

THE DEPENDENCY SYNDROME AND OBASANJO'S NATIONAL CASSAVA POLICY IN NIGERIA

ALI IDRIS MOHAMMED, *PH.D*

General Studies and Pre-ND,
Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia,
Nigeria.

Email address: idrisalimo247@gmail.com

Tel: +2348065300955, +2348146022571

Abstract

The paper examines the nature of Obasanjo's national cassava policy introduced in 2002. The policy component of using composite flour of 10% cassava and 90% wheat for bread production in Nigeria is intended to conserve foreign exchange and encourage industrial utilization of cassava in Nigeria. The paper adopts the world system perspective of political economy to enable us understand the subject under review. The Obasanjo cassava policy has not brought about availability and affordability of food in Nigeria: the problem of food insecurity, poverty and hunger continued to mount rather than subsiding. As a result, cassava production in sub-Saharan Africa stands at 10 tones per hectare, far below potential yields of more than 30 tones. In the light of this, the paper recommends for mass education of the people on the need for self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food production. Also the paper recommends that government policy and intervention in cassava production should be extended to all the nooks and crannies of the country.

Introduction

Before the advent of crude oil in the Nigeria economy, agriculture played an important role in the economic development of the country. The Nigerian State has always recognized the role of agriculture as it believes the economy cannot develop without a sound agricultural policy. To reposition the agricultural sector for a utmost performance, the Nigeria State has so far taken several measures like Accelerated Food Production Programm, Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, and Cassava Multiplication Programm intended to transform the agricultural sector whose performance has not however been considered generally satisfactory. These efforts were further reimbursed by former President Obasanjo who had strove to promote cassava production through the new cassava initiative introduced in 2002. The New Federal Government Policy of using composite flour of 10% cassava and 90% wheat for bread production in Nigeria is intended to conserve foreign exchange and encourage industrial utilization of cassava in Nigeria.

All these policy measures and programmes on food production generally and Obasanjo cassava policy in particular have not brought about availability and affordability of food in Nigeria. The problem of food insecurity, poverty and hunger continued to mount rather than subsiding (Ali, 2017). Currently the national economy is being threatened by the plunge in oil prices; there is the problem of over dependence on import goods that can be produced locally; there has been a phenomenal unemployment crisis as a result of neglect of farming, and persistent Farmers/Herders clashes. In addition, majority of the illiterate farmers do not have enough fund to buy agricultural inputs like fertilizers or pesticides and often cannot access resources to learn better cultivation methods. As a result, cassava production in sub-Saharan Africa stands at 10 tones per hectare, far below potential yields of more than 30 tones. Several policies of government to encourage food production (cassava) in Nigeria have not yielded much result due to poor implementation and lopsided state policy.

Therefore, the paper seeks to examine the nature of Obasanjo cassava policy, its contradictions and what can be done to promote food security through cassava production in Nigeria. In doing so, the paper adopts the world system perspective of political economy to enable us understand the subject under review.

Clarification of Concepts

i. Dependency

Dependency is a historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favours some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economics...a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected (Theotonia, 1971).

Dependency depicts a reliance of some countries which are considered to be less developed to other countries which are considered to be developed in terms of political, economic, social, cultural, and policy issues. This reliance translates into a relationship between the less developed countries and the developed countries. And this relationship between the two translates into dominance of the developed countries over the less developed countries. The dominant countries are the advanced industrial nations in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and the less developed countries are those countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The economic activities in the less developed countries are dominated by the external forces like the multinational corporations, foreign aid, international commodity markets and other means through which the advanced industrial nations can project their economic interests abroad.

ii. Policy

Policy is an authoritative decision or statement of principle guided by certain rules that are geared toward achieving some societal goals and objectives (Ali, 2016). Public policy is a government policy designed by the political actors or groups to address a particular problem at a given time. Political actors like the executive usually choose specific subject demanding attention on the basis of priorities. Solutions to the subject are made in such a manner that they will satisfy the targeted goals and objectives.

Robert and Edward (1991) defines public policy as a set of decisions taken by a political actor or group concerning the selection of goals and the method of attaining them, relating to a specified situation. They are of the view that policy makers usually choose specific political or socio-economic problems demanding attention on the basis of priority, solution to each of the problems are designed in such a way that will meet the desired goal.

However, the success and the failure of any public policy is essentially determined by the planning and strategies used in achieving the desired result. The policy actors must monitor the behaviours or activities of implementing agencies in a bid to ensure that they do not deviate from the stated goals and objectives. This cannot be achieved without effective and subsequent evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed course of action. Control is therefore the instrument employed to assume that activities or events conform to plan (Chandler and Pano, 1988). Control is attributed to authoritative action, persuasion and coercion.

Therefore, Obasanjo national cassava policy is a public policy designed and implemented to promote food security, increased income and industrial utilization of cassava in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the world system perspective of political economy which is the most recent approach of political economy as its theoretical framework. The approach emanates from

some scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, Emmanuel Wallerstein and Paul Baran among others to address the lingering problem of underdevelopment in the Third World Countries.

The world system perspective associated the development crisis of the Third World Countries with their contact with the imperialist capitalist countries. That imperialist penetration and domination of the Third World Countries instead of developing the productive forces of these societies resulted in its underdevelopment, that the situation of underdeveloped countries can only be understood when the decisive role of external factors is considered. The social structures of colonies, ex-colonies or non-colonies are not the results of autonomous historic development, but they are determined by foreign exploitation. The exogenous factors stand in an individual explanatory context of 'structures of dependence' of third world countries (Jones, 2002).

Both slavery and colonialism also constituted the mechanisms of the enforced incorporation of Latin America, Africa and Asia into the capitalist international division of labour. This global division of labour took shape from around the time of the Industrial Revolution in England (and later Western Europe) from about 1750 to 1850 (Hopkins and Wallerstin, 1980). The industrialized nations of the world predominated in the industrial production, finance capital and technology and the Third World countries were compelled to be in the primary production and provided raw materials for industrial revolution in Europe and America and meet up with the food demand of the metropolis. This unequal international capitalist division of labour also started the global process of uneven development between the North and the South (Rodney, 1972 and Brown & Tiffen, 1992). The Third World countries were used and exploited to expand capitalist development at the centre of world capitalism, and this same organic process ensured the simultaneous underdevelopment of the periphery of global capitalism (Galeno, 1974 cited in Ali, 2017).

The problem of agricultural underdevelopment began with the integration of the Third World Countries to the world capitalist system of surplus appropriation of peasant sector with the support of the colonial state. The role of colonial state in this regard was to provide favourable grounds for effective commoditization and appropriate the surplus of the peasant production by the international capital and their allies. Therefore, the introduction of peasant commodity production and cash crop economy by the colonial state encouraged the exploitation of the Third World Countries.

Obviously speaking, the backwardness of the Third World Countries has external causes, but the results are manifested internally and its overthrow will need great efforts of the government and the people of the underdeveloped countries to design an alternative framework of development. In view of this the Economic Commission of Latin America advocated an inward oriented development path for Latin American Countries. This path emphasized industrialization, state planning, an increased role for the state and protectionism.

The world system perspective on political economy have been criticized for not taken into cognizance the class analysis in understanding the structural economic deficiency and exploitation existing in the underdeveloped countries which paved way for external exploitation.

Food Security or Intensification of Rural Hunger in Nigeria

One of the objectives of the National Cassava Policy is the issue of food security. Cassava has remained one of Nigeria's main staples consumed in both urban and rural areas. In Nigeria, farmers and food processors market five types of cassava products: fresh roots, dried roots, pasty product (commonly called akpu), granulated product (called garri) and cassava leaves. The roots of sweet cassava varieties are eaten raw, roasted, boiled in water or fried. It can also be pounded alone or in combination with other staples such as yam, coco yam, sweet potato etc. Dried cassava can be milled and made into a pasty meal (Fada, 2008). In Africa, consumption more than doubled from 24 million tons per year in the early 1960 to 58 million tons per year in the early 2000s, after accounting for waste (Nweke, 2004). The large increase in the total cassava consumption is due to a significant increase in per capita consumption in Nigeria and other African countries. For example, the per capita consumption in Nigeria increased by 40% from 88 kg yearly in the 1960s to 20 kg early 2000s (Nweke, 2004). Cassava can also be used in the industry for production of starch, malt, beer, bread, ethanol, animal feeds among others. Future increase in cassava consumption will depend on how well cassava is prepared into food forms or as material for industries. Jones (1959) provided advocates of cassava praised it because it produced the largest number of calories per hectare than any crop and for its ability to be grown on poor soil and withstand severe attack of drought, pest and disease.

Because of the importance of cassava, President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the National Cassava Policy in 2002 to promote food security through cassava production. For instance, in 2000 the Federal Government of Nigeria signed a loan agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the root and tuber expansion US\$16 million (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000). On 8th August, 2000 in Nigeria President Olusgun Obasanjo inaugurated a National Committee on Cassava Production and Export to address issues relating to an increase in yield and production, post harvest management, and promotion of local and industrial utilization of cassava. President Obasanjo wished to increase food security and also export US\$1 billion worth of cassava in the next three years (Bello, 2002).

The new Federal Government policy of using composite flour of 10 % cassava and 90% wheat for bread, production in Nigeria is aimed at conserving foreign exchange and encouraging industrial utilization of cassava (This Day, 10th January, 2005). Currently, the Nigerian Government is believed to be spending about US\$400 million on wheat importation annually, to meet local demand of flour by the baking industry in Nigeria. It is believed that with 10%

cassava substitution, the government will save about US\$40 million, which can be injected into the Nigerian cassava industry.

The commercialization of cassava has tended to undermine food security in rural areas in Nigeria. Cassava is the only crop that is harvested and marketed all the times of the year. By this, peasants require large parcels of land to meet up with the demand. The time devoted to the production of cassava has lessened the attention given to other crops. The resultant effect is that, cassava is overstretched as it is presently used as a cash crop among the peasants. The situation has made it possible for peasants to produce mainly for exchange.

According to IITA (2004), one innovative to achieving greater cassava production is being undertaken by the cassava growers associations. It is acquiring large parcels of land in each local government authority (LGA). Each parcel is intended to provide 1000 hectares of continuous land suitable for commercial cassava cultivation. In Nasarawa State, such associations like the Kaibo Mada RTEP Group, Baiwa Root and Tuber Group Akpajeshi Farmers Co-operative etc have acquired large parcels of land for the cultivation of cassava in various parts of the state. The Kaibo Mada RTEP Group has acquired about 1000 hectares of land in Keffi Local Government Area for that purpose. Also the Baiwa Root and Tuber Group have acquired a total landmass of about 32 hectares while the Akpajeshi Farmers Cooperative Society on the other hand has acquired about 40 hectares. In addition to current production levels, farmers groups would be organized in such a way that using mechanized equipment, high yielding varieties and improving farming practices, yields (IITA, 2007).

The expansion of land devoted to cassava requires some explanation. Increase in cassava land is made possible by a decrease in the land devoted to the production of other crops. This reduction is gradually having an effect on the production of other crops. The production of rice, millet, sorghum and soya beans have drastically reduced. The land meant for these crops have been devoted to the production of cassava which is destined for the exchange.

In addition, increase in the prices of cassava products is going to serve as an incentive to the peasant population in cassava production. This may as a result lead to an intensification of surplus labour so as to achieve surplus product.

The commercialization of cassava through this policy is not only facilitating the cultivation of cassava for exchange but is also promoting the commoditization of food stuff. This is due to the emergence of advance middle capital and the local based traders popularly called “belanda” (Merchants that exploit the peasants through exchange relations that are favourable to them). This group of people are finding lucrative business in the purchase of cassava from poor peasants at low prices and distributing them to the emerging cassava industries in the state (Lafia Cassava Flour Mill). Already the Nasarawa State Government and DATCO Nigeria Limited

have gone into partnership for the production of cassava flour in the state. But before the establishment of the Lafia Flour Mill, Nasarawa peasants were using cheap cassava for production of local staple foods like garri, akpu and dried cassava, etc. The low utilization of Lafia Flour Mill and other related companies across the nation is linked with the low productivity on the part of the peasants. The available cassava in the state is mainly consumed by both rural and urban areas of the state. The survivals of Nigeria Flour Mills depend largely on cassava that is produced manually by the peasants. The more cassava produced by peasants, the more the companies are likely to increase its production. If this should be the case it is likely that, the companies may offer attractive prices to the peasants. But for now, there is some kind of discouragement on the part of the peasants. They are not even producing enough for their food requirements. The lack of raw materials due to the poor prices being offered to peasants is accounted for under-utilization of the companies.

The table below shows a number of estimates that exist as to future demand for cassava based products. The presidential initiative provides the following estimates:

Table 1: Cassava demand estimates by presidential initiative by 2014 (tones)

Product	Domestic	Export	Total
Food	5,700,00	1,825,000	7,525,000
Starch	1,770,000	3,200,000	4,970,000
Livestock	15,622,000	75,621,248	91,243,248
Ethanol	900,000	2,700,000	3,600,000
Total	23,992,000	83,346,248	107,338,248

The demand estimates by the presidential initiative clearly suggest that livestock and human food are the largest immediate market. The demand for human food is likely to increase as a result of rural-urban migration to be propelled by the emerging cassava industries. This situation is thus intensifying food crisis and gradually undermining the health and nutritional status of the peasantry.

Contradictions on Income Generation and Improved wellbeing for the Peasants

It is on record that one of the focuses of the national cassava policy in Nigeria is to promote increased income and well-being of the direct producers of cassava. Essentially, the policy is aimed at ensuring massive cassava production to feed the emerging cassava industries in the country. The emergent cassava industries and the massive cassava production are expected to mitigate the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. The policy of the Federal Government requiring bread bakers to include 10% cassava on all bread produced in Nigeria is expected to generate six million jobs from up and down stream, and 37 small and medium enterprises as well as generate N635 billion or \$5 billion income yearly (Ugeh, 2007). In addition, the project coordinating committee described cassava as the “ultimate future crop”, it is hoped, would diversify the Nigerian economy as well as improve the well-being of its primary producers.

However, the pressure on primary production in Nigeria did not only reinforce the existing division of labour between the country and the metropolitan economies, but also reinforce the structural dependence of the Nigerian economy. The primary commodities like cassava requires unskilled labour to produce the product and exported to the developed countries to satisfy their basic and industrial needs of the metropole. This involves transfer of income from Nigerian economy to the metropolitan economies. Ake (1981) posits that the expansion in the production of primary commodities did not involve radically new techniques, but largely the method already in use, with perhaps a little more efficiency. In sum, because foreign investment increased primary production without significantly raise income, improving the development of productive forces or even capital accumulation, it did not hold much hope of the colony breaking away from its role in the division of labour established in the early periods of colonialism between the colony and the metropole.

The Nigerian state efforts in commercializing cassava involve funding of research into improved and high yielding varieties, aggressive awareness campaign and farmers mobilization, multiplication of new varieties, input subsidy, agricultural financing at concessionary rate, virile public private partnership, and creation of market opportunities (FGN, 2006).

In line with the policy guideline, the Nasarawa State Government had in 2007 declared every Friday half day at work to enable civil servants in the state to attend to their cassava farms. The state had also produced and installed a cassava processing machine from Holland. All these are attempts by the state government towards ensuring that peasants are encouraged to go into massive production of cassava so as to meet with the demand for it.

Three years after the release of N50.8 billion loan facilities, the loan is yet to reach the direct beneficiaries. Also in Nasarawa, the high yielding variety brought from Brazil is yet to be diffused four years later. They are still at the nursery site at Doma, Arikya, Karmo, Nasarawa Eggon and Lafia. Similar thing happened in Benue State, where every Friday was declared public holiday to enable the state public servants take care of their cassava farms, but the result has not been encouraging.

The peasants in Nigeria embraced cassava policy with high esteem. They believe that high production of cassava would translate into high income and improved wellbeing. As a result the peasants have engaged the practice of marrying many wives to cope with the labour requirement. Most of the peasants were of the believe that the art of marrying more wives due to lack of tractors, harvesters and other farm machines is now common among the peasantry. They believe marrying more wives and boring more children would guarantee massive cassava production and high income. Lewis (1995) describes women in the Third World countries as beasts of burden because they were used to execute tasks which in advanced societies are done by mechanical power.

Commoditization of the Cassava Products and Exploitation of the Peasants

One of the major objectives of the National Cassava Policy is to transform cassava from being a food crop to commercial crop. The policy intends to promote mass production of cassava to provide for food security and export. It intends to increase food security and export US\$1 billion worth of cassava products. This will bring about commoditization of cassava. And commodity production is a situation where production is geared towards the satisfaction of market. A commodity is a product made expressly for sale (Ake, 1983). Commoditization of cassava production would promote and encourage the incorporation of the peasantry into commodity relations, the exacerbation of social inequalities and social differentiation within the peasantry. Policies such as this operate objectively to intensify commoditization and thereby further incorporate the peasantry into the circuits of capitalist of surplus appropriation.

This will have the effect of intensifying the labour of peasant population to maintain or increase the supply of cassava in industrial capital without a commensurate improvement in their living standard and thereby intensified rural poverty. With the commoditization of cassava, the labour of some of the rural producers in Nigeria is becoming more and more intensified without any commensurate increase in their income and welfare.

As stated earlier, the national policy on cassava production focuses on promoting the massive cultivation of cassava to serve the industrial needs of the state as well as earn foreign exchange. The massive production cassava required the use of modern agro-technologies and those who are not able to afford the use of these agro-technologies resort to marrying many wives to meet up with the labour requirement. As part of the policy, the state intensified efforts to encourage farmers to use tractors, fertilizers, high yielding varieties, pesticides and herbicides to achieve high production. But, five years after the policy came into existence, not much of the above mentioned is being used by the poor peasant population. Instead, majority of the peasants have so far commoditized their labour and are selling it to capital for their reproduction.

As part of the commoditization of cassava production is the subsidy on fertilizer. Despite government subsidy on fertilizer the prices of fertilizer have remained high at the time of this study. It is obvious to note that the state's so called subsidy on fertilizer never favor the poor peasants because they hardly get the product (fertilizer) at official rate. The rich peasants, the urban-based businessmen, and the bureaucrats are those who have access to the fertilizer at official rate and resell to the poor peasants at black market rate. The poor peasants buy fertilizer at the exorbitant rate in the open market. This action reflects Marx assertion that the executives of the modern state are but a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. Classical Marxism as exemplified by Marx and Engels (1977) regards the state as the executive arm of the bourgeoisie, essentially antagonistic to the interest of the dominated class. The distribution of fertilizer in Nigeria clearly reflects the opinions of Marx. Through commoditization, fertilizer is bought by the state and sold or given to the bourgeois class at

official rate. The poor peasants who have no access to state power on their part buy this product from the bourgeois class at exorbitant prices. This situation has increased the cost of cassava production and other agricultural crops. Following this development, most of the peasants buy one bag of fertilizer and apply same on cassava, beans, yam, rice, maize etc. This has negative effects on yields and their wellbeing. The implication is that the state through the national policy on cassava production is set to encourage commoditization of both labour and cassava products. The use of modern agricultural inputs in the production process raise the cost of production both in monetary terms and in terms of labour time which at times end up being an exercise in futility.

The national policy on cassava production is thus perceived by the state to overcome the peasants' problems. To achieve this feat, the state and capital come together to subordinate the peasantry and further incorporate them into circuit of capital and the exacerbation of poverty of the peasantry. The national cassava policy is used as a vehicle for inducing peasants to conform to modern capitalist production by providing them with modern inputs, teaching them the modern practices and facilitating the marketing of their produce. The Federal Government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industries facilitated a trial export of 1, 000 tones of cassava chips to China and other countries (PRCU, 2007). The cassava policy has raised the expectation of the primary producers but is yet to impact positively on the peasantry.

Agro-Industrialization and dependency: An Overview

One of the objectives of the national policy on cassava production is to step up industrial utilization of cassava in Nigeria. The intention according to the Programme Coordinating Unit (2005) is to put Nigeria in the global context for competition. By doing so, the country needs to up-grade the use of cassava into primary industries such as starch, ethanol, chips and flour in order to provide an industrial base for further diversification of the national economy (PRSCU, 2005).

The IITA has the African mandate for cassava development. The institute changed its focus to research for development with emphasis on the downstream sector development. Beginning from 2002, the IITA had focused its attention on a market driven technology transfer and commercialization of cassava. The IITA cassava market development activities since 2002 including hosting of the cassava competitiveness workshop in 2002, the implementation of the cassava Mosaic disease and the cassava enterprise development projects. The institute in 2003 concluded two sub-sector studies on cassava in Nigeria and made significant inputs into NEPAD Pan-African Cassava initiative on cassava. The IITA is currently implementing three cassava Mosaic diseases (CMD), the cassava enterprise development project (CEDP) and Cassava bio-fortification development project. The primary focus of the CMD project is to use a fast track approach to build a defence against the virulent form of the CMD by introducing resistant varieties to the disease. CEDP is to support micro and small scale agro-processing activities in the pre-emptive management or the cassava Mosaic disease project and so it is referred to IITA

as the integrated cassava project. As of 2004, the CEDP and CMD projects were experimented in 12 states mostly in south-east and South-south. The projects are gradually expanding to cover the entire country. The bio-fortification project however is still in the making. It is however pertinent to note that other states outside the ones mentioned above also indicated interest in the project and are exploring the possibility of paying their counterpart funds (IITA, 2006). The CEDIP is funded by the USAID, SPDC and the IITA, while the Federal Government and other participating states fund the CMP project. The ICP works through partners and all stakeholders in the development of sustainable technology transfer, commercialization and industrialization of the Nigerian cassava sub-sector (PRCU, 2006).

According to the PRCU (2006), the integrated cassava project had in 2004/2005 set up four small-scale cassava processing plants in Abia, Akwa-Ibom and Delta States and formed a network of Cassava equipment fabricators in Nigeria. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization also has community-based projects with location of multi-product micro-cassava processing plant in Abia, Oyo and Benue States. There are also several other private sector initiatives manifested in private investments; these include the Nigerian Starch Mills that has just recently retooled its plants, NYIAMCO ethanol plant which has been bought by a private investor Dura Clean (but yet to commence full production), Real Food , Ibadan (retooling) peak products, Abeokuta, Delta Food Benin-City, JOF Industries, Ogun state (interested in glucose production from cassava starch), Conwave Industries, Delta State (starch), Louis Carte, Enugu (starch), Obasanjo Farms Limited, Sango-ota (ethanol), Willbahi Investment (starch), Ashitech Global Resources (Benue State starch, flour and ethanol), lobi Cassava Flour Mill, Benue (flour), Lafia cassava flour Mill and Keffi flour mill. The cassava flour mill was established in 2005. The machine procured in Holland by the Nasarawa State Government was meant to process starch and not cassava flour. It is obvious that lack of technical knowledge is responsible for the non-production of starch. The company is currently managed by a foreigner (R. Dutchner).

The Lafia Mill and Keffi Mill are not functioning well. Lack of spare parts, manpower and the dwindling cassava market in Nigeria are responsible for non-functioning of the Mills. Abba Ruma (2008) observed that cassava farmers in the country are not able to get market for their produce because of constraint in deploying technology to processing cassava. He however maintained that, many farmers in the country went into large scale cassava farming since 2006 as a result of encouragement by the administration of former president Obasanjo but two years after, the farmers are complaining of lack of market problem. Abba explained that, government has therefore taken cognizance of the fact that processing is another challenge which could strengthen the value chain that will enable the farmers leverage and stabilize price (DailyTrust, March 11th, 2008).

It has been argued that policies such as this will only deepen dependency of the third world countries. Any policy in Africa which focuses on the use of foreign technology and market designed to further intensify dependence. Foreign technology, it is further argued, tends to compound the problem of dependence due to the initial and recurrent cost of machinery, spare parts, fertilizers, agro-chemicals and high yielding varieties that go with development package.

The problems of dependence is not only limited to the level of foreign technology. Also it has been argued that the commercialization of cassava would only tend to facilitate the incorporation of the peasantry into the circuit of capital, making them to rely heavily on the market forces for their production. The policy is gradually introducing modern technology into farming practices of Nigeria peasants. Obviously most of the peasants would want to use tractors, fertilizer, pesticide and herbicides and even harvesters. But, most of the peasants lack the influence to acquire these farming inputs. Even fertilizer is for those who have connection with those in position of authority and pesticides and herbicides are beyond the reach of the poor peasants. For instance machet which is one of the most important implements is now imported from China, Indonesia and other places with high prices.

In place of tractors, the machet is very useful to peasants as they use in clearing the grasses and shrubs. The inability of Nigeria peasants to produce these items themselves means they have to rely on the market for these items. There exists a form of exploitation between capital and a peasant since the peasants has to depend on foreign implements like machet to engage in production.

The problem that is linked with the use of foreign technology especially machines that are imported into the country is the problem of spare parts for maintaining the machinery and technical-know how. Spare parts are a problem in Nigeria because most of these being used are imported from advanced capitalist nations. Thus, lack of spare parts for machines that are to be used to bring about a sound agro-industrial policy would rather cripple it. Information available reveals that, 1000 tractors imported in 2003 to boost cassava production and other crops in Nigeria were without the required implements, thus rendering them unusable. Also about 50.5% of the estimated 10,000 tractors in the country are in a state of despair. The very low tractor density of 0.03 horse power per hectare are some of the problems perceived to stand against the full realization of the policy (Hannan, 2003).

The cassava production policy is meant to promote massive production of cassava to serve as raw materials for the emerging cassava industries in Nigeria. The products of these industries it is hoped if produced in high quality and quantity shall be consumed locally and internationally. The contradiction here is that, peasants have since commenced massive production of cassava without a corresponding market. They are still being disposed of their products in the traditional markets which are well known. Recently, the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industries

facilitated a trial export of 1,000 tons of cassava chips to China. It is hoped that, the export strategy will be sustained.

The idea of using modern farm inputs is intended to raise yields for market. Such full scale dependence on the market by the peasantry for the supply of farming inputs and the disposal of their produce does not guarantee any improvement in their standard of living and the possibility of helping the peasants from the deepening poverty. The price of the inputs the peasants are going to buy or are buying is being determined not by the peasants but by capital. Ake argued that another notable source of contradiction between capital and the peasants was the attempt by capital to bring peasants into commodity relations and to extract surplus value from them by manipulating the condition of production and exchange. Agricultural improvement schemes and legislative measures were used to maneuver peasants into producing particularly to specifications, in certain preferred quantities and with specific inputs, tools and techniques. This was done not in the interest of peasants but in the interest of the people who made the rules and launched the agricultural schemes. They got the farmer to produce it in a manner most suitable to their advantage. At the same time, the peasants become more dependent and more exploitable.

In the sphere of exchange, the peasant was exploited through control of commodity collection and marketing by monopoly agencies such as market boards, which enabled capital to expropriate the value of the commodity in the world market. But a lot of measures used for bringing his conditions of production and exchange were unpopular. Capital profited only by engendering enemies of the very system that established it to profit. The use of modern foreign technology is therefore seen as an attempt to expose the Nigerian peasants as Oculi (1980) has argued to new forms of dependence on the technology of multinational agribusiness firms and other industrial firms. The commercialization of cassava is being promoted through this cassava production programme to further facilitate the incorporation of the peasantry into circuit of capital.

Thus the cassava policy came about among other things to relieve the country of being dependent on foreign wheat. A situation which it is believed would save the country \$40 billion US dollars yearly. But this will also lead to another form of dependence which is going to be foreign technology. Such attempts are making the peasants to depend on foreign production resources whose continuous supply and orderly functioning may not guarantee their production and reproduction due to intervening variables such as the availability of machinery spare parts and foreign exchange for their import.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The paper concludes that the new cassava policy can thus be envisaged as government decision not only to empower the peasants economically but also to improve their living

standards through mass production, effective pricing and marketability of cassava products. The policy engages the peasantry into production relation with capital and its allies.

It is obvious that the World Bank, Federal and State governments contributed financially toward the objectives of the cassava policy in Nigeria, but those entrusted with funds could either divert it for personal use or misappropriate the funds. Also, though the programme may help to raise cassava production, this will be achieved at the expense of marginalizing and pauperizing the majority of the poor peasants. It is argued that commercialization of cassava may tend to encourage the further incorporation of the peasantry into commodity relations. This will have the effect of intensifying the labour of peasant households to maintain or increase the supply of cassava in industrial capital without a commensurate increase in their incomes and welfare and thereby intensifying rural poverty.

Apart from intensified commoditization which the new cassava initiative may bring about, another consequence of the programme may be the exacerbation of social inequalities and social differentiation within the peasantry. The policy will encourage the emergence of a new class of capitalist farmers who will tend to dominate the politics of the state and control the rural population as well.

The commercialization of cassava which the initiative is promoting will tend to undermine food security for the peasantry. This will tend to intensify the food crisis and undermine the health and nutritional status of the peasantry. In the area of dependency, the study concludes that the programme will compound the problem of dependence. In addition, mechanization of cassava production being promoted by the new cassava policy will tend to promote further incorporation of the peasantry into the circuit of the international capitalist system. Our conclusion is that although the Obasanjo's national cassava drive may enhance the Nigerian cassava industry which will generate the nation's economic growth; this will be accomplished at the expense of marginalizing and pauperizing the majority of the poor peasants who have no access to improved farming techniques, funds, fertilizers and other incentives associated with the policy.

Recommendations

The paper recommends for the following:

1. Establishment of an agricultural credit guarantee scheme to provide guarantee for agricultural loans granted by commercial and merchant banks.
2. Educate the masses of the people on the need for self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food production;
3. Mobilize the abundant land, water and manpower resources of the country towards the effective and efficient food production.
4. Modernized production and create an agricultural sector that is responsive to the demands and realities of the Nigerian economy in order to create more agricultural and rural employment opportunities, which will increase the income of farmers and rural dwellers.
5. Protect all prime agricultural lands for continued agricultural production.
6. The study further recommends the need for group formation among peasant farmers to enable them have a greater voice in term of decision making process on land ownership and easy access to credit facility.
7. The study recommended that government policy and intervention in cassava production should be extended all the nooks and crannies of the country.

References

- Ake, C. (1981). *Political Economy of Africa*: New York, Longman Nigeria Plc.
- Ali, I.M. (2017) Cassava Production and Its Impact on the Socio-Economic Development of Peasants in Nasarawa State, PhD Thesis, Dept. of Political Science, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Candler, R.C. and Piano, J. C. (1988) "Public Policy and the Development of Indigenous Capitalism: The Nigerian Experience", In Collins, P. (ed). *Administration for Development in Nigeria*, Lagos: African Educational Press.
- Fada, A.S (2007) The Nigerian Policy on Cassava Production, Unpublished M.Sc Thesis, Dept. of Political Science, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2000). Loan Agreement (roots and tube programme) between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the International Funds for Agricultural Development.
- Idris, A. M. and Moses, O. S. (2016) The Effects of the National Cassava Policy on Peasants in Cassava Production in Nigeria, CELLSJHESS, A Journal of the Cells Educational Services.
- IITA (2004). Collaborative Study on Cassava in Africa". Ibadan; International Institute of Tropical Agriculture.
- Jones, N. J. and Azuokwo D. (2002) *Political Economy: A Historical Science*, Owerri, Springfield Publishers.
- Jones, W.O (1959). *Manioc in Africa*: Food Research Standford, C.A. USA Standard University Press.
- Marx, K. and Engels F. (1980). *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow, Progress Publishers.
- Nweke, F.I (2004). *The Cassava Transformation: Africa Best Secret*. Michigan, Michigan State University Press.
- Oculi, O. (1975) "Dependent Food Policy in Nigeria" *Review of African Political Economy*. No 15/16.
- Rodney, W. (1972) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington, Howard University Press.
- Theotonia, D. S. (1971) *The Structure of Dependence*," in K.T. Fann and Donald C. Hodges, eds, *Readings in U. S. Imperialism*, Boston: Porter Sargent.