

Kakuri

Multidisciplinary International Journal of
Arts and Social Sciences Education



A Bi-Annual Publication of the
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND LAW
KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY, KADUNA – NIGERIA

VOLUME II, NUMBER I,

JANUARY - 2025

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VOLUME II, NUMBER 1, JANUARY, 2025

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Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education
Faculty of Education,
College of Humanities, Education and Law
Kaduna State University, Kaduna - Nigeria

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KAKURI Multidisciplinary International Journal of
Arts and Social Sciences Education
Volume II, Number I, January, 2025 = Rajab 1446 AH

ISSN: 2992-5754

Published by:

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
• COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, EDUCATION AND LAW
KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY, KADUNA - NIGERIA

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Printed By:

VERSATILE EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES LTD
NO. 2, YAHAYA GUSAU RD. OPP. KANO STATE POLYTECHNIC NEW SITE, KANO STATE - NIGERIA
Phone: 080 3837 3533/080 2356 3413; E-Mail: mmmaltama@gmail.com

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Our amiable journal is making great progress as we present to you Volume II, No 1, third edition of the journal KAKURI, a Multidisciplinary International Journal of Arts and Social Sciences Education is now online as part of our efforts to make the journal reflect its international spread just as in its composition of editors and advisers. It is also for the purpose of making the journal accessible worldwide, so that it can meet, yet another stride of international coverage and accessibility as it contributes to the annals of research, continuum of knowledge and strong pillar for further learning from this divide of the world, thereby enriching the discourse in Arts and Social Sciences Education.

We acknowledge the resilient courage, efforts and enigmatic squeeze of our great contributors, who, out of love for exploration of knowledge and facilitating learning provide us with great articles for publication, despite the global economic and social tense.

In this third edition of KAKURI JOURNAL, there are great articles in the usual areas, exploring teaching and learning in Arts and Social Sciences Education. These articles cover such areas as Languages and Literature, such as in Arabic, English and religion, Christianity and Islam and Social Sciences such as Economics, Geography, etc. Each article exemplifies rigorous inquiry, critical thinking, commitment to advancing knowledge from exploration of pedagogical methodologies to analyses of societal impacts on education, the articles in this edition offer valuable insights and perspectives that contribute to both theory and practice and as history reflects on our current life and activities.

The world is constantly a changing place and so life itself. It is not surprising that in the next edition, our esteem readers and contributors would increase and so the Editorial Board and Team of Advisers may change greatly as we move on. However, it is our hope that KAKURI would continue to wax stronger and cover many more fields within the Arts and Social Sciences Education and beyond, which might include findings in teaching and learning pedagogy, and area yet to explored as it

reflects the modern trends in the world influenced by technology, especially in communication and the use of Artificial Intelligence. Perhaps there are greater minds to see in the future, featuring in the subsequent editions of KAKURI, with greater zeal to explore more areas, review our articles with profound research and learning evidence, present newer skills in teaching and learning, bring forth greater and rigorous research findings triggered by our journal, thereby bringing about paradigm shift in pedagogical processes, as classroom teaching and lectures are becoming archaic, etc.

KAKURI. As editors, we are grateful to our dedicated authors, reviewers, and members of the Editorial Board, whose expertise and commitment ensured the quality and relevance of this edition. Your contributions enriched our journal and expanded the boundaries of knowledge in Arts and Social Sciences Education, as the online free access would further enhance the image of the journal. Enjoy the values of this edition and many more. Free access to KAKURI Journal <https://journals.kasu.edu.ng>

Dr. Jibril Lawal,
Editor

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Kakuri Multidisciplinary International Journal of Arts and Social Sciences Education is a peer-reviewed multidisciplinary research platform, published twice a year (January and July) by the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, Kaduna State University, Kaduna. The journal offers an excellent platform for academics and practitioners to promote their double blinded peer reviewed works on any related field. The purpose is to explore the field of Multidisciplinary Research directed for, academics, researchers and practitioners working in any area. This journal publishes original contributions grounded by appropriate theoretical, Practical and Fieldwork analysis.

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FROM FARMS TO OIL FIELDS: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND WELLNESS IN YORUBALAND, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The truism 'food for the stomach' and the ancient proverb 'health is wealth' have become increasingly poignant in Nigeria, where the quest for food security and wellness is beset by formidable obstacles. This study investigates the decline of Nigeria's agricultural sector and explores the factors that compromise sustainable food systems and wellness. Using Yorubaland as a major reference, the findings are as follows: i) In the pre-colonial era, agriculture drove Nigeria's economy, generating more than 70% of its income. ii) By the early 1970s, Nigeria's economy shifted from agriculture to oil, with oil exports reaching 74.4% of the total exports in 1971. iii) The oil boom's success came at the expense of agriculture and rural economies, but proved short-lived. This paper acknowledges past efforts to revitalize Nigerian agriculture, but notes their limited success. The study concludes that agricultural sustainability is a collective responsibility, unaffected by factors such as Western education or occupational status; education liberates and cures ignorance as food cures hunger. Addressing food security and wellness in Nigeria requires a multi-stakeholder approach, involving government, private sector, civil society, and farmers. This study adopts a historical and analytical approach with a combination of primary and secondary sources of data collection.

Keywords: Agriculture, Sustainability, Food Security, Oil Boom, Wellness, Yorubaland.

Introduction

The poor performance of many African economies has become a matter of great concern for scholars and analysts. Nigeria's economy is in a precarious state, threatened by a multitude of crises, including rapid population growth, dependence on foreign food, stagnation of local industries, and widespread food insecurity. The transformation of Yorubaland and Nigeria's economy; from an agricultural-based system in the pre-colonial era to an oil-dominated economy by the 1970s, highlights the unintended consequences of commercial growth. The success of Nigeria's oil industry came at the expense of agriculture and rural economy, which suffered a significant decline, underscoring the need for a balanced economic approach. As would be proven beyond doubt with major

references drawn in Yorubaland, it is evident that despite the growth in manufacturing, mining and oil explorations, agriculture remains vital to Nigeria's economy, employing most of the workforce, providing food security, and generating foreign exchange.

Food is the fundamental physiological requirement for human sustenance, superseding other essential needs. According to Abraham Maslow's seminal hierarchy of needs theory, food occupies a paramount position, preceded only by basic physiological needs (Maslow, 1943:370-396). The rationale underlying this prioritization is the severe consequence of food deprivation, which manifests as hunger and malnutrition. These afflictions transcend geographical boundaries, socio-economic strata, ethnic divides, and religious affiliations, underscoring the universality of food insecurity. The far-reaching implications of food deprivation necessitate a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between food availability, access, and utilization.

Yorubaland, situated in south-western Nigeria, boasts a rich cultural heritage of farming and food production, having historically served as a hub of agricultural production. However, the discovery of oil in Nigeria in the late 1950s marked a pivotal turning point in the country's economic trajectory, precipitating a rapid shift away from agriculture and towards oil production. This transformation has had far-reaching consequences, including the decline of agriculture and the rural economy in Yorubaland. Despite the growth in manufacturing, mining, and oil exploration, agriculture remains a vital component of Nigeria's economy, providing employment for the majority of the workforce, ensuring food security, and generating foreign exchange. Nevertheless, the neglect of the agricultural sector has led to widespread food insecurity, forcing millions of Nigerians to rely on imported food to meet their basic needs.

The interplay between economic growth, agriculture, and food security is complex and multifaceted. This paper provides a historical analysis of the impact of Nigeria's oil industry on agriculture in Yorubaland, underscoring the need for a balanced economic approach that prioritizes food security and sustainable agricultural development. By examining the intricate relationships between economic growth, agriculture, and food security, this research aims to identify key lessons for sustainable agricultural development and food security in Nigeria.

Global Food Security Challenges and United Nations' Initiatives for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security

Food security remains a pressing global challenge, affecting over 820 million people worldwide who suffer from hunger, with an additional 2 billion people experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, underscoring the need for sustainable and equitable food systems (FAO, 2020: 8-10). Although food security is a universal challenge, its severity and impact vary greatly between developed and developing countries, with the latter facing a disproportionately larger burden. Developed countries combat food insecurity with targeted solutions: direct food relief, food stamps, and subsidized production, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to nutritious food. To address this global challenge, the United Nations has developed initiatives and frameworks that prioritize sustainable agricultural practices, environmental stewardship, and food security, with the ultimate goal of achieving wellness and prosperity for all people and the planet. Some of these United Nations (2020) countries, include the following:

- i. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Specifically, SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) focus on sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- ii. **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):** The FAO promotes sustainable agriculture practices, supports small-scale farmers and addresses climate change, water scarcity and biodiversity loss.
- iii. **Committee on World Food Security (CWF):** The CWF develops guidelines and policy recommendations for sustainable agriculture and food security.
- iv. **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):** UNEP addresses the environmental aspects of sustainable agriculture, such as pollution, soil degradation, and climate change.
- v. **International Fund for agricultural Development (IFAD):** IFAD supports small-scale farmers and rural developments through sustainable agricultural practices.
- vi. **World Food Programmes (WFP):** WFP addresses food insecurity and promotes sustainable food systems.
- vii. **Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives:** Initiatives such as Agroecology, Permaculture, and Regenerative Agriculture have been promoted by the UN to enhance soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.
- viii. **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** The UN supports climate resilient agriculture practices to address the impacts of climate change on food security.
- ix. **Water for Food Security:** The UN focuses on efficient water use and management in agriculture to ensure food security.

- x. **Food Loss and Waste Reduction:** The UN aims to reduce food loss and waste throughout the supply chain to ensure more efficient food systems.

For a healthy and food-secure Yorubaland, Nigeria, sustainable agriculture is the essential bedrock, supporting the region's prosperity, and nurturing the well-being of its people, now and in the future.

The Yoruba Cultural Beliefs and Values in Agriculture and Food Systems

The Yoruba, one of the largest and most sophisticated ethnic groups from West Africa, reside mainly in south-western Nigeria (particularly in the states of Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti, Kogi, and Lagos); Kwara in the north-central region as well as in neighboring countries such as Benin and Togo, with ancestral ties to the god-hero Oduduwa. They can be found in various regions worldwide, particularly in areas with historical and contemporary diasporic connections such as Brazil, Cuba, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean (Falola & Childs, 2004:10). The areas of these countries primarily inhabited by Yoruba are often collectively referred to as Yorubaland or territory. Yoruba have lived in advanced urban kingdoms for more than 1,500 years. His submission (Akintoye, 2010:46) that *"the Yoruba are a culturally sophisticated and urbanized people, with a long history of city-state development and complex societal structures"* also correlates with John Peel's attestation that *"the Yoruba are a nation with a strong tradition of monarchy and leadership, exemplified by the Ooni of Ife and other Yoruba kings"* (Peel, 1989:45-50).

Johnson (1921:10-15)'s description of the Yoruba as *"a nation of farmers, traders, and craftsmen with a strong tradition of monarchy and a complex religious system"* attests to the fact that the Yoruba communities traditionally thrived in agricultural compounds, where they cultivated the land and honoured their ancestors through a vibrant native religion. This is in line with Soyinka (1976:23-30) that *"the Yoruba are a people with a deep spiritual heritage, emphasizing the importance of Orisa (deities) and ancestral reverence."* Several Yoruba communities hold the New Yam festival with high esteem as a significant event in the town's cultural calendar. The annual New Yam Festival or *Odun Ijẹsu* (2024, July 13) took place at Olusin Palace Square, Isanlu-Isin, Kwara State in July, 2024 (witnessed by the author as one of the guest speakers). The Festival of Ile-Ifẹ New Yam (August 8, 2024), was celebrated at the Palace of Ooni of Ife in Osun State in August, 2024. These festivals are a testament to the importance of yam in Yoruba culture and the community's appreciation for the harvest season. Lovejoy (2000:150) reveals that *"there are about 40 million Yoruba*

world-wide and Yoruba, their tonal language, spoken by millions across the country, is a cornerstone of their identity."

The Yoruba people's reverence for agriculture is beautifully encapsulated in the classic song: "*Isẹ agbẹ ni'sẹ ilẹ wa, ẹni ko sisẹ a maa jale, iwe kikọ lai si ọkọ ati ada, ko i pee o, ko i pee o*" (farming is our fore-father's job, whosoever is indolent will definitely steal, sound education without farming tools is incomplete education. Yes! It's an incomplete education). Such other words or phrases to buttress include: *isẹ oko pe* or *agbẹlere* (farming is profitable), *agbẹlọba* (farming is the principal vocation), etc that conform to God's injunction in both *The Holy Qur'an* (80:26-32) and *The Holy Bible* (Gen.2:15, Lev. 25:18-22, Psalm 104:14, Prov. 12:11, Isaiah 30:23-24) on the need to engage in agriculture and the God-factor.

Sayings and proverbs in Yorubaland attest to the *ilera lọrọ* (health is wealth) concept, as a healthy diet empowers individuals to unlock physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, leading to a transformative and fulfilling life. The Yoruba saying, "*Oun t'a ọ jẹ l'àgbà oun ta ọ se*" (what we want to eat is, on the hierarchical scale, superior to what we want to do) emphasizes the importance of fuelling the stomach before any significant physical/laborious activity such as bush clearing, cultivating, planting, weeding, harvesting, etc (Akosile, 2024). Even while the need for the appropriate and effectiveness of the tool to work with, is well established in the saying-"*Igbehin l'o ma ndun oloku ada si*" (the one who decides to farm with a blunt cutlass will surely face the consequences of such a choice); the fact that food provides the physical strength needed to accomplish a task is well stressed in the saying, "*ailapa ni ada o mu, omori se lagi*" (a lazy man will always complain about tools, even one can break plank with a pestle). Again, the widely held saying that "*ona ofun ni ona orun*" (the path to the stomach is the path to paradise/heaven) reveals that the Yoruba fascination with hunger is legendary. It remains factual that when hunger strikes, many things can go wrong.

Another colloquial says "*ọmọ ita l'ebi*" meaning - hunger is a thug. Hunger can even bring a king on his knees, leading to anger (a hungry person is an angry person) and causing a range of physical, emotional, and social effects. Like the famous biblical Esau in Genesis 25:29-34 who sold his birth right to his twin brother for food, a hungry person is prone to losing his sense of reasoning and rationality at the very moment. The people of Oyo during the reign of *Oba Awole Arogangan* (1789-1796) suffered from severe famine just like several Yoruba wars (i.e. the Ijaiye War, Kiriji War, *Jalumi* War, Ogele War, Dahomey War, etc

were instances where people suffered from food hunger. In the real sense, the *Mugbamugba* War derived its name from *igba* (locust bean fruit) which was the only saving grace for ravenous soldiers during the Oyo army's second attempt to regain Ilorin from the Fulani.

Similarly, the expression, *ebi kii wọnu, ki ọran mi o wọ* (hunger does not enter the stomach and allow anything else in) attests to the fact that concentration, calmness and comfort are far away from a hungry soul. The nutritional and medicinal value of Yoruba hierarchical foods and delicacies is inherent in the saying, "*Iyan lounjẹ, Ọka loogun* (pounded yam is food, while *Ọka/amala* is merely medicine) and *ounjẹ ọrẹ awo, ounje to dara a maa sara loore* (good food is complexion friendly, sumptuous meal nourishes the body) attests to the fact that access to nutritious food makes food a healthy diet (medicine) which is '*a solution to many of health-care problems*' (The World Economic Forum, 2023).

The realization of agriculture for food security and wellness from ages past is well captured in the Yoruba proverb, "*Ti ebi ba ti kuro ninu isẹ, isẹ buse*" (when hunger is taken out of poverty, poverty ends). Nothing in life defies a solution - just as education is the antidote to ignorance - food is the remedy for hunger - unlocking the door to physical and mental well-being. Yoruba believes that one that works hard must eat well as hard work and good food go hand in hand. Hence the saying, *bi oo se, oo jẹ* (no work/sweat, no food/sweet). This is much in line with Socrates' quote, "Eat to live, not live to eat" and Virgil's wisdom that *food sustains the body and health is the ultimate wealth*; hence, the Yoruba, have always realized that they must prioritize sustainable agriculture to guarantee food security, wellness, and a prosperous future.

Yoruba's history is therefore, deeply tied to their favorable environment, where a unique blend of geographical advantages, a peaceful atmosphere, strong social bonds, work ethics, and agricultural beliefs came together to create a thriving indigenous economy, built on optimal resource utilization and a strong foundation for food security and wellness. People created a strong economy through farming, trading, and art production. Their resourcefulness and innovative techniques significantly boosted both agrarian and non-agrarian activities, providing employment opportunities for most of rural dwellers. In addition to crafting essential tools such as hoes, cutlasses, and axes, they employed a range of advanced agricultural methods, including: terracing to optimize land use, shifting cultivation to maintain soil fertility, crop rotation to promote healthy soil and reduce pests, green manuring to enrich soil with organic matter, mixed farming to diversify crops and reduce risk, poultry farming to

provide a source of protein, and regulated swamp farming to harness the potential of wetland areas (Ehinmidun, 2024).

All said and done attest to food, being an antidote to poverty and for healthy living in Yorubaland. Their saying, "*Oun ti eiye ba ja ni eiye ngbe so*" (what a bird eats, it flies with) implies that what one is or becomes is influenced by what one eats. According to USAID (1992), food security is defined as both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for productive and healthy life.

The Golden Age of Agriculture in Yorubaland: Agriculture in Yorubaland Before Crude Oil Discovery

A survey of Nigeria's food crises is indeed historical and analytical. Prior to foreign contact and oil discovery in Nigeria, Yorubaland was a peaceful hub for farming, hunting, fishing, manufacturing and trading. Agriculture was the main basis of the wealth of pre-colonial Yoruba, as every citizen was a farmer. Trade with Sudan was another source of wealth before the 18th century, when Yoruba exported kola nuts, locally woven cloth, livestock, etc to Sudan and imported commodities such as salt, potash, shea butter, wool, milk and horses. Taxes from the provinces and tributes from subject states provide a greater bulk of royal revenue. However, from the 19th century, there was a gradual change in the direction of the Yoruba economy from the north to the south where coastal trade with the Europeans developed. From then on, the sale of slave exports and the import of European fire arms formed an important aspect of the economic activity of the people. This marked the beginning of a transformative relationship between Europeans and Africans that began in the 15th century, forever altering Nigeria's history. Onwubiko (1985:94) attests thus to the following:

The most striking feature of the economic development of Yorubaland in the 19th century was the shift from the direction of its trade from north to south. Trade with the south was growing and consisted mainly of slave exports.

The conquest and occupation of Nupe and northern Yorubaland by Fulani at the beginning of the 19th century resulted in the dislocation of traditional trade with the north (Saharan trade). Therefore, increasing attention was paid to trade with the coast (Atlantic trade), and the Yoruba civil wars provided a steady supply of slaves sold in exchange for firearms and a few other European goods.

In spite of the civil wars, however, many economic activities continued in Yorubaland, and farming continued to some extent. It is worth noting that Alaaḥin

Atiba the founder of the new Oyo encouraged the growth of yams and kola nuts; the missionaries in Abeokuta encouraged agriculture especially the growth of cotton and oil palms. Domestic slaves were then increasingly diverted to the farms to cultivate these crops and to prepare them for export. Palm oil exports thus became so important much that by 1856, 15,000 tons of palm oil was exported from Egbaland alone (Onwubiko, 1985:95). By the 19th century therefore, palm exports doubled in West Africa, as Nigeria took the lead. Notably, like the Niger Delta region, many Yoruba states in the south-western region have ever since become enterprises, partly because of the abundance of palm trees in its hinterland and also because the Niger River provides easy transportation for oil across the Atlantic.

The ports of Badagry and Lagos served as gateways for British trade in Yorubaland, initially in slaves and later in commodities such as palm produce, timber and rubber. Lagos, the chief port, had five routes connecting it to the interior, with the Egba, Remo, and Ijebu-Ode routes being the most significant. The struggle to control these routes was the primary cause of civil wars throughout the 19th century. The British occupation of Lagos in 1861 underscored the importance of peaceful trade relations in Yorubaland for the prosperity of Lagos and growth of British commerce. Consequently, British intervention in Yoruba politics was driven by economic interests, facilitated through treaties and military force, and characterized by the exchange of local goods (e.g., native cloths, palm oil, and kernels) for European commodities (e.g., salt, clothes, and firearms). The Lagos administration made use of C.M.S. missionaries to bring peace in 1886, after the longest civil war in Yorubaland- The *Kiriji* War that 'ended' with the peace treaty signed on September 23, 1886, at Igbajo and Imesi-Ile now in Osun State. Thereafter, the British imposed colonial rule (Falola, 1991:87).

The trend of an agrarian base economy in Nigeria continued well into the British colonial period when agriculture stood as the largest employer of labor within the colonial economy. As part of the colonial policies, the authority placed much emphasis on cash- crops production (cocoa, coffee, rubber) as against food crop production, in order to provide a regular and ready source of raw materials for European manufacturing industries. The British authority placed much emphasis on cash crop production to provide a regular and ready source of raw materials for European manufacturing industries (Corwin, 2003).

In Nigeria's independence in 1960, agriculture was the backbone of the economy, accounting for more than 70% of the country's revenue. The sector's prominence was driven by farmers' motivations to produce both domestic consumption and

exports. Regional specialization in cash crops, such as cocoa in the west, cotton and groundnuts in the north, and palm oil and cassava in the east and middle - belt, contributed significantly to the development of their respective regions. The impressive statistics on agricultural production at the time instilled optimism for Nigeria's future economic growth and development. For instance, by 1958, the acreage of cocoa plantations in the Western Region alone totalled 981,091 acres and in 1961, when the country's exports were valued at nearly £200 million, about 20% of it or £34.8 million was derived from cocoa. In the same year, groundnut production in the Northern Region topped over one million tons, while Palm Oil and palm kernel production in the Eastern Region exceeded 20 percent of total exports. The land, as it was, was the main locomotive of the agriculture-based economy (Igiebor, 1987:21). Nigeria's agricultural sector experienced remarkable growth in the 1950s and the 1960s, largely due to decentralized control vested by regional governments. The 1954 and 1963 constitutions designated agriculture as a regional responsibility, enabling regional governments to invest heavily in the sector and to retain a significant proportion of export revenues. This has led to flourishing regional economies, driven by cash crop exports, which in turn has facilitated social and economic development programs.

Over time, things began to diminish. By 1966, agriculture contributed only about 60% of the country's total exports, compared badly with its former contribution of 80%. Military intervention in 1966 focused on regional autonomy, and more so when the country was broken up into 12 states on May 27, 1967. As the military government was being essentially more of a unified command, the federal government mostly took over the residual powers and responsibilities of the states. Hence, there was a drastic reduction in the revenue accruing to the state. The 1979 Constitution formalized the major shift of power from the states to the federal government when it placed agriculture on the concurrent list, making it a joint responsibility of both the state and federal governments. A federal Ministry of Agriculture was established until 1973 (Aboyeji, 2020:187).

Agriculture in Yorubaland and the Nigeria's Oil Wealth Economy

One auspicious development that had a profound effect on the government's attitude to agriculture occurred in 1958, when the Shell Oil Company began production and exported the first Nigerian crude oil of 5,134 barrels per day from Oloibiri, Rivers State (Igiebor, 1987:21). Traditional agriculture entered a period of decline as able-bodied youths migrated to urban cities leaving old men and women who have been incapacitated by old age - to cultivate food capable of feeding the whole country. Negative development since the discovery and production of oil relies on oil that eclipses agriculture as the engine of the Nigerian economy. For example, from less than 1 per cent in 1960, the

contribution of oil to gross domestic product (GDP) rose to 14.6, 21.9 and 26-29% in 1970, 1975 and 1979 respectively. By 1992, it had reached a height of 46.8%. The contribution of oil to Nigeria's export earnings was much higher. From 58.1% in 1970; it rose to 95.6% in 1979. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it remained very high, accounting for ₦210 billion or 96.1% of total export earnings in 1996 (Ogbogbo, 2014:75).

Faced with the unsustainable burden of soaring food import costs, the Nigerian government has introduced various initiatives aimed at promoting self-sufficiency and self-reliance in food production. These schemes sought to mobilize national efforts towards achieving food security, boosting foreign exchange earnings through increased export production, and providing raw materials for domestic manufacturing. Various governments have attempted to implement policies to reform agriculture. Such include:

- i. *The Strategic Grains Reserves Programme* (SGRP) of the Gowon-led regime by the mid-1970s;
- ii. *The Operation Feed the Nation* (OFN) of the Obasanjo military regime;
- iii. *The Green Revolution programme* of the Shagari administration, ditto his river basin development authorities and agricultural development programs (ADP);
- iv. *The Strategic Grains Reserve Scheme* (Buhari -led military regime);
- v. *The National Directorate of Employment* (NDE) under Buhari led the military administration;
- vi. *Natural Agricultural Lands* (NALDA); *Agricultural and Rural Management* (ARMTI), *the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure* (DFRRI); *Structural Adjustment Programme* (SAP); *National Centre for Agricultural and Mechanical* (NCAM)-all under the Babangida led military regime;
- vii. *Agricultural Revitalization Scheme* (2002); *Root and Tuber Expansion Programmes* (2003)- Obasanjo's civilian led administration;
- viii. *The Transformation Agenda* (Yar'Adua);
- ix. *The Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme* (SURE-P) launched in 2012 by the Goodluck Jonathan led administration;
- x. *The Anchor Borrowers Scheme* of the Buhari-Civilian administration;
- xi. *Food Security and Agricultural Mechanization Programme*, a state of emergency in the *agriculture sector* and ongoing intervention plan on food security by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu.

Nigeria's agricultural initiatives over the years to promote self-sufficiency in food production and reduce reliance on food imports have had mixed results. The successes of these schemes include the Strategic Grains Reserve Scheme's ability to stabilize food prices and ensure availability of grains. The Operation Feed the

Nation Scheme, launched in 1976, achieved significant increases in food production, particularly in the first two years of its implementation. The program also strengthened agricultural extension services, providing farmers with training, inputs, and technical support. Similarly, the Green Revolution program, launched in 1980, led to significant increases in crop yields, particularly for crops such as wheat and rice. The program also introduced new agricultural technologies, such as tractors and threshers, which improved the efficiency of farming operations. The National Directorate of Employment's creation of jobs through agricultural projects, and the Natural Agricultural Lands' (NALDA) promotion of agricultural development in rural areas. Additionally, the Agricultural and Rural Management (ARMTI) and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) have improved agricultural productivity and infrastructure, while the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) has helped to liberalize the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Revitalization Scheme and the Root and Tuber Expansion Programmes have also increased production and productivity in the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), launched in 2011, is a notable success story. It focused on increasing the production of key crops like rice, maize, and cassava, resulting in Nigeria becoming the world's largest producer of cassava and significantly reducing rice imports. Another successful initiative is the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), which provided farmers with access to finance, leading to increased production, particularly in the rice sector. The political will demonstrated by the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration in diversifying the economy received tremendous support, as many Nigerians went into farming. Despite these limitations, restricting land border imports, greatly encouraged Nigerian farmers, especially rice producers. This opened the gate for some Nigerian industries, especially cottages to return on-stream owing to certain policies put in place.

The launch of the Food Security and Agricultural Mechanization Programme by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu marks a significant milestone in Nigeria's efforts to enhance its agricultural sector and ensure food sufficiency. The programme aims to deploy cutting-edge agricultural machinery and technology to promote large-scale agro-value chain development, with key objectives including increasing food production, promoting agricultural mechanization, and supporting local industries (Tribune Online, January 29, 2025). The programme has shown promise in increasing food production, with notable successes such as Nasarawa State's harvest of 2000 hectares of rice farm as part of the food security programme. Additionally, the introduction of new agricultural technologies, such as tractors and implements, has improved farming efficiency. These initiatives

demonstrate the government's commitment to transforming the agricultural sector and ensuring food security for its citizens.

Unfortunately, all concerted efforts made by different administrations over the years to improve the standard of living and revitalize agriculture have not justified these hopes. Raji, (2024:8) best describes efforts as “*motion without movement*”. Nigeria, especially after the recent nose-diving of crude-oil in the global market, has realized the dangers of a mono-product economy. The global crude oil pricing crisis significantly contributed to the country's drift into a recession. The income that the country generates nose-dived substantially and there were no ‘shock absorbers’ to stem the tide, as the country's foreign reserves had been depleted. The resultant hardship that came with the recession made the mantra of economic diversification prominent and acceptable to different strata of Nigerians. Despite these good initiatives and notable successes, many initiatives have been plagued by inefficiencies, corruption, and lack of sustainability. The Strategic Grains Reserves Programme (SGRP), for example, failed to achieve its objectives due to inadequate funding and poor management. The OPN scheme was criticized for its lack of sustainability, as it relied heavily on government funding and subsidies. Additionally, the program had limited impact on rural poverty, as the benefits of the program were largely captured by large-scale farmers. The Green Revolution program, launched by the Shagari administration was criticized for its dependence on imported inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides, which increased Nigeria's dependence on foreign exchange. The program's focus on intensive agriculture led to the neglect of the needs of small-scale farmers, environmental degradation, including soil erosion and water pollution. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) struggled to create sustainable jobs. Similarly, the Agricultural Revitalization Scheme and the Root and Tuber Expansion Programmes had limited impact on agricultural productivity and food security. Overall, despite some progress, Nigeria's agricultural sector continues to face complex challenges, hindering sustainable food security. The numerous schemes launched by the government have been plagued by challenges and failures, underscoring the need for a more effective and sustainable approach.

Key Challenges Facing Agriculture for Food Security and Wellness in Yorubaland

A critical survey and analysis of the various policies and programs of governments clearly reveal myriad problems leading to food insecurity, most so formidable to increase this tendency unless serious preventive measures are taken.

- **An Underdeveloped Agricultural Sector:** The main problem confronting food supply in Nigeria is the fact that an overwhelming proportion of food crop production is in the hands of peasant farmers operating within the framework of traditional agricultural systems. Agriculture faces challenges from rapid population growth, limited technical assistance, limited access to finance, poor rural infrastructure, dependence on rain-fed agriculture and poor soil fertility management, leading to unsustainable expansion into infertile lands and low productivity. Government incentives rarely reach farmers, who cannot tackle farm challenges alone, underscoring the need for adequate support (Ehinmidun, 2024).
- **Insecurity:** The need to genuinely address prevailing national security challenges especially those posed by Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen, kidnapping and armed banditry. Conflicts between herdsmen and farmers become rampant. Just a case of many is Wole Soyinka's ordeal captioned by Ajibade (2022) thus: *Nobel Laureate and Fulani cattle breeders* (I) and another headline reported by Agboola (2021) with the headline '*Herders hack 56-yr-old farmer to death in Oyo*'. Historically, farming and nomadism coexisted peacefully in Yorubaland, with minor skirmishes between the Yoruba and Fulani nomads. However, since the 1980s, disputes over water sources and farmland trespasses have escalated. The conflicts intensified over time, culminating in recent violent attacks by armed herdsmen and kidnappers on farming communities, resulting in significant human and material losses- as well as the displacement of indigenous farmers.

The issue of kidnapping and banditry in the south-western region of Nigeria continues to be a pressing concern, receiving ongoing attention and calling for action. Olufemi (2024) reports that "Ooni of Ile-Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi on Friday, March 1 hosted the 2024 Yoruba Security Summit, where he met with other traditional rulers in the south-west region, and deliberated on practical solutions to kidnapping and banditry in the region."

Storage, Pest and Disease Management: A study by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) found that in southwestern Nigeria, which includes Yorubaland, post-harvest losses for crops such as maize, cassava, and yams ranged from 20% to 40% (IITA, 2019). At the *1st Post-harvest Connect Conference and Exhibition*, held in Abuja, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Mission Director- Melissa Jones, stated that about 50% of fresh agricultural produce in Nigeria is lost at the post-harvest stage. According to her, such losses are partly responsible for the rising food inflation in the country which reached 40.01% in March 2024 (Tones,

2024). Perishable crops, such as plantains and tomatoes, are highly susceptible to spoilage because of their short lifespan. Inefficient storage and marketing systems exacerbate this problem, leading to market gluts and price fluctuations. Similarly, yam, a staple crop in Yorubaland, experiences significant post-harvest losses due to pests, diseases, and poor storage systems, resulting in estimated annual losses of 30-50% of the 15 million tons produced.

Ill-thought-out and inconsistent government policies:

The Nigerian government has implemented various agricultural programs and policies to address food security and wellness. However, these efforts have been marred by inconsistencies, absolute lack of direction, and lack of continuity. For instance, the Yakubu Gowon administration introduced the National Accelerated Food Programme (NAFP), which was later cancelled by the Obasanjo regime and replaced by Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976. The OFN was patterned after Ghana's operation. However, when Shagari came to power in 1979, he ditched the OFN and launched the Green Revolution, which was modelled after Asian agricultural projects. This pattern of discontinuity has been a recurring theme in Nigeria's agriculture sector. The frequent renaming, reorganization, and proliferation of agricultural ministries and programs have created confusion and disrupted the existing initiatives. For example, Gen Yakubu Gowon created the Federal Ministry of National Resources, which was later merged with the Ministry of Agriculture and National Resources by the Obasanjo regime, to be separated again by Pres. Shehu Shagari in 1979. These ministries were later merged again by Buhari's administration as the Head of State. President Bola Tinubu has since 2023 given a new title to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS).

Over-reliance on Mono-product Economy:

Nigeria's over-reliance on crude oil has led to the decline of other sectors, including agriculture, mining, manufacturing and industrialization. These sectors possess significant potential for employment generation, which could effectively address the country's unemployment challenges. Through these sectors, Nigeria's GDP could be close to that obtained in fairly-developed countries of the world if not surpass them (Henry, 2018: 262). Policies that promote monopolistic competition for large-scale industries hurt cottages and small industries.

Increasing Paucity of Cheap Labour:

The oil boom of the 1960s to the 1970s triggered a massive rural-urban migration that depleted rural communities, as millions of able-bodied youths went to the

oluses (i.e. Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Akure, Ado-Ekiti, Osoogbo) in search of white-collar jobs and education. As a result, agriculture was relegated to secondary status.

Economic and social challenges facing farmers:

Difficulty in the farmers' ability to procure and raise loans to pay for farm inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides, tractor hire services and labor is undeniable. Access to fertilizer use is constrained by market liberalization and trade policies that increase fertilizer prices relative to commodity prices; limited access to markets and infrastructure; limited development of output, input and credit markets; poverty; and cash constraints that limit farmers' ability to purchase the needed. Programmes meant to aid farmers with credit and inputs are often plagued by diversion, which denies them the intended benefits. Globalization threatens food security and perpetuates poverty in developing countries through subsidized produce dumping, unfair competition, and exploitation by transnational companies, with inadequate labor protections (Ehinmidun, 2024).

Climate Change:

Food production is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, which leads to an overall decline in farm input investment, including fertilizers, seeds, and technology adoption. Climate change affects the practice of agriculture in Yorubaland, Nigeria, via unpredictable rainfall patterns, increased temperature, drought, flooding, soil degradation, nutrient depletion, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity. Over the last decade, the most significant evidence of climate change is increase in atmospheric temperature, short and intense rainfall which generates greater run-off water and limiting the amount available for use, prolonged dry season and incessant flooding. Climate variability significantly impacts agriculture, a primary livelihood source in Yorubaland. Over the past decade, south-western Nigerian states, particularly those with coastal and riverine areas (e.g., Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, and Oyo), as well as Kwara and parts of Kogi in the north-central, continue to experience recurrent flooding, exacerbated by their proximity to major rivers, dams, and the River Niger. Flooding in Nigeria's southwest states was part of the larger national issue in 2024, with floods affecting 31 states and resulting in over 300 deaths and 1.2 million people affected (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024). Like previously along Asa Dam (2008, 2015), flooding in Kwara State, specifically in Patigi, has emerged as a persistent and pressing concern, yielding devastating consequences for local residents. The region's unique geographical characteristics, marked by its proximity to a large river and classification as a wetland, render it susceptible to flooding, a

vulnerability exacerbated by climate change. Recent flood events have affected multiple local towns in Nigeria, particularly multiple local government areas within Kwara State, resulting in significant humanitarian impacts, including the displacement of over 233,268 individuals and 24,808 households (International Organization for Migration, 2024). Likewise, Ondo State experienced several cases of flooding, particularly in 2024. Prolonged heavy rainfall precipitated widespread flooding in Ondo City, necessitating the displacement of residents and adversely impacting multiple communities. According to official reports from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the flood event resulted in at least one confirmed fatality (FRCN Positive FM 102.5, October 6, 2024). The floods have not only caused agricultural disasters, environmental degradation but in some cases led to cases of acute diarrhoea diseases and cholera-related illnesses.

Poor Management of Research Findings:

The development and dissemination of innovative agricultural technologies and best practices are hindered by inadequate research and extension services provided by academic and agricultural institutions. Research findings often remain underutilized when, collecting dust in libraries and file cabinets. Furthermore, the scarcity of extension service workers has exacerbated the gap between farmers' research and practical application. Additionally, farmers' adherence to traditional methods can render them unreceptive to new ideas, perpetuating stagnation in agricultural progress.

Ways Towards Reversing the Trend

Food insecurity in Yorubaland and Nigeria was directly correlated with poverty, ill-health and death. Like the adage, 'a hungry man is an angry man,' food insecurity does not just signal ill-health due to malnutrition, but can also cause political crisis just like the rice riot of 1980 that unseated President Tolbert of Liberia. It was also a food riot that provided an opportunity to topple the regime of President Nimeiry of Sudan in 1985. A well-fed population can be pacified to sustain social and political stability, but unfed and underfed populations cannot. Poverty alleviation schemes and wealth creations for the target population can be achieved through the following strategies:

- **Diversification:** The Nigerian government must encourage diversification of its mono-cultural dependence on the oil sector as it is the only way to survive the current environment of global uncertainty with the volatility of oil price; a state cannot be rich when its revenue is from one source and "there are strong indications that countries that depend on mineral resources as the basis of foreign exchange and overall development are susceptible to the volatility of

their market” (Aghalino, 2014:3). Isa (2019:60) attests thus: “Countries that are counted among the successful ones in the world attained their status largely through economic diversification. A state like China is effectively utilizing her agricultural mining and industrial sectors where hundreds of millions of citizens get employment, which in turn drive the economic development of China through the production of wealth”.

- **Nutritional Interventions:** Malnutrition is a pervasive issue among impoverished populations, resulting in elevated mortality and morbidity rates, diminished cognitive abilities, and reduced quality of life (WHO, 2018). To achieve food sufficiency, Nigeria must prioritize not only quantitative increases in food production but also qualitative improvements through dietary diversification. Government, private sectors and farmers can achieve this through the implementation of nutrition education programs, the promotion of nutrient-rich crops, and support for research on nutrition and health.
- **Market Accessibility:** The projected gains of world trade liberalization tend to be minimal in sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps it is time for Yoruba to produce for Nigerians and Africans in order to have more market control. Nigeria could champion the African market. Market accessibility can be enhanced by producing for local and African markets, through the development of local processing and packaging industries, trade agreements, and market support. Promoting market accessibility is crucial for the economic development of Yorubaland. To achieve this, various institutions play a vital role. Research and development institutions such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), National Institute for Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NIERALS), and Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi (FIRO) conduct research and provide training and support to farmers. Agricultural training and capacity building institutions like the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI), National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), and Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP) provide training and capacity building for agricultural professionals and farmers. Market development institutions such as the Nigerian Commodities Exchange (NCX), Agricultural Commodities Marketing and Development Company (ACMDC), and Southwest Agricultural Commodities Market (SWACOM) provide platforms for farmers to sell their produce and access markets. For example, the National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) Ilorin plays a pivotal role in enhancing market accessibility for farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs in Kwara State and beyond. By developing and disseminating improved agricultural technologies, NCAM Ilorin contributes

to increased agricultural productivity and efficiency. The centre's training programs and capacity-building initiatives enable farmers to produce high-quality products that meet market demands. To achieve sustainable agricultural development, NCAM Ilorin's interventions must be sustained and scaled up. This requires continued investment in agricultural research and development, capacity building, and market development. By enhancing market accessibility, NCAM Ilorin can contribute to food security, poverty reduction, and economic growth in Kwara State and beyond (NCAM. (n.d.).

- **Rural off-farm Opportunities:** Providing opportunities for landless rural poor and failed entrepreneurs can curb rural-urban migration and induce urban-rural migration. To motivate farmers towards efficient farming practices, initiatives such as cottage industries, credit provision, contract processing facilities, and market facilitation can be implemented. Collaboration among stakeholders is essential to enhance shelf life and facilitate marketing in distant markets.
- **Capacity Building:** As an intervention to food security, education must practically provide avenues for farmers to be listened to, being the primary beneficiaries of food security related - policies, and also transfer knowledge of research findings on matters relating to: food preservation, alternative medicine to make health more affordable, more efficient agricultural extension, options for improving soil fertility, the best approach to manage different agricultural systems, and marketing strategies. Moreover, education is not a hindrance to engaging in agriculture, as the imperative of food security transcends socio-economic boundaries. Hunger is an indiscriminate and universal challenge that affects individuals regardless of their educational background.
- **Good Governance, Policy Reform and Consistency:** Nigeria is often said to be 'rich' in natural and human resources but 'poor' in governance, its one-hundred and eighty million people are sometimes said to be either 'positively' committed to 'negative' things or 'negatively' committed to 'positive' things; its system of government has been described as a 'functioning anarchy,' where, though the 'best' is impossible, yet, the 'worst' is unlikely. In-built in all these paradoxical epithets and statements of incredibility is the reality that the country exhibits major contradictions of what is expected and what has so far been delivered (Abiodun, 2019:4-5). More often than not, sustainable food security measures are long-term strategies which need to be protected from volatile political interests of leaders. It is also in everybody's interest to have only the best hands without political interference from governments and donors. All these strategies can only work in a peaceful, corruption free environment and inward-looking government. It is obvious

that the various programmes and schemes since independence have failed woefully to supply food domestically and yet, food importation not the remedy.

- **Collaborations and Multi-stakeholder Approaches:** This is essential in addressing the complex challenges facing the agricultural sector, particularly in reducing post-harvest losses. Collaborations facilitate the exchange of ideas, expertise, and best practices among stakeholders÷□ governments, private sector companies, NGOs, civil society organizations, farmers' organizations, and research institutions. Jones (2024) speaking on the subject '*Currently, Nigeria post-harvest losses are almost 50% for fresh produce*' called on "stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the effects of the unpleasant statistics is reduced for vulnerable populations who have been thrown into hardship." Collective responsibility is captured by The Mission Director, USAID, Melissa Jones (2024 thus, "it is critical that we all come together to focus on ensuring that the hard work of farmers is not lost in post-harvest and passes to the consumers who are in need."

Conclusion

A critical examination of Nigeria's economic history revealed that agriculture has long been the linchpin of the forest region's economy. The country's rich endowments of arable land, human capital, and natural resources create fertile ground for economic development. Notably, the pre-independence agrarian economy of Nigeria's ethnic groups was characterized by a high degree of regional specialization and adaptability, underscoring the importance of contextualizing economic development within specific geographical and cultural contexts. Despite the recognition of the importance of agriculture for food security and wellness, its availability to humanity is still far from being inadequate. While the rest of the world has made significant progress towards the sustainability of agriculture for food security and wellness, the continent of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, continues to lag behind.

This study examines how the agrarian base of the Nigerian economy dates back to the pre-colonial period. It was agriculture that largely provided sustenance to the economy of the ancient kingdoms and empires in pre-colonial Nigeria which made prominent Yoruba kingdoms and empires such as Ife, Oyo, Ibadan, and Abeokuta. The problem of food security has worsened since the 1970s when attention shifted from agriculture to oil wealth. All efforts made ever since to reverse from a dwindling economy to a once-on-a time sustainable one seems like a mirage. The major challenge to food security in Yorubaland and Nigeria is the underdeveloped agricultural sector which is characterized by over-reliance on

primary agriculture, low fertility soils, minimal use of external farm inputs, environmental degradation, significant food crop loss both at pre- and post-harvest, minimal value addition and product differentiation, and inadequate food storage and preservation that result in significant commodity price fluctuations. The study concludes that enhancing agricultural development requires a multifaceted approach, and critical strategies for sustainable development include: diversification, market accessibility, nutritional interventions, rural off-farm opportunities, capacity building, good governance, and stakeholder collaborations are essential for sustainable development. By implementing these strategies, stakeholders can collectively contribute to achieving sustainable food security in Yorubaland. That food opportunities abound in Yorubaland owing to the abundance of land for agricultural and industrial use suggests that every society is left to define its relationship with the available opportunities. A nation that cannot feed itself is at the mercy of others, and has a lot to lose. Therefore, as food is the only cure for hunger, achieving a solution to food security lies in increasing food availability, access and adequacy. He further called on stakeholders to collaborate to ensure that the effects of unpleasant statistics are reduced for vulnerable populations thrown into hardship.

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