labor and brain drain.

12. INAPPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES

The choice of appropriate technology has always been a serious problem for developing countries due to self-serving interests and corruption tendencies. While technology is development specific by the country that developed it, the third world on other hand imports it without giving due considerations to its environmental realities such as soil characteristics, income level, socio-political conditions etc.

There were several accident cases involving innocent farmers because of inappropriate use of agricultural chemicals, farm implements, and fertilizers. Good agricultural practices aimed at

achieving economic viability and social stability; will require adequate training and application of available knowledge of the natural resource to the advantage of both the farmer and the public. A clear example will be the choice between chemical and organic fertilizers in sub Saharan Africa.

The central issue to appropriateness of technology is the assessment of these two central issues:

[a] To what extent can farmers increase production by using low cost and locally developed and available technologies and inputs?

[b] What impacts do such methods have on environment and the people using the technology and those who consume the output?

13. DRUDGERY AND ACCIDENTS

Agriculture is characterized by the fact that a number of work settings exist side by side, from large-scale enterprises down to micro holdings. Even though production techniques vary according to the size of holdings, financial resources and crops in cultivation; the real safety and health issues are of great concern in modern, as well as subsistent farming methods.

Drudgery, the most common cause of accidents is because of many reasons ranging from repetitive tasks to physical exhaustion and climatic reasons; and accelerated by the desire to complete certain

tasks within specific period. Although accidents and injuries are natural hazards and could not be eliminated in agricultural production; nevertheless could be minimized or avoided in farm environment through proper education and training. In dealing with mechanical machines particularly in developing countries, it has been observed that the more complicated its functions are, the more dangerous or frequency of accidents due to poor training.

While we are talking of safety in agricultural work place, it is quite pathetic to note that out of the eleven ILO conventions of direct relevance to safety and health in agriculture, none of them was rectified by Nigeria. Again, additional seventeen conventions relevant to agriculture, only two were rectified by Nigeria namely:-

[A] C.11 of 1921 Right of association [agriculture] convention and

[b] C.97 of 1949 Migration for Employment convention

14. FAMILY STRUCTURES AND KINSHIP

“In primitive society, there is no relationship which is of a purely economic character...Therein lies the strength of primitive society, in that it enlists the binding forces of one aspect of society to support those of another.” R. Firth – primitive Economies of the New Zealand Moori. 1929.

Agriculture has a long history of being a family base occupation involving all members of the family young and old. While in developed countries agriculture has become a high-tech industry requiring serious planning, investments, and marketing strategies; it has largely remained in our country an intricate social cum economic system. In Northern Nigeria, and particularly in Hausa societies, the system remains the most common bond that ties not only the family together economically and socially; but also the community as a whole:-

[*Aikin kodago*] - is more than a paid labor; it is based on interpersonal exchanges between the rich farmer and landless peasants.

[*Aikin Gayya*] - is a non-financial communal support to in-laws, friends, and those whom you respect and cherish in the community.

[*Goron gona*] - is a commodity based gift given to village authorities, friends and associates who supported you either by allowing you the use of some land, or supported with agricultural inputs.

[*Aikin Jinga*] - is cash based contractual agreement between the farmer and the landless peasant, to undertake certain agricultural tasks within a specific period.

[*Araba daidai*] - is crop-sharing arrangement between individuals by sharing profits and losses in a specific agricultural activity.

[*Noman Gandu*] - is an arrangement within a family of sharing responsibilities on a piece of land usually for food crop production only; where the output is kept as reserve for difficult times.

[*Noman gawaina*] - is a piece of land allowed to each member of the family to work for personal economic gains.

GROUNDNUTS PRODUCTION AND THE YOUTH

“When you discover in the middle of a race that you are riding a dead horse, you have three options, one to dismount immediately and find another horse, or continue to sit on the horse, or kill yourself.” [Minnesota Indians]

Having examined the issues affecting the development of agriculture, I now turn to the main topical issues of this paper that is how to motivate youth to take up groundnut farming. Investing in groundnut production could provide a quick answer in our quest for sustainable agriculture that provides both food and foreign exchange.

Today’s groundnut farmers faces two major challenges of ensuring crop safety by preventing and controlling *aflatoxin* contamination; and adapting groundnut supplies to demand for varieties best suited

to specific end-users. Efforts are currently been focused on technical assistance by INCRISAT and ITC to groundnut farmers in African countries to achieve both. If we want to encourage our youth to take up groundnut farming as a serious occupation, the UN world programs of action for youth should be our guiding principle for sustainable development. That is-

1. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

[A] Northern governments must be able to make farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive, by providing social amenities comparable to what is obtained in our urban areas.

[b] Experimental farming programs directed towards youth, should be initiated, while extension services are expanded to cover marketing of produce.

[c] States and Local governments in cooperation with youth organizations should organize a cultural event that enhances exchanges between urban and rural youth.

[d] State governments in association with youth organizations should develop training programs for youth which will improve methods of agricultural production and marketing; based on rural economic needs and the need to give them adequate

training. Attention should be given to gender equality and youth retention in rural areas. The training should target youth in the cities, disables, and school leavers.

[e] State and Local governments should provide grants of land to youth and youth organizations, supported by financial and technical assistance.

[f] State and Local governments, consistent with their rural development schemes and with the assistance of International Organizations should be invited to work with volunteer youth organizations on projects, which enhance rural environments.

[g] NGO's should organize and support direct-marketing groups; including production and distribution cooperatives, which ensures that young farmers are not only accessible to the markets, but also reduce their losses from defective system of storage.

[h] State governments should intensify their commitments to rural youth by providing cheap inputs and soft agricultural loans.

2. GROUNDNUT PRODUCTION DEVELOPMENT

In order to increase yield and profitability of groundnut production, it is essential to implement the following:-

[a] There is an urgent need to develop National and Regional groundnut sectoral and seed strategies that will lead to increasing exports of edible groundnuts to meet the needs of en-users.

[b] Intensify the implementation of aflatoxin management programs, covering all contamination related issues; including mould formation and spreading, routine monitoring and detoxification of the products.

[c] Encourage the Food and Drug Administration Agency to intensify measures in controlling the flow of contaminated groundnuts within our borders.

[d] Enhance quality control by equipping such laboratories with standard equipments.

[e] The Export Promotion Council should intensify the promotion of Nigeria's groundnuts in the world markets.

ADDING VALUE TO GROUNDNUT EXPORTS

In line with technical assistance needs identified through seminars, the ITC formulated a project aimed at improving income levels of groundnut producers and exporters in some African countries which will be useful to Nigeria's need to improve its export power in non Oil sector. The projects aimed at encouraging local

businesses and communities to become more efficient and focus on edible groundnut production for export.

The project foresees the following technical assistance activities:

[A] Market development and promotion missions, to target export markets through participation in trade fairs.

[b] To provide training for young farmers in export quality control management, and certifications.

[c] Development of export labeling and generic promotion campaigns, for products with specific origins.

[d] Technical support to selected enterprises in quality assessment and yield payment systems adapted to specific local conditions; forecast of output and efficient HPS groundnut selection.

CONCLUSION

Groundnut is recognized around the world with different names; such as peanut, African nut, Chinese nut, Manilla nut, hawks nut, jar nut, earth chestnut, monkey nut, goober pea, ground pea, and ground bean [Johnson 1964]. By whatever name we call it, it is essentially an important food and cash crop, which produces tremendous economic benefits to many communities around the

world. Some grow groundnut for its oil; while others as the cheapest source of protein.

Nigeria, which is among the three largest producers of groundnut, have suffered a decline in the 70s and 80s to almost half of its total output, because of multiplicity of factors.- oil revenue, poor soil fertility and erratic rainfall; compounded by lack of high yielding cultivars, pests and diseases as well as inefficient technology.

Recognizing that young people in all parts of the world are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development, and technological innovations, this summit is not only about producing more groundnuts, but also about how to mobilize our young people to take part in designing our future development. Robert S. McNamara one time president of the World Bank has this to say in forwarding a book by Uma Lele on Designs of Rural Development, *“The problem is not merely that the benefits of economic growth have been inequitably distributed, as they have, but that the youth themselves have been unable to contribute to that growth.”*

Our young people represent agents, beneficiaries, and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox: either to be integrated into the existing order; or serve as a force to transform that order. The choice of how we want our youth to

view society is entirely ours. If we strengthen our national capacity in youth development, the benefits will accrue to the country as a whole; but if we neglect this aspect of human development, the crisis will engulf all of us.

How we go about our development programs will determine our successes and or failures. Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, but when our country was singled out as the number two most corrupt country in the world, certainly eliminates us from taking part in serious economic development. One reads on a daily basis mind-boggling revelation on how Nigerians not only loot our treasuries, but also swindle innocent persons around the world including the Nigerian President.

Among the many bewildering sights that have defied any solution in today's Nigeria is cultism in schools and colleges in pursuit of ground for cultism and sophisticated armed robberies; but also a centre of immoralities ranging from examination malpractices, to sexual trade. Those we entrust to teach and train our youth to become good citizens; are the prime movers of corruption and pervasion.

One does not need to be a social scientist to understand that the underlining causes of youth delinquency is the common belief of pessimism about the future, and the belief that we their parents

have landed the nation into a mess. We must redeem our global image and fight corruption at all levels if we are to achieve any success in pulling out our nation from the shackles of poverty, and get rich quick syndrome.

On the agricultural technology front, we need to find, develop, and promote the use of simple and appropriate technologies suitable for increasing our farmer's output with less drudgery typical of our current use of primitive tools. The traditional farming is associated with drudgery, slow pace of achieving simple tasks, could only be redeemed through ergonomic solutions. The ergo-design refinement will not only compensate for the initial negation that the current tools impose a high physiological load; but also precipitate health and comfort, thereby encouraging youth to take up farming as a decent occupation.

Our country appears to provide a classical example of what can go wrong when a government gets involved in the business of production of goods and services. Between 1973 and 1990, our public sector invested \$115 billion just about \$1,000 for every citizen; yet none of us here can tell the difference. Poverty and unemployment are everywhere, except a few privileged individuals. The reasons are obvious, we only need to look at our investment fort polios in steel, petroleum refineries, and many others. A well known developmental economist,-Gerald .M Meir

of Stanford University asserts that, “relying on the private sector to undertake major investments, Nigeria could have saved up to \$80 billion less investment over the eighteen year period.”

The solution of youth employment and engagement in a sustainable manner lies in our ability to raise the productive capacities of our rural young so that their own incomes can rise as those of others in the urban areas; groundnut production in Northern Nigeria could provide such answer.

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