

LAND TENURE AND AGRICULTURAL
DECLINING STATE IN NIGERIA

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GIN

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS THESIS

DCs	Developed Countries
FAO	Food & Agricultural Organization (of the United Nations)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
NAFPP	National Accelerated Food Production Programme (Nigeria)
OECD	Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development
OFN	Operation Feed the Nation (Nigeria)

EQUIVALENTS

Currency*

N 1	Naira (Nigeria)	U.S. Dollars \$1.63
k £1	Pound (Kenya) = 20 Shillings	
10.59 shillings		U.S. Dollar \$1.00

Area

1 Hectare	2.47	acres
1 square mile	2.5900	square kilometre
1 acre	1.6093	km.

Note: Currency equivalents (Dollar) are as of March 12, 1982.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this thesis is to identify land tenure as the major obstacle of progress in the Nigerian agricultural development. According to professor G. Abalu, land tenure ". . . describes all the arrangements by which farmers and others hold or control land. . . ." ¹ In Nigeria, some few families or communities within a society are said to be owners of the arable land while others in the farmlands are temporary occupants. The decision as to who will cultivate the land, what to plant and when to cultivate the land is governed by the land owners. Due to lack of written documentary and statistical records, the time of origin of land tenure in Nigeria is not well known. For some writers, it is an attribute of colonial rule while others have argued that land tenure in Nigeria has its legal origins in the customary laws existing prior to British presence in the country. ²

Writings on the subject of land tenure and agricultural development present conflicting arguments. One school of thought holds that traditional landholding systems are primary obstacles to increasing the economic and social welfare of the rural sector. The major argument here is that

¹G. I. O. Abalu, "The Role of Land Tenure in the Agricultural Development of Nigeria." A Journal of West African Studies, 15 (July 1977), 30.

²Ibid, p. 31.

if rules that determine ownership of land are abolished there would be a massive cultivation of land which would consequently, increase agricultural productivity. Another school of thought strongly asserts that land tenure seldom creates serious obstacles to development since once new economically profitable opportunities appear, the participants will adopt institutions to take advantage of these new opportunities.³ Those who argue this point of view feel that direct intervention to alter tenure institutions may be a waste of time and resources which may actually result in a drop in the overall agricultural production. In view of the rapidly increasing population of Nigeria and the inability of the agricultural sector to expand at the same pace, this paper seeks to dismiss the views which support private ownership of land as defined by traditional laws.

The Nigerian agricultural sector, in comparison to the agricultural sectors of other African countries, has enjoyed larger sums of fund appropriation from the government in an effort by the government to revitalize the industry. But in spite of the large amount of money being spent in the agricultural industry, production still continues to decline. The problem of land tenure is not seen only in the Nigerian economy but, rather, it is a general characteristic of many

³R. W. Cummings Jr. Land Tenure and Agricultural Development, The Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison Wisconsin, July 1978, p. 1.

developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. But, unlike in Nigeria, the issue of land tenure as a problem in agricultural development has been recognized in most of these countries and strong laws to erradicate or modify the traditional land tenure rules have been enacted. To name a few, the Latin American country of Brazil and the East African Country of Kenya have recognized the problem of land tenure and have enacted strong land reform laws to modify their traditional tenure systems. The result has been a noticeable growth in agricultural productivity in these countries. To say that the government of Nigeria is unaware of the existence of this problem might be open to question. The first National Development Plan (1962-68) document of Independent Nigeria emphasized the problems facing the agricultural industry. In Paragraph 2 of Chapter III it is stated that the traditional farming methods and systems of land tenure inhibit an extensive use of land for farming. In addition, in section 3 of Chapter IX it is stated that the two most important of the six listed impediments to efficient agriculture in Western Nigeria have been shown to be: (a) land tenure problems; (b) problems of fragmented holdings.⁴ Apart from mentioning these problems, no concrete proposals have been made to tackle them. While the policies being embarked on stress mechanized agriculture,

⁴Agriculture Development in Nigeria 1965-1980. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Rome, 1966) p. 331.

the fundamental problems that might militate against achieving the objective of these policies are neglected. Our major hypothesis here is that agricultural production in Nigeria declines owing to the land tenure rules that prohibit adequate cultivation of land in the country.

Methodology.

One remarkable thing to note in discussing Nigerian land tenure is the cultural differences that exist in the country. Nigeria is a country with several ethnic groups. Because of differences in cultural heritages, land tenure practices vary from community to community and there exist as many tenure systems as there are ethnic groups. Nonetheless, occupancy of farmland tends to be based upon a number of concepts which are common in most regions of the country.

In my effort to measure the effects of land tenure on agricultural development in Nigeria, my approach will not be to discuss the various tenure systems that exist in the country but, rather, I will portray the existence of land tenure in the agricultural industry by analyzing the major concepts that determine occupancy in farmlands. The paper will be divided into four chapters and will finally conclude by presenting alternative proposals to modify the traditional land tenure system in Nigeria.

Chapter One serves as the introductory/background chapter. Chapter Two compares agricultural development in

Nigeria with that of Kenya. This comparison will recognize land tenure as the major difference that exists between Nigeria's and Kenya's agricultural sectors. While Nigeria's approach to agricultural development neglects the problem of land tenure, Kenya on the other hand, considers land reform as a requisite for development. We have chosen to compare Nigeria's agricultural development with that of Kenya, because in recent years Kenya's agriculture has been portrayed by most writers on African Agricultural Development as the most impressive. Kenya, like Nigeria, has those specific defined problems which are poverty, high population growth rate and unemployment. The farming systems in the two countries are basically the same. Both are determined mainly by rainfall, temperature and topography. But in spite of these similarities, agricultural output in Kenya is highly progressive. We will measure the declining rate of agricultural production in Nigeria by making a time series analysis on agriculture's contribution to the GDP. We will identify the major agricultural export commodities of Nigeria and evaluate their past and present contributions to the nation export market. We will use the same analysis to evaluate agricultural development in Kenya. In our effort to show that the Nigerian agricultural industry is in its declining stage, we will also make a cross sectional analysis on the growth rate of the major sectors of the economy.

In Chapter Three we will see that the major problem prohibiting development in Nigeria's agricultural sector is

the persistent land tenure rule in the economy. We will measure land tenure in Nigeria by identifying the concepts that determine occupancy in farmlands. The major concepts that determine occupancy which give rights to individuals or group of farmers to cultivate a farmland are: (a) Inheritance, (b) Lease, (c) Pledge, (d) Gift, and (e) Government appropriation of land for public use. What this analysis tends to show, is that not every willing or capable individual has access to land for farming. In this chapter, we will also use the concepts developed to measure the demerits of the tenure system. The demerits of the traditional tenure system will be measured by its effects on: the agricultural land, cash crops and on sharecroppers who make up the larger bulk of the agricultural labor force. Its effect on farmlands will be seen on the lack of manageability it creates owing to constant changing of tenants on the farmland.

The question that is likely to arise now is whether this tenure system is a recent development, or whether it also existed in the past when there were great agricultural productivity and progress. The tenure system is not a recent development in Nigeria. What has happened is that, because of increased population and economic activities, its effects on the Nigerian economy are being felt more today than in the past. Consequently, in view of the rapid population growth rate of the country, and the importance of the agricultural sector as a supplier of food and employment for the populace,

this paper contends that the present tenure system no longer meets the needs of the growing population.

Chapter Four will evaluate the major agricultural policies of Nigeria. Our objective here is to evaluate the role of Nigerian government in agricultural development. In this chapter the paper blames the ineffectiveness of the policies on negligence on the part of the government in not putting enough emphasis on the fundamental problems that face the agricultural industry.

CHAPTER TWO

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A COMPARISON WITH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

Agricultural Development in Nigeria.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. The nation was once a British colony. The country became an independent state when she won her independence from Britain in 1960. With its large area of about 924,000 sq. km. and a population of about 90 million, the country is the largest African nation. Its area is about the same size as France, West Germany and the United Kingdom combined. Nigeria is bordered by the Republic of Benin (formerly called Dahomey) on the west, Niger on the north, Chad and Cameroon on the east and the Gulf of Guinea on the south. The country has a wide range of climate which reaches sometimes over 100 °F in the north. In the coastal regions, temperatures are seldom over 90 °F with relatively high humidity. Most of the rain falls between April and September in the north and between the months of March and November in the south and varies from under 25 inches to 80 inches a year.*

Prior to the civil war of 1967-70, the country was

*Note: For size and population of Nigeria, see (1) Nigeria: Africa's Economic Giant (A Subsidiary of Business International Corp., Bus. Int., 1979) p. 14. (2) "Nigeria: Weilding Africa's Oil Weapon," Time Mag., (Oct. 6, 1980 Vol. III #4) p. 52.

governed by four administrative regions and later a fifth region, the Midwestern region which was created out of some parts of the west and eastern region. In May 1967, the country was divided into 12 administrative states and at the end of the civil war in 1970, the 12-state structure was subdivided. Seven new states were created out of the existing twelve, making the country a nineteen-state structure today. The population of Nigeria is made up of some 400 ethnic groups of which three are predominant--the Hausas in the north, the Ibos in the southeast and the Yorubas in the southwest. Each of these ethnic groups has its own special dialect and custom. This disparity in language and custom has been widely emphasized as a major barrier towards the development of the country. One could be a Nigerian but understand only the one ethnic dialect he belongs to. Although English tends to be the general medium for communication, not everybody in the country speaks it. It is important that the reader of this paper understand the ethnic differences that exist in Nigeria because ethnic loyalties greatly influence agricultural activities in the country. Although ownership of land as defined by traditional laws permits the landowners to lease their farmlands to any individual they like; because of differences in customs it would be difficult for a farmer from say, the Ibo tribe to rent portions of farmland in the Hausa tribe owing to communication barriers that might exist between the landowners and the intending tenant. Because of these differences in custom, farmers are restricted to farm within the areas to which they belong.

Each of Nigeria's four major climatic and vegetational regions is suitable for different kinds of agricultural products. The northern area, which has low rainfall and low relative humidity, grows most of the country's millet, sorghum, cowpeas, groundnuts and cotton. Groundnuts and cotton are the two most important cash crops of this region. Most of the country's livestock are also raised in this region. The southern belt, which has greater rainfall, engages mainly in the production of staple tree and root crops such as plantains, bananas, cassava and yams. The middle belt, an area which has a climate between that of the north and the south, produces most of the country's vegetable oils such as benniseed, shea, butter and soyabeans. The western part of the country grows most of the country's cocoa while the eastern part grows mainly the palm products. This specialization, created by geography, has given the country the potential to produce within its own borders the various agricultural needs of its people.

The Nigerian economy on the eve of its independence was predominantly agricultural. Agricultural activity dominated the economy from 1958/59 to 1973, contributing over 50 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. Table 2.1 shows the level and sectoral distribution of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product for the period 1958/59 (marking the eve of the country's independence) to 1973/74. The table shows that in 1958/59 the nation's GDP, valued at 1962/63 factor cost amounted to ~~4~~2,084.2 million. Of this total, agriculture

TABLE 2.1

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF NIGERIA'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT 1958/59 - 1973/74
(PERCENTAGES)

Sector	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66
1. Agri., Forestry & Fishing	64.39	63.13	64.08	62.19	61.82	61.50	58.67	55.37
2. Mining	1.12	1.20	1.20	1.74	2.09	2.08	2.70	4.76
3. Manufac- turing	4.65	4.82	4.80	5.22	5.64	6.02	6.13	7.02
4. Elec. & Water	0.24	0.29	0.32	0.39	0.44	0.48	0.52	0.58
5. Building & Construc.	4.22	4.53	4.01	4.23	4.34	4.19	4.34	5.15
6. Distribu- tion	12.50	12.50	12.74	12.35	12.05	12.80	13.50	13.30
7. Trans. & Communica- tion	4.79	4.79	4.56	5.14	4.83	4.64	5.07	4.64
8. Gen. Gov't.	3.01	3.47	3.20	3.10	2.99	2.75	3.04	3.08
9. Education	2.52	2.74	2.56	2.81	2.99	2.93	3.17	3.08
10. Health	0.47	0.50	0.50	0.57	0.64	0.63	0.69	0.72
11. Other Svc.	2.09	2.03	2.03	2.26	2.17	1.98	2.17	2.30
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

TABLE 2.1 (Cont'd)

Sector	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74
1. Agri., Forestry & Fishing	51.88	52.69	42.59	47.45	44.56	42.00	36.99	34.06
2. Mining	6.90	6.36	3.34	8.10	11.99	15.07	16.79	17.77
3. Manufac- turing	7.36	7.35	7.88	8.17	7.49	6.52	7.56	8.90
4. Elec. & Water	0.66	0.58	0.69	0.64	0.58	0.62	0.70	0.83
5. Building & Construc.	5.25	5.27	4.60	5.20	6.27	7.51	8.51	8.09
6. Distribu- tion	12.79	12.92	13.06	12.76	12.15	11.75	10.73	10.84
7. Transport & Communica- tion	4.65	4.40	4.94	3.95	3.26	3.15	3.64	4.26
8. Gen. Gov't.	3.35	3.57	5.46	8.00	7.40	6.95	8.24	7.85
9. Education	3.62	3.47	3.61	2.24	2.69	2.83	2.90	3.02
10. Health	0.82	0.72	0.75	0.72	0.87	0.87	0.94	1.15
11. Other Svc.	2.72	2.67	3.08	2.77	2.74	2.78	3.00	3.23
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

NOTES: *At 1962/63 Factor Cost.

**The former three Eastern states are not included in the estimates.

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, National Accounts of Nigeria (Lagos: 1976).

accounted for ₦1,342.0 million or 69.4 percent while distribution, the second largest sector, contributed ₦260.6 million or 12.5 percent of total GDP. From this table, one will see that none of the other sectors accounted for as much as 5 percent of the GDP. In 1958/59, the share of manufacturing and crafts was 4.6 percent while building and construction accounted for 4.2 percent of the total GDP. Mining, general government and education accounted for 1.1, 3.0 and 2.5 percent of the GDP, respectively.

Agricultural activity dominated the economy throughout the 1960s to the middle 1970s when petroleum emerged as a major export product. Although petroleum emerged as a major export product, it has not changed the pattern of economic growth of Nigeria. Nigeria's economic growth still depends solely on its export market. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of Nigerian exports by major commodities from 1960 to 1974. In 1960, agricultural products alone accounted for about ₦278.8 million or about 82.1 percent of total export earnings while petroleum accounted for ₦8.8 million or 2.6 percent of total export earnings. Petroleum's share of the total export rose to 25 percent in 1965 accounting for ₦136.2 million, while agricultural shares declined by 24.1 percent. This large proportion of petroleum's share to the total export rose to ₦510 million or 57.6 percent in 1970 and reached a high peak of ₦5365.7 or 92.6 percent in 1974. Presently the oil industry accounts for over 80 percent of the nation's total export.

TABLE 2.2

DISTRIBUTION OF NIGERIAN EXPORTS BY MAJOR COMMODITIES 1960/74 (SELECTED)

Commodity	1960		1965		1970		1974	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cocoa	73.5	21.7	85.4	15.9	133.0	15.0	159.0	2.7
Groundnuts	45.8	13.5	75.6	14.1	43.6	4.9	6.8	0.1
Groundnut Oil	10.6	3.1	20.0	3.7	23.2	2.6	11.4	0.2
Palm Kernels	52.1	15.4	43.1	9.9	21.8	2.5	43.7	0.8
Palm Oil	28.0	8.2	27.2	5.1	1.2	0.2	*	*
Hides & Skin	8.5	2.5	9.1	1.7	5.6	0.6	10.6	0.2
Rubber (natural)	28.5	8.4	22.0	4.1	17.4	2.0	33.2	0.6
Timber (Logs & Saws)	14.1	4.1	12.5	2.3	6.2	0.7	11.2	0.2
Raw Cotton	12.4	3.7	6.6	1.2	13.2	1.5	-	-
Bananas	5.2	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Petroleum (Crude)	8.8	2.6	136.2	25.4	510.0	57.6	5365.7	92.6
Colombite	4.2	1.3	2.3	0.4	2.0	0.2	1.4	*
Tin Ore	12.1	3.6	*	*	-	-	-	-
Tin Metal	-	-	29.8	5.6	33.8	3.8	26.4	0.4
Other Exports	35.5	10.4	56.7	10.6	74.4	8.4	125.4	2.2
TOTALS	339.4	100.00	536.5	100.0	885.5	100.0	5794.8	100.0

* NEGLIGIBLE

SOURCE: Federal Office of Statistics, Annual Abstract of Statistics and Review of External Trade. CBN-AR

What is evident from this information in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 is that agricultural production in Nigeria is declining. The striking thing to note here is that some commodities like raw cotton, bananas and palm oil, which were major components of export products of the economy in 1960, have virtually disappeared from the export market. Table 2.3 gives the most recent information on the composition of the principal export products of the country. What is obvious from this table is that the agricultural components of the total export have diminished in recent years.

A cross sectional analysis on growth rate of the major sectors of the economy would reveal that while other sectors are undergoing tremendous growth, the agricultural sector is growing at a very slow rate, if not declining. Table 2.4 shows the growth rate of the major sectors of the economy between 1970/71 to 1979/80 at 1974/75 factor cost and projected annual growth rate of the sectors during the Third National Development Plan period of 1975-1980. Between 1970/71 and 1974/75 every major sector of the economy, with the exception of the agricultural sector, had a noticeable growth. As mining and quarrying was having 18.5 percent growth rate between 1970/1971 and 1974/1975, agriculture had a declining rate of -0.2 percent during that period. With the persistent problems facing the agricultural industry, the projected five percent growth rate that was expected during the plan period was very far from being achieved.

TABLE 2.3

PRINCIPAL EXPORT EARNINGS 1975/79 (MILLION OF NAIRAS)
NIGERIA

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Crude Petro	4,630.0	6,196	6,879	6,033	10,022
Cocoa	175	218	294	384	NA
Groundnuts	--	--	--	--	--
Groundnut oil and Cake	8.0	34.4	NA	NA	NA
Palm Kernels	10.8	26.8	29.6	9.9	NA
Palm Oil	--	--	--	--	--
Rubber	7.8	14.0	10.4	11.9	NA
Cotton	--	--	9.8	5.7	NA
Timber and Plywood	4.8	1.5	NA	0.5	NA
Tinmetal	18.2	14.6	17.6	10.9	NA
Total Exports	4,988.0	6,623.0	7,700.0	6,689.0	NA

Source: Nigeria Central Bank.

Note: NA means data not available.

TABLE 2.4

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT: GROWTH BY SECTORS
AT 1974-75 FACTOR COST
NIGERIA

Sector	Actual Average Growth Rate (%) 1974/74-1970/71	Projected Average Growth Rate (%) 1979/80-1974/75
Agriculture		
Forestry & Fishing	-0.2	5.0
Mining & Quarrying	18.5	5.2
Manufacturing & Crafts	9.1	16.5
Electricity & Water	17.1	19.3
Building & Construction	23.1	18.3
Distribution	3.2	10.7
Transport & Communication	15.9	16.1
General Government	10.4	16.1
Education	9.5	19.7
Health	15.3	18.2
Other Services	11.9	9.2
TOTAL	10.6	9.1

SOURCE: Third National Development Plan 1975/80.

The economy is a case in point today where there is a noticeable food shortage. The government of Nigeria in January, 1980 commissioned a team of World Bank experts to look into the food problems of the country. The team, in its report, put the food production deficit for 1979-80 at 2.6 million tons of grain equivalents, and estimated that at the present rate of increase to 5.3 million tons of grain equivalents by 1985.⁵ The result of this declining state of agricultural production has been the economy's large dependence on food imports. Table 2.5 gives the most recent information on major import items of Nigeria. The table shows that the level of food imports increases by over 50 percent annually. Level of food imports that was estimated at ~~N~~155.2 million in 1974 rose to ~~N~~232.0 million in 1975. This amount increased by over ~~N~~2 million in 1976 and 1977 and by over ~~N~~3 million in 1978. As the level of food imports rises annually and agricultural production declines tremendously, the question that policy makers should ask is: What actually is the cause for this agricultural decline? This question has been widely answered by the government of Nigeria. Recently, the Nigerian minister of agriculture, alhaji Ibrahim Gusau, dealt with this question during a lecture he delivered to students of a senior executive course at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru, Nigeria, on November 12, 1980. The minister blamed the problems of the

⁵"Agriculture Document: Nigeria's Green Revolution" Africa Report, (July-Aug. 1981) p. 19.

TABLE 2.5
PRINCIPAL IMPORTS OF NIGERIA 1974-1979
(MILLION OF NAIRAS)

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979 Jan.-Aug.
Food & Live Animals	155.2	232.0	441.8	790.3	1,108.6	699.0
Drink & Tobacco	9.1	19.6	63.7	146.8	57.7	5.0
Crude Materials	63.4	67.0	79.3	70.7	113.6	92.5
Mineral Fuels Etc.	50.9	92.0	181.2	136.8	181.2	111.6
Oils & Fats	3.6	6.8	24.7	46.8	81.8	60.2
Chemicals	188.7	284.0	398.4	464.9	680.4	392.0
Manufactured Goods	512.1	888.0	1,135.7	1,581.9	1,970.2	973.6
Machinery & Transport Equipment	608.3	1,306.0	2,447.4	3,528.8	3,759.4	1,720.6
Misc. Manufacturer	113.4	208.0	351.4	516.8	668.2	197.8
Other	10.7	8.2	8.5	13.0	13.8	12.0
TOTAL IMPORTS	1,715.0	3,717.0	5,140.0	7,100.0	6,524.0	4,264.5

SOURCE: Nigeria Central Bank.

agricultural industry on: (1) population drift from rural to urban areas, leaving an aging farm labor force, (2) disruption caused by the civil war and drought, (3) inadequate and ineffective extension services, inadequate supply and erratic availability of inputs and other farm support services, (4) inadequate infrastructure, and (5) inadequate public expenditure on agriculture.⁶ Nigeria's government approach to agricultural policy since 1960 has focused attention strictly on those problems listed by the agriculture minister. It follows, therefore, that depending solely on these factors would be very much misleading as it would tend to mean that the government has not made a noticeable effort in developing the agricultural industry or that the policies being followed are not effective. The factors listed here by the Nigerian minister are not different from the problems that are widely associated with other agricultural sectors of other countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. But in recent years some of these countries have had noticeable growth in agricultural production owing to the effective policies that have been enacted. In this paper we would contend that the Nigerian agricultural policies fail owing to a misconception as to what actually is the problem in the industry. In dismissing the view that geography and other natural factors are the problems retarding progress in agricultural development of the LDCs, R. W. Cummings argued that declining state of the agricultural sector

⁶Ibid, p. 19.

is not a fault of new technology but rather it is an attribute of a man-made institutional inequity.⁷ The problem of population drift to urban areas cannot be a factor that would retard progress in agricultural activity in the rural sector in any country of the LDCs because in spite of the massive drift, the population in the rural sector continues to outnumber that of the urban. The following excerpt, from Michael Todaro's Economic Development In The Third World, would help nullify the emphasis being placed on rural to urban migration as a factor that retards agricultural development in the LDCs. According to Todaro:

"Over 2 billion people lived in rural areas in the mid 1970s. Estimates indicate that this figure will rise to almost 2.8 billion by the year 2000. People living in the countryside of Latin America and Asia comprise considerably more than half the total population of such diverse nations as Brazil, Peru, India, Indonesia, Burma, Bolivia, Srilanka, Pakistan and the Philippines. In Africa, the ratios are much higher with almost every country having rural dwellers in excess of three-quarters of the population. In spite of the massive migration to the cities, the absolute population increase in rural areas of most third world nations will continue to be greater than that of urban areas for at least the next decade."⁸

The major misconception in putting emphasis on the issue of population drift to urban areas is the failure to recognize the relationship between the population density of the rural sector and the amount of available land. In most regions of

⁷Ibid, p. 1.

⁸M. P. Todaro, Economic Development in the Third World (New York: Longman Inc., 1977) p. 204.

the LDCs some farmlands are overpopulated and cultivated; in contrast, other farmlands are left fallow and underpopulated. It follows, therefore, that scarcity of human labor cannot be the factor that retards production in the LDCs. According to Lewis, surplus labor is available in both rural and urban areas. The case might be that the rural labor surplus is disguised in the sense that everyone is working but if some portion is withdrawn, output will not fall, the remaining workers will just work harder.⁹ It would be better argued that the amount of land available for cultivation is low relative to the number of people willing to cultivate the land. The scarcity is not a result of natural factors in Nigeria but rather, it is an attribute of a traditional norm. This concept would be more clarified in Chapter 3 as we examine the concept of land tenure and its effects on agricultural production in Nigeria.

Agricultural Development In Kenya.

Most agricultural economists who have worked considerably on African Agricultural development tend to agree that Kenya's agriculture is the most impressive compared to the other African agricultural sectors. To name a few, David Norman, Prof. T. J. Bembridge and Judith Heyer have all reached this similar conclusion. What is that special characteristic of Kenya's agriculture that makes it supreme among the others?

⁹W. A. Lewis, Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor, The Manchester School of Economic & Social Studies, May 1954, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 408.

Like Nigeria, the East African country of Kenya was formerly a British Colony. Kenya became independent of Britian when she won her independence in 1963. Kenya's economy, like other developing countries of Africa and Asia, has the problems of poverty, high population growth rate, and unemployment. Like Nigeria, the country has a high population growth rate which has been estimated to be about 3 percent per annum. If this population growth rate is maintained, its present population of about 16 million is projected to reach 30 million by 1975.¹⁰ The economy of this country is predominantly agricultural. The majority of the people are farmers and the growth rate of the economy depend mainly on the country's numerous agricultural export products. Major exports of the economy are coffee, tea, pyrethrum, sisal and hides and skins. Efforts are being made in the agricultural sector to promote the production of groundnuts, fruits and vegetables and cashews for export purposes. The main staple food crop of the country is maize. Other staple food crops that are produced in the country are: plantains, roots and tubers and millets and sorghums. Wheat, rice and Irish potatoes which were recently introduced in the country are becoming important items of production. There is evidence of growth of industries in the economy but the production levels of these industries are still very low and, for this reason,

¹⁰T. J. Bembridge, "Agricultural Development in Kenya" Africa Insight, Vol. II, No. 2, 1981, p. 68.

industries have not made much impact in solving unemployment problems of the country. The agricultural sector of Kenya, like that of Nigeria, is the major source of employment for this growing population. The agricultural sector of Kenya, apart from its major function in solving the unemployment problems of the economy, is the major source of food supply for the growing population in the country.

A cross sectional analysis on growth rate of major sectors in Nigeria's economy shows that agricultural production in the country has declined tremendously over time. This is also evident in its share of the nation's GDP. Export earnings share of agriculture in Nigeria has declined tremendously and most agricultural products that were major components of total exports in the 1960s have virtually disappeared from the nation's export market constituent. This is not so in Kenya's economy. In Kenya, there has been a noticeable increase in agricultural production since 1963. Agriculture has maintained its dominant position in the economy contributing a larger proportion of the nation's GDP since the nation became independent. Kenya is essentially an agricultural nation and the country has a relatively efficient system of agriculture which has managed to double output in the past 20 years.¹¹ Table 2.6 shows growth rate of Gross Domestic (by major sectors) Product 1964-72 (at

¹¹Ibid, p. 68.

TABLE 2.6

KENYA'S GROWTH RATE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT 1964-72
(AT CONSTANT 1964 PRICES)

Industry	1964 K m	1972 K m	Growth Rate 1964-72 (%)
Gross Product at Factor Cost			
A. Outside Monetary Economy	73.47	98.50	3.6
Agriculture			
Forestry	1.99	2.82	4.3
Fishing	0.11	0.14	1.9
Building/Construction	5.81	7.38	3.1
Water	2.09	2.79	3.5
Ownership of Dwellings	5.53	8.31	5.2
Total Product Outside Monetary Economy	89.00	119.94	3.7
B. Monetary Economy			
1. Enterprises and non-profit Institutions			
Agriculture	53.08	83.31	6.0
Forestry	1.88	3.20	4.7
Fishing	0.85	1.12	2.5
Mining & Quarrying	1.46	2.50	11.5
Manufacturing & Repair	34.17	63.61	8.4
Building & Construction	6.82	15.67	10.8
Electricity & Water	4.84	8.85	7.3
Transport/Storage/Communications	24.52	42.43	6.8
Wholesale/Retail Trade	32.98	50.69	5.5
Banking/Ins./Real Estate	9.85	21.78	9.8
Ownership of Dwellings	13.34	15.02	2.1
Other Services	11.90	26.59	11.0
Total Enterprises	195.69	334.77	7.1
2. Private Households			
Domestic Services	2.94	3.80	3.5

TABLE 2.6 (Cont'd)

3. General Government			
Public Administration	16.84	26.38	5.5
Defense	2.19	4.72	10.4
Education	11.20	29.70	12.5
Health	4.69	11.62	11.0
Agricultural Services	4.41	7.66	6.5
Other Services	3.31	12.13	16.9
<hr/>			
Total General Government Economy	42.47	92.21	9.6
<hr/>			
Total Product Monetary	241.10	430.78	7.5
<hr/>			
Total Gross Product at Factor Cost (monetary & non-monetary)	330.10	550.72	6.6
<hr/>			

SOURCE: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 1974, p. 2.

constant 1964 prices) in Kenya. What is evident from this table is that there is a noticeable growth of all the sectors. Like in Nigeria's economy (see Table 2.4), there is a noticeable growth in manufacturing, education, building and construction, mining and quarrying, but unlike in Nigeria, Kenya's economic growth of these sectors grow simultaneously with the agricultural sector. The table shows a \$220.62 million increase of the GDP (at constant 1964 prices) from 1964 to 1972. Sectoral growth of the major sectors shows annual growth of mining and quarrying at 11.5%, building and construction (10.8%), manufacturing and repairs (8.4%), education (12.5%) and agriculture (6.0%). Other major sectors that had tremendous growth are forestry (7.4%), banking, insurance and real estate (9.8%). Currently, "Agriculture contributes 38 percent of the Gross Domestic Product"¹² in Kenya.

On Kenya's export potential, agricultural exports make up about 70 percent of the nation's total export. Higher earnings of agricultural export were the case in the Nigerian economy in 1960 when agriculture contributed 82.1 percent of total export earnings. This figure dropped to 58.0% in 1965 and 30.0% in 1970 in Nigeria. Table 2.7 shows Kenya's Domestic Exports by principal commodities. What is evident from this table is that the products which constitute the nation's export tend to be, if not increasing, very stable,

¹²Ibid., p. 68.

TABLE 2.7

KENYA'S DOMESTIC EXPORTS PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES
1964-73 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VALUE

Commodity	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Coffee, not roasted	32.7	29.9	32.3	29.3	22.2
Tea	12.9	12.9	15.0	13.8	17.4
Sisal Fibre & tow	12.8	8.2	5.8	3.9	3.2
Meat/Meat Prep.	4.6	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.2
Pyrethrum extract & flowers	5.2	4.7	4.9	5.4	5.3
Hides/skins/furskins, undressed	2.7	3.7	4.4	3.3	2.9
Maize, unmilled	-	-	-	2.6	8.3
Wattle bark & extract	2.3	1.8	2.7	1.7	2.1
Pineapples, tinned	1.9	1.6	0.9	1.0	0.8
Cotton, raw	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.2	0.7
Wool, raw	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.0
Cashew nut	0.6	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.1
Beans, peas, lentils	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.4
Oil seeds, oilnut & oil kernels	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	1.1
Butter & ghee	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6
Non-agricultural	9.7	16.4	14.9	18.3	15.3
Other	8.5	9.1	8.0	10.5	11.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2.7 (Cont'd)

Commodity	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
Coffee, not roasted	26.6	31.1	26.8	27.3	29.2
Tea	17.8	17.7	16.2	18.1	13.8
Sisal Fibre & tow	2.7	2.6	2.1	2.3	3.9
Meat/Meat Prep.	4.1	4.0	5.0	5.4	3.1
Pyrethrum extract & flowers	4.4	3.0	4.6	5.0	3.0
Hides/skins/furskins, undressed	3.0	2.3	3.3	4.2	4.2
Maize, unmilled	4.4	-	-	-	4.6
Wattle bark & extract	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.0
Pineapples, tinned	1.1	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.2
Cotton, raw	1.2	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.1
Wool, raw	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.7
Cashew nut	1.1	2.2	1.0	1.2	0.5
Beans, peas, lentils	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.2	1.0
Oil seeds, oilnut & oil kernels	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.4
Butter & ghee	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.8	0.6
Non-agricultural	16.3	16.7	19.7	14.7	12.5
Other	12.8	14.0	15.1	14.9	19.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Annual Trade Reports, East African Customs and Excise Department and
adopted from Republic of Kenya Stat. Abstract, 1974.

unlike in Nigeria where most agricultural items that were major components of total export in the 1960s tend to be disappearing in the export market constituent of the country. During this ten-year period, 1964-73, Coffee's contribution to total export in Kenya averaged about 29 percent. Although there is a trend in coffee's earnings, coffee's share that was 32.7 percent in 1964 fell to 22.8 percent in 1968. The reason for this decline is not difficult to find. This was a result of the high rate of the "coffee berry disease,"¹³ in 1967 and 1968. However, coffee's overall contribution to export earnings is highly impressive for a single crop. Tea is the next most important export product in Kenya. Its export earnings fluctuated from 12.9 percent in 1964 to 18.1 percent in 1972 and then down to 13.8 percent in 1973. These fluctuations, as well as those of the other export crops, are attributed to the variations in world demand and world prices of these products over which the exporting country has very little control. This is not the case in Nigeria's export market. The problem inhibiting development in earnings of agricultural export products is not a matter of external influence on Nigeria, but rather, it is the inability of farmers to replant worn out trees. The overall production level of the economy's export products is low when compared with the level of production of major export products in

¹³Heyer J., Meitha, J. K. & Senga, W.M. Agricultural Development In Kenya: An Economic Assessment (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 71.

Kenya. This problem will be better explained in Chapter 3 as we examine the problem of land tenure in Nigeria and how it effects production of cash crops in the economy.

There is no special characteristic of Kenya's agricultural sector that distinguishes it from that of Nigeria. Kenya's farming system is basically the same as Nigeria's. Farming systems in these countries depend mainly on the amount of rainfall, variations of temperature and topography. Rainfall in Kenya and in Nigeria follows a strong seasonal pattern. It follows therefore, that geographical factors cannot be the causes prohibiting agricultural development in Nigeria. Major differences exist between these two countries on land structure. There is a noticeable scarcity of land suitable for farming in Kenya.

" . . . Of the total land area of 569,000 square kilometers: . . . only about 7 percent can be described as good agricultural land in the sense that it has adequate and reliable rainfall and good soils and is not steeply sloping. A further 4 1/2 percent is suited for crop production but is in the area where in some years rainfall will prove inadequate and crop failures may ensue. From an agricultural point of view the remaining land, in the absence of irrigation or water conservation, is suited only to stock raising at varying levels of intensity, depending mainly on rainfall and also on soil type. Land use declines to a very low level on the 60 percent of Kenya's land area which can best be described as semi-desert.¹⁴

Nigeria, unlike Kenya, has a vast amount of land that has been said to be very suitable for farming but because of

¹⁴Ibid, p. 71.

the persistent land tenure rule in the country, the land--man ratio is very low. This problem was not totally absent in Kenya's economy. Tenure of land was needed by the colonial rulers in Kenya in order to have sole authority over the limited area of land that was classified to be suitable for farming. The colonial policy on land in Kenya "absolutely laid down that no native has any individual title to land and that the land is the commonwealth of the people."¹⁵ The major objective of this policy is to guarantee cheap and dependable labor for the European settlers. But events at the end of the second world war, such as rising population and food prices, led the colonial rulers to find solutions to solve the problems of hunger in Kenya. It was believed that it would be extremely difficult to solve the problem of famine in the country without motivating the African population to produce their own agricultural needs. The motivation would only be achieved if the policy that governed occupancy in the suitable farmlands could be modified. The Colonial policy on occupancy in farming was seen as the major cause of the economic disaster that faced the economy. The reason for this general lack of internal self sufficiency are not difficult to find. On the one hand the establishment of:

"... reserves did not simply reduce available land per worker, it also made it difficult for people to acquire permanent rights elsewhere. Hence, whatever expansion took place had to be within each area of

¹⁵Ibid, p. 155.

ethnic jurisdiction, and in areas where land shortages were developing it had to be at the expense of other members of the group. Labor was as important as land, however, and the fact that the settler economy syphoned off most of the able-bodied men and women meant that the rural economy was deprived of its other most productive asset. The overall effect of these factors was that both the rate of expansion in agricultural production and the rate of technological adaptation to changing man - land ratios was low."¹⁶

The modification of the initial colonial policy on occupancy in farmland occurred at the end of the second world war and gave some African communities and some few individuals statutory rights of ownership over some acres of land for farming. Since independence, the government of Kenya has embarked on extensive land reform programs. Most writers on African Agricultural development believe that Kenya's progress on agricultural development is due to the land reform policies of the country which originated from the reform policies of the colonial government. As Professor Bembridge would argue, the transformation of Kenyan agriculture since independence would have been impossible to achieve without the land consolidation program recommended by Sir. Roger Swynnerton in the 1950s and continued after independence.¹⁷ This program which is usually referred to as the Swynnerton Plan is the cornerstone of agricultural development policies in Kenya.

¹⁶Ibid, p. 159.

¹⁷Ibid, p. 68.

Kenya's Approach To Agricultural Policies.

The Agrarian Revolution of the 1950s.

Kenya's agricultural transformation is not a recent phenomena. Colonial policies made great impact in making access to farmland possible for any willing individual in the country. Recent policies after independence are mainly advancement of the colonial policies rather than off-springs of independence. The 1950s marked a period of noticeable development in Kenyan agriculture. New Programs were created to encourage the Black Africans in the country to engage in farming. The objective of the colonial government was to solve the problems of unemployment and food shortage in Kenya. It might be argued also that by increasing agricultural productivity in the African owned farms, revenues from the colony would increase for the colonial government. With that thought in mind of the ruling government, a crucial step to revitalize the agricultural sector was undertaken. The new approach to the development of agriculture in this country was the emergence of the Swynnerton Plan in 1954. The Plan's objective included among other programs, the policy of land tenure reform, increases in extension services, research credit and marketing development services to support commercial agriculture in the small farm areas and a program for the development of the pastoral areas which has since been superseded. The remarkable thing to note about this plan is that it is still the engine of present agricultural policies in the

country. Every effort to develop the agricultural sector since independence is simply the extension of the Swynnerton Plan. The radical approach of the Plan on the issue of land reform was based on the philosophy that sound agricultural development is dependent upon a system of land tenure which will make available to the African farmer a unit of land and a system of farming whose production will support his family and make his standard of living comparable with those of other professions.¹⁸ The Plan recognized individual ownership of land. The belief was that consolidation of land based on this concept would prohibit the high values attached to land which made it supreme among other assets. This new concept of land ownership differs widely from the Nigerian concept, where land ownership is determined basically by inheritance and only some communities and/or families have sole rights over farmlands. The Swynnerton Plan went further to explain the rights of the individual or the family in the consolidated land. The consolidation permits the landowner to sell the land among his fellow countrymen or to pledge the land for Government loans where the individual would not have the financial resources to cultivate the land.

In evaluating the results of the Plan and its effect on Kenya's Agricultural development, some economists have called it the Agrarian Revolution. Areas that were first

¹⁸Ibid, p. 126.

consolidated and registered have had a good increase in production of cash crops, and there is a marked increase in income for every farmer as a result of this program. Its effect on cash crop production could be measured on the growing rate of coffee production in the country. Small holder plantings of coffee only started on a large scale in the 1950s and production from this sector did not reach significant proportions until the end of the 1950s.¹⁹ As the consolidation plan gave more people access to cultivate more land the rate of coffee production has changed remarkably with small holders contributing largely to the production of this crop. As shown in Table 2.8, production of coffee is no longer restricted to estate production. Small holders production which emerged as a result of the new land reform policy accounted for 16.6 000 metric tons of the 41.4 000 metric tons produced in 1964. This amount increased yearly and reached 36.1 000 metric tons in 1973 and 39.9 000 metric tons in 1974. The advantages of the plan were observed in 1962 by a visiting team of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The team, in measuring the merits of the plan, remarked that:

" . . . it has become increasingly recognized over the years that a sound system of tenure is the key to agricultural development. Whatever may be the merits of joint ownership of land suitable for pastoral use only, registered title is essential to the full development of the agricultural land. It provides an incentive to improvement and it furnishes the security needed in order to obtain the loans required for the development;

¹⁹Ibid, p. 81.

TABLE 2.8
COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KENYA, 1963-74
(000 METRIC TONS)

Year	Estates Production	Small Holdings Production	Total Production
1964	24.8	16.6	41.4
1965	23.1	16.2	39.3
1966	28.4	28.5	56.9
1967	19.2	28.8	48.0
1968	18.8	20.8	39.6
1969	26.8	25.6	52.4
1970	27.9	30.4	58.3
1971	31.5	28.0	59.5
1972	34.2	27.8	62.0
1973	35.1	36.1	71.2
1974	30.8	39.3	70.1

SOURCE: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 1969 & 1975.

and recommending that within the agricultural development program . . . by far the best economic results will be forthcoming from investment in African farm consolidation, enclosure and development along the lines set out under the Swynnerton Plan."²⁰

Recent writings on this policy have shared the same view.

After observing the progressive nature of production level of cash crops and food crops in the economy and larger hectares of land being cultivated, Prof. Bembridge remarked that "in many cases these advantages have materialized."²¹

The Period After Independence.

Kenya's approach to agricultural policies after independence is not different from the programs outlined by the Swynnerton Plan. Most African nations, on attaining independence, tend to create policies which do not have any similarity with those used by the colonial government. They do not evaluate the existing policies to see whether they would be useful in the independent nations. On attaining independence, Kenya did not have this negative attitude on the existing agricultural policies. The first government of independent Kenya recognized the benefits of the land reform policy as was set forth by the colonial government and was convinced that it would be to the benefit of the country if the policy was developed. The first two development plans of Kenya attached much importance to the problem of land

²⁰Ibid, p. 128.

²¹T. J. Bembridge, op. cit., p. 68.

tenure. Major areas of preference in terms of budget allocation were on land settlements and credit schemes for small farmers. The credit scheme was a measure to support the new farmers in the new farmlands financially in developing their new acres of land. This excerpt from the development plan document of 1966-70 would better portray the governments interest on the small farmer and intentions to carry on the colonial policies that would be of benefit to the people of Kenya.

" . . . It has been long accepted that a necessary prerequisite to the development of much of the peasant farming areas is reform of the tribal systems of land tenure by registration of title preceded by enclosures and in many instances, consolidation of fragmented holdings. . . . The Government is determined to accelerate the process and complete as much of the remaining area as possible, particularly all medium and high potential land within the next 10 years."²²

Reviewing the achievements of the land reform policy and the rate of agricultural development since independence, the 1974 Development Plan showed that after a decade, thirty-five thousand families had been settled on 470,000 hectares of land at a total cost of £30 million under the Million Acre Settlement Programs, four hundred families on 6,500 hectares of land under the Harambee Settlement Scheme, fourteen thousand families on 105,000 hectares of land under the Haraka Settlement Scheme and two thousand families at Ol Kalou where 86 large scale farms covering a total of 56,000 hectares were

²² Republic of Kenya, Development Plan, 1966-70 (Govt. Printer, Nairobi, 1966), pp. 129-30.

taken over. Beginning in 1971, the Shirika program, which involved the takeover of expatriate-owned large scale farms, was started. Instead of subdividing the farms into small plots, each farmer was allocated a small plot of about one hectare for food production while the majority of the farm was run as a large scale unit with a manager provided by the Department of Settlement.²³ By 1973, five thousand three hundred families had been settled on 53,000 hectares at a cost of £3.1 million. A second phase was expected to settle fourteen thousand families on 139,000 hectares of land at a cost of £7.8 million, but 41,000 hectares of this will be based on subdivisinal settlement.²⁴ The evidence available shows the government's intention to erradicate the traditional tenure rules and maintain the agricultural sector's dominant position as a major source of employment. The government believes that most agricultural products could be produced in small farmers' holdings. Recent policies on agricultural development in Kenya stress: (1) intensification of land use for both crop and livestock production with a concentration of effort directed to the poorer families in an attempt to raise their standard of living by comparison with that of the community

²³Republic of Kenya, Development Plan 1974-75 op. cit., pp. 197-212.

²⁴Ibid, p. 226.

NOTE: For recent Official Attitudes on Land Reform see: Republic of Kenya, Development Plan 1970-74, op. cit., pp. 174-8 and Republic of Kenya, Development Plan, 1974-78 op. cit., p. 110.

as a whole; (2) a redistribution of land towards more labour intensive farm units; and (3) the settlement of unused or under-utilized land.²⁵ The programs being embarked tend to be highly labor-intensive and differ widely from Nigeria's approach which tends to displace labor, as will be seen in the later chapter of this paper.

Conclusion.

The evidence available from this chapter shows, that Kenya's agricultural production increases owing to the land reform policies that have been enacted in the country; as a result, large acres of land are cultivated. In the following chapter, we will examine the problem of land tenure and how it affects agricultural production in Nigeria.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 144.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF LAND TENURE IN NIGERIA

Land in Africa is one of the principal forms of wealth. The traditional belief of Africa recognizes some land acres as areas for worship. Some pieces of land represent the gods themselves. There is the god of the water and the god of the land, and the portions of land assigned to them in a community are said to be sacred. One general characteristic of many African countries is that a few families own the majority of the land. In these areas, it is the traditional belief of the people that some members of the community were born with special rights to land. The level of agricultural production depends to a large extent on the quality of land and the quantity of land available for cultivation. "Most of the millions of people in the developing countries of Africa aren't industrialist or merchants. They are farmers or small traders. Many millions of these people too, live and farm in the same village or community where their fathers and forefathers lived."²⁶ The concept of land tenure as defined by customary laws implies that people would cultivate the land their forefathers cultivated. Because of the customary rules that govern the agricultural sector, African farming systems

²⁶Difficult Case of the Non-Disappearing African Land Tenure Systems," Farm Index, (February 1970) p. 19.

are widely based on the method of shifting cultivation. In Nigeria land utilization in the country is still based on its traditional setting. Table 3.1 shows the land use pattern of Nigeria in 1951 percentages. Of the 228 million acres of the nation's land area, only about 9.4 percent was devoted to farm crops; about 1.3 percent was left fallow. Forest reserves, non-agricultural land and uncultivated bush and waste land accounted for 7.6, 1.00 and 80.8 percent respectively. What this analysis shows is that most land owners have more land than they could develop while the majority of the peasant farmers concentrated on small acres of land.

Factors That Determine Occupancy in Farmland.

Land in Nigeria has never been said to be owned by an individual but rather, ownership of land is vested in families, clans, villages, or communities. The best description of land ownership in Nigeria could well be that of Chief Justice T.O.S. Elias. According to Elias:

"Land belongs to the community, the village or the family, never to the individual. All the members of the community, village or family have an equal right to the land, but in every case the Chief or Head man of the community or village or head of the family, has charge of the land, and in loose mode of speech is sometimes called the owner. He is to some extent in the position of a trustee and as such holds the land for the use of the community or family. He has control of it, and any member who wants a piece of it to cultivate or build upon, goes to him for it. But, the land so given still remains the property of the community or family."²⁷

²⁷T.O.S. Elias, Nigeria Land Law and Custom, (London: Routledge and Kegan, Paul Ltd., 1962), p. 93.

TABLE 3.1

LAND UTILIZATION IN NIGERIA 1951 (PERCENTAGES)
LAND CLASSIFICATION

	Under Farm Crops	Under Farm Crops	Fallow	Forest Reserve	Non-Agri- cultural	Unculti- vated Bush & Waste	Total Area in 1000 Acres
Benue Plateau State	9.42	0.09	23.37	2.63	1.58	62.01	25.091
East Central State	28.43	4.91	52.23	3.76	2.82	7.85	5.341
Kano State	24.5	0.00	8.10	1.50	1.90	64.00	10.643
Kwarg State	5.10	0.02	10.58	12.94	0.59	70.77	18.350
Lagos State	9.10	53.10	33.00	0.00	1.20	3.70	.88a
Midwest State	5.39	16.03	37.81	14.25	0.66	25.86	10.527b
North Central State	9.45	0.00	5.13	7.82	1.04	71.56	16.611
North Eastern State	5.27	0.00	5.86	1.24	0.68	86.95	66.329
North Western State	3.04	0.09	30.44	9.04	2.48	54.91	41.691
River State	25.2	0.80	66.00	0.00	1.30	6.7	4.485c
South Eastern State	19.72	2.62	48.53	15.94	1.18	12.00	8.787d
Western State	12.13	9.15	25.30	22.98	0.78	29.66	3.796e
Total Nigeria	9.4	1.3	13.80	7.6	1.00	80.8	228-268fg

SOURCE: Federal Department of Agriculture (1973).

- NOTES: (a) 727,000 acres of coastal swamps, etc. not included in the survey
 (b) 2,657,000 acres of coastal swamps, etc. not included in the survey
 (c) 2,947,000 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 (d) 70,000 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 (e) 448,000 " " " " " " " " " " " "
 (f) 6,848,000 " " " " " " and Sarduana Province
 (11,200,000 acres) not included in the survey
 (g) Parts may not add up to total due to rounding

From what we could learn from this detailed statement, not every individual in the country has the right over land to cultivate. It becomes evident that most farmers would be sharecroppers as majority of the people are engaged in agricultural occupation. As we said earlier, differences do exist among the various ethnic groups in the country in the methods of entrusting lands to individual farmers but in most cases the system of ownership is based upon a number of concepts which are common in most regions of the country. The major concepts are:

(a) Inheritance.

In most areas of Nigeria, inheritance is patrilineal. Ownership of land in this sense is acquired from the father and the father's male relatives. Inherited land belongs to the family where the head of the household supervises the land. The concepts that determine ownership of land in Nigeria are not different from those that governed the traditional tenure system in Kenya prior to the passage of the Swynnerton Plan in 1954.²⁸ The traditional land tenure of Kenya, like that of Nigeria, was such that ownership of land would be acquired through inheritance or by sharing the community land with clanmen. Kenya's idea on inheritance differs from that of Nigeria, because individual private ownership is recognized. Although inheritance in Nigeria's case confers legal rights of

²⁸E. A. Wilemski, African Traditional Subsistence In Change, (Cologne, 1975) p. 46.

use of the family land on an individual member of the family, it does not permit sale or alienation of the land outside the kindred. This differs from Kenya's concept where the individual could sell his inherited land when there is a need for cash. From this, one can see that Kenya's tenure system is more liberal than the tenure system of Nigeria which does not permit individuals without inherited land to acquire lands of their own for farming.

(b) Lease.

The concept of lease as a factor that determines occupancy in the Nigerian tenure system and the traditional tenure system of Kenya differs from the Concept of Inheritance as it strictly allows temporary occupancy. It is a form of alienation for a fixed period of time. Original landowners could lease acres of farmland to a tenant farmer or group of farmers who are willing to abide by the terms prescribed by the landowners. The lease period is usually for one year but the lessor can continue to cultivate every year as long as he pays his dues and as long as the owner does not need the land. Annual rent for a piece of land is usually paid on terms agreed by the lessor and owner. In most cases it is settled by some percentage share of the farmer's harvest.

(c) Pledge.

This system of tenancy differs from leasing, since its term of agreement is not made to cover a specific period of time. Land in this sense is pledged by the landowner to borrow

money to meet urgent needs. Pledged land is redeemable any time the debt is paid although the temporary occupant of the land has the right to harvest the crops he has planted. In most cases the pledged land is not used for immediate planting as it basically serves as a guarantee that the borrowed money would be repaid. As the borrower of the money, who is the landowner, could come up with money to meet his debt at any unspecified time, the pledged land would not be expected to be used for cultivation of permanent crops. Most landowners have vast amounts of land more than they can cultivate. In most cases most land areas are left fallow, their primary function being to serve as guarantees in obtaining loans.

(d) Gift.

A person could be granted the use of farmland by a family other than the one he belongs owing to the friendly relationship he has with the landowners. When this friendly gesture occurs, the new landowner, as might be called, would be expected to be giving the head of the family of the original landowners some shares of his harvest annually. This obligation is not usually regarded as rent but rather, it serves as a reminder to the cultivator that he is not the traditional owner of the land.

(e) Appropriation.

The government may compulsorily take over pieces of land for public use, the construction of roads, establishment of market places, mission premises or for farm settlements.

This concept differs from the other factors that determine occupancy in farmlands in the traditional setting because it is not a rule that is accepted or prescribed by landowners but rather, it only shows the way governments intervene in the agricultural sector. Although this right empowers the government to acquire lands from landowners, the government of Nigeria has done little or nothing in acquiring excess lands from landowners, unlike in Kenya where the government has intervened greatly, and continues to do so, in acquiring excess land.

The appropriation right called for two administrative arrangements in Kenya: "land registration and adjudication as a kind of innovation to the traditional tenure system."²⁹ The land registration for Edmund A. Wilemski, is the basis for granting of the title deed which is now necessary for land transactions and obtaining the credit for farm improvement.³⁰ The result of these policies in Kenya has been massive, commercial transaction of land which enables individuals to buy or lease farmlands without difficulty. It then, does not make land supreme among other goods. Land could be sold easily at an agreed price and the title would be transferred immediately to give the buyer absolute ownership.

²⁹Edmund A. Wilemski. African Traditional Subsistence Economy In Change (Cologne: 1975), p. 46.

³⁰Ibid, p. 47.

The Nigerian land tenure system based on the concepts we discussed above did not foresee the future economic potentials of agricultural earnings at its initial time of the establishment. The system was suited for, and was designed to provide adequate food needs of the members of the community as long as they were purely subsistence cultivators with no desire for creating agricultural surplus. One remarkable thing to note about this system is that, it has created a farming system based on shifting cultivation which involves abandoning land when it is thought to be exhausted of its natural chemical nutrients. This means that farmlands are cultivated only temporarily as farmers change plots at regular intervals.

Demerits of The Tenure Systems.

Lack of Security of Tenure.

In most cases when a piece of land is leased, there is no formal written agreement to show the duration of the lease. Agreement on terms of lease is usually met by verbal discussion. In most rural areas of Nigeria, the landowners are the most wealthy members of society. It follows, therefore, that the relationship between the landowner and the peasant farmer, who is the temporary occupant of the land, could be well described as that between the strong and the weak. As R. W. Cummings would argue, ownership of land carries with it ownership of government, the right to tax, the right to enact and enforce police regulations and the

right to judge.³¹ This wide influence makes the landowner supreme. In the case of any misunderstanding between the landowner and the peasant farmer, the landowner would eventually evict his tenant. The basic fact about this relationship is that the relationship is not restricted only to business but rather to all aspects of life, in which the tenant is subservient to the landowner. Since the peasant farmer could face possible eviction from the land at any time without prior notice, one would not expect the farmer to make necessary improvements on the land that would be for the benefit of the landowner in the longrun. This being the case, the farmer tends to be very precautious on any development he makes on the farm. Thus, uncertainty of tenancy impedes agricultural development, because the precautionary measures of the tenant farmer would affect the level of investment that would be made in the farmland. It does not enable the tenant farmer to engage in the production of such cash crops as rubber and cocoa which require long periods of time to harvest.

Effects on Tree Crop or Cash Crops Planting.

There would, probably, be no better explanation on the effects land tenure has on cash crop planting than the one given by the findings of the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

³¹Ibid, p. 3.

Over large areas where land is communally owned by the clan, and this applies to more of the Mid-West than the Western Region, there has been fierce resistance from the elders to any suggestion that any further areas of land should be devoted to oil palms. The argument advanced is that a sufficiently high proportion of the land is now occupied by oil palm grooves and is unavailable for food production, that any planting of palms would further reduce the area of land available for food production, thus leading eventually to starvation. Moreover, palms planted by individuals would become the property of the individual and not be available for communal exploitation, as wild palms are.³²

The basic fact behind this finding is that tenure system of land usage serves on a temporary basis. Cultivators of the land are only authorized by the landowners to use the land strictly for cultivation of annual food crops. Accordingly, no misunderstanding would arise at the end of the planting period if the farmer would harvest his products and pay the dues of the land as was agreed upon. But, according to traditional ideas, a tree is the property of the man who planted it even when the land upon which it is planted is reverted to the ownership of the landowners. This principle of allowing individuals to plant permanent crops on lands other than their own must have been established in the olden days when land was thought to be in abundance and its present value was not foreseen. Although permanent tree crops planted years ago, under this condition, are still in existence, there is no evidence of new ones being planted by people on lands other than the

³²Tree Crop Planting Projects, Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (July 1964), p. 71.

ones they have claims to. From my own observation in East Central State of Nigeria, I have seen, in many areas, individuals owning permanent tree crops (example: mango trees, pears) in other people's lands. This form of establishment should not be misunderstood to mean any form of tenancy because there is no stated agreement on how long the plant would be on the land. Establishment of permanent trees on this basis is based on the relationship between the landowner and the plant owner. The primary purpose of this planting is not necessarily for commercial purposes but in recent years, most of these fruits like mango and pears have emerged to be lucrative marketable commodities. As much income gains are seen in these plants the free condition by which they were planted have changed as the landowner gets some shares of the harvest annually. Permanent tree crops, such as cocoa, rubber and oil palms, which have long been recognized as major export products have adversely suffered because landowners have refused permission to tenant farmers to plant new trees.

Effect on Employment of Sharecroppers.

Land tenure shapes the distribution of employment opportunities and income in the rural sector. "As the owner of the farm can choose to work his land with his family, sharecroppers, wage workers or with machinery, this decision will clearly have an income effect and employment effect on

those without control over the land."³³ These were the words of R. W. Cummings as he measured the effects of land tenure on Agricultural Development of the LDCs in 1978. The basic argument here considers the rising population growth rate of the LDCs which is not seen to be growing simultaneously with non-agricultural employment opportunities. This being the case, it follows, therefore, that the larger bulk of the labor force would continue to depend on the agricultural sector as the major source of employment. But as the tenure system shapes the structure of employment in the agricultural sector, many people have been unemployed, not because there are no jobs, but because they do not have control over the land. In Nigeria, sharecroppers, such as palm oil processors and palm wine tappers, depend solely on landowners for their livelihood. Their ability to secure employment depends on their relationship with landowners. The employment effect of the tenure system on sharecroppers has a direct impact on the potential yields of such cash crops like oil palm and rubber. It is believed that the inability of landowners to substitute worn out trees of oil palms and rubber is a matter of reluctance rather than question of scarcity of these products. The reason is that the process of harvesting these products requires experts who are mainly sharecroppers. Their wages depend on the amount of yield of the harvest. Since the

³³Ibid, p. 3.

nominal owners of these trees do not take active part in harvesting these products, they do not appear to be interested in establishing new trees. This excerpt from Tree Crop Planting would better explain the effects land tenure has had on sharecroppers and permanent tree crops in Nigeria. Findings of the Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture revealed that:

"The Chief obstacle which in the past has frustrated attempts to encourage farmers to undertake the planting of oil palms has been the fact that more people regard the oil palm as a wild tree to be exploited systematically for a livelihood only by specialists in the art of climbing and extracting the oil. The specialists are regarded in the same light as hunters of game and are not infrequently 'strangers' of a different tribe, who pay a fee for the privilege of exploiting the palms belonging to the village either for palm wine, palm oil or both."³⁴

Virtually, every activity in the agricultural sector is performed by human labor. Nigeria has not developed such modern methods that would use machineries to process such products as rubber, cocoa and oil palms. Because of this lack of modern techniques in the farms, individuals specialize in different skills. Harvesting crops like oil palms and other tree crops require specialists. For example, there are specialists in harvesting, and specialists in processing the products. Although this wide division of labor in the agricultural sector creates vast employment, the mechanism of the tenure system does not employ strictly on skills but rather

³⁴Tree Crop Planting Projects, Western Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (July 1964), p. 70.

on the relationship between the landowner and the job hunter. There are no formal job application procedures. Sharecroppers know where the crops they specialize in are concentrated in large numbers. Negotiating the contracts depends on how acquainted the sharecropper has been with the landowner.

Fragmentation of Holdings.

In over-populated areas of Eastern region and the west the major obstacle facing development of land use is the nature of the farms which are characterized by small acres of farmlands. Since every member of the community, whether he is a farmer or not, wants to secure a part of the community land, the result is a massive split of fragmented holdings. A rural economic survey of Nigerian farms of 1964-65; Table 3.2 shows that the larger percentage of the farms are based on small acres. From the table, it is evident that larger holdings are virtually absent in Nigerian agriculture. In the Northern region, as in the other regions of the country, less than 4 percent of the total farmlands have areas of 15 to 20 acres. That fragmentation is a problem to land development is evident from the fact that modern machineries, like tractors, which are made for large scale farms cannot be efficiently used.

Maldistribution of Land.

The nature of the tenure system in Nigeria shows that only some families or communities would have sole rights over

TABLE 3.2

SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF FARMERS' HOLDINGS:
1964/65

(Percent and Cumulative Percent of Farmers' Holdings)

Size of farm (acres)b	East		Mid-West		West		North	
	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%	%	Cum%
0-25	21-4	21-4	6-9	(6-9)	7-1	(7-1)	1-7	(1-7)
0-25-0-50	18-7	40-1	10-9	(17-8)	17-8	(24-9)	3-5	(5-2)
0-50-1-00	24-0	64-1	14-2	(33-0)	25-5	(50-4)	10-8	(16-0)
1-0-2-5	25-7	89-8	38-1	(71-0)	32-5	(82-9)	30-7	(46-7)
2-5-5	7-7	97-5	24-4	(95-4)	13-1	(96-0)	28-4	(75-1)
5-10	2-0	99-5	3-9	(99-3)	3-6	(99-6)	18-0	(93-1)
10-15	0-4	99-9	0-6	(99-9)	0-3	(99-9)	4-9	(98-0)
15-20	..c	99-9	0-1	(100)	0-1	(100)	1-4	(99-4)
20 or more	..	(100)	..	(100)	..	(100)	..	(100)
Median (approximate)		0-35		1-7		1-0		2-8

SOURCE: Rural Economic Survey of Nigeria: Farm Survey 1964-65 (Lagos: Federal Office of Statistics, RES/1966/5), pp. 11-18.

NOTE: a. A "Farmer" is defined as a person having the main right to produce from a farm plot. b. Last figure in Column gives beginning of next size class. c. Denotes size of plot held by less than 0-1 percent of farmers.

areas of land within a society. In most cases, the acres of land which they hold claims to are far beyond their present capacity for utilization or exploitation. As some few people would have land in abundance, others would face severe shortages of land. Because of the high taxes involved in renting acres of land most people have abandoned farming. In most areas of Nigeria farming is said to be destined for some few members of the community within a society. The general belief is that they were destined to provide the general agricultural needs of the people and that is why they were born with special rights to land.

Conclusion.

The traditional land tenure system does not establish property rights in a manner so that the use of the land can be altered or these rights can be transferred in response to changing economic situation.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAJOR AGRICULTURAL POLICIES OF NIGERIA: A CRITICAL VIEW

Most governments intervene in the agricultural sectors of their economies to a greater or a lesser degree and their experience has been the extreme difficulty of making sound agricultural policies. Most writers on the Nigerian government's involvement in the agricultural sector tend to base their analysis strictly on allocation of budgets as stated in the 'development Plans' rather than pointing out the key policies or the major projects that have been embarked upon by the government. Although the plans do well to state the governments intentions, they do not reveal the actual policy that has been enacted, nor the degree to which the policy has enhanced productivity. Nigeria since independence has embarked on four Development Plans. A careful review of the Plan documents would reveal that the policies being stressed on are simply repetition of what have been stressed before. Instead of embarking on new programs in recent plans, there has been an extension of previous plan projects with more appropriation of money. It follows, therefore, that the policies have never been effective in restructuring the agricultural industry. While the policies ignore the traditional norms that prohibit intensive utilization of land for farming, the policies being followed are based on the belief that increased productivity would be achieved strictly by embarking

on mechanized form of agriculture as is the case in the advanced countries of Western Europe and in the United States. Mechanized forms of agriculture require extensive cultivation of land which the land tenure rule in Nigeria would not permit. The nature of Nigerian farms is based on small acres of land: thus, applying modern techniques of the west such as irrigation schemes and heavy mechaneries without prior consolidation of land might not make much impact on improving production. Nigeria's approach to agricultural development as we will see in this chapter stresses an intensive cultivation of land through mechanized form of farming. But because there has not been a noticeable land reform in the country, this approach does not seem to make any impact on the level of production. The major policies under examination here are: the water resources and irrigation scheme, the world bank projects, the NAFPP, the OFN, Credit Scheme for farmers and the Green Revolution.

Water Resources and Irrigation Schemes.

The purpose of this project is to ensure adequate water supply to agricultural areas of the country where there are lesser degrees of rainfall and to control the floods that pose great problems in some regions. This project has been concentrated in the northern part of the country which has lesser rainfall. Although the southern part has effective wet season from the months of March to November, effective

wet season is only seen in the north between the months of July and September. Irrigation scheme in the north is, therefore, needed to encourage double cropping so that agricultural activity would no longer be limited to only the wet season. The project would also ensure sufficient water for the wet season crops. In the south it is expected to increase productivity in the plantation large scale farms. Apart from the Federal government's engagement in this project, most northern state governments have embarked on various irrigation schemes. The most notable irrigation projects in the country that are underway are the Kano river Project in Kadawa, the Sokoto - Rima Project at Bakalori and the Chad River Basin Project. These projects involve huge sums of money.

The primary objective of the irrigation scheme is for the cultivation of wheat for commercial purposes rather than for cultivation of staple food crops. The government in putting much emphasis on this scheme tends to integrate the farmer into the market economy where farming activity would be based mainly for commercial gains. The likely problems to arise in this measure is the nature of the farms which are mainly fragmented holdings. This project can only be effective in large units of farmlands which the land tenure system does not permit in the Nigerian agricultural sector. Because there was no prior redistribution of land, most of the irrigated lands are left fallow. As in most cases, owners of the

land do not have adequate funds to buy the seeds and hire the necessary labor. The cultivation devices in production of wheat generally requires the use of tractors for tillage of the soil. Although provision was made for establishment of tractor hire units in the 1962-68, Development Plan period to help achieve the objectives of the early irrigation schemes, most farmers have complained of the difficulties they encounter in getting their land tilled owing to the corruption in the Tractors Unit Agency. Most tractor drivers require one form of compensation or the other before rendering their services. The scheme only provides credit allowances for the use of tractors for only a period of two years to encourage farmers start off the ground. After two years of farming every farmer requiring the use of tractors is to pay cash in advance before securing a tractor service. There are not many drivers who are trained to operate these tractors, thus, because of this shortage of drivers, farmers do not have all their farmlands tilled at the same time. Efficient production of wheat requires that the planting would be made at a specific time and harvesting of the products at a particular period. The wide variation of time in planting retard progress in harvest. Most of the seeds are left in the ground longer than the actual time for harvest.

World Bank Projects.

Crop yields in African countries are said to be low owing to widespread nutrient deficiency in the soils. To

be in line with McNamara's new Bank policy which calls for provision of adequate plant nutrients and credit schemes for the farmer, Nigeria's approach to the policy is strictly centered on the "larger farmer."³⁵ The larger farmer so defined is the farmer who has enough land, labor and financial resources to follow world bank recommendations. The farming objective of the farmer would be primarily for commercial purposes. Major crops, under focus for improvement through the scheme, are cotton and groundnuts for export market and maize for livestock feed. The question is: Why would financial aid be based on progressive nature? Government subsidies would only go to those farms that are already well established. The number of these farms are small relative to the total number of farms in the country. The basic argument behind this measure was explained by the Funtua Project Manager, one of the leading administrators of this scheme:

"... with regard to the progressive farmers which many think are in some way a special and privileged few who take all projects benefit to the exclusion of their fellows, it is pertinent to point out that experience with extension work in many countries has shown that farmers and others when presented with new techniques or ideas; may be categorized in terms of their speed of adoption . . . in addition it has been demonstrated that laggards are more likely to adopt if they see a technique in operation . . . It was this logic which guarded us in our choice of extension method to reach our eventual aim of involving all farmers. The method was to work through progressive farmers, who are the innovators and early adopters."³⁶

³⁵T. Wallace. "The Challenge of Food: Nigeria's Approach to Agriculture 1975-80," Canadian Journal of African Studies, (vol 15, No. 2, 1981).

³⁶Ibid, p. 248.

As there was no prior consolidation of land, while ownership of land is the basic requirement to qualify for this credit scheme, landowners would be very reluctant to lease their land. Development aimed through this scheme, only centers for the benefits of landowners and totally neglects the peasant farmers who make up the larger bulk of the farming population.

National Accelerated Food Production Program.

The NAFPP required every state government to set up food production target that would be met by farmers in their respective states for a period of five years beginning in 1975. The program was not limited to only the state governments as the Federal government was also to meet a production target through a central agricultural agency which would involve cultivation of new acres of land and employment of farmers from all parts of the Federation. The stated objectives of the program are as follows:

- (a) To organize research and extension efforts on commodity (crop) basis.
- (b) To dramatically increase the production of food crops in Nigeria with the ultimate aim of increasing the farmers income and improve their standard of living.
- (c) To speed up the transfer of research results to farmers.
- (d) To encourage the rapid spread of improved seeds and cultural practices from farmer to farmer.
- (e) To develop an improved training system for staff involved in the program.

- (f) To encourage improved planning in food production at State Divisional and local level.
- (g) To promote cooperation among research agencies with production agencies.
- (h) To improve food storage facilities throughout the country.
- (i) To ensure the availability of vital farm inputs at the correct time and at reasonable prices to the farmers.
- (j) To promote food processing industries.³⁷

The objectives of the program have been well stated and are seen to be very much needed for an economy like that of Nigeria where there is a noticeable shortage of food. But there are some problems that might be encountered in executing this plan. Intensive production of food would require intensive cultivation of land which requires more human labor and more acres of land. The question of human labor would not be a problem as there are already large numbers of people in the rural sector but the plan did not make any provision on how new acres of land would be entrusted to the large number of peasant farmers in the rural sector who have no claims over any area of farmland. Like all the other policies, the NAFPP was strictly concerned with improving the use of fertilizer and other pesticides in the existing farms and totally neglects a land reform measure which would put more people to vast acres of land. The major crops under focus for growing through this scheme are wheat, soybean, sorghum and pigeon. These products could only be better grown by plantation

³⁷Ibid, p. 250.

farmers who have the planting machineries for the crops and who are knowledgeable of the economic values of these crops. But, because plantation farmers are few in number compared to the number of peasant farmers, the established yield of the plan would be very far from the goal. That this program is a failure could be evident at the third NAFPP Conference for the northern states, held at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1978. Every representative in the conference expressed doubt about the success of the program. Failure of the policy was attributed to the unwillingness of the farmers to cooperate with the program. Other problems prohibiting achievement of the program objectives were attributed to the incorrect nature of the package contents of the incentives and the seeds and lack of adequate communication between the administrators of the plan and the farmers.

Operation Feed the Nation.

The name of the program tends to portray high intentions but in its overall evaluation, the program is nothing other than the call for more use of fertilizer in the farming system. The OFN project which was launched in 1976 differs from the other projects by its objective to make direct allocation of fertilizers to farmers. It was believed however, that the ineffectiveness of the other policies which provided the same subsidy was due to the maldistribution of the fertilizers. Although the earlier projects made provisions for chemical subsidies, the provision was only restricted for

use in large-scale farms. The federal government believed that by making equitable distribution of fertilizers, food production in the country would increase by 5 million metric tons over the 1975 production level by 1976 and over 16 million metric tons by 1985.³⁸ This great expectation is very far from the reality we see in today's economy of Nigeria: the economy depends to a large extent on food imports.

The major objectives of the OFN policy are as follows:

- (a) To encourage the sector of population which relies on buying food, to grow its own food.
- (b) To encourage general pride in agriculture through the realization that a nation which cannot feed itself cannot be proud.
- (c) To mobilize the nation towards self sufficiency and self reliance in food.
- (d) To encourage balanced nutrition and thereby producing a healthy nation.³⁹

Although farming in Nigeria has never been looked upon as a profession, the way medicine, teaching and law are, the OFN policy strongly called for massive participation of every able individual to tackle the food problems of the nation in one way or the other. As Sam Aiyeyi put it, ". . . it is intended that people in all walks of life should participate,

³⁸NOTE: The figures for the expected increase in production level were taken from OFN, Nigeria Federal Planning Office, Government Printing Press (Lagos, 1975), p. 5.

³⁹S. A. Aiyeyi. Agriculture in the Economic Development of Nigeria (M.A. Thesis, Atlanta University, 1979), p. 92.

be they farmers, civil servants, doctors, engineers, soldiers, businessmen, policemen, students, housewives, etc."⁴⁰ The call no doubt enhanced interest in farming as people in all areas of the country wanted to make use of their available land to plant their daily agricultural needs such as tomatoes, lettuce, pepper and other vegetables. The government provided such seeds like corn and every body was willing to participate in the program. Most tenants in the cities who were not earlier on allowed by their landlords to own gardens in their rented homes saw the opportunity to alter this restriction. Unfortunately, this agricultural fever did not last long due to the inefficient management of the program. Most people hired to distribute the seeds and fertilizer were students. There was no efficient planning for transportation of these workers with the result that their mobility would only be restricted to their own places of abode. Most people did not have the seeds while some people secured more seeds and fertilizer than they were able to cultivate. The following excerpts from T. Forest (1977) would clarify this problem of maldistribution as it affected the objectives of the OFN policy.

"... fertilizer seemed to have been largely distributed in towns and villages with good communications which are already higher users of fertilizers, at least in the north. There is also the problem that channels of distribution involving the traditional authority structure, traders and richer peasants may result in unequal distribution."⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid, p. 94.

⁴¹T. Forest. "The Economic Contest of OFN" Savanna, (Vol. 6, No. 1, 1977) p. 80.

Will the problem of maldistribution as regards this measure be taken as an unforeseen circumstance? The major problem prohibiting better results in Nigerian agricultural development policies is the inability of the policy makers to fight the likely fundamental problems before embarking on development projects. The government is aware of this problem and has remarked in the Third National Development Plan prior to the launching of the OFN policy. The plan noted that the distributive system has always been divided by inefficient handling. Not only are the quantities not enough, but very often the limited quantities distributed do not reach the farmers at all; and, when they do, they very rarely get to the farmers at the time they are most needed.⁴² The reason this thought was not considered in administering the program of the OFN is a question that would be better asked to the policy makers that enacted the OFN policy.

Credit Scheme For Farmers.

One of the factors responsible for retarding agricultural development in Nigeria is the inability of the farmers to secure Bank loans or government loans. The consideration of this factor called for the establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural Bank in 1973. Although the World Bank project and the irrigation scheme provided credit facilities for farmers, this program was made to be more broad in terms of

⁴²Third National Development Plan, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1975-80), p. 66.

credit provision and it was expected to meet all borrowing needs of every farmer regardless of whether the farmer is in small scale farming or plantation type. Although the introduction of the scheme sounded highly motivating and hopeful to every farmer, it was soon realized that the prescribed guidelines the bank used were advantageous to only a few, select farmers. The agricultural bank was to abide by certain rules in making any loans. The general requirements of the farmer to secure the bank loan through this scheme and the conditions by which the bank would make the loan were stated as follows:

- (a) The projects must be commercially viable and capable of showing satisfactory returns on investment.
- (b) The project must generate adequate funds to repay the loan in full in accordance with stipulated and agreed terms and conditions.
- (c) Evidence or presence of good management must exist.
- (d) Loan must be covered by adequate security.
- (e) The farmer must possess suitable farming land.⁴³

There are some problems that might arise in meeting the objectives of this policy. Generally all the conditions stated above have faced series of criticism but the requirement which this paper sees to be the most drastic is the one that requires the farmer to "possess suitable farming land." Factors that determine ownership of land have been measured in Chapter 3

⁴³T. Wallace, op. cit., p. 250.

of this paper. The credit scheme by recognizing ownership of land as one priority for loan qualification tends to be for the interest of few individuals while excluding the larger bulk of landless peasants who make up the larger percentage of the farming population.

The Green Revolution.

The Green Revolution is one of the most recent notable policies the Federal government of Nigeria has enacted to bring about an improvement in agricultural production of the economy. The concept of Green Revolution did not originate from Nigeria. It has earlier on been adopted by most countries of Latin America and Asia in their effort to improve the production of wheat and Maize in their economies.

Adoption of this program by most developing countries is due to the remarkable work of a group of scientists at the International Institute for the Improvement of maize and wheat in Mexico. Because of their efficient scientific research and technique, there was a tremendous increase in the production of maize and wheat. Application of this concept has also revolutionized the production of rice in the Philippines. Because the concept could be applied in the production of crops other than maize and wheat, the Nigerian government intended to apply the policy in a broad base. The Nigerian concept of Green Revolution aimed to meet the following objectives:

- (1) To provide adequate, reliable, safe and stable food supplies for the country's rapidly rising population at prices average people can afford.
- (2) To become self-reliant in basic food requirements and thereby minimize the potential threats to national sovereignty from excessive dependence on others for basic food needs as soon as possible.
- (3) To raise and stabilize the nutritional standards of all Nigerians with particular stress on increasing the share of animal protein in total protein.
- (4) To ensure stability in food commodity and input markets and thereby avoid economic, social and, possibly, political disasters.
- (5) To ensure fair and reasonable levels and distribution of incomes among food producers.⁴⁴

Achieving the goals of this policy, as stated above would be very much commended as the goals are very much needed in a growing population like Nigeria. But achievement of this broad objective would only depend on the ability of the government to recognize and tackle the basic problem facing the agricultural industry. The program was effective in Latin America because most of these countries of Latin America have embarked on strong land reform policies and have modified their traditional laws of land tenure. Because Nigeria has not embarked on such land reform movements that would make room for wide cultivation of land, there has not been any noticeable results of this policy.

⁴⁴Nigeria's Green Revolution, op. cit., p. 19.

Conclusion.

We have discussed programs designed to improve agricultural development and these programs failed because of the failure of the policy makers to recognize and modify the traditional land tenure rules that govern the agricultural industry. While the policies stress intensive cultivation of land, no effort is being made to erradicate the traditional tenure rules that prohibit wide cultivation of land.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria's approach to agricultural development is based on the belief that progress would be achieved by strictly mechanizing the form of agriculture. The structure of the farmlands, however, will not permit the use of heavy machineries. Unlike Kenya, Nigeria has not considered the fundamental problems before enacting any agricultural policy. All the major agricultural policies of Nigeria stress the intensive cultivation of land without providing access for the willing individuals to acres of land for farming. FAO does not believe that launching technical incentives alone would revitalize the agricultural sector.

On the question of what is to be done to erradicate the traditional tenure problems, writings on this issue tend to be highly emotional. Because of beliefs in tradition in most parts of Africa, most economists have attached social values in their judgment. For some writers, revolution of the peasant population would be the only solution towards an effective land reform. Personally, I feel that revolution in this modern era would only create adverse effects on the few developments that have been made. The policy of property tax on land has been widely stressed as one method by which excess possession of land would be discouraged. Most African nations have embarked on intensive land taxation to discourage excess land holdings but, because the tax burden is indirectly carried by the temporary land tenant instead of the landowner, property tax on land has not made any impact in discouraging excess land holdings.

Alternative Proposals.

(a) Government Commitment.

I recommend a reform movement which empowers the government to repossess lands that are not used for any essential purpose, and to redistribute the acquired lands to individuals who are willing to make effective use of the lands to meet the food shortage of the country.

(b) Collective Farming.

To encourage collective farming would be an obvious prerequisite of effective reform administration. Farms should be operated by groups of producers who are not members of the same family. Examples of this form of institution are: the Commune in the Soviet Union, the Ejidos in Mexico, and the Wirtschaft Production Genossenschaften in East Germany. Establishing this form of farming in Nigeria will make pace for large holdings that are essential for mechanized form of farming.

(c) Limit On Size of Holdings.

A third alternative proposal would involve working out a limit for size of holdings. Putting a ceiling on size of holdings would be advantageous in a growing population like Nigeria in that it will discourage concentration of land in the hands of a few, and would release surplus land for distribution. Enforcement of a minimum size would also be useful to stop fragmentation.

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