

**Evaluation of the National Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) in
Plateau State, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The study was conducted to evaluate performance of National Special Programme for Food Security Programme in Plateau state. The specific objectives are; examine the socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiaries, determine and analyze the technical efficiency in resource use of the beneficiaries, determine costs and returns of Food crops of the beneficiaries (Farmers) and examine and ascertain the determinants of the productivity of the major crops in the study area. Linear production function gave an R^2 value of about 50% and F- values of about 13.6. the significance of the F-value also point to the fact that the regressors were collectively responsible for the variation in output. The significant of the calculated Z – statistics at ($p < 0.05$) also indicated that the beneficiary farmers is statistically profitable in the study are. Other problems such as inadequate funding, late supply of farm inputs and poor marketing outlets are major constraints facing NSPFS beneficiary farmers.

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, containing approximately 25% of the total Africa population with an annual population growth rate estimated at 3.5%. It is also one of the fastest growing populations in Africa. But while the population is increasing at an annual rate of 3.5%, food production increase per annum is under 2% (Panwal 2006). With this revelation, it was evident that food production was and is still lagging behind population growth. Many people in Nigeria are being thrown in to the zone of poverty on the daily basis.

Nigeria is richly endowed with diverse natural, material and human resources for agricultural development. Eboh, (2008) observed that majority of Nigeria's poor live in the rural areas and depend directly or indirectly on agriculture and its related activities while owning or controlling few physical productive assets. In other words, the assertion above shows that agriculture (farming, forestry, fishing, and livestock keeping) in Nigeria is practiced mostly by the farmers who live in the rural areas. Nigeria at the moment is witnessing an upward trend in the prices of foodstuff partly due to the inability of production to keep pace with the rate of increase in demand. Demand itself increases largely as a result of increase in population (Idachaba, 2004).

This poverty level has left many Nigerians food unsecured; many people do not have enough to eat. The poor cannot think beyond when the next meal is coming from, and many live from hand to mouth. Successive governments have embarked upon various Nigerian types of poverty Alleviation programmes (PAPS), but even though this several programmes on poverty reduction strategies were attempted by Nigeria since independence in 1960, they have failed woefully or yielded very little fruit. Poverty is hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and unable to see a doctor, inability to go to school, illiteracy, joblessness, fear of future. Living one day at a time etc. in short, it is the state of being poor and unable to provide basic needs, inability to meet a minimum standard of living. (Olayemi 2008).

Consequently, Nigeria has initiated various programmes, policies and initiatives aimed at achieving food sufficiency. These efforts have failed to some extent in achieving the desired objectives. While few of these programmes are on-going, majority have ceased to exist. Some of these programmes, policies and initiatives include farm settlement schemes, (1960s). national Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) 1972. Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF) 1977, Land Use Decree, 1978, Rural Banking Scheme, 1978, Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) 1986, National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) 1991 Fadama Programmes and National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) 2002 among others (Onojah et al, 2008). The above programmes, policies and initiatives though well intentioned, suffered losses ranging from socio-cultural conflicts, political conflicts and others such as ethnic and religious conflict which hinder and effective implementation (Sanni, 2009). In another vein, most of the agricultural development programmes and projects were tied to specific administrations and each gave way to a new one as frequently as governments come and go or changed hands (Adebayo, 2004).

It is on this that the past successive governments and also presents government, saw this very bad trend and put in place Agricultural Development Programmes, FADAMA 1&2 and NSPES that will help eradicate poverty and make people secured in Nigeria.

Food security is access by all people at all times to enough food to an active healthy life. Food security at a minimum include the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food and on assured ability to acquired acceptable food in socially acceptable ways, that is without having to resort to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies.

It was in this vain, that the Obasanjo government in the process of string eradicate poverty and malnutrition put in place a national special programme for food security (NSPES) with the objective of increasing food production and eliminating rural poverty.

It is also in recognition of the right to food, that the Yar adua administration has food security as one of its 7-points agenda. According to the minister of state for Agriculture and water resources, the present government has put in place programmes and projects that will ensure food security for all Nigerians. The government emphasises that it will intensify measures to redress the adverse conditions that militate against the availability of quality food in sustainable basis. These are laudable programmes, unfortunately inspite of huge resources spent on War Against Poverty (WAP), the figure of the poor has consistently been on the increase.

The research therefore evaluates the impact of the National special programme on food security to ascertain if the programme has improved the overall access to food for all members of the family? Has SPFS aim of improving food security at both national and household levels been achieved after its ten years of existence (2004-2014) ? These and many other unanswered questions as to why households are still food insecure, many are still malnourished and many are still incapacitated due to micronutrient deficiencies. in view of this problems, this study examined the socio-economic characteristic of the SPFS beneficiaries (Farmers) in Plateau state determine and analyzed the technical efficiency in resource use of the SPFS farmers (beneficiaries), determine costs and returns of food crops of SPFS beneficiaries (Farmers) in Plateau state, examine and ascertain the determinant of the productivity of major food crops in the study area with a view to make a view to make a policy recommendation.

Methodology of the study

Plateau is one of the 36 states of Nigeria and is located in the middle belt zone of the country. It lies between latitude 8° and 0° North and longitude 7° and 11° East respectively and about 85% of the state population is estimated to the directly involved in subsistence agriculture. Though situated in the tropical zone, the climate on the plateau simulate that of the temperature regions. The state has distinct wet and dry seasons with the rainy season from April to October of the year. There are four vegetation zones in the state viz:

the Northern Guinea Savannah, the mid attitude or mundane, the Southern Guinea Savannah and the Sub-Sudan zones.

The average annual rainfall varies from 890mm in the Sub-Sudan zone to over 1500mm in the mid-attitude and Savannah zones.

The state comprises of (17) seventeen Local Government Areas.

Sample Random Sampling Techniques was used in distributing the questionnaires to 90 randomly selected beneficiaries farmers in the study area. The questionnaires were designed to collect information on the demographic characteristic of the NSPFS beneficiaries' farmers age, gender, marital status, education and sources of inputs. Other information collected includes problems encountered by the farmers and cost and returns.

Analytical Techniques: Descriptive statistics, production function. Net Farm Income and Resource use Efficiency were used to analyze the data

Results and Discussions:

Empirical results from table I showed about 35.7% of the NSPFS beneficiaries farmers were within the age range of 40-49 years. The mean age of the farmers was 43 years indicating that a high proportion of them are in their active age of 40-49 years . The fact that about their active about 38.5% of the respondents were below active age suggests that young people are also highly involved in this programme, and this suggest that if proper attention is paid to this NSPES a lot of youths can be gainfully employed. Majority (85.7%) of the respondents were male. All the respondents have one form of education or the other, education enables individuals to gain knowledge and skills and this increases their level of understanding which attribute can be tapped to improve the respondents technical efficiency in resource use and adoption of technological innovations.

The linear production function gave an R^2 values of about 50% and F-values of about 13.6. Indicating that about 50% of the outputs from the enterprise are being explained by the independent variables included. The significance of the F-value also

point to the fact that the regressors were collectively responsible for the variation in output.

The farm budget analysis gave an estimated gross margin of about N 113,074.29. a farm gross margin of about N27,224. per hectare and a turn over rate of about 1.3. This is commendable considering the fact that resources are not efficiently utilized and the fact that the farmers are small scale often employing rudimentary tools in their operations. The significant of the calculate Z-statistics at ($p < 0.05$) also indicated that the beneficiary farmers enterprise is statically profitable in the study area. Variable cost constitutes more than 95% of the total cost. In the case, it is reasonable since the respondents used rudimentary farm tools for most of their farming activities. Other problems like inadequate inputs supply, inadequate fund. Late supply of input, poor road network, poor transport facilities and poor marketing outlets are major constraints facing NSPFS beneficiary farmers.

Conclusion/Recommendations

In conclusion, the NSPFS is a laudable programme, but there should be more emphasis on the technique efficiency in agricultural production, processing and marketing for it to achieve its desired objective. Record keeping that would allow objective assessment of achievements were inadequate both at NSPFS and farmers level. Hence the research was not able to qualify the impact of claimed achievements. Generally NSPFS beneficiary farmers achieved significant increases in crop production and productivity as a result of use of the available inputs and crop production techniques provided by the programme. However, many instances the crop intensification modules were underfunded and sometimes late and insufficient supply of inputs to the beneficiary farmers, which should be addressed.

Therefore, for the programme to be sustainable, the degree to which beneficiaries have acquired new knowledge about improved farming practices and the degree and length

of time that state authorities or coordinators are able to continue to provide subsidized fertilizer, credit and other necessary inputs to meet the requirements of farmers should be improved.

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Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

VARIABLE	DISTRIBUTIONS (%)
Age	
<30	10
31-39	28.6
40-49	35.7
50-59	21.4
60<	4.3
Sex	
Male	85.7
Female	14.3
Marital Status	
Married	91.4
Single	8.6
Level of education	
Primary education	34.3
Secondary	50
Post secondary	7.1
Qur'anic education	8.6
Farming experience	
10> years	20
11-15	20
16-20 years	24.3
20 years	35.7

Sources of Data: Field Survey, 2015

Table 2: Estimate Z- value

ITEMS	MEAN VALUE	VARIANCE	SAMPLE SIZE	CAL"Z
Returns	125,320.7	14006.48	90	18.64
Cost	91,706	573.86		

Sources of Data: Field Survey, 2015

Table 3: Gross margin analysis

VARIABLE	DISTRIBUTION (N). m
Variable cost	
Fertilizer cost	16,680
Hired labour	22,630
Family labour	12,800
Other inputs	18,680
Fix cost	
Farming implements	5,060
Total cost (A)	75,850
Total revenue (B)	110, 850

Farm profit margin (FGM) = (B-a) 37, 22.19 capital turn over= B/A-1-4

Variable	MPP	MVP	MFC	R
Land	7632.32	39230	4100	9,8
Expense on inputs (fertilizer, etc)	3623	79754	200	35.2

Sources of Data: Computed from Field Data

Table 5. Estimated Linear Production Function

VARIABLE	COEFFICIENT	STD- ERROR	T-VALUE	PROBABILITY
Constant	27760.66	23795.48	1.167	0.284 ^{ns}
Farm Size (X ₁)	1969.5	1.895	1.895	0.063 ^{***}
Hired labour (X ₂)	1143.17	800.129	1.429	0.150 ^{ns}
Family labour (X ₃)	868.89	586.85	1.48	0.144 ^{ns}
Fertilizer qty (X ₄)	2539.8	700	3.628	0.000*
EXP. on Seeds/chemicals and Other inputs (X ₅)	1.421	0.29	5.242	0.001*
P ²	0505			
f-value	13.6			

Sources of Data: Computed from Field Data