

**UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, AKOKA, LAGOS**

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF INTERVENTIONIST  
PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SECURITY IN ANAMBRA-  
MAMU RIVER BASIN OF NIGERIA, 1960 – 1991**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

To My divine mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, (Seat of Wisdom) and to the memory of my father, Chief Charles N. Ikemefuna Adinuba who insisted that I attain the highest educational career.

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## ABSTRACT

The importance of food in human life and in national development cannot be overemphasised. Based on this imperative, this study examines in historical context, the strategies, successes, challenges and limitations of the interventionist programmes inaugurated by the Federal and State governments, donor agencies and non-state actors towards achieving food security in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin in the period between 1960 and 1991. It illustrates the rich biodiversity of plants and animals of nutritious values, which in the past served for food self-sufficiency in this geographical space located in the south-eastern Nigeria. The colonial regime adjudged the food situation satisfactory and hence adopted *laissez faire* policy which failed to lay the foundation for food security attainment. The effect was that the prevailing periodic food deficits in some places started manifesting as chronic under-nutrition owing to growing soil fertility and exponential population growth. At independence in 1960, the Eastern Nigerian Government initiated revolutionary formula which dramatically changed the equation and made food affordable to the populations. Unfortunately, these initiatives were damaged and in some cases destroyed by the Nigerian Civil War during which, widespread malnutrition and *kwashiorkor* took unprecedented toll among the citizens. The matter was aggravated in the post- civil war years by the structural changes in the economy, particularly oil boom which stagnated local food production, with the rules of the game tilting in favour of food import. High level of dependence on imported food discouraged the local population from engagement in food production and this encouraged extensive rural-urban migration. The Federal and Anambra State authorities as well as donor agencies intervened with plethora of programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution and Food for the People Programme. Unfortunately, the gap between intentions and performance was quite substantial resulting to failures. Employing the dependency and food entitlement theories, the study demonstrates that the externally and vertically integrated character of the Nigerian economy of which the Anambra-Mamu area was a microcosm, led to fundamental contradictions and gross inequitable distribution of national wealth which made the interventionist programmes unable to achieve their objectives. Through multidisciplinary methodical strategies such as unstructured oral interviews, archival materials and government publications, materials from donor agencies, private documents, research dissertations, newspaper reports and articles as well as historical analysis approach, the findings of the research showed that the low income earners were unable to access food in the right quantity and quality to lead healthy and fruitful life. Their average daily food intake of 2,062 kilocalories and 45 grams of protein in the urban areas and 1,976 kcals and 39 gms in the rural areas fell below FAO's requirements of 2,400 kcals and 65 gms. Using the insights offered by economic history, the study concludes that the failure of the interventionist programmes consigned the vulnerable and marginal households to food poverty. It recommends among other strategies, improved agro-processing technologies, increased private sector investment, and utilization of comparative economic advantages offered by large-scale tree cropping, animal husbandry and provision of agricultural subsidies to reverse the trend.

**Key Words:** Food Security, Carrying Capacity, Nutritional Status, Food Self-reliance/Sufficiency.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

Food is fundamental to human life. By food is meant any material substance of plant and animal origin, in solid or liquid form, which is consumed by living organisms for the purpose of (a) achieving energy for work and body warmth; (b) providing raw materials for growth, repair of body tissues, reproduction and nourishment; (c) regulating the healthy working of the body and protecting it from ill-health and diseases.<sup>1</sup> Food products are classified under cereals, legumes, root and tuber crops, oil seeds and nuts, vegetables and fruits, vegetable oils, sugar products, beverages and livestock products. In modern times, food has become an instrument for national power. A country, which cannot feed its citizens, cannot be considered truly independent. It was within this imperative that the successive tiers of government in Nigeria had since 1960 made efforts, though unsuccessful, towards the attainment of food self-reliance. The importance of food in national development was attested to by a former Anambra State Military Governor, Col. D. S. Abubakar, when he lamented in 1978 at Otuocha that “If we are to succeed in our efforts to develop a strong and healthy nation, it is necessary that we produce more food.”<sup>2</sup> The importance was further underscored by the World Bank report of 1986 which stated that:

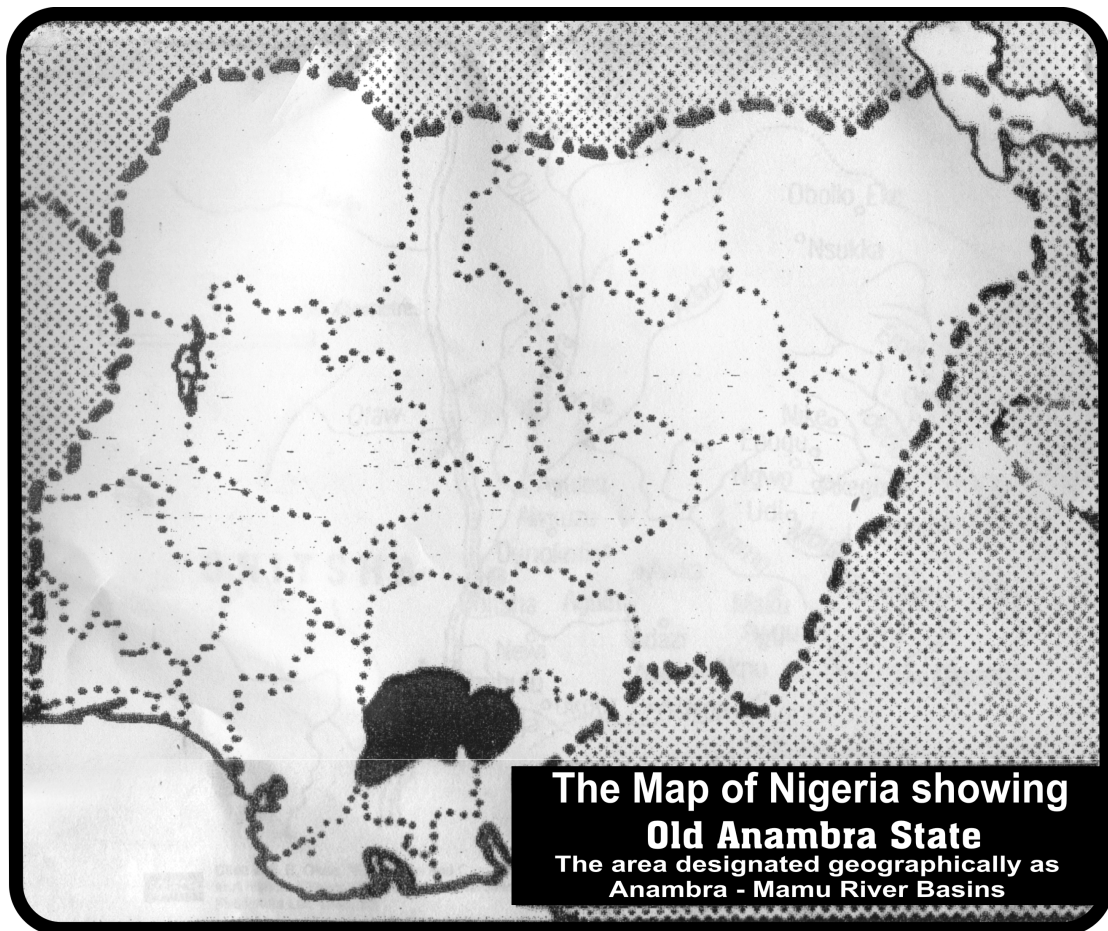
The costs of inadequate diets to families and nations are considerable. Inadequate diets increase vulnerability to disease and parasites. They result in general lack of vigour, alertness and vitality. These outcomes reduce the productivity of people

and income, and make it more difficult for families and nations to escape the cycle of poverty.<sup>3</sup>

The philosophy of food self-reliance was considered imperative by the different stakeholders in the Anambra-Mamu hydrological province, an area that covers the present Anambra and Enugu States plus the contiguous communities who live in the seven LGAs of Ebonyi State namely Abakiliki, Ikwo, Izzi, Ezza North, Ezza South, Ohaukwu, and Ishielu. All the above, constituted Anambra State until the creation of new states in 1991. The zone is bounded in the north by the southern Benue trough, in the west by River Niger and in the east by the Cross River Basin. It is underlain in the south by the Imo Clay Shales. It lies between Latitude 6°35' north to Latitude 8°30' north and Longitude 5° 40' east to Longitude 7° 05' east.<sup>4</sup> It was part of Eastern Nigeria until 1967 when it came under the East Central State. Carved out from the latter, it came into existence on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1976 when Imo State was excised and it became in political terms, the area designated as Old Anambra State - the status under which this thesis examines it. Its geographical features include a land area of 16,727.1 square kilometres; an estimated population of 6.9 million (as at 1987); 441 officially recognized autonomous communities; an average annual rainfall regime of between 60 inches to 90 inches or 152 cm to 203cm.<sup>5</sup>

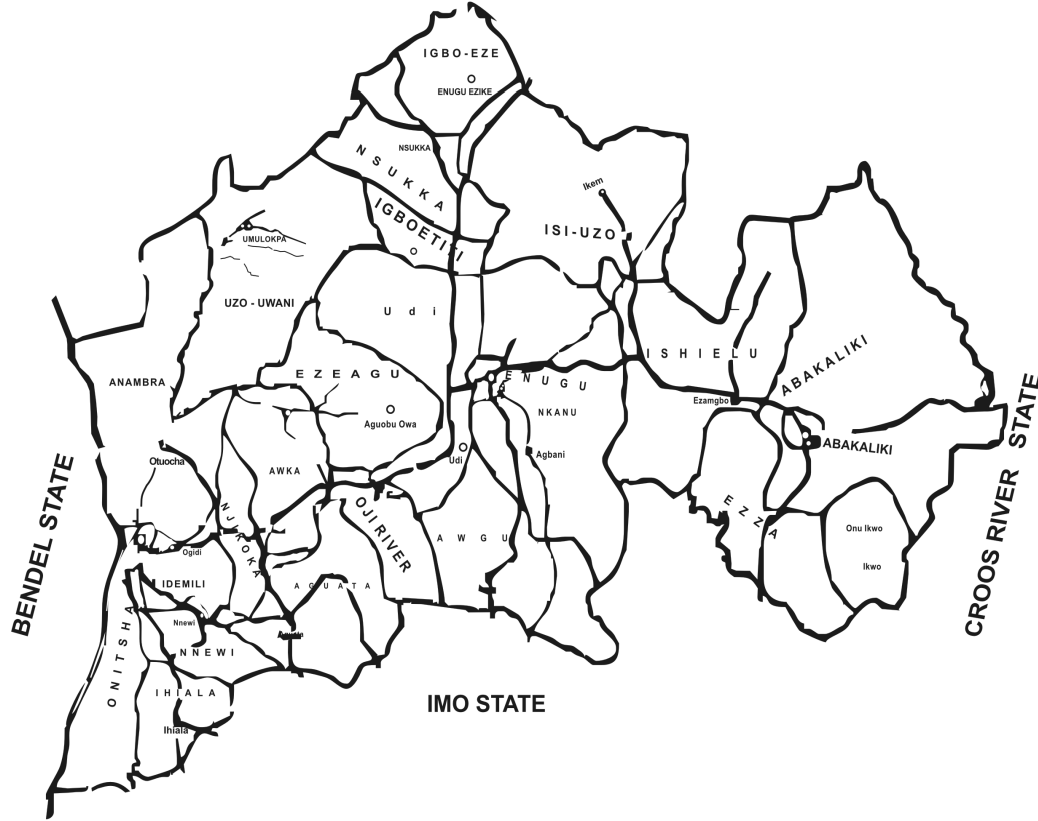
The basin is drained by several rivers such as the Niger, Urasi, Idemili, Ekulu, Nkisi and Ezu. However, the two principal rivers: Anambra and Mamu take upper hand in terms of geographical spread, hence the appellation, Anambra-Mamu system. From Ogurugu, the Anambra (together with its Oju tributary), flows in a slow motion over a lowland plain of about 120 metres in elevation, and empties into the River Niger at Onitsha. It achieves the drainage of the entire north-west lowland plain, otherwise called

the Anambra-Do River area, forming a confluence with the Niger at the lower Niger flood plain.<sup>6</sup> The Mamu with its principal Adada tributary has a total area of about 6,670 square kilometres of which about three quarter is contributed by the Mamu itself. The principal headwaters are the Ajali, which rises from Oji River, east of Enugu. The Mamu also comprises in the main, the Mamu River valley, which stretches from Okpoha in Ezza clan in Ebonyi State and flows through Awgu-Udi axis, covering Awka-Orlu uplands where it is separated from the Imo River Basin at the southern watershed by the Oghomili River at an elevation of about 120 metres.<sup>7</sup>





**OLD ANAMBRA STATE  
(POLITICAL)  
BENUE STATE**



**SOURCE:** Anambra State Of Nigeria: Blueprint for Rural Development in Anambra State, Official Document No. 1 of 1986, 20

The people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin were known for their food security consciousness, the robust food industry dating back to 5000 BC as demonstrated by ethnobotanical evidence, crop and animal ennoblement and the findings of D. D. Hartle and Thurstan Shaw; among other archeologists.<sup>8</sup> The tropical rain forest afforded it with exuberant biodiversity of flora and fauna, which served the needs for food self-sufficiency. Like all such ecologies across the world, increased human activity had the effect of reducing the ecosystem into semi-Guinea savannah vegetation. On its conquest of the area, the colonial regime adjudged the food situation satisfactory and hence adopted a laissez-faire policy towards it. It concentrated attention on cash crop production and failed to lay a solid foundation towards food security development.<sup>9</sup> In any case, Pax Britannica created road and rail transport and trade

diasporas, which aided food exchanges within the basin and with other regions of Nigeria. Immigrants from Awka, Nsukka, Enugu and Onitsha provinces where food deficits had started manifesting migrated to Nike, Igbariam , Anam and Ogbaru - where surplus farm lands were available even as they migrated outside Igbo land. However, at the end of colonial rule, the prevailing periodic famine had translated to chronic under-nourishment and malnutrition.<sup>10</sup>

At independence in 1960, the Eastern Nigeria Government initiated tremendous social and economic development programmes. With the slogan, “One Egg Every Day,” its First National Development Plan 1962-68, sought to minimize the dependence of the region on external sources, particularly animal protein consumption. Vigorous investments were made in poultry, small ruminants and piggery. Cattle kraals were established at Adada, Obimo and Awgbu in Nsukka and Awka Divisions respectively. Its projected 500,000 Day-Old-Chick project at Ezzamgbo was achieved.<sup>11</sup> Import substitution industries, tree crops engineering, community self-help-government partnership projects and thousands of micro and small scale industries were promoted, the latter having over 10,728 in fourteen towns and employing 28,721 workers according to a survey by Kilby in 1961.<sup>12</sup> It established thirty-one Farm Settlement Schemes (FSS) and plantations<sup>13</sup> which the area of study benefitted through the Uzo-Uwani and Igbariam farm settlements, Oghe plantation, Adadana and Affa state farms. Though the farms settlements failed in their objectives, the legacies of the plantations remain evident up to present times. However, the most ambitious of the schemes was the Uzo-Uwani irrigated farms. Drained by the Obinna River, it extended through Adani and passed

through Omasi community. These efforts no doubt resulted to improved standard of living and enhanced food security profile of region.

Self-reliance philosophy in food (a revolution also taking place in other parts of the country), resulted that, in market terms, the food situation at the larger Nigerian level was adjudged satisfactory, only a small portion of the nation's import bill valued at about £20 million out of a total consumption of £500 million) was due to import.<sup>14</sup> These consisted of sugar, milk, wheat flour and fish (mainly stock fish) – items to supplement the local supplies. Unfortunately, these efforts were damaged or destroyed by the Nigeria civil war between 1967 and 1970.

Between 1966 and 1967, the feeding capacity of the zone was overstretched by the surge of several thousands of refugees who fled from other parts of Nigeria following the tripple pogroms of that tempestuous period.<sup>14</sup> This was followed shortly by protracted civil war between 1967 and 1970. With the declaration of the Republic of Biafra, the Federal Military Government adopted economic blockade and scorched earth policy against the Biafra enclave resulting to unprecedented hunger and malnutrition in the Anambra-Mamu zone, manifesting chiefly as kwashiorkor, especially among children and the aged persons. The responses of the international community towards airlifting food and materials to the beleaguered Biafra were scuttled by indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations and decapitation of the International Red Cross planes.<sup>15</sup> The result was extreme hunger and malnutrition as illustrated in the three towns of Nnobi, Awka-Etiti and Nnokwa.

**Table 1.0 Nnokwa Parish Refugees and Relief Patients**

Towns	Refugees in camp	Non Camped Refugees	Kwashiorkor Patients	Incipient Kwashiorkor Patients
Nnobi	2,546	764	1,893	1,200
Awka-Etiti	1,577	647	1,014	2,430
Nnokwa	704	264	1,293	1,600
Total	4,827	1,675	4,200	5,230

**Source:** *ARCHON: Fr. Woulfe to Fr. Madike, October 29, 1968; F/247/1.* Cited in Rev. Fr. V.A Nwosu, "The Civil War Years" in *One Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985* (Awka: Africana-Fep), 370.

From the above table, the three towns noted above had 4,200 people in 1968 dying of kwashiorkor while 5,230 others had the symptoms of the sickness. This did not include unrecorded others who had died or who suffered varying degrees of starvation but were not in the refugee camps or sickbays.

At the end of the war in January 1970, the ravages of hunger and kwashiorkor continued to wreck their havoc. For instance, at the paediatric ward of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Ihiala, cases of severe malnutrition and kwashiorkor resulted to an average of 100 deaths in every 10 days.<sup>16</sup> The Federal Government embarked upon the Reconstruction Programme to repair the war damages via the Second National Development Plan, 1970-75. It failed to address the problem because a paltry sum of £2.20 million it provided for the entire East Central State could not shoulder the necessary Marshal Plan type of programme needed for the herculean task.<sup>17</sup> The situation was compounded by the vindictive policy of freezing the savings of the former Biafrans in exchange for a paltry £20, courtesy of Central Bank Currency Conversion Decree 1967. This is illustrated in the Supreme Court case of Chief J. J. Enweluzor vs. the Central Bank of Nigeria, 1976.<sup>18</sup> The punitive policy and obnoxious abandoned property saga mainly in today's Rivers State where a large number of the people had landed

properties consigned many of the elderly citizens into the poverty bracket. To repair the war damages, community self-help projects were embarked upon ranging from agricultural development, grading of access roads, water scheme and market construction. In the month of April 1975 for instance, 210 Community Councils embarked upon 489 projects at an estimated cost of N5, 471,011.<sup>19</sup> An example is Ayamelum Clan where 23 bridges and culverts destroyed by the war were replaced to ease food evacuation to the markets.<sup>20</sup>

The most enduring problem however, was the structural changes that took place in the economy, caused principally by the mismanagement of the massive oil wealth since 1973. The oil boom of 1973-1978 and subsequent massive oil revenue since then, in real terms diverted the attention of the government away from domestic food production. The oil revenue, which recorded an annual average of over \$6billion, was hardly used to spur development in all the sectors.<sup>21</sup> The non systematic utilization of these resources in a reliable and stable framework denied the economy the multiplier and accelerator effects of integration and diversification, thus stagnating domestic food production capabilities. Nigeria became ranked among the poorest nations and undeniably a huge consumer nation, one of the largest importers of food in the world. The import value for food, which was N57.8 million in 1970 (equivalent to \$80.9 million), climbed to \$463 million in 1986; and by 1991, it rose by over 20 per cent of the total imports. It was reckoned that for every one naira spent in the economy, 68 kobo found its way out of the country.<sup>22</sup>

The paradigm shifts while creating economic growth, in turn created food deficit situation in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin with the result that the region depended heavily on overseas and to a lesser extent, other parts of Nigeria for much of the food her

people ate. The dependence did not favour the poor folks whose abysmal condition consigned them to swim in the sea of poverty amidst vast ocean of wealth and prosperity. To tackle the problem which was nationwide, the Federal Government and other stakeholders initiated several agricultural programmes such as the FAO sponsored fertilizer trials (1970-71), National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) (1973), National Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB) (1973), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Seed Multiplication and Distribution Project (1976), Green Revolution (1980). It was made mandatory on commercial banks to give agriculture a higher priority in loan allocation. This led to inauguration of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund which protected banks against envisaged bad debts. It also financed 16 faculties of Agriculture in federal universities, 40 Schools and Colleges of Agriculture and 14 Agricultural Research Institutes. Through extension services, inputs such as fertilizers, agro-chemicals, and seed multiplication and distribution scheme were promoted, the aim being to provide incentives to farmers to expand output and ensure adequate supplies of foodstuffs to consumers at reasonable stable prices.

The above named agricultural programmes initiated throughout the country between 1972 and 1991 differed only in nomenclature and perhaps organizational structure and advisory procedures. They however shared common objectives, which according to Amalu <sup>23</sup> include the following: (1) to increase the production of suitable food crops, both carbohydrates and proteins particularly those which the country had economic and ecological advantages so as to provide the dietary requirements of a rapidly expanding population. (2) to provide increased employment opportunities in agriculture by developing small and large scale farms. (3) to supply sufficient agricultural

raw materials for the development of local industries and to absorb labour from the agricultural sector under import substitution policy. (4) to develop livestock and fisheries production in an effort to supply dietary protein requirements of the people. (5) to achieve reverse in rural-urban migration through integrated development of the rural sector.

Amalu stated further that to achieve the above objectives, the following policy measures were built into the country's agricultural programmes. (a) Agricultural farm input supplies and subsidies (2) agricultural credit, primary mechanisms and marketing channels (3) agricultural extension delivery systems (4) agricultural research and institutional development strategies (4) agricultural mechanization, processing and storage strategies (5) agricultural lands and water resources development.

Based on these objectives and policy trusts, the East Central State (later Anambra State) Government likewise initiated numerous programmes aimed at correcting the dwindling performance of agriculture and to restore food production as a viable venture. The principal ones include, the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) (1970), Food for the People Programme (FPP) (1980), Community Self-Development Programmes and Cooperative Societies. The above programmes only scratched at the problem of food insecurity owing to public corruption, policy inconsistencies, and wrong implementation strategies. This also reflected in the Nigerian society, which annual food import climbed from N441.7 million in 1976 to N6, 085.1 million in 1991.<sup>24</sup> The Federal Government sought to ameliorate the problem through the adoption of austerity measures in 1978, 1982 and 1984. These banned importation of some categories of food. Ironically, the government embarked on massive food imports tagged "Essential Commodities." Rice

being its principal item, it created the “Presidential Rice Task Force” to handle the project. The exercise ended dismally on account of widespread corruption. Worsening economic recession further compelled the government to seek the answer in the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with its cushioning programmes of National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and Better Life Programmes (BLPs). Unfortunately, the miasma of corruption and wide gap between intent and purposes ensured their failure. Consequently, per capita income of the citizens decreased from N1, 151 in 1976 to N843.94 in 1991 with per capita daily calorie intake depreciating from 24.93 per cent in 1976 to 09.10 per cent in 1991.<sup>25</sup> Inability to attain food security through these programmes and absence of functional nutritional policies including consumer education made the citizens to spur traditional nutritious foods in favour of imported more prestigious, more convenient and more expensive foods. This made Nigeria a net food importer. It is against this background that this thesis is designed to investigate the successes, failures and challenges of the interventionist programmes and their far reaching effects on the attainment of food security.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Food security concerns have over the years, jostled the complacency of national governments and have occupied the attention of the comity of nations, which explains the adoption of various strategies by not only the successive administrations that have piloted the affairs of the Anambra-Mamu River Basin but also the federal authorities, multinational development agencies and private organizations since 1960. The Anambra-Mamu basin, like its counterparts across the nation and Africa is faced with formidable



challenges of food deficits occasioned by ecological constraints and inordinate dependency on external sources among a myriad of other factors. Unfortunately, efforts geared towards tremendous transformations of the food industry in the interrupted First Development Plan of 1962-68 were virtually damaged or destroyed during the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970.

After the war, the structural changes in the economy induced by the quintessential oil boom led to boisterous food imports which almost strangulated domestic food production making it difficult for the mass of the people to access enough food to lead healthy and fruitful life. The Federal Government and East Central State (later Anambra State) as well as multinational development agencies and other non-state actors intervened by inaugurating a plethora of programmes to boost food supply and to ensure optimum production.

Unfortunately, all the efforts aimed at engineering a reconstruction of food production capabilities failed to achieve the desired goal because of wrong policy formulations, programme summersaults, implementation hiccups and absence of salubrious business climate. Their failure meant that in spite of abundant human and material resources, the zone degenerated to a level of incurable food deficits. Consequently, its performances in the area of food production remain abysmally poor even as consumption levels were comatose. The effect is that agriculture failed to gain its place of pride, diversification of the economy remained elusive and food continued to be imported massively from prolific foreign countries. This is the problem that this study examines. It explores the pattern of policy formulation and implementation, which made them to achieve epileptic results and made food imports to persist. Accordingly, the result

of the study should provide a framework for guiding future efforts at solving the problems of food insecurity not only in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin but also other regions of Nigeria and Africa and the developing world as a whole.

Until recently, the major discourse on food security issues have often been undertaken by experts in the field of agronomy and related disciplines. Their works though relevant and instructive have been tangential and bereft of the historical trajectory and antecedents. This study is an attempt to fill this gap and to historicize the evolutionary trend in the interventionist programmes and to use insights obtained therein to evaluate the nagging question of food insecurity in the area of study in the period between 1960 and 1991. In analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes, their wrongful implementation strategies are identified even as the study explores the opportunities and benefits which the Anambra-Mamu River Basin stands to derive from the development of efficient food production, distribution and consumption policies to meet up with the expectations of not only the populace but also of international standards.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to analyze the effectiveness of the interventionist programmes inaugurated by the different stakeholders, which include particularly the federal and state governments, donor agencies, and private companies and religious organizations towards achieving food security in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin between 1960 and 1991. Specific objectives include to:

1. Examine the background issues in the traditional food economy during the pre-colonial and colonial eras and the food situation up to 1960.

2. Analyze the policies adopted by the First Republic government and the effects of the Nigerian Civil War up to 1970.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of the interventionist programmes inaugurated between 1970 and 1991 such as the Civil War Reconstruction Programme, the National Accelerated Food Production Programme, Operation Feed the Nation, Agricultural Development Authority, Green Revolution, Presidential Rice Task Force, Food for the People Programme, Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Better Life Programmes.

### **Significance of the Study**

The failure of the plethora of agricultural programmes inaugurated by Federal Government of Nigeria and successive administrations in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin has often proved an enigma in the Nigerian food security development. A cross section of stakeholders, which include government policy makers, multinational donor and development assistants, and intellectuals have often wondered why the programmes performed below expectations in spite of the huge sums of money and other resources invested in them. This study is significant because it delves into their variegated nature and trajectories behind their failures. Unlike other studies that examined them tangentially, this study rather analyses them from holistic dimension and in line with the entitlement thesis which informs that a nation may through good agricultural policies, imports, food aids and grants, increase its national food supplies and achieve the much

desired food self-reliance yet identifiable sections of its population may remain food insecure because of other factors that were not taken into consideration. The work therefore serves as a reference material for policy makers to understand the dynamics of food policy design and implementation with particular reference to the area of study and in relation to other parts of Nigeria and the developing world.

From the perspective of economic history, the study uses the Anambra-Mamu hydro-geological zone as reference point to examine the failure of Nigeria's political leaders to actualize the various goals, treaties, declarations, resolutions and action plans, which it signed at the various food conferences and summits. An example is the World Food Conference in Rome 1974, where Nigeria joined the American representative, Dr. Henry Kissinger and other world leaders to declare that no child would go to bed hungry in the next ten years.<sup>29</sup>

The study also questions the continued hold upon trypanosomiasis as barrier to large scale animal husbandry in the zone in spite of the conversion of the upland areas from steaming rain forests to derived savannahs capable of sustaining heavy concentration of livestock. It demonstrates that the trypanosomiasis question was taken too far by the colonial regime and used as excuse to limit animal husbandry in the zone.<sup>30</sup> It also examines the ecological contradictions in the synclinal lowlands of Anambra, Niger and Mamu rivers, which in spite of their specialized agricultural features, remain food insecure. For instance, in spite of their meandering channels, deranged channels, abandoned courses and ox-bow lakes – features capable of sustaining abundance of fish and other aquatic resources, the zone derived less than 7% of its fish needs from within, with about 70% from Norway (dried cod), Iceland (iced and frozen fish), UK and North

Atlantic (tinned fish); 15% frozen fish from the Gulf of Guinea, about 4% dried fish/crayfish/periwinkle from the Niger Delta and about 4% dried fish from Lake Chad.<sup>31</sup> Even at that much of the internally generated fish were composed of *azu iwere* – substandard fish killed with poisonous *iwere* leaves or gammaline chemicals.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The work covers the period between 1960 and 1991. The choice of the commencement date stems from the fact that it was the year that the first independent government came to power. For the first time, revolutionary formula was initiated on the issue of achieving food security objectives, the preceding colonial government having adopted a *laissez faire* policy towards it. It terminates in 1991 to reflect the end of old Anambra State as a political entity. In terms of geographical coverage, the study is limited to old Anambra State.

The population study focused on Anambra River Basin, otherwise called old Anambra State. It today comprises the two states of Anambra and Enugu States plus six local Governments in Ebonyi State namely, Abakaliki, Ikwo, Izzi, Ezza North, Ezza South, Ohaukwu, and Ishielu. The study traverses the different political regimes that ruled the area of study. Though the commencement date of the study is 1960, it however goes back to the pre-colonial and colonial eras to bring out the background situation before 1960. It then traverses the First Republic era of Eastern Nigeria, the Nigerian Civil War era, the days of East Central State and finally old Anambra State until its dismemberment in 1991. Although the study centres on the entire population, the rich and poor, public (civil) servants and informal sector/farmers, emphasis is however on the low

strata of the society composed of small holder farmers, petty traders, service providers and other marginal or vulnerable groups such as the physically challenged, who as it were suffered from food insecurity. Such households lived in the rural areas and urban slums and peripheries, they lacked sufficient purchasing power and therefore could not buy enough from the functional markets at the same time they lacked the resources to produce their own food. The study is encompassing and examines the different facets of the quest for food security and how the interventionist programmes impacted on these. It also analyses the differing thematic areas such as the effects of exponential population growth, marketing/distribution, ecology, globalisation and technology transfer. Importantly, the study examines the policies and strategies by which the different tiers of government and multilateral development agencies as well as implementation agencies in the ministries, departments and parastatals executed the programmes. Finally, the study scrutinizes the effects of the poor implementation of the programmes particularly on the poor households.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will guide the study.

1. What were the dynamics of traditional food economy in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin during the pre-colonial and colonial eras and the food situation at independence in 1960?
2. What was the nature, dynamics and policies adopted by the Eastern Nigerian Government towards achieving food security and to what extent did the Nigerian Civil War affect food security up to 1970?

3. To what extent were the interventionist programmes such as civil war Reconstruction Programme, National Accelerated Food Production Programme, Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, “Essential Commodity,” Structural Adjustment Programme and Food for the People Programme and other policy instruments put in place by both the federal and state governments in ensuring sustainable food security in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin in the period between 1970 and 1991?

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terminologies feature regularly in the study. Their meaning and usage within the context of this work are as follows:

**Carrying Capacity:** This refers to the total number of people who were fed by domestic production in the area of study from 1960-1991. It is derived by dividing the geographical area by the total population.

**Food Security:** This is a situation in which individuals, households and communities in Anambra-Mamu River Basin enjoyed in a sustainable way, consistent access to foods that in quantity and quality provided them with hygienic and nutritionally balanced diet. The concept as used in this study transcends what economists call “effective demand.” This implies that for the area of study to assume that it has achieved food security, all categories of people both rich and poor, farmers and non-farming population alike, must be able to achieve satisfaction in their food needs in terms of nutritional qualities, balanced with quantity. The study evaluates food security on broad, generalized terms rather than narrow, specific approaches, which means that multifaceted factors are factored into the analysis. These

include among others, the role orchestrated by climatic and natural perturbations such as soil quality, erosion, vegetation and landforms, marketing and distribution mechanisms, effects of political (mis)governance such as political strife, conflict and wars. Others include transportation difficulties, rural-urban disparities in development, population implosion/explosion, type of farming tools, technological innovations, effects of micro and macro-economic factors such as inflation, unemployment, unstable markets, world price gyrations, and the drain imposed by foreign debt and food imports. Also examined are the role played by inequitable distribution of national resources among income groups and communities and the effects of quantitative, qualitative and structural changes that took place in the economy. Lastly, the study evaluates food security in the binoculars of paradigm shifts at achieving a re-conceptualization of national security, which lays emphasis more on issues bordering on human rights and human security rather than the state centric military notions of security, which has been the perspective in Nigeria since the early 1970s.

**Food Insecurity:** This refers inability of the people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin during the period under review, to access enough food to live healthy, fruitful life as a result of either chronic or transitory poverty both of which were characterized by inability to produce one's own food, lack of purchasing power to buy from the market, eating one type of food like cassava and yam every day and lack of nutritious mix of food components. The study analyses it in relation to interplay of forces caused by the above factors among others.

**Food Balance Sheet:** Also called the "food situation," it measured the relationship between food demand and supply in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin in the period of study. It showed the estimate of per capita supply of food which was determined by the



official data supplied by the National Bureau of Statistics, based on a basket of the ten major food items, which included rice, maize, cassava, guinea corn, millet, beans, groundnut, yams, cocoa yam and plantain.

**Food Self-Reliance:** This refers to the situation where all the available human and material resources in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin were put into maximum use, in order to satisfy domestic food needs of the population in such a manner that everyone, the rich and poor alike would depend on these resources to meet their basic food needs.

**Hidden Hunger/ Food Poverty:** Hidden hunger refers to a condition where food was available in the area of study but enough of essential nutrients to build a healthy body and to provide energy for work was absent. Households that spent less on food than the defined threshold were considered to be “food poor.”

**Kilocalorie:** Kilocalories (kcal), which are units for food measurement is used in the study to measure how much chemical energy food consumed by the Anambra-Mamu River Basin produced based on individual factor such as age, sex, body size, weight, height and levels of physical activity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Many theories on food security/insecurity in their various manifestations abound. However, this research adopts two explanations which are the dependency and entitlement theories because of their abilities to offer comprehensive analyses of the food situation in the area of study. While dependency explains the inordinate reliance of the people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin on external sources of food supply to the

detriment of domestic food production, entitlement theory dwells on irrational distribution of national resources and wide income differentials that exist in the region to the marginalization of the poor farmers, low income civil servants, petty traders and service providers in the villages and urban slums. It made the rich to eat prodigiously often with attendant health consequences while the poor and marginal groups, strangled by hunger and deprivation eke out a living from the bare earth.

### **Dependency Theory**

The theory originated in Latin America during the 1950s. It was promoted by radical economists among who was Raul Prebisch, to explain the underdevelopment and exploitation of Latin America by the United States. The perspectives of this theory were broadened to apply to the situation of poverty and economic underdevelopment found in the Third World countries of Africa and Asia, what Gunder Frank terms ‘the development of underdevelopment.’<sup>32</sup> The concept of “dependency” was coined by the Brazilian economist, Fernando Henrique Cardoso to denote that crucial economic decisions are made, not by the countries that are being “developed,” but by foreigners whose interests are carefully safeguarded.<sup>33</sup>

The food situation that prevailed in Anambra-Mamu River Basin during the period of study can be explained by this theory. Since contact with the white man between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Anambra region was incorporated into the capitalist world economy as suppliers of first, human labour via the Atlantic slave trade and later raw materials (principally palm oil and palm kernel) to feed the metropolitan industries of Europe and the America Hemisphere. Advent of colonial rule perfected the

dependency syndrome and instituted fundamental contradictions, which made the colonial masters – Britain to develop hostility towards industrial development of the area. In the absence of industries to absorb the products of agriculture, it conferred on the Anambra region, a predominantly extractive, externally and vertically integrated economy – one that was oriented towards serving the needs of the advanced capitalist world. With nominal or flag independence attained in 1960, the stultifying imperialist structure operated by Britain not only remained intact but was improved upon, expanded and widened in scope to accommodate other imperialists from Western Europe, America and Asia. The prevailing neo-colonial regime made it a disarticulated economy, an overseas extension of the capitalist world, serving rather the interests of foreigners to the detriment of the indigenes.<sup>34</sup> The enclave economy was further characterized by asymmetrical trade relationship in favour of the external economies. It meant that the character, dynamics and direction of the economy particularly with respect to material production, became a function of the dictates and needs of the external economies to which it was an appendage. In the absence of manufacturing industries to absorb the products of agriculture and with emphasis placed on the needs of external economies rather than the domestic economy, there was bound to be under-development of the industrial sector and non-utilization of the primary products generated within the economy. It left the farmers with no alternative than to sell their products to external markets without simple valorization.<sup>35</sup>

Faced with this grim reality, concerted efforts were made by the Eastern Nigeria Regional administration led by the Rt. Hon. Dr. M. Okpara, to minimize the effects of dependency through establishment of import substitution industries. This model adopted

since the late colonial era and continued since the advent of petro-chemical boom in the early 1970s, has robbed the economy the benefits of true industrial take-off. It made it a mere assemblage of products manufactured abroad and in the case of food industries; it relies on imported concentrates to churn out luxury goods. This conditioned the economy towards external orientation following the inability of the Federal Government to take advantage of the propitious oil revenue for true industrial development. This factor denied the economy the multiplier and accelerator effects of diversification, inter-sectoral linkages and integration sine qua non for sustainable development.<sup>36</sup>

This development posed a number of implications for the Anambra region. Firstly, with engine of growth located externally, the citizens who could not put into practice their professional knowledge or develop their innate potentials took disproportionately to outward migrations to cities within and outside the zone and to overseas in the brain drain syndrome. Within the zone, majority of them took to trading, marketing other peoples' products or engagement in other non-agricultural sectors of the economy as viable alternatives that offered quicker returns on investment. This served as basis for high level of dependence on the industrialized Western nations for industrial goods and for the basic food needs of the people. Secondly, in the absence of industries to absorb agricultural products and more importantly, lack of modern food preserving technologies, the farmers faced high perishability of food products, which could not be utilized into secondary or finished goods. The frustrations engendered by this factor discouraged expansion in farming operations. Thirdly, dependency status made the economy of the Anambra region to remain an essentially capitalist and unplanned enclave controlled by the invisible market forces of demand and supply. Absolutization and profit

maximization characteristic of the system entailed that the interests of the people were sacrificed on the altar of primitive accumulation by the minority but dominant bourgeois class who in tandem with foreign interests grew very influential and indeed more powerful than the State. Such an economy could not but generate internal contradictions, which clearly demonstrated in the imbalance in the development of the urban and rural sectors. With the interest of the economic managers located almost exclusively in the urban sector, the rural sector was grossly neglected leading to a differential growth rate of one per cent as against seven per cent for the urban sector.<sup>37</sup> This exacerbated rural-urban drift, which had been a troubling phenomenon since the colonial era. The effect was that since urbanites rarely produced food, the food security profile of the region degenerated curiously from self-reliance in the 1950s and 1960s,<sup>38</sup> to an undesirably net importer till date. Another implication was the absence of sectoral linkages in the economy. With dependency irretrievably set in motion, a mono-product regime subsisted. At first, it was export of cash crops mainly palm produce as raw materials. With discovery of oil in commercial quantities, petroleum export took the driver's seat of the economy even when it was employing less than 6 per cent of the population.<sup>39</sup> With the adamant refusal of the ruling class to diversify the economy and give agriculture and other sectors their pride of place; unemployment took high toll, producing restlessness among the unprotected members of the public.

The most serious disadvantage of the dependent economy was that it made the satellite state (Anambra region in particular and Nigeria in general) inescapably vulnerable to the externally generated problems and crises emanating from the advanced capitalist economies. The implication was that cyclical fluctuations and crisis in the

economies of foreign trading partners were imported and replicated in the local economy - what economists euphemistically refer to as 'business cycles.'<sup>40</sup> Consequently, world economic recession, which Nigeria escaped in the 1970s because of the resilient nature of the economy made possible by massive oil revenue, hit her intermittently since 1979 and continued afterwards following the volatility of prices in the international oil market. Unable to recover from the shocks, stagnation and double-digit inflation took their tolls hitting the citizens throughout the 1980 and 1990s. To arrest the situation, the Federal Government panicky adopted 'belt tightening' austerity measures in 1978 and followed it up in April 1982 by enactment of Economic Stabilization Act, which widened the coast of the austerity measures as strategy to stem the tide of recession. However, their grueling effects necessitated massive importation of food products known as "Essential Commodities" to cushion nerves of restless citizens. Its wrongful and corruptive distribution formula further stifled the low strata of the society leading to worsening of food crisis. This set the stage for the adoption of structural adjustment programme in 1986, which failed to correct the inherent imbalances leading to periodic nationwide riots that lasted up to the mid 1990s.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that the self-reliant philosophy preached by successive tiers of government proved lip service. For instance, at a time when there was no food scarcity and the farmers were working hard to respond to the demand, the Federal Government took to the reckless issuance of the hot cake food import duty licences. There is no doubt that in alliance with chains of disincentives created by the bubbling oil wealth; this tilted the rules of the game in favour of food imports to the detriment of local production. With oil as mono-product, the economy paradoxically

assumed the status of growth without sustainable development. The same government also frustrated several efforts made to change the status-quo and to correct inherent imbalances by its inability to take firm measures. Starting from 1972 it promulgated the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree as measures to reduce economic dependence and to encourage Nigerians to participate in the operations of economic activity, which was almost entirely in the hands of foreigners. The amendment of the decree in 1977 also geared towards the same objective. Unfortunately, the exercise was frustrated by the active collusion of the comprador bourgeoisie, who acted in tandem with foreign interests to sabotage the system. <sup>41</sup>

The failure notwithstanding, in subsequent years the government inaugurated other programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Again, the programmes made no serious intention to make agriculture to be productive. For instance, through the Land Use Decree enacted in 1977 and amended in 1980 as Land Use Act, the political authorities encouraged appropriation of large tracks of peasants' land in favour of military and police brass and their business mogul associates and politicians. In the Anambra region almost the entire cultivable land in the fertile food producing zone of Uzo-Uwani were appropriated by uncommitted absentee landlords who bought them at very cheap prices not for food cultivation but as collateral to access cheap agricultural loans from the government and to divert it to other ventures unrelated with farming. <sup>42</sup> One of these ventures was food importation, which displaced the indigenous farmers from business. Locally produced foods found it difficult to compete with foreign equivalent dumped in the peripheral Anambra region. This is explained by the fact that the foreign foods were

heavily subsidized by their home governments and had the advantages of free market and trade liberalization. These were trade regimes promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of the globalization realities, which as it were favoured the rich advanced countries of the North against the poor peripheral trade partners of the South.<sup>43</sup>

The consequence was that in spite of the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of the Anambra region were agriculturally oriented; the zone was unable to feed its populations. It made all the agricultural and poverty reduction programmes to be fated to failures. For instance, the linkage effect intended to be achieved by the adoption of DFRRRI and Better Life Programmes failed because active participation of the farmers and rural dwellers was not effected. In similar way, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) failed because lucrative areas of the economy such as oil and export trade of cash crops remained in the hands of monopolistic alien commercial firms under the protective umbrella of their 'home' countries and their collaborators who served as commissioned agents, contractors and intermediaries for the foreign concerns.<sup>44</sup> This had been the economic policies pursued by the multilateral development agencies since independence. It made the situation reminiscent of the colonial tactics of enriching the metropolis and making Nigeria to be economically dependent.<sup>45</sup> The effect was that majority of the countrymen and women were perpetually consigned to engagement in small scale, low yielding traditional methods of farming, petty trading, meagre wage employment as clerks, technicians and unskilled artisans, and in factories, skilled workers were employed as contract and casual staff on very low pay. The experience of the Anambra region in this regard was that of non-producing and non-industrial consumer society. This position,



which was true and replicated in the entire Nigerian workforce made Usman to lament that,

The wealth of this country is interested to produce people whose role is to act as salesmen, mere salesmen and advertising hacks for trans-nationals.<sup>46</sup>

The matter was made more difficult in the fact that the school curriculum and educational system put in place in the Anambra region had like elsewhere in Nigeria particularly since the 1970s, failed to equip the recipients with functional skills capable of affording them self-employment. Efforts made by some concerned individuals, and pressure groups to defeat neo-colonialism and to re-orientate the thinking faculties of the nationals were frustrated by the imperialists, acting in concert with not only the comprador class but also agents in the Nigerian State and ruling class. The implication was that the vigorous interventionist efforts engineered by the respective administrations were fated to failures. Anambra business class who should have tapped the technological innovations promoted by the government and donor agencies diverted their interests to trading and importation, which offered more attractions. Unregulated pumping of money into the economy by government in favour of import substitution manufacturing, construction and the service sectors, neglected agriculture in which over 70 per cent of the population depended for livelihood.<sup>47</sup> The net effect was high food import regime that set the stage for negative growth of local food production. This recorded -20.81% and -12.76% in 1975 and 1980 respectively.<sup>48</sup> It led to fall in per capita calorie intake from 1,896 kcal in 1970-74 to 1,761 kcal in 1975-79, rising to 2, 200 kcal in 1990-91 yet below the required standard. The food consumption deficit stood at 21.6% in 1970-74,

27.2% in 1975-79/80, 23% in 1985 and 9.1% in 1990-1.<sup>49</sup> These were pointers to economic weakness, depletion of scarce foreign exchange and chronic trade deficits.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that dependency theory offers good explanations for the non-development of the Anambra region into self-reliant and food secured entity. However, attractive the dependency theory proves, it cannot offer sufficient explanations of the failure of the interventionist programmes and subsequent hunger and malnutrition that bedeviled the people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin during the period of study. In as much as dependency factor was responsible for the difficulties in achieving food security and also flooding the basin with foreign food, it was not in the broad sense of it responsible for the non-accessibility of the available food (both imported and local varieties) by the poor, marginal and vulnerable groups who formed the majority of the population. In the same vein, dependency does not offer valid explanation on the equally important aspect of food security indicators, which implies that food must be accessible to everybody in the study area. In this respect, some other factors must have been responsible for the faulty handling and distribution of national resources, which was the prime cause of high degree of poverty, hence hunger and malnutrition in the region as well as Nigeria. This aspect made the food entitlement theory attractive to this research.

### **Entitlement Theory of Famine and Hunger**

The theory was propounded by Amartya Kuma Sen, a Nobel Peace laurel and an Indian professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard.<sup>50</sup> It came as a reaction to the campaign of the neo-Malthusts, otherwise referred to as anti-natalists who sought to heap

all the blame of hunger on population growth. Sen's pioneering book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* published in 1981, demonstrates that famines occur not because of lack of food, but from inequalities built into mechanism for distributing food." From his empirical research, he concludes that, famine is due to people not having enough purchasing power rather than there not being enough food in the market.<sup>51</sup>

This theory demonstrates that it would be too simplistic to attribute the problem of food insecurity in the Anambra-Mamu region to population and ignore the unfair distribution of national resources. In spite of the high population agglomeration in the area, the resources to produce enough food had been available and in spite of the economic down turn over the years, food had been in abundance even as the markets were functioning properly. Like the rest of Nigeria, peak food availability was over the years made possible by three economic booms: agricultural, oil and financial booms. Yet the poor and vulnerable group could not access enough food because of poor purchasing power; at the same time they lacked the capacity to produce for themselves. This situation showed similarity with the examples of famines in Bengal (1943), Bangladesh and Ethiopia (1974) as cited by Sen. In these places, the peasants groaned in hunger caused by flood, drought or warfare respectively, yet food was being transported from their regions to the cities and abroad where it earned higher prices.<sup>52</sup>

Bringing it home, apart from the civil war days when starvation was adopted as weapon of warfare, food was plentiful in the Anambra-Mamu region made possible through local production, intra-regional distribution within the confines of Nigeria and importation from overseas, courtesy of the quintessential oil boom but the poor could not

access it enough because they lacked purchasing power defined as food entitlement. Several shocks such as high unemployment and under-employment, massive retrenchment of staff, arrears of unpaid salaries/pensions, frequent market fire disasters, and incessant communal clashes in the food producing zones of Aguleri/Umuleri, Ezza of Abakaliki, Igga/Omasi in Uzo-Uwani all coalesced with official corruption and misdemeanour among the political ruling class to defeat the goals of the several interventionist policies. More importantly, unhealthy rivalry defined as dichotomy between the northern ‘Wawa’ and southern ‘Agba-Enu,’ rendered the implementation agency – the civil service so inefficient and bankrupt that the programmes were fated to failures. Their failures caused peasant farmers and service providers in the villages and urban slums to eke out miserable living in the midst of plenty.<sup>53</sup>

Inability of the poor households to access enough food in the Anambra zone was therefore not as a result of food availability decline (FAD) or lack of food caused by population explosion, but “exchange entitlement decline” (EED) caused by political shocks and skewed distribution network of national resources which sidelined the unprotected group. It should be noted here that food entitlements are derived from both legal and ethical sources. One acquires food through four major sources: growing it by one’s self and one’s family, buying it from the market, working for it through one’s own labour and inheriting it i.e. being given food by others.<sup>54</sup> Realities showed that identifiable members of the population defined as vulnerable and marginal groups, were unable to key into any of these categories because the prevailing state of disequilibrium financially empowered the state actors, their associates and other privileged groups but discriminated and strangled the majority – the under dogs. Even when all things were

equal, the condition of the latter group was worsened by the economic downturn which led to mass industrial layoffs between 1983 and 1991. This rubbished the extended Africa family culture on which the 'have nots' depended on their better off relations for sustenance. Inequalities built into the mechanisms for distributing the 'national cake' failed to protect the poor, the unemployed and the physically challenged as was done in functional democracies such as the USA and Britain where such misfortunes were mitigated through food banks or Food Stamp Administration.<sup>55</sup>

This research adopts the dependency and food entitlement theories because the Anambra Mamu region is a dependent, neo-colonial territory where the ruling elites not only adopted faulty distribution mechanisms of the national resources but also adopted food importation as state policy even when the advantages of self-reliance abounded.

## **Literature Review**

Literature review serves as guide post in academic research. Food security is a multidisciplinary field of study, which made a cross section of scholars to discuss and analyse it from differing disciplinary background. It is for this reason that this research has found it imperative to consult a number of extant works in the food security subject matter, using thematic approach.

## **Food Security**

The first set of materials, are works that dwell on the meaning of food security/insecurity. The combined study of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) defined it as "access by all people at all

times to food needed for a healthy life.”<sup>56</sup> The 1996 World Food Summit also defines it as “when there is physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all peoples at all times to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>57</sup> From the above definitions, food security has the essential features of adequacy, availability, accessibility, sustainability and utilization. The primary importance paid to household evaluation made the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), to define it as “the capacity of a household to produce a secure and sustainable basket of adequate food.”<sup>58</sup> The gap in these definitions is that they are of generalized nature. The specifics, details and illustrations as well as the insights generated from the definitions are what this research seeks to evaluate with particular reference to the Anambra-Mamu River Basin of Nigeria.

### **Food Security Indicators**

A number of authors have also evaluated it from the angle of food security indicators to bring out its salient features. Joseph Hulse’s, *Science, Agriculture and Food Security*<sup>59</sup> and The World Bank’s 1986-policy study *Poverty and Hunger, Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*<sup>59</sup> demonstrate that food security is evaluated on broad, generalized terms rather than narrow, specific approaches as no endogenous and exogenous factors are left out in the calculations. They note that food security is not synonymous with agriculture or food production but rather a function of the people’s standard of living, measured by their purchasing power and the extent or degree of poverty eradication. It is also not the same thing as agricultural self-sufficiency or self-reliance because nations like Mexico and Brazil were major food exporters, yet about 25 to 30 per cent of their citizens suffered from acute hunger and malnutrition. This

was also the case with Zimbabwe prior to the severe drought of 1991-2.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Taiwan and Singapore were not agriculturally oriented and imported almost all the food their nationals ate, yet they were among the Asian countries whose citizens enjoyed the highest standard of living.<sup>61</sup> Cuba depended on food imports but her distributional policies eliminated hunger and malnutrition.<sup>62</sup> Hulse explains that food security discourse places emphasis on household evaluation as national figures could often be deceptive. The World Bank Group uses the terms “chronic and transitory food insecurity” and “relative and absolute hunger” as indicators to demonstrate that national governments should focus on these measures in their quest to arrest the menace. It set the minimum of \$1.25 a day calculated on purchasing power parity rates as threshold for measuring food security.<sup>63</sup>

### **Poverty Indicators**

The poverty indicators made the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to consider 71 percent of Nigerian households as poor, with half of them classified as “core poor” or very poor. Of this, 77 per cent of the urban and 68 percent of the rural belonged to the poverty bracket.<sup>64</sup> This impelled the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) to conclude that the food security profile of Nigeria between 1970 and 1991 was largely unimpressive. It showed that food imports as substitute rose progressively from 6 percent of total imports in 1960 to 20.51 percent in 1991.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, per capita daily calorie intake declined from 24.4 percent between 1970 and 1979 to 23.58 percent and 8.38 percent between 1980-1990. The progressive decline in the average annual per capita income, which remained less than N1, 540.13 within the same period, made Nigeria one of the poorest countries in the

world.<sup>66</sup> The above works irrespective of their ability to address the problem, however generalized it in the Nigerian context. The present study intends to fill this gap using a sub-section of the country – the Anambra-Mamu River Basin to elucidate.

### **Traditional Igbo Food Economy**

A number of authors have evaluated food security concerns from the background of Igbo history. Elizabeth Isichie's work, *Igbo Worlds: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Descriptions* is apt. It provides valuable background information and description of the culinary and rich food culture of the Anambra-Mamu area as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>67</sup> Isichei uses the account of the earliest European visitors to Igbo land such as W. B. Baikie (1854) and H. Barth (1851) to demonstrate that the people were self sufficient in food production and as there were no extremities of wealth and poverty, there was no malnutrition, unemployment or begging. The significance is that the ancestors of the Igbo were satisfactorily fed. G. T. Basden's work *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* and Thurstan Shaw's *Unearthing Igbo-Ukwu* both give stimulating insights into the food culture of the people. Basden dwells particularly on yam production, what he refers to as the Ibo "staff of life."<sup>68</sup> Thurstan features the iron-smelting industry as capable of producing agricultural implements that probably stimulated an advanced agricultural economy.<sup>69</sup>

This fact is corroborated by the *1980 Ahajoku Lecture* of Bede Okigbo<sup>70</sup> as well as the "Igbo Food Economy up to 1990" written by Obi Iwuagwu<sup>71</sup> both of which give background information and detailed inventories of the traditional crops and animals which form the cornerstone of Igbo food economy. However, the economic geographer,



Reuben Udo, in *Migrant Tenant Farmers of Nigeria*, attributes the food insufficiency in the area to the problem of land hunger and soil impoverishment. He uses the “push-pull” hypothesis to explain why people migrated in droves away from the peripheries of former Udi, Nsukka, Awka and Onitsha Divisions, where land became so overworked that even cassava, which thrives in relatively poor soils, started to fail. The pull factors were provided by existing economic opportunities in the cities and in other parts of Nigeria and beyond.<sup>72</sup> A biochemist, Caleb Okezie, in *Biotechnology: Benefits for Ihiala People*, uses Ihiala, one of the towns of the Anambra-Mamu River Basin, to demonstrate that the people could achieve food security, economic empowerment and poverty alleviation by revamping their food culture through utilization of modern biotechnologies.<sup>73</sup>

All the above-cited works provide illuminating general information on the food situation of the area under study. However, incisive as they proved, they all dwelt on the dynamics of traditional food economy of yesteryears and failed to offer explanation on the contemporary food situation. More so, with the exception of Basden, who merely noted the relative scarcity of animal protein, the other works took to nostalgic eulogizing and romanticizing the rich traditional food economy, without allowing us to see the other side of the coin. These are the gaps, which the present study intends to fill.

### **Population Studies**

Population studies are germane to this study. The works of A. G. Onokerhoraye<sup>74</sup> and George Ehusani’s *Politics of Population Control*<sup>75</sup> demonstrate the effect of unregulated population growth on the less developed countries in relation to their agricultural development. Onokerhoraye traces world population growth through history

and brings it down to the peculiar situation in the developing world particularly Africa. While discussing population in relation to food supply, the author cites example with Nigeria where available data indicates gross imbalance between population growth and food production. He notes that while population index increased at annual compound rate of 5.2 per cent between 1960 and 1974, food production showed a growth rate of 2.5 per cent during the same period.<sup>76</sup> Onokerhoraye's line of argument is however in disagreement with those of Ehusani who though not supporting population growth, unplanned and irresponsible breed of humans nevertheless cautions that the major cause of hunger in Nigeria is not over population as often alleged, but greed, embezzlement of national wealth and stashing them into foreign accounts.

The submission of this research - that population growth cannot be the cause of food insecurity as made manifest by Thomas and Ehusani is in agreement with the analysis of Jacqueline Kasum. Titled "Over population is not the cause of Africa's Famines," it demonstrates that many thickly populated countries enjoy great wealth and productivity. Examples include; Taiwan (1412), Hong Kong (13,562) and Singapore (11,536). When compared with Anambra's of less than 730-806 persons per square mile (1973 estimate), it proves that population is not a barrier to affluence.<sup>77</sup>

## **Dependency**

Other relevant works reviewed include: Eno Blankson Ikpe's, *Food and Society in Nigeria*,<sup>78</sup> Nkem Onyekpe's, "The Nature and Problems of Nigeria's Dependent Economic Status,"<sup>79</sup> and *The Wheat Trap: Bread and Underdevelopment in Nigeria* written by Gunilla Andrae and Bjorn Beckman.<sup>80</sup> These works capture the dependency

factor by attributing extreme politicization of the food sub-sector as one of the major causes of food insecurity. Ikpe attributes the murky waters of Nigeria's indigenous food deficits to the problems created by the oil boom in the early 1970s, which opened the Pandora's Box of food imports. Onyekpe attributes it largely to non-diversification of the economy, which also explains youths' migrations to the cities, resulting in high cost of labour in the farms. Likewise, Gunilla Andrae and Bjorn Beckman evaluate Nigeria's parlous food economy in the light of the decision of the leaders to allow a consortium of food exporters in the United States and elsewhere to convert Nigeria into a dumping ground for their products. This menace persisted because of the ignorance of those who had incorporated bread into their daily diet and also by well-entrenched groups who resisted every move to ban wheat imports.

The above three works, however leave some gaps in their trails. Onyekpe's work examines it from the Marxist point of view without elaborating on the other ideological viewpoints. Similarly, *The Wheat Trap* has the shortcomings of evaluating the matter only from the narrow angle of wheat without incorporating other basic foodstuffs and culinary. Likewise, Eno Ikpe views it from the angle of food customs and tradition and not food security profile. These are the gaps the present research fills using a section of Nigeria – the Anambra-Mamu River Basin - a microcosm of the larger nation.

### **Food Marketing and Distribution**

*The Food Commodity Trends* written by Samuel Onomakaiye<sup>81</sup> and William Jones's *Marketing Staple Food Crops in Tropical Africa*<sup>82</sup> use the Food Complementarity Theory to explain the dynamics of food exchanges between and among food surplus and

deficit regions. The authors cite the example of food diasporas between the Hausa traders whose surpluses of meat and fish were exchanged with animal protein deficit areas of the South from whom the former obtained garri and other food stuffs. The gap in the theory is that it fails to show the farm gate prices of foodstuffs purchased by traders. It tends to dismiss exploitation of subsistent farmers by traders as (reciprocal) rational economic decisions. It is silent on the large market chains and unscrupulous strategies adopted by traders to make some food items attract as high as seven transactions thereby skyrocketing retail prices. It is also silent on the use of carcinogenic insecticides such as the local *otapiapia* by traders to treat dried fish from Lake Chad against maggots.

### **Irrigation and River Basin Development**

Irrigation system and River Basin Development Authority as pivot towards achieving food security makes a review of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the US imperative to this study. The pragmatism at which the United States Government converted the over 2,000 acres of land on the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals marked the beginning of River Basin as engine of food security.<sup>83</sup> The programme, which received Congressional passage in 1933, was financed by a \$50 million appropriation from Congress and sale of bond from the public. Apart from harnessing water for farming systems, the project also achieved the reclamation and profitable use of land and generation of electricity.<sup>84</sup> It stimulated economic benefits to over 3 million people living in the over 40,000 sq. miles of land in the basin. The success story of the Tennessee project created other similar projects in the US and from there spread to both the developed and developing countries including the United Kingdom.<sup>85</sup> Kpotun Mohammed Baba use the Anambra Irrigation Project under the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority to bring to light, the importance of irrigation towards achieving food security

objectives. The author notes that of the 3,850 ha envisaged to be developed and equipped for irrigation, project discontinuities and subsequent deterioration of infrastructure made only 1,000 ha to be eventually achieved in 1998/99.<sup>86</sup> The author stresses that the story of under-performance also applied to Anambra State owned irrigation schemes at Adani which out of a total planned area of about 3,000 ha, only an approximate 600 ha was equipped and irrigated.<sup>87</sup> The gap in the above reviews is that while the Tennessee example is foreign, the Anambra system cited by Mohammed Baba is sketchy. The present work goes deeper to demonstrate the efforts and challenges in the Anambra-Mamu basin.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts historical analysis approach which entailed collection of data by the researcher from diverse sources between 2010 and 2014. Unstructured interview technique backed up with guided, face-to-face and in-depth oral interviews were conducted on ten serving and six retired career civil servants in the State Cabinet offices, twenty farmers, seven extension officers, ten housewives and four staff of government farms. Food Security Units of the Ministries of Agriculture in the three states were visited and detailed discussions was held with the Enugu State director of Food Security Unit, Mr. Patrick Njom. The library of the old Ministry of Agriculture building at Market Rd. Enugu provided very useful documents. Information was obtained at diverse places such as Radio Nigeria, Enugu, ADARICE Company Adani, School of Agriculture Igbariam, (abandoned) Rice Processing Mill Complex at Omor, Oghe Cashew Plantation, Market Garden Enugu, Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative Bank at New Heaven and Directorate of Employment, Okpara Avenue, Enugu. Others include the Land Use and Allocation Office Enugu and the Norwegian (Presbyterian) Church Farm at Ikwo, Livestock Centres and Veterinary Institutes

at Adada, Oghe, Ezillo/Nkalagu, Achi and Nkwele. Also visited were Lairages and abattoirs at Onitsha, Ihiala, Ozubulu, Nnewi, Ogidi and Igbo-Ukwu. Composite consumer price indexes of foodstuffs in some markets were analyzed even as nutritional status of patients over the years was obtained from four nurses and midwives at the four major hospitals in the zone. The National Archives Enugu and Ibadan and the libraries of the Universities of Lagos and its counterpart at Nsukka provided extensive secondary sources, which included unpublished manuscripts, dissertations, journals, seminars, workshops and conference papers, monographs and internet sources. Information and data garnered from the aforementioned were analyzed and interpreted in the chapters.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND TO FOOD INSECURITY: THE PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL ERA**

#### **Introduction**

This study is anchored essentially on the efforts made by the government and people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin in their quest towards achieving food security. Although discussions of the food economy in the period after independence up to 1991 forms the heart of this thesis, it may be imperative in this chapter to survey briefly the development before the study period. Such background information becomes necessary since the complex deep-seated constraints bedeviling food production, distribution and consumption patterns can only be understood in their historical trajectory. The chapter therefore demonstrates the traditional food economy and the feeding pattern of the people and the changes wrought by contact with the wider world beginning with the Portuguese incursion in the 15<sup>th</sup> century up to the era of legitimate trade and subsequent colonialism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Background to Food Industry**

The food industry of the Anambra-Manu geographical area like their counterparts in other parts of Africa was laid about 5000 BC, a time it was believed the Igbo people had been living in their present abode since the dawn of human history. <sup>1</sup> The slaving

English captain John Adams relaying his experience about the jungle of the Heebos (Ibos) about the 1820s noted that the vast morass, heavily timbered woodland stretching many miles into the interior where the people lived was unfit to produce sufficient food for the scanty population. The difficulty, which mankind faced at the initial times of the life of Homo sapiens is universally true. The use of simple tools made it extremely difficult to cut down the huge trees, which made cultivation and grazing of land unthought-of. Thus, gathering of food in the wild sufficed. Even when they started cultivation, the plot of land was initially very small, limited by the human physical labour and available tools. <sup>2</sup> This was true of the people of Anambra-Mamu basin, the 'core' probably around Awka-Orlu where it is believed the Igbo settled first before dispersal by different groups to other surrounding areas. <sup>3</sup>

Extensive archeological reconnaissance excavations in Igbo-Ukwu in today Aguata Local Government Area carried out by Professor D. D. Hartle <sup>4</sup> and similar other excavations across northern Igbo land show evidence of life characteristics of the late Stone Age. This also shows the extent to which the people had developed in the food culture. The artifacts revealed bronze objects, iron weapons and implements, pottery vessels, and stone tools. These are among the most unique and among the earliest findings in any part of Nigeria and they go a long way to show an elaborate and sophisticated lifestyles of the people similar to the present day living. <sup>5</sup>

### **Geographical Characteristics**

The Anambra-Mamu River area in the past was of course like other steaming tropical rain forest regions across the world. It was characterized by its remarkable

exuberant bio-diversity, which comprised animal species and immense variety of plants and vegetable formation, a large proportion of which were of nutritional and medicinal value. The zone boasted in the past, an abundance of plant species sometimes exceeding 150 different species per hectre, thus making it among the richest in terms of biomass productivity of all terrestrial ecosystems. Remarkably, however, this complex ecosystem usually stood on poor quality soil. Once destroyed, it became difficult or impossible for such a forest to recuperate. Population explosion had meant that the forests started shrinking fast thus reducing to secondary vegetation, the implication being that food cultivation was a poor alternative even as hunters finished off whatever wild life that was left leaving it bare of animals.<sup>6</sup>

The zone has high degree of rainfall which monthly distribution shows a long wet season from April to July interrupted by a short dry season in August known by the people as 'August break.' This is followed by another short wet season from September to October followed by long dry season from November to March. There is also marked variation in the total rainfall, which decreases in volume from the southern fringes to the northern frontiers. Though in the neighbourhood of between 80 inches for the southern parts such as Uga and Ihiala contiguous communities bordering Orlu zone in Imo state and 60 inches for the northern Nsukka zone, both of which are high enough for agricultural purposes, there is however high precipitation and the fluctuation effect of line squalls in these areas. Fluctuations in the amount, seasonal distribution and annual rainfall variability affect peasant-farming communities adversely. Since crop calendar for clearing the land, planting and harvesting of crops is directly controlled by the rainfall regime, any interruption or change in the anticipated pattern may result in crops failures.<sup>7</sup>

This matter was serious because the first rains in the line squalls often deceived many farmers who planted their crops expecting subsequent rains. When these failed to materialize, as often happened, there were crop failures. Likewise unusual, intense rainfall or below average might equally affect certain crops adversely and reduced their yield considerably.<sup>7</sup> The matter has worsened in recent times by the global climate change, which has continually wrenched havoc on farming operations. The excruciating effect of weather variations was the message painted of the area of study in the pre-colonial era by the celebrated novelist Chinua Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart*. It told of the ugly experience of a young farmer, Okonkwo, which expressed in the late arrival of the first rains and followed by a long period of drought, which roasted Okonkwo's yam seedlings. When the much-expected rains eventually came, it was first brief and momentary and then was followed by another blazing and scorching sun and finally violent torrents that washed away yam heaps.<sup>8</sup>

As it was in the pre-colonial era, so it still is today. In much of the upland areas, soils tend to be predominantly poor, acidic, highly weathered and therefore low in fertility. Rainfall is often excessive or excessively violent and unreliable during the planting seasons. Excessive rainfall has the tendency to reinforce high weed growth, pest and disease infestations. The effect had been that combined with other debilitating factors as the centuries rolled by, the average rate of growth of food production during the period of research never attained 2% which was far below population growth of about 3% and when the issue of post harvest perishables is put into consideration, investment in agriculture was not worth it.<sup>9</sup> The zone has several rivers, streams and lakes. Examples include Ulasi and Atammiri, which are joined by Abanze and flow into the Niger. They



run across Ihiala and Okija areas from Orlu zone in Imo State. Ezu, Adada, and Obinna rivers, as well as Omai and several others drain the respective communities. Ebonyi River drains the entire Abakaliki contiguous communities. Osugwudugwudu spring serve the large Amamu quarters in Ihiala while Agulu Lake though its fishes are taboo to the indigenes is revered as tourist centre. Iyiokwulu Lake in Anambra Zone is a destination point for tenant fisher men. Space may not permit the listing of Anambra Rivers, springs and Lakes but suffice it to say that the zone has an abundance of these natural resources which the people utilize for the betterment of their livelihood.

### **Effects of Population Growth**

The three basic features of the population in the area were its geographical size, density and rate of growth. Although not much was known about these features prior to the effective British occupation, available evidence suggests a high fluctuating rate of growth resulting to population being close to the carrying capacity of the land.<sup>10</sup> From the account of Olaudah Equiano, we know that even before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ever before contact with the white man, the area was already densely populated with highly developed culture.<sup>11</sup> The rapid growth was accounted for by differing waves of migration into the zone, which started in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century but gained momentum thereafter. Space may not allow a detailed account of the in-migrations but suffice it to say that salubrious climate and surplus food offered by the Anambra-Mamu forests and the developed cultural heritage impression left on the zone by the celebrated Nri culture were factors that attracted large number of immigrants. They came from as far as Cameroon, even as escapees and victims of the Ekumeku secret society in today's Western Igbo as

well as warriors and stragglers from the Benin Kingdom came to seek new hegemonic and commercial fortunes offered by the Onitsha port and its contiguous communities.

From the north came Igala and Idoma escapees of the horse mounted Fulani invaders and from the Jukun wars as well as chieftaincy tussle generated by the declining Igala kingdom. This led to the concentration of population, which included Akpoto (Idoma) and Igala elements who were settled in the Igbo-Eze, Igbo-Etiti and Uzo-Uwani areas, the later occupying today, places like Ogurugu, Igga, Enugu-Ezike, Opi and other areas particularly along the Anambra valley. With population increase over time, other unoccupied tracks of land such as Obukpa and Ovoko areas came into existence. From the southern parts came another wave of immigration into the Anambra-Manu area by escapees of the Aro slave raiders and their headhunting mercenaries/allies: Abam, Ohafia, Abriba and Adda and Nike. They sought refuge in the area and for the purpose of stability and peaceful existence and for defence against the slave raiders who played off one local community against the other.<sup>12</sup>

The slowing down of population posed by the Atlantic slave trade no doubt put a wedge on the population of the Igbo as a whole going by the records of the slaving captain, John Adams as well as Macgregor Laird, which in the ensuing years of 1822 showed an alarming annual export rate of 200,000 at its lowest calculation. In spite of the above depopulation factors, the Anambra- Manu area still boasted of a large population because it was the receiving end of escapees from other areas. It somewhat benefited from the slave raids in that it produced a centripetal movement whereby people migrated from the periphery from all directions of the core of the Igbo society. This factor, which accounted for the dense population of the area of study, is demonstrated by the fact that

in the 1970s, the East Central State (Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi) with an area of 38.3 square kilometers had a population growth of 58.3 per cent of the entire former Eastern Region. On the other hand, old Rivers State (Rivers State and Bayelsa) and Southeastern State (Akwa Ibom and Cross River) with geographical areas of 28.8 and 37.9 square kilometers had population figures of 12.5 percent and 29.2 percent respectively going by the 1963 census.<sup>13</sup>

In any case, out of the three urban centres with the highest concentration of population in East Central State, two namely, Onitsha and Enugu were located in the Anambra-Manu area. The population growth was supported by the estimation of Horton, which put the Igbo population somewhere between ten and twelve million much larger than his estimate for the Yoruba who occupied a much more expansive territory.<sup>14</sup> It also explains why the population in the interior particularly Awka and Onitsha and up to Enugu and Nsukka had been so dense through the ages as to press on the limited resources of the land. It made Igboland generally one of the most densely settled in Africa with the possible exception of the Island of Mauritius, the Nile Valley, Burundi and Rwanda. With a land area of 75,488 square kilometers, it had a population of 12.4 million in 1963, the average population density being 164 persons per square kilometer. This was exceeded by 32 countries in the world.<sup>15</sup> The effect of the population increases was to show up later at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century giving rise to waves of migration out of the zone.

### **Indigenous Igbo Food System**

The traditional food system of the Igbo since the dim past has conveniently been classified into seven distinct food components or categories as follows:

(a) Main food which include annual crops such as yams, cocoyam, other root crops, African bread fruit (*ukwa*), plantains etc. (b) Food supplements such as maize, tapioca, palm kernel, coconut, native pear and a host others. (c) Fruits such as star apple (*udara*), velvet tamarind (*icheku*) etc. (d) Condiments, spices and flavours such as *ogbono*, *akpalata*, *uda*, *uziza*, oil bean. (e) Fats and oils such as palm oil and palm kernel. (f) Vegetables such as *okazi*, *utazi*, *nchuanwu*, *olugbu*, *oha*, etc. (g) Masticatories such as kola nut, bitter kola, *mmimi* etc.<sup>16</sup> Added to this are; (h) Animal and fish products of diverse types.

Using undomesticated version of foods, McGlothlen has further categorized these into four principal groups. These include (1) relishes or side dishes that accompany the staple food in typical meals such as edible insects, palm wine etc. (2) Snacks that are consumed between meals e.g. palm kernels, palm nuts, coconut etc. (3) Short-term staple substitutes e.g. Bread fruit (*ukwa*) (4) Famine foods, roots, fruits and grasses such as cow pea (*akidi*) and pigeon pea (*fio-fio*).<sup>17</sup>

**Yam:** First among the main food or annual crops was yam. The incipient cultivation gave birth to the development of yam species like *Dioscorea Prachensis* (*ji abi*) and *D. abyssinica*, which was hybridized with *D. Cayensis* (*ji oku*) to produce the ancestral *D. Rotundata* (*ji aga*). Several historical accounts such as the records of Arab travellers like Ibn Batuta and Al-Omari who wrote in the medieval times, show that some species of yams were indigenous to West Africa.<sup>18</sup> This consensus is now accepted by botanists,<sup>19</sup>

a fact that also made Lewicki and Dr Lucien to testify of its antiquity in Igboland dating farther than the use of iron.<sup>20</sup>

Alluding to the importance of yam in the 1960 economy G.T. Basden described it as the “Ibo staff of life.” To be deprived of yam he said, created a condition of acute distress such that whatever substitute could not satisfy the native’s desire for his favorite food. He compared its foremost position as foodstuff and agricultural product to potato in Ireland.<sup>21</sup> The indispensability of yam in the diet of the people is measured equally by the fact that when the Igbo man said he was suffering from the effects of *ugani*, it did not necessarily mean that there was hunger in the true sense of it, but that there was scarcity of yam. *Ugani*, which means hunger or famine, refers particularly to the “hungry months” around June to August when yams had been planted awaiting harvest. During this period yam sold at prohibitive price at the market.<sup>22</sup>

Yams were eaten best pounded with assorted types of soup: *Egusi* (melon), okra, bitter leaf, *oha*, *nsala* or white soup, vegetable, etc. It could also be eaten as porridge which is a combination of yam with plenty vegetables and assorted condiments. A man’s worth was measured by his ability to feed his family on yam throughout the year as yam formed the principal food of the people.<sup>23</sup> It is important to note however, that yam is a carbohydrate diet and cannot on its own afford the required nutritional properties necessary for healthy living except if it is supplemented with meat and other protein-giving food items. In a society like Igboland where meat and animal products were seldom eaten or eaten as luxury and for most people during festivals, it was not unexpected that protein and vitamin deficiencies would be a common feature of such societies. The matter was even serious where people portrayed ignorance about the

nutritional benefits of vegetables and fruits or tended to eat them disproportionately. G. T. Basden, captured the significance of this fact when he observed that yam was singularly deficient in nutritional properties. One was expected to consume a large quantity to make up the expected notational requirements. He noted that the crop was of small size, which meant that even a small household in order to make up must consume an enormous quantity in a week. In a situation where the product was exorbitant and beyond the reach of some identifiable members of the public, particularly during the famine months, then there must have been some problems. Basden observed that *abi*, the only variety that was of great size was only available for a brief period. He concluded that since pounded yam was swallowed wholly without mastication, a person needed to eat a very generous quantity to sustain his physical powers. The need for quantity was therefore important to compensate the deficiency in quality as the Igbo vegetarian diet was not rich enough.<sup>24</sup>

In any case, the deficiencies were ameliorated by other yam varieties of lesser prestigious value, which include *Dioscorea bulbifera (adu)* and *Dioscorea dumentorum (ona)* which were not eaten widely by the people, perhaps only by the elders. These varieties though energy foods, they were however of considerable low starch content and were highly valued as medicinal because of their rich content of *diosgenemins (steroidal saponins)* and *dioscorin* (a storage protein with high antioxidant activities).<sup>25</sup>

The difficulties created by yam in the economy were alleviated by the domestication of some species of cocoyam and the subsequent introduction of other varieties from Asia. The poorer sector of the socio-economic stratum heaved a sigh of relief as they saw in cocoyam a crop free from the suffocating spirituality that was

associated with yam in addition to its laborious cultivation, appropriation of the best farming land, and above all its inordinate promotion of patriarchy, which made it exclusively a man's crop. The denial of the women folk of the right to cultivate or own yam plots meant that men exercised extra-ordinary power over the women's food security, which made them subordinated and dependent on their husbands, fathers and brothers.<sup>26</sup>

Cocoyam could not have substituted yam but it served as "yam" for the poor and needy and went a long way in keeping the down trodden and their children from hunger and starvation. The fact that it was exclusively a woman's crop added to this importance which gave it some qualifying names like "*aku nne*" (mothers wealth or what the mother can provide") *ihe bara na anị chirị umụ pata*, (that which went into the ground and came out with many children). These advantages made it a crop that was used to starve hunger<sup>27</sup> but like yam, it is largely carbohydrate with lots of deficiencies.

**African Bread Fruit:** African breadfruit, *Treculiar Africana (ukwa)*, native to the area was highly consumed as substitute to yam during the lean months. Similar to the breadfruit eaten in the Caribbean and South Pacific, it is eaten as porridge and the seeds are roasted together with palm kernel or coconut as snacks. Its water residue after boiling, served as choice drink. The fact of its high dietary fibres and high vitamin makes it ideal for patients with diabetes and for maintaining healthy eyes and skin and boosting the body resistance to diseases. No wonder the elderly Igbo cherished it in view of its cholesterol reduction properties as well as its content of Omega 3-6 and fatty acid content.<sup>28</sup>

**Maize:** The importance of maize lies in the fact that it fitted into the ‘hoe culture’ of the Igbo and was therefore planted in yam farms or intercropped with vegetables, cassava and other crops. Described aptly as the “hunger breaker” in view of being the first crop to be harvested in the agricultural year, corn or maize is used to eat a variety of meals. It is cooked with breadfruit (*ukwa*) or with other varieties of beans. It is also grounded and mixed with little cassava flour and eaten as fofo. It can be boiled and eaten with coconut, or palm nut as refreshment or as snacks. Some people prefer it roasted on fire. It can also be baked or fried. It is equally fermented and dried to produce *agidi* or *nni oka*, a sort of corn bread, which in Ghana is called kenkey. This is achieved by fermenting the wet flour, wrap it in cornhusks or banana leaves and then cook it. It is also prepared in porridge by mixing the flour with ingredients and cooked (*elele oka*). The Igbo also use maize gruel to produce infant food formula, which serves as supplement to breast milk particularly during weaning periods.<sup>29</sup>

**Cassava:** Cassava was not indigenous to the people. It is believed to have originated in Brazil and carried to Africa by Portuguese traders. Today over one third of world cassava is in Africa, Nigeria being the largest producer after Zaire.<sup>30</sup> This crop revolutionized the food economy of the Igbo. Cassava was a savior of the poor because unlike yam, which the farmer must own the costly seed yams, cassava needs no seeds, but stem propagates. It requires less labour as it is planted with hand on tilled ground, which need not much mound with the exception of the *Ogu Ukwu* areas of Ebonyi where large mounds are the preferred method of planting. It is drought resistant plant and survives in all soil types. Cassava has the advantage of being preserved in the ground for several years. The roots become even enlarged each year, the disadvantage however is that it becomes fibrous and



woody with subsequent lower starch content. The disadvantage of cassava is that it cannot be stored like yam, or cocoyam and the roots deteriorate a few days after harvest. This called for storage techniques such as drying the pellets and using them as floor (*achicha*) or fufu to be used during off food season.

The commonest method of using cassava as meal is to cook it as fufu paste or gari. Gari entails grating, drying and firing it dry into powdery particles. The roots, which are commonly toxic because of its *cyanogenic glucosides* (HCN) content, are fermented. The process makes it toxic free.<sup>31</sup> Fufu is prepared by fermenting the tubers into a softened edible state and processing it further to remove the particles after which it is cooked, and pounded in a mortar and rolled into very large balls. It is cooked twice, pounding it at each occasion until it is ready to eat. Cassava is also eaten with coconut or palm nuts as snacks and as food supplement. The food is most delicious when it is sliced into particles after fermentation and garnished with traditional condiments, spices, meat, sea food, vegetables, fish, periwinkles, stock fish, dried meat or *pomo* to produce the palatable dish called *abacha* which today is a relish of the Igbo city and rural dwellers, rich and poor alike. However, its high dose of carbohydrate made it a minus in the health status of the people.

**Plantains and Banana:** The two crops were and are still grown extensively in the Anambra-Manu area because they require wetness. While bananas are sweet desert fruit, plantains are starchy non-sweet cooking fruits. They need no adequate plant cultivation and once the suckers are planted, they grow very quickly and in about two months survive and start producing bunches of food even as the plant propagates by itself and

could survive for many years. In the area of study, plantain has only one variety but banana has two varieties, *Musa acuminata* (*une oko*) and *M. balbisiana* (*une apki*).<sup>32</sup>

The two crops serve the need of the women folk, as they are grown in compound gardens where their wet vegetative nature harbours snails, which are good sources of protein. It prefers soil with high humus content, and can also grow well in volcanic or alluvial soil. Both bananas and plantain do not rotten like cassava, rather they get ripe if not consumed a few days after harvest and begin the process of decay. The Igbo preserve the food (plantain) by slicing them with pellets to be dried and stored away. They are cooked with beans or grounded into flour to be eaten as fufu. Bananas are eaten raw as ripped fruit or on their own, cooked with vegetables and condiments when unripe and eaten as porridge or just with palm oil in the same way plantain (ripped or unripe are eaten). The common eating of unripe roasted or cooked plantain by the elders is usually attributed to their well-known longevity in the remote past. This is true in view of their high content of iron and vitamin A.<sup>33</sup>

**Legumes or Pulses:** Legumes are indigenous to the study area where they are grown as vegetables and pulses. They are women crops and are intercropped on yam farms or planted on compound gardens where they achieve higher seed production. Legumes tolerate less fertile, acid soils and are therefore suited to some areas of well-drained soil of Northern Igboland. There are different varieties of the category. These include Walnut, (*ukpa*) *Dioelea deflexa*, the African yam beam (*okpa odudu*) *Sphenoslulis stenocarpa*. Cowpea (*akidi* or *agwa*), *Vigna unguiculata*, kerstings groundnuts (*akidi ala*) *Kerstingiella geocarpa* etc. One advantage of intercropping the legumes with other crops is that they improve soil fertility by their nitrogenous substances. Leguminous plants

usually produce nitrogen through their association with *Rhizobium* sp, an organism contained in their root. Being planted along with other crops, they fix large amounts of nitrogen in the soil, which other plants benefit immensely. The horse eye bean *Mucuna sloanei* (*ukpunkulu*) is not indigenous. It is the white species of beans derived from the northern parts of Nigeria.<sup>34</sup> Bambara nut (*okpa nwa aturu*) *Voandzeia subterranea*<sup>35</sup> is grown at Nsukka and Benue States from where they are sold to other parts of Igbo society. The seeds are used to prepare the Okpa, a popular food in Enugu State but since immemorial times eaten widely in the other parts of the study area and later elsewhere such as Lagos where they are now cooked by families, prepared and sold by food vendors. It is prepared in the same manner with *moi-moi* and garnished with spices but *okpa* is thicker and drier and believed to be highly delicious than the common beans.

Their yield, though not high enough served as reserved food during lean periods of the planting season. The dried seeds are cooked in salted water together with yam or other farinaceous crops with plenty vegetable and occasionally meat or fish condiments to make a thick gruel for children and porridge for adults. When freshly harvested the seeds of *akidi* and the soft green pods are cooked together. Like other legumes, the dried pods with the seeds intact or deshelled are preserved for later day meal during *ugali* - the lean period or they are stored as seed crops.<sup>36</sup>

With the advent of colonial rule in the early twentieth century, common beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and its other variety lima bean (*Phaseolus lunatus*) were introduced into the Igbo nation. They were however not grown in the Igbo area even in the past but reached the people through the itinerant Hausa traders. The consumption of diverse common beans namely dry, dwarf, field, French, haricot, navy, pinto, runner, salad, snap

and string beans, gradually took over the menu of the people in terms of pulses, in a revolutionary manner replacing the indigenous varieties of *odudu*, *akidi*, *okpa* and *fio-fio*. The fact of Anambra-Mamu River Basin is characterized by high humidity must have explained why beans were not grown there as the crop is highly susceptible to a litany and army of diseases and insects that attack it mercilessly.<sup>37</sup>

**Vegetables and Nuts:** Nuts are eaten as roughages, which add bulk to food thereby preventing the consumer from feeling hungry, in addition to aiding digestibility through the stimulation of intestinal movement. The Igbo from earlier times recognized the primacy of this function and consumed nuts in between meals and as a means of keeping the mouth busy. Chief among these nuts is palm nut and its complimentary palm kernel. Vegetables and nuts are other valuable food sources that were used to achieve food availability and self-sufficiency. An average Igbo man would not taste food not garnished with leafy vegetables, which complimented and supplemented their starch-based meals even as they were also meals and used in the preparation of soup, sauces and relishes. The profuse use of vegetables and nuts with their high dose of minerals and vitamins was a factor that served as compliment for the observed scarcity of animal protein among the people. It was perhaps for this reason that Worthington commented that vegetable relishes are used in astonishing variety.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, most people tended to see vegetables and fruits especially the later not as component of the diet, but as food for the poor. They ate them sparingly as past time and or consumed them out of proportion when they wished to enjoy them.

**Table 2.0 The commonest leafy vegetables grown and consumed prolifically include**

	English name	Igbo name	Botanical name	Part of plant used	Usage
1	African spinach	Inine	Amaranthus hybridus var cruentus	Leaves	Used in garnishing yam dishes as well as those of other farinaceous crops
2	Green amaranth	Inine Ojiri	Nemo nene Amaranthus	Leaves	Above
3	Okra	Okwuru	Hibiscus esculenta	Fruits	Used in preparation of draw soup
4	-	Eriamionu	Celosia argentea	leaves	Mixed with okra fruits to cook soup
5	Vegetable Jute	Ahjiara	Corchorus olitorus	Leaves	The same purpose as above
6	Fever plant	Nchuanwu	Ocimum Vividis	Leaves	Cooked with hot pepper, fish, meat dried or fresh) together with crayfish, stock fish etc but not with oil to prepare pepper soup and related dishes to serve as cleansing agent for nursing mothers and for women who had delivered of their babies.
7	Guinea pepper	Uziza	Piper guineense	Leaves and seeds	As above
8	-	Utazi	Gungronema latifolium	Leaves	As above
9	-	Njamunja	Piper Umbellatum	Leaves	As above
10	African nutmeg	Ehuru	Monodora myriastica	Seeds	As above
11	African Guinea Pepper fruit	Uda	Xylophia aethiopicum	Seeds	As above
12	Fluted pumpkin	Ugu	Telfanria occidentalis	Leaves and seed	Used in cooking soup and variety of dishes. The seeds are eaten as refreshment.
13	Camwood leaves	Oha	Pterocarpus soyau xii	Leaves	Soup preparation
14	-	Uturukpa	Pterocarpus santalinoids	Leaves	As above
15	Bitter leaf	Olugbu or onugbu	Veronica amygdalina	Leaves	As above
16	-	Oha Ojii	Pterocapus muldraedil	Leaves	As above
17	Melon	Egusi	Brachystegia spp	Seed	As above
18		Achi		Seed	As above
19	Native mango	Ugiri	Irvingia gatonensis	Seed	As above
20	Non mango type of above	Agbolu		Seed	As above
21	Oil palm nut	Nkpuru akwu	Elaeis quineensis	Seed residue	Called banga soup among Nigerian Deltans it is used in the preparation of the delicacy <i>ofe akwu</i> and the oil is used generally for cooking
22	Bitter gourd	Elili	Colocynthis vulgaris	Seed	A variety of melon (egusi) used as alternative
23	Oil bean	Ukpaka or ugba	Pentadethra macrophylla	Seed	Used in preparation of ugba – an extra ordinarily rich salad that is based on the seed as the principal ingredient but garnished with stock fish and miscellaneous other tantalizing ingredients.
24	Castor bean	Ogiri ugba	Ricinus communis	Seed	Used as seasoning agent, what maggi serves today's woman.
25	Locust bean	Ogiri igala or ogiri okpi	Parke clappertoniana	Seed	As above
26	White fluted melon	Ogiri egusi	Brachystegia spp	Seeds	As above
27	Silk cotton tree	Akpu	Ceibu pentandra	Leaves (the fresh shoots)	Added to items numbers 24 – 27 in the preparation of ogiri – seasoning agent.

28	-	Ujiji	Myrianthus arborea	Leaves (the fresh shoots)	Used to achieve the same purpose as above
29	African star Apple	Udara	Chrysophyllum albidum	Fruits	For refreshment

**Source:** Bede Nwoye Okigbo *Ahiajoku Lectures 1980*. Published by Imo State Ministry of Information, Youth and Culture, Government House Owerri, 1980

**NB:** The table shows the diversity of vegetables from, which any Igbo woman who knew her worth would select from to prepared sumptuous meals. Some of them make up traditional condiments used to enrich diets and to thicken soups. These crops were planted in the compound gardens, which every woman owned during the pre-colonial and colonial eras.

There were other plant-based foods consumed as short-term substitutes for staple crops in the diets during the “hungry months,” the period just before the harvest when yam and stored supplies of grain from the previous harvest were exhausted. These alternative samples include roots, fruits, and grasses that were normally used as dietary supplements and were more heavily relied on during times of hardship. Famine foods also included those foodstuffs that were kept aside because of their prohibitive cooking procedures, low digestibility, or a combination of the two factors. An example is pigeon pea (*hjo-hjo*), which requires long soaking in water, a long cooking time of at least three changes of cooking water, a treatment in an ash and water solution before they are rendered edible. Gathered wild plants were used in the household production of salt. The ashes of certain plants are high in salt and potash. Frequently the ashes of these plants were mixed into cooking water or filtered in water prior to cooking.<sup>39</sup>

### **Games and Domestication of Animals**

The tropical forest zone is not rich in animal biomass compared with the Savannah ecological environment particularly after the forest had greatly been disturbed of its originality. However, there were many species of game in addition to the presence of reptiles, birds, rodents, ants, lizards, termites, insects etc. In as much as these were detrimental to crop production, they featured prominently in the animal protein content of the people's diet. These were and are still gathered in the wild and the absence of large game made the consumption of a whole lot of birds, insects, rodents and others a welcome idea. It is from the bulk of these animals that domestication of species began. These include goats, sheep, fowls, swine, cattle and dogs. The gradual change from gathering and hunting to cultivation and animal rearing made these livestock the sources of meat and providers of money to buy other goods and to pay for services. Animal droppings were also the source of manure to enrich soil fertility even as animals were themselves the source of fibre. Hunting proffered some dignity on some people, which gave rise to the title *Di Nta*, the great hunter, which attracted valued traditional trophy to the holder comparable to that of Eze Ji (*Yam king*).

Games were generally scarce as the observation of Meek in 1937 and those of G.I. Jones 1946<sup>40</sup> showed. However, the record of G.T. Basden showed that in spite of the scarcity of games, hunting was recognized as a respectable profession though very few men engaged in it. This could perhaps be attributed to the scarcity of games and or the risky nature of the profession. The hunting equipment was limited to primitive tools such as snares, traps and flintlock guns.<sup>41</sup> In any case, some games were brought home for the kitchen pot and much of it was sold to the public for consumption. These include antelopes, deer, cutting grass, rabbits and monkeys of various kinds and sizes. The others

were bush cow, wild pig, alligator lizard etc. One spectacular observation of hunting in Igbo land is the fact that they had so repeatedly been carried out in the past that much of the animals were exceedingly scarce even as others like elephants and manatee and a whole lot others like wild pigs, lions, leopard, wild cows are nonexistent.

In the confines of their villages or even near households, individuals hunted, trapped and snared the small animals such as duiker (*mgbada*), glasscutter (*nchi*) and rabbits (*ewi*). The indigenes used latex (*eso*) obtained from some trees to trap birds. This they did by spreading the gummy substances on mats and scattered many insects on it to act as bait. In this way they trapped varieties of birds such as weaver birds (*ahia*), as many as two hundred birds could be obtained in a single day.<sup>42</sup> Young boys also engaged in their own trap forms and also dug holes to kill rodents like bush rats or even snakes. In areas where game was more abundant, it was a common sight to see most of the able-bodied males of a village or a quarter engaged in a mass-hunt armed with cap guns, Dane guns and sticks accompanied by ferocious dogs. This practice had seriously diminished game since everything was attacked. There was no effort to spare females and young.<sup>43</sup> This factor made game animals scarce causing acute animal protein deficiency.

The prevalence of tsetse flies must have been a factor limiting animal biomass and this must have explained the fewness of cattle composed of the West African shorthorn breed called *Muturu*. Though breeding of cows was a feature of a few families, the Ezza and North Afikpo groups of the Abakiliki areas and certain groups in North Onitsha bred tsetse resistant dwarf cattle for export to neighbouring zones of the Anambra-Manu area on a small scale. The greatest impediment to large-scale animal husbandry in Igbo land was and is still characterized by intensive grazing practices.



Free range rearing was and still unknown and this was resorted to avoid destruction to planted crops irrespective of whether it was during or off planting seasons. For this reason goats, sheep and cattle were tethered in fenced off enclosures and fodder was collected from the bush and used to feed them. Because of the ravages of tsetse fly, more importantly to safeguard planted crops, the extensive nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle-breeding where livestock are allowed to move about in search of natural pasture, which is the dominant feature of both the guinea savannah and the semi Sahalian grassland zones was not practiced in the area of study. The Igbo as a common practice, did not and still do not rear animals for consumption or commercialization but for their value purpose such as at the sudden arrival of an august visitor or during emergencies and feasts or festivals or to use the money derived of them in terms of sales to solve other problems. This made meat not a common article of diet but a luxury.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 2.1 List of some Traditional Animals in Anambra-Mamu River Basin**

	<b>English Name</b>	<b>Igbo name</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Igbo</b>
1.	Goat	Eghu	32.	Duck (domestic)	Ọbọgwu ụlọ
2.	Sheep	Aturu	33.	Duck (wild)	Ọbọgwu Ọhịa
3.	Ram	Ebili	34.	Ostrich	Enyi nnunu
4.	Cattle	Ehi	35.	Bush fowl	Ọkwa
5.	Native Cow	Ehi Igbo, Muturu	36.	Weaver bird	Ahia
6.	Pig	Ezi	37.	Wren	Nza
7.	Antelope	Ele	38.	Wood Pecker	Ọturukpokpo
8.	Deer	Mgbada	39.	Dove	Nduru
9.	Buffalo	Atuh	40.	Parrot	Iche
10.	Deer	Mgbada	41.	Python (royal)	Eke
11.	Monkey	Enwo	42.	Python (wild)	Eke nwa Ọhịa
12.	Duikar	Umolu	43.	Cobra	Ubi
13.	Chimpanzee	Ozodingba	44.	Viper	Abu ami
14.	Gorrilla	“	45.	Green Snake	Aka
15.	Ape	“	46.	Agama Lizard	Ngwere
16.	Baboon	Adaka	47.		
17.	Dog (domestic)	Nkita ụlọ	48.	Alligator Lizard	Ngwere olu
18.	Wild dog	Nkita ọhịa	49.	Tortoise	Mbe
19.	Hyna	Edi	50.	Crocodile	Aguiyi
20.	Fox	Nnagwerede	51.	Crab	Nsiko
21.	Rat	Oke	52.	Frog	Mbara
22.	Rabbit	Ewi	53.	African Snail	Ejuma
23.	Cutting Grass	Nchi	54.	Yello striped Squirrel-	Ọsa
24.	Hedgehog	Ebi Ogwu	55.	Blue striped Squirrel	Uze
25.	Crested porcupine	Ntu ebi	56.	Bat	Ụsụ
26.	Domestic fowl	Okuko	57.	Cat fish	Ọkpo
27.	Hawk	Agụ Nkwọ	58.	Trout	Ogune
28.	Kite	Egbe	59.	Ell	Asa
29.	Falcon	Mgbawu	60.	Mudfish	Ebii
30.	Eagle	Ugo	61.	Electric fish	Ahia
s31.	Owl	Ikwughikwughi	62.	Snake fish	Omila
			63.	Fries	Mpom/Erei

## **Fishing**

The Anambra-Manu area was/is not evenly blessed with rivers, lakes, streams even as coastal waters are completely absent. The entire old Njikoka area does not have rivers or streams. Agulu Lake, which is an exception, is like several rivers exemplified by Nkisi, which fishes were forbidden as taboo. This factor made seafood relatively scarce. However, the Niger and Anambra rivers provided the little available fish, which made Agu-Ukwu, Nzam, Anam, Onitsha, Otuocha and Ogbaru zones fishmongers and suppliers of fish products. There were no periwinkles in these rivers, which made them unknown to the area of study, but crayfish and turtle were in very small quantities particularly in the tributary streams. In any case, snails were predominant in the surrounding forests. Since meat derived from animal flesh was very scarce and meat was eaten occasionally only during feasts or ceremonies, this made fish to serve as veritable alternative to meat. This explains why fresh fish but more importantly smoked fish though equally relatively scarce and costly was in high demand.

Fishing among the communities was quite undeveloped and underexploited. In any case, it offered additional benefit in terms of employment opportunities and potential for savings. Besides, artisanal fishing had the added advantage of meeting the nutritional needs of the local populations. In as much as they were of micro and subsistent scales and localized in nature, they provided much of the fish consumed in the area of study as at the pre-colonial era when population was scanty. The predominant mode of fish production had always been the artisanal fish mongering in streams and rivers. The use of hooks and traps was the commonest method and so fishing was consigned to off farm activities dominated by small peer group of young men and women. Other modes of fishing

include the use of nets fastened on strong bamboo sticks at the edges of quiet flowing waters away from the torrents.<sup>45</sup> Another method was *ikwo mmiri*, which entailed the construction of artificial ponds, which consisted of deep troughs dug near riverbanks to trap fishes, which tried to escape from the swirling currents during the flood season when the river overflows its bank. The ponds were drained during the dry season to collect copious quantity of fishes which retreated into these land-locked pools.<sup>46</sup> Poisonous substances such as the flowers and leaves of *iweli* plant was squeezed and scattered on the surface of the water. Their effect, comparable to that of garmaline, (used later since the later part of colonial era), had paralysing effect on the fishes, which caused them to float belly upwards and die later.<sup>47</sup> *Achara* – a large ball-like device resembling huge bird nests and wrought by craft makers was baited with food to trap prowling fishes that entered it through closed channels. Women and children also used the basket system worked on similar techniques to trap fishes mainly fries and crayfish that tried to escape through the fish runs. Varieties of fishes were caught using these methods. They consisted of catfish, (*okpo*), trout (*ogune*); (*ebii*) and ell (*asa*). Other sea creatures included tortoise (*mbe*), crayfish (*ahia*), fries (*aja azu*) etc.

## **Honey**

The people cherished honey, which they ate raw and used it in sweetening some dishes such as corn-floor porridge and maize gruel (*akamu*). They used it also in preparation of various medicines. The method of placing pots between the forks of tall trees for bees to rest in as widely used in the northern parts of Nigeria was not in vogue in the area of study. Honey was simply harvested from hollow trees and crevices in the wild. Honey product supplied the required nutrients because it is rich in not only caloric

energy but also protein as the combs frequently contain bee larvae and pupa.<sup>48</sup> But like the rest of tropical Africa, the honey bee was harvested by the destructive method of burning the bees with lighted torch, or stupefying them with smoke. In so doing, the hive was destroyed and bees dispersed. The queen bee was in all probability killed. This made the product to be relatively inadequate.<sup>49</sup>

### **Drinking Water**

Admittedly, there were many rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and springs dotted in many of the communities. However, their sources of supply were tedious and tortuous. The rivers did not pass through many communities and even for those that had them; they were located many miles away from human habitation. They were even located deep between steep hills and gullied erosion sites. Besides what constituted drinking water consisted of contaminated river water. It was in the same river or stream that the people fished, bathed, washed their clothes and household utensils and processed their fermented cassava, breadfruits and castor nuts even as some unscrupulous people defecated on them. The alternative source of water was rainwater collected with earthen pot or basin raised on a platform during heavy down pour. It was so bad that many discrete communities who had no rivers or streams relied on *umi* - underground pit dug purposely to collect flood for sundry purposes.<sup>50</sup>

### **Wine, Liquour and Beer**

The people obtained their wine from sugary palm saps which flavour varies from sweet unfermented to sour fermented and vinegary alcoholic drinks. They were and still obtained from two palm sources: Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineense*) known locally as *nkwu* and

Raphia Palms (*Raphia Hookeri* or *R. Vinifera*) known by the people as *ngwọ*. Palm wine is nutritious. The saps are collected by tapping the palms. This is achieved by making an incision at the top part of the trunks and a gourd is tied to collect the sap, a process that is on daily basis. The fresh juice is sweet, clear and colourless, with 10-12 percent sugar content. Because the tapping materials, which consist of collecting gourd and knife were often not washed between collections, the residual yeasts in the gourd caused it to begin quick natural fermentation process within some hours of tapping.<sup>51</sup> Fermentation also causes it to develop alcoholic content of up to 4 per cent. This quality gives it a sour vinegar taste, which makes it to be diluted liberally with water. Since the alcoholic content is small, drinkers do not get drunk. It only produces a fuddled state if consumed much. Olaudah Equiano attesting to the non-intoxicating properties of palm wine wrote that the people

are totally unacquainted with strong or spirituous liquors, and their principal beverage is palm wine. This is got from a tree of that name by tapping it at the top and fastening a large gourd to it, and sometimes one tree will yield three or four gallons in a night. When just drawn it is of a most delicious sweetness, but in a few days it acquires a tartish and more spirituous flavour though I never saw anyone intoxicated by it.<sup>52</sup>

The trees both oil palms and raphia palms were /are very plentiful and self-sprouting and so copious quantities were produced. The high yeast content of palm wine caused by the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is a factor that made the White missionaries during the colonial era to encourage their students to drink it for clear vision.<sup>53</sup> In any case, palm wine is an excellent substrate for microbial growth and the unhygienic collection procedures cause the contaminating bacteria to compete with the yeast thereby producing acid instead of alcohol.<sup>54</sup> This is explained by the fact that

though when fresh, palm wine is adjudged to be nutritious, possessing Vitamin B Complex, nevertheless it has a lot of sugar which breaks down into carbon dioxide while in the stomach. The accumulation of the gas is responsible for the dazed, fuddled, physical lethargy and stupor, which follows heavy intake of it especially when it is sour. Palm wine like any other wine also acts as diuretic.<sup>55</sup> The people also drank spirits consisting of gin, brandy, whisky and rum, which was for the first time introduced in the course of the Afro-European trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when the Portuguese made their first visit. However, it was limited in patronage and localized to a few elitist personages and titular heads who could afford it and who were in trade relationship with the Coastal traders who trickled them into the Igbo hinterland. Simon Heap supported this truism. He noted that the liquor trade in all intents and purposes confined itself to a relatively narrow coastal strip. He attributed this to the fact that the fragile, bulky, heavy bottles of the demijohn imposed transport restrictions. Equally true according to him, was the fact that head loading proved cumbersome and too expensive even for comparatively short distances from the coast.<sup>56</sup> It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the drink, which became known to the Igbo as *mmanya oku* (hot drink) came to assume some importance when it gradually came to co-exist with palm wine, both of them complimenting and competing with the other. Since the middle part of the colonial rule, locally made gin known variously as *kaikai*, *akpuru achi* or *ogogoro* became dominant. Efforts by the colonial regime to stamp it out through prohibitions, branding it “illicit gin” were unsuccessful.

### **The Land Tenure System and Land Rights**

Land was individually or collectively owned. The traditional legal system prescribed the rights over land, which covered such issues as how they were acquired and

used, their content and their security of tenure, how they could be transferred or succession to them. Professor Victor Uchendu identified four principles governing the land tenure system in Igbo land. The first is that all land was owned, which meant there was no concept of “abandonment of land” or “no man’s land”. Even when land was left uncultivated or unused for a long time, it belonged to somebody. The second principle was that land belonged to a lineage and could not be alienated from it. Thirdly, the individual within a lineage was entitled to land either for farming or for erecting his house. Lastly, no member of the lineage was deprived of land. Uchendu adduced these principles to be the cause of fragmentation of land – a factor that did not support large-scale farming or plantation system.<sup>57</sup>

A number of other reinforcing factors coalesced to make the situation even more difficult for the thrive of large-scale farming. Firstly, individual land ownership was anathema. Land was necessarily owned by the family and no member of that family, not even its Okpara (the eldest man) had the prerogative to alienate it. He, like other male family members were only trustees, acting in concert for the departed ancestors and future generation and yet unborn persons – those who owned the land, that is, if anything like ownership existed. It was not that land was not sometimes sold or pledged out, but these were clandestinely done as some elders in conspiracy arrogated unto themselves the power to deal in family land without the approval or consent of the family as a whole. If discovered, as often was the case, such elders were sanctioned and the land in question redeemed.

Cases of individuals or groups alienating family land or its usufructuary rights were and still frowned at and the matter taken not lightly. In any case, the sharing



formula of the family land for the purpose of agriculture was the issue. The senior members of such family took decision regarding when the land was to be farmed after a considerable number of years it was allowed to lie fallow and to regenerate. No member of the family could on his own accord, enter the land and start farming it at his will. If such happened, the person was sanctioned. An apt example was provided by L.T. Chubb concerning Onyebuchi family of Otolo Nnewi in 1947 where a member of the *Umunne* (an extended family of one hundred and twenty adult males) took to clearing his customary plot of the land one year before it was due to be farmed under the rotational law. He was forced to uproot his yams and to obtain land on pledge elsewhere from another '*Umunne*' in the village.<sup>58</sup> As could be seen from the works of Daryll Forde and Richenda Scott,<sup>59</sup> as well as Professor Ikpe,<sup>60</sup> the patricidal seniority principle of allocating land for farming season meant that a large segment of the people were by varying undemocratic subterfuges marginalized or denied land for increased food production. These comprised the younger (particularly unmarried) males, women, orphans, the low status such as slaves or *osus* and stranger elements (*awbias*).

### **Labour and Slavery**

The above factor notwithstanding, one outstanding reason why food production remained small in scale, not surpassing the subsistence level of usually not more than two acres, was the fact that it was limited to family labour, which was of course determined by the size of available land. The labour in most cases consisted of the household made up of a man, his wives and children and other few dependants.<sup>61</sup> In most cases, a household could also comprise members of a big compound who were independent of the compound head. Such individuals also had their own private farms and were not obliged

to work as a household, except where they joined other compound members as production unit in assistance to the compound head in what the Igbo called *ọru ọkenye*. The only enlarged production unit resembling what may be termed teamwork was *ufu ọru or onwe ọru*. This refers to reciprocal team work in which members of an age grade usually young men assisted one another as a unit.

The effect of small unit of household farm labour, meant that the volume of production was usually small which gave rise to periods of *ugani* or lean months of food scarcity.<sup>62</sup> This position was in contrast to what prevailed in other socio-political groups such as Hausaland, Yoruba or Efik and Bonny City States. The obvious explanation is to be found in the Igbo man's marked individuality and self-assertion as well as his adaptability and strong abhorrence or suspicion of any authority other than their own. The strong dislike for imposed authority such as kingship found in other ethnic groups precluded large political hegemony where slave labour was used to produce food on large scale. Like the power of the Yoruba warlords, the Hausa oligarch, the coastal Efik/Bonny House system and the Fulani extensive use of slave labour demonstrated, slave labour was used to bring a large area of land under cultivation using the plantation system. This method was made possible because townships or city life was earlier developed by these socio-political groups so that food produced somewhat in large scale plantations was sold and used to feed the town people who themselves engaged in other non-agricultural endeavours.<sup>63</sup>

In the case of the Niger Delta for example, the keeping of large number of slaves led to the formation of what was termed "Houses." A House might contain up to three hundred people or more, all rendering allegiance to the head (father).<sup>64</sup> A similar picture

was true of Osomari, which had an estimated population of six to eight thousand or over twenty thousand. This included slaves on the surrounding farms – all rendering labour to their owners in the form of agriculture particularly in the collection of palm nuts and palm oil processing for shipment abroad.<sup>65</sup> This form was not found among the main land Igbo who preferred to sell their slaves to other regions. These constituted war captives, debtors or undesirable elements such as thieves, people convicted of adultery or some other crime against the land. This explained why the Delta had an influx of Igbo slaves; the Efik state of Old Calabar alone having half of its population composed of Igbo slaves.

The picture was also true of Okirika, Bonny, New Calabar, Brass and Akasa where Igbo language was widely spoken.<sup>66</sup> Thus, in spite of the fact that slavery thrived in Igboland, and the methods of acquiring or recruiting them varied, they were not geared towards farm work or large scale food production but for sales and for widespread human sacrifice which also explained the heavy traffic on them after the Atlantic slave trade had ceased. The records of the missionaries showed they were imported in large numbers from diverse places like Nupe land, and Igala land for the slave market situated at a sandbank on the Niger near the present day Holy Trinity Cathedral. Other prominent slave marts included Nike and Uzuakoli.<sup>67</sup> Yet the Igbo chiefs in large number came to purchase them not for labour but for human sacrifices. Another explanation for non-utilization of slaves for large-scale food production was the fact that though the slaves depended upon the caprice of their owners and obviously enjoyed only such privileges that might be granted them generally, their existence was not hopelessly unhappy one. On

the contrary, they could be quite cheerful, contented, and in some places could attain to positions of comfort and even affluence.

The explanation of Olaudah Equiano showed that slaves acquired as war prisoners or captives and who were not sold or redeemed lived no differently from other members of the family. They did no more work than other members of the community, even their feeding, clothing and lodging were nearly the same as their masters, the only exception being that they were not permitted to eat with those of freeborn. Equiano added for emphasis that there was scarcely any other difference in terms of superiority. This also exhibited in the way the head of the family treated or exercised authority over them in comparison with other members of his household. Even some slaves had slaves under them as their own property and for their own use.<sup>68</sup> G.T. Basden explained the lenient attitude granted to slaves to rest fundamentally on the platform that slaves were great assets to their masters. They protected him in terms of security. It was to his interest that the slave dwelt contentedly as the master's own life was too often in the hands of his slaves, who if no other thing could poison him as bitter resentment, after all they had manifold opportunities in handling his food.<sup>69</sup> It could be seen from the above that slaves were part and parcel of the household and could not have been overstretched or subjected to the arduous task of large scale food production or payment of inhuman taxes. There was no basis for these of course as there were no cities or urban population to feed as was the case of the Hausa or Yoruba. This factor limited the number of slaves to between one and three.

Apart from domestic slavery, the Igbo also had another discernable form of institutionalized slavery, which was also not in any way earmarked for productive

ventures such as large-scale food production. This was the *Osu* – persons dedicated to a god as slaves of that god. These slaves were dedicated to the numerous shrines (*alusi*) and were considered as equivalent to a money gift to the deity. The *raison d'état* of their existence made them not suitable for such tasks as food production for the society as they were considered sacred and untouchables which implied that no one could touch or eat food produced by them. They were on the contrary, liabilities to the community as they depended on food sacrificed to the shrine even as people were obliged to offer them food and animals freely as recompense to the deity which they served.<sup>70</sup> It could be seen that in contrast the history of other Nigerian cultural groups and beyond, where the slave population were used for production ventures especially in large-scale food production, the Igbo *Osus* were rather liabilities who depended on the sweat of their so-called freeborn counterparts for sustenance. And when the fact of their geometric progression population growth is put into consideration, the issue becomes glaring. It need be noted that the *Osu* men and women were acquired through various ways: they were purchased, kidnapped as war captives, they were descent of polygamous *Osu* parentage who were sired over the years. They also increased through the seeking of refuge in the sanctuary of the shrine by freeborn persons – a practice, which was rampant in those days of widespread insecurity.<sup>71</sup>

### **Trade, Markets and Food Distribution Mechanisms**

The pre-eminent position of agriculture notwithstanding, trading also assumed an enviable means of livelihood, which generated a lot of income to the natives during the pre-colonial era. The growing soil infertility, population explosion and fragmentation of land, which were serious in most places in the area of study and the lure offered by

trading as alternative means of achieving high economic status must have been factors that induced many people to take to trading as occupation. The examples established earlier by the Awka and Aro traders, were factors, which must have encouraged many enterprising and dogged men and women to engage in life as traders though still holding on to food cultivation albeit in negligible capacities. Trade, particularly the long distance trade became popular because of the products involved. These included salt, slaves, horses, tsetse resistant Ndama and Muturu cows, grinding stones etc. These products had their regional specialties, which added some glamour to them. Salt obtained from the delta area, was traded in most places. These were complimented by those obtained from the salt mines of Uburu, an inland village group, which was also centre for horses and cows brought from the north and from French-speaking West Africa.<sup>72</sup> Onitsha Market was reputed for yam and fish, maize, slaves and imported articles. Some of these products were ferried there from Oguta in today's Imo State, which was popular for corn and yams as well as slaves obtained from Uzuakoli and Iddah. Farm implements were generally sold in all the villages including those obtained from other places outside the zone such as Bende and Uzuakoli. Awka was however the centre, which produced many blacksmiths and medicine men (*dibia*) and wood carvers. Included in the category of long distance or itinerant traders cum-artisans were the religio-economic activities of some groups such as the Agu-Ukwu Nri who were famed for expiation of abominations. They also practiced tattooing or incision (*igbu ichi*) marks as well as production and distribution of *Ofò* sticks.

Since these items were in high demand in most parts of Igboland, the quest for their services afforded the practitioners economic gains, which they repatriated home to

take care of the feeding and nutritional needs of their families and dependants.<sup>72</sup> Long distance transactions were however constrained by head potterage, which was the only means to transport goods. The environment harboured soldier ants, which mercilessly attacked the beasts of burden. The menace of these pests together with those of tsetse fly was lethal to the existence of horses, donkeys, and camels, which could have alleviated human labour. In any case, the marketing system no doubt provided some fair distribution of economic resources. Diverse products were brought to the markets for sale and the money was used to solve the pressing needs of providing food to their household. In the same way, even the poorest of natives knew they could produce crafts such as pots, baskets, hoe handle, fishing, and animal traps, sweeping brooms, rain hats etc, which they sold to improve their economic well being within the subsistence economy. Even though agricultural produce were equally owned by the generality of the people, traffic in foodstuffs generally dominated other articles. This was attributed to increase in population and increasing adoption of non-agricultural ventures by many people. Such people including bona fide farmers came to the market to look for choice varieties or to augment their stock with cherished forest products like mushroom, honey, *okazi*, *uziza*, *utu* (wild fruit) *chereku* etc. Hunters and animal trappers also brought their games and catch to the market. These included bush meat like antelope (*ele*) duiker (*mgbada*), grass cutter (*nchi*), rabbit (*ewi*), bush fowl (*okwa*), wild pig (*ezi ohia*), wild duck (*obogwu ohia*), differing type of birds (*nnunu*), alligator lizard (*mgwere oru*), snakes, and indeed wide variety of games. In similar way, the fishermen were not left out in their differing variety of catch: trots, eel, cat fish etc. These products became scarce particularly for densely populated areas where close settlement had reduced the natural vegetation

making these wild products to be sold in the markets. More so, people who were very busy in their occupational fields or in the farms might not have the time to go out in search of such products.<sup>73</sup>

The internal rural trading operations dominated by women deserves emphasis as the women folk were of invaluable assistance to their families particularly during the period of *ugani* or *unwu* – a time of food scarcity when men depended more on their wives for sustenance. Apart from providing the women related food items such as cassava, coco yams, and the three leaved yam called *ona* plus a litany of vegetables and fruits, the woman also complimented with the little gains realized from their trading activities to stave off hunger and food insecurity within their households. Their homes also served as sales outlet for people who came to buy at odd hours such as at night.

### **Assessment of Food Security In The Pre-Colonial Era**

An assessment of the pre-colonial food system showed that in spite of the crude methods of and unfriendly socio-political atmosphere that prevailed, the people attained high level of food production, which moved Olaudah Equiano to say that:

Agriculture is our chief employment, and even children women are engaged in it. Thus we are all habituated to labour from our earliest years. Everyone contributes something to the common stock, and as we were unacquainted with idleness we have no beggars.<sup>74</sup>

Equiano continued on this line of exposition by saying that:

Our manner of living is entirely plain, for as yet the natives are unacquainted with those refinements in cookery which debauch the taste, bullocks, goats, and poultry, supply the greatest part of their food. These constitute likewise the principal wealth of the country and the chief articles of its



commerce. The flesh is usually stewed in a pan, to make it savoury, we sometimes use also pepper and other spices, and we have salt made of wood ashes. Our vegetables are mostly plantains, eadas, yams, beans, and Indian corn..., contact with the wider world particularly.<sup>75</sup>

The situation was helped by the culture of enthomophagy - the widespread eating of edible insects such as termites (*aku*), grasshoppers (*igwurube*), caterpillars (*egu*), crickets (*abuzu*) and palm tree larvae (*akpa nkwu*). Like some cultural groups of Central African Republic whose locals collected *bobo* (termites), *kindagozo* (green grasshoppers) *imbrasia* (larvae) and *makango* (caterpillars), a culture also practiced by Mexico farmers who collected from the wild, *chapulines* (young grasshoppers), the native Igbo of old delighted in the eating of edible insects which afforded them a source of protein. The culture of eating insects was popular because the creatures tasted so delicious and served as delicacies.<sup>76</sup> Food security was equally boosted by the ameliorating impact of the numerous feasts and festivals, which featured free for all, with sumptuous foods, drink and merriment. The food security profile was however placed under limitations by the adverse effects of taboos, which made whole lots of animals and edible plants totem (*nso*). These prohibitions stood on the way to healthy nutritious living, their unrestrained fetishes affected adversely the health status of children and their mothers often leading to high rates of mortality.

### **Colonial Rule and Establishment/Restoration of Internal Peace and Orderliness**

The advent of colonial rule brought some far-reaching changes, which radically effected positively, food security equation. The first and major impact was the creation of internal peace and the abolition of slave trade and its associated raids and internecine warfare, which had profoundly devastated the local economy. G.T. Basden captured this

when he recorded that the Igbo like other ethnic groups occupied their spare time with fighting, generally town against town. The evil of this, he noted was not so much the blood shed, but rather the paralyzing of trade and intercourse. The immediate effect of the pacification and establishment of Pax Britannica was end of the invasions and internecine warfare, which had profoundly disrupted farming operations and devastated economic activities. In as much as the colonial conquest also brought its own miseries and devastations, by 1920 relative peace had been restored and peaceful co- existence stimulated economic activities, which brought some improvement to food security concerns. This meant that war like groups like the Aro and their auxiliaries: Abam, Edda, Ohafia, Abriba scattered throughout Igboland and beyond had to take to quiet settled life and trading.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the expansionist and land grabbing colonizing tendency of Ezza warriors reduced. Pacification of Nigeria and subsequent amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 widened the horizon of trade and intermingling of people who hitherto were kept away from each other by the pervading insecurity. This enabled the Hausa traders and Fulani nomads to reach the south with their articles of trade particularly beans, grains, onions, dried fish and meat as well as cattle.

### **Transportation**

The development of trunk motor roads and their feeder auxiliaries achieved through forced labour no doubt revolutionized the transportation of food stuffs not only within Igbo land but vis-à-vis other Nigerian cities and regions. In addition to increased road network, the construction of rail lines from Port Harcourt to Enugu from 1913 and beyond to the northern Nigerian towns proved to be a stimulus to the trade on foodstuffs.

The colonial historian Simon Heap captured the revolutionary significance of transport when he commented as follows:

Nigeria was undergoing a transport revolution. Coinciding with colonial rule, motor vehicles and trains dramatically altered the transport situation. Publicly or privately, Nigeria had constructed 6,000 miles of roads by the 1920, and government built railways totalled 2,178 miles of tracks a decade later. Water transport also improved with substantial investment in clearing creeks, dredging rivers and providing dock facilities and fleets of river craft.<sup>78</sup>

Frederick Lugard, who was partly responsible for some of the improvement, saw their powerful economic effects at first hand and proclaimed ‘the material development of Africa may be summed up in one word “Transport.”’<sup>79</sup> Professor Elizabeth Isichei captured the revolutionary zeal of transport when she emphasized that lorry transport proved one of the triumphs of Nigerian enterprise, competing successfully with the railways despite government’s support of the later.<sup>80</sup> The revolutionary impact of lorry transport is measured in the fact that the enterprising Igbo trader could now travel up Northern Nigerian and diverse places up to Lagos to buy goods and within a few days, he was back to Onitsha to sell them. From Onitsha, the foodstuffs reached the villages and more importantly, the Igbo cities where they were in high demand. In this way, it created a chain of wholesalers and retailers.<sup>81</sup> It is important to point out however, that the motor transport, complimented by its larger railway laid the foundation of the dwindling effort of the people of Anambra-Mamu River area to produce their own food. In combination to other disadvantaged factors, the people increasingly relied on foods ferried from other parts of Nigeria in addition to the foreign ones brought in by the thriving European firms

whose warehouses were concentrated at Onitsha from where they spread to Enugu. This factor no doubt laid a veritable foundation for the later day dependency syndrome.

### **Migrations**

One significant factor that profoundly affected food availability and food security quotient was rural-rural and later rural-urban migration which as already noted, was dictated by economic differentials or imbalance between various parts of Igbo land in particular and Nigeria in general. This factor is explained by the push-pull hypothesis. It suggests that regional imbalance induces migration and that certain factors such as declining socio-economic conditions tend to push people away from the source regions while other factors such as opportunity and prosperity tend to exert a pull effect at the destination.<sup>82</sup> In line with this hypothesis, the push stimulus, which expressed in land hunger and soil-impoverishment and which was serious in the Anambra-Mamu River area compelled a large number of the people to seek their fortune outside their home of origin. Increasing land hunger and soil infertility meant that with time increase in population led to progressive decrease in the length of fallow periods, which was a distinctive feature of Igbo farming system. The result was progressive decrease in crop yields. This was particularly serious in most parts of Onitsha and Awka Division where land was so over worked that even cassava, which normally thrived on relatively poor soils started to fail. The findings of colonial administrators L.T. Chubb and S.G. Ardener showed that population pressure on land had become so heavy that food scarcity was observed in many places. They also noted that soil impoverishment became more worrisome when it led to aggravated gully erosion, which destroyed farmlands in many places of the study area such as Udi and Awka Divisions Nanka and Agulu contiguous

communities were so badly affected that farmlands and dwellings were abandoned under the Agulu Soil Conservation, which started in 1945. By this scheme, the local authorities in an effort to effect reclamation of the denuded land passed regulations, which put farms and household dwellings in such areas out of use by the local population.<sup>83</sup>

There are however some areas with abundant and fertile land. These include Abakaliki, Uzo-Uwani, Anambra, and Ogbaru zones. Though they served for food abundance, environmental degradation such as menace of lethal biting insects such as tsetse fly, black fly and mosquitoes and the additional fact that government presence tickle down to such places were factors that caused their indigenes to migrate to the urban centre with the expressed intention of breaking away from the incubus of factors that kept their parents in poverty. Apart from these, young people in the upland areas where soils tended to be poor and infertile and where land fragmentation was becoming unbearable were compelled to migrate to places of plentiful supply of farmland while the non-farming population migrated and took up work as wage earners. Professor Reuben Udo has identified three categories of destination to which Igbo migrants travelled. The first were those who sought the greener pastures within the Igboland. Examples include people from Awka-Upland region who migrated to work on the rain fed swamps left vacant by Ezza Abakiliki, or Ihiala, Okija and Orlu groups who migrated to Ogbaru Division or Onono, Anam, Otuocho and Ogurugu in search of fertile land and for fishing ponds.<sup>84</sup> The second are those who migrated outside Igbo land to Benin to work on the rubber plantations or to Cross River Plain and Western Nigeria to work as migrant tenant farmers. There were also non-farmers who migrated to cities outside Igboland to take up work as skilled and unskilled labourers/workers. The third comprised of those who left

the shores of Nigeria, to West African countries, or to Gabon, Cameroon and Fernando Po or elsewhere such as Europe, Asia and America.<sup>85</sup>

### **Wage Employment**

The dynamics of changes in the economy following the advent of colonialism meant that the traditional sources of income open to the people were gradually becoming unsatisfactory. These meant that farming, trading, local crafts and livestock tenancy were no longer enough to maintain an adequate living standard for some people. The establishment of colonial offices, mission houses and churches, trading companies, schools and colleges, and later industries brought new opportunities for the generation of employment albeit on very negligible scale in comparison with the population as a whole. The development also gave rise to increased migrant farmers, which were common in areas of dense population. In as much as colonialism was associated with repressive measures, the changes it brought were occasion for people to augment their income. These manifested in road construction and expansion of existing ones, building industry which witnessed boom, and later oil exploration. The World War II and the economic crisis that trailed it all created the scarcity of essential goods and services, which brought forth the ingenuity of the Igbo to fill the gap. Thus were created a professional class of skilled and semi-skilled tradesmen and women such as carpenters, masons, bricklayers, gold smiths, radio and watch/clock repairers, cobblers, tailors/seamstresses, catechists, teachers, nurses/hospital dispensers, post and telecommunication (P & T) workers, lorry and locomotive drivers and railway staff, and industrial technicians, cooks, stewards, gardeners, mechanics and bicycle repairers etc. The absence of some manufactured goods which importation were disrupted by the activities of German submarine warfare led to

the creation of semi-skilled itinerant tinkers who repaired leaking or broken iron pots and plates even as they fashioned new buckets, cooking pots, cymbals for school bands etc.<sup>86</sup> The advantage of this development was that the gradual rise of non farming professional class lessened the pressure on the land. They now used their income to buy food and by so doing encouraged the commercialisation of farming.

### **The Effects of Urbanization**

Until the establishment of colonial rule, Igbo land consisted of generally rural based communities, lacking the characteristics of true towns, which meant that the people lived in numerous clusters of mud houses. They were thus unlike the Yoruba and the Hausa who had a culture of urban settlement. An instance is Yorubaland whose many old cities had over 50,000 with Ibadan, the largest city of tropical Africa having 627,379 inhabitants. It could be seen that whereas over half of the population of Western Nigeria was urban, with Ibadan and Oyo provinces having two third of the people living in urban areas, only about 14 percent was so in the eastern states as a whole and even so the Igbo sections contributed less of it.<sup>87</sup>

However, British rule changed all that and saw the beginning of urban centres which developed first as administrative headquarters where the District Officers and their subordinate staff of clerks, interpreters, policemen, messengers, prison warders etc lived. There is no doubt that soon these administrative centres began to attract nearby populations who came to exploit the opportunities they offered. The strategic location of Onitsha as waterway on the Niger and centre for export of palm product made it to develop much earlier as an ancient commercial highway. European traders were

established there as early as 1860 making it attract high population density.<sup>88</sup> However, a major stimulation of urban centre development was the railway construction. Cities like Aba and Umuahia took advantage of lying on the railway station to spring into new importance even as these were compensated by feeder motor roads. It can be seen that towns like Enugu and Port-Harcourt benefited immensely from both as administrative quarters and railway stations. The discovery of coal in Enugu in 1909 raised the question of the evacuation of the product to the sea and this brought Port Harcourt into favour in the planning of rail line. Work together with development of the future city started in 1913. Thus between 1913 to 1915 the line had stretched from that coastal town which assumed a harbour of importance, to Enugu which took advantage of the coal fields to become the capital of Southern Provinces by 1922.<sup>89</sup>

The effects of urbanization started becoming serious during the colonial era. It meant that the rural areas lost a considerable proportion of their population particularly the young and more educated to the growing towns as cities exhibited bright prospects of good employment and enhanced quality of life. In the words of F. O. F. Onyemelukwe, “as no effort was made to check this trend, it grew in bounds following the improvement in modern transportation and monetized internal trade.”<sup>90</sup> The urban centres took on wider role in the lives of the people providing more irresistible attraction to non-urban dwellers. And since the latter found no strong economic justification to continue living in a rural economy that had not provided them with promising livelihood, they found migration into towns a logical step towards their self-fulfilment. This meant that they depleted the labour force for food production for as we all know, city dwellers are food consumers, rarely are they producers.



The imbalance between the rural and urban areas received additional boost by the reclassification of some territories from rural to urban following the creation of new regions, divisions, and districts in the post World War II. By 1950, the growth became more accelerated with the unprecedented rate at which rural-urban migrations went.<sup>91</sup> The high fluidity of rural-urban migration, which first started from the Anambra rural areas to the Igbo cities of Onitsha, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Aba, Umuahia and Owerri grew in bounds. They constituted a strong push factor which transcended Igboland in quest of migration to cities outside of it in the northern and western Nigeria and beyond to Ghana, Gabon, Fernando Po, the later alone having some 20,000 Igbo as at the end of colonial rule in 1960.<sup>92</sup>

An additional side effect as it relates to the Anambra-Manu River area like elsewhere is that the inexorable and uncontrolled zest for migration to the sprawling urban centres expressed also within the framework of centre-periphery model. This factor made the areas of study to have overstretched population densities in the numerous semi-urban centres and emerging towns while the peripheries were denuded of human populations. These developments posed considerable diseconomies in the spatial organization of food production, distribution and consumption.<sup>93</sup> The overall implication of unchecked urbanization trend was seen in the fact that the number of farmers began to dwindle to a ridiculous extent. Composed mainly of the elderly age bracket, they were unable to meet up with the growing demand of urban food requirement (as indicated in the following table) which made importation both from other Nigerian regions and Europe the viable alternative. This laid down a veritable foundation for the later day dependency syndrome.

**Table 2.2 Percentage Allocation of Incomes on the part of urban population in Eastern Nigeria in Percentage (in £)**

Town	All items	Food & Drink	Clothing & personal needs	Accommodation, fuel & light	Transport & other service	Other purchases	Tobacco & kola
Enugu	100	57	12	10	10	8	3
PH/Aba	100	51.5	11	15.5	10.5	9	25

**Source:** *Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Economic Planning, Statistics Division, Eastern Nigeria, Edition Official Document No. 24 of 1965, Enugu, 1965.*

The figures were based on the result of inquiries into household budgets in 1954 (Enugu) and 1957 Port Harcourt/Aba). The population samples include labourers, artisans and clerical workers in commercial firms and government employment. Their basic earning did not exceed £350 per annum (Enugu) or £400 per annum (Port Harcourt and Aba).<sup>94</sup>

### **Promotion of Agricultural Export Production and its Effects on Food Economy**

An important feature of the food security discourse during the colonial era was the development and promotion of agricultural export production otherwise referred to as cash crop economy. Lord Lugard in his Dual Mandate made it clear ab initio, that British imperial expansion and conquest of Nigeria was dictated not only by philanthropic motives of introducing civilization, achieving peace and good government and abolishing slave trade. It was principally also aimed at fostering the growth of trade and finding outlet for the British manufactures as well as export of surplus energy and capital to satisfy the desire of her statesmen and businessmen.<sup>95</sup> Achieving this policy via export crop promotion meant the encouragement of the indigenes to produce only non-protein, non-consumable food products, which in the area of study composed overwhelmingly of

palm oil and palm kernel. These were meant for export, notably to the economies of metropolitan Britain and other European countries. There was therefore profound policy neglect of the production of cereals, livestock and other sources of dietary energy. The colonialists labeled these sections of the economy collectively as “subsistence sector” with the obvious suggestion that they were unmonetized and of secondary importance even if they were the life blood of the people. To add salt to injury, the products of the colonized people were bought at extremely low prices, which failed to justify their returns for further investment. For this reason, they were unable to afford enough cereals and protein giving food to lead healthy lives.<sup>96</sup>

H. A. Oluwasanmi explained that by emphasizing on commercial farming, Africans were persuaded to forgo their food needs and to rely on imported food. The consequence was the development of new tastes for European goods, a historical phenomenon that led to incorporation of Nigeria into the global economic order.<sup>97</sup> The development laid the groundwork of the persistent food crises in the post-colonial era, leading to shocks of galloping import bills and unresolved dependency syndrome, which paved way for what could be termed “colonialism through the stomach.”<sup>98</sup> The following table elucidates the trend.

**Table 2.3 Import of foodstuffs 1913 to 1920 in £**

Item	1913	1914	1918	1919	Average 1910 – 1919 except 1915-1917	1920
Bread/ and Biscuits...	cwt962,066 £52,472	57,716 48,534	659 2933	16,820 77,441	47,602 49,621	40,673 176,55
Fish	cwt90,974 £134,988	70,214 109,625	1,773 3,683	7,044 18,980	41,668 63,974	59,575 241,568
Flour...	cwt41,416 £20,909	33,583 21,933	5,658 13,306	27,840 07,244	31,454 63,774	27,737 76,292
Rice...	cwt75,822 £98,032	212,830 109,520	5,641 11,440	35,484 62,673	163,631 93,083	65,770 209,633
Total...	cwt750,278 £306,391	374,343 289,612	13,731 31,362	87,188 226,338	284,353 236,245	193,755 704,048

**Source:** Nigeria: Annual Report for the Agricultural Department for Southern Provinces prepared by A. H. Kirby, Acting Director of Agriculture Ibadan June 27, 1920, Government Printer Lagos.

The above table shows that as early as 1913, imported food had become a feature of the food economy of the Anambra-Mamu River Basin just like other Southern Nigerian communities. These included among others, bread/biscuits, flour, tinned fish and rice. For instance, by 1913, the value of imported bread/ was biscuits weighing 962, 066 was as high as £52, fish weighed 90, 974 at the value of £134, 988 472, rice weighed 75, 822 at the cost of £98, 032, flour weighed 41, 416 at the cost of £20, 909. There was progressive increase both in the volume and cost of the imports in subsequent years exemplified up to 1920 as indicated in the above table. Though it should be conceded that the minority European populations and a tiny crop of African elites patronized the imports, they however formed the rubrics on which the later day imports were anchored. The imports were promoted more by the fact that the prevailing climate was not quite salubrious for internal food production. This made consumable food import ratio to experience progressive increase. The worst of the importations was that the local

warehouses and departmental stores of the United Africa Company (UAC) in all its branches were filled to the brim with miscellaneous imported foods. As time went on, the imitation of the Europeans by the indigenous elitist population, who had become accustomed to alien tastes encouraged more importations.<sup>99</sup>

In any case compared to other parts of Africa, the Anambra-Mamu region had a mitigated impact of the lopsided policy in that there was a healthy balance between production for export and internal consumption. The exercise rather impacted positively on those farmers who operated close to Uras, Niger and Anambra rivers. Towns like Uli, Ihiala, Ozubulu, Okija and Ogbaru contiguous communities utilized the establishment of beaches at Oguta, Oseakwa, Onitsha, Otuocha, Ogurugu and several other places in the present Anambra and Oyi local government areas to boost sales. These beaches which served as collection points for the palm produce for onward shipment overseas became a hive of activities where the natives made quick sales of not only cash crops but articles of trade and farm products even as some unscrupulous young women engaged in incipient prostitution with company agents and middlemen.<sup>100</sup>

The refusal by the government to allow land expropriation through large-scale European plantation system meant that the people embarked upon the production of cash crops simultaneously with household food cultivation using the same land for both. Like the traditional system, they used the method of chopping off palm fronts (*ifu igu*) during cultivation to allow enough sun light to penetrate the crops at the same time having no damage done to the oil palms. Equally true was the resort to mixed cropping which guaranteed diversified production as opposed to the mono-cultivation practiced in the French colonies. This factor, which caused Senegalese groundnut farmers great distress

leading to massive food imports from overseas to feed the teeming population,<sup>101</sup> was not the case with Anambra region. Contrary to this, the findings of Uzoezie shows that foods grown for domestic consumption constituted seventy-six (76%) per cent by value of total agricultural production.<sup>102</sup> This also agrees with the views of Agboola that a high proportion of the palm oil and palm kernels served for domestic use even as the palm tree produced miscellaneous other economic products.<sup>103</sup>

It could be seen from the above that if the food situation during the colonial era was unsatisfactory, it was not caused by the cash crop export economy but should be attributed to some other variable factors particularly lack of articulated policies to encourage domestic production. For example, the three Directors of Agriculture between 1921 and 1954 rarely paid any attention to the food equation aspect of their department. They include; O.T. Faulkner (1921-1936), Captain J.R. Mackie (1936-1945) and Mr. A.G. Beatle (1945-1954). Their incoherent agricultural policies administered in a state of flux<sup>104</sup> paid no attention to domestic food production as in the Southern Eastern region. This exacerbated food deficits, manifested in two forms as indicated by A. G. Hopkins. The first occurred in areas of high population density in which case there was acute land hunger, which led to high migrations to areas of surplus land and to the townships. The second was the shortage of certain exotic quality foods such as rice, milk, sugar and beverages which consumption came as a result of the imitation of wealthier fellow country men who diversified their family food needs through association with the white man.<sup>105</sup>

The worst of these deficits was animal protein shortage, which grew in bounds because the government exaggerated the issue of trypanosomes in Eastern Nigeria. The

criticisms of the British Parliamentary team, which visited Nigeria in 1939, demonstrated the insincerity of the government and its marginalization of the Eastern Region in this respect. <sup>106</sup> The refusal of the government to develop livestock husbandry in the region made it to concentrate the effort in the Northern Provinces where in Kaduna for instance, a trypanosomiasis centre was established because like the Igbo areas, it had widespread tsetse flies such as *Glossina palpalis* and *G. tschnoids*. All activities of the centre were concentrated in North. The only references to the Southern Provinces were generally limited to abattoirs. <sup>107</sup> Equally, no facilities for research existed for the cropping section of the equation. The fact that the work was limited and controlled by officers stationed at Moor Plantation, Ibadan made Eastern Nigeria too remote for them to make any impact. It was not until 1953-54, the year of change and reorganization that the Constitutional Conference in London and Lagos vested in Regional governments the responsibility for all agricultural matters other than research. It was then that the Eastern Region began to experience some modernization in its agricultural practices. The following table shows the inadequacy of animal protein consumption in Eastern Nigeria using 1947 as illustration.

**Table 2.4 Cattle Population and Animal Marketing Figures for 1947**

Northern Provinces	211,282
Eastern Provinces	29,479
Western Provinces	82,588
Lagos Colony	24, 846
<b>Total</b>	<b>348,195</b>
<b>Slaughtering of Cattle 1947</b>	
Northern Provinces	3,281,491
Eastern Provinces	43,330
Western Provinces (excluding Lagos)	362,191
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,686,912</b>

**Source:** Nigeria Trade Summary: Monthly Return of Animals Slaughtered in Onitsha etc. March 1955 (Enugu National Archive *MINHEALTH*, File No. vv. 1/361 A ONDIST 12/1/90).

The above table shows that the Eastern Provinces reared lesser number of cattle (muturu) than both the Northern and Western Provinces/Lagos Colony, and consumed far less as indicated in the number of cattle slaughtered. The implication was that the Anambra-Mamu region suffered acute animal protein deficits. The explanation were attributed first to the ravages of tse-tse fly, which was more acute in the forested areas of the East that the semi-Savannah areas of the Western Region particularly, the north most areas of Oyo Province and its border areas with Ilorin, Kabba regions. The second reason was the fact that the Igbo in particular kept the muturu cattle mainly for ceremonial purposes like burial, sacrifices, feasts and Ozo as well as other chieftaincy ceremonies. They were unlike the Northners and their Western counterparts who earlier enough formed the habit of meat consumption as cultural pattern. The following table using animal slaughter in the month of March 1955 illustrates the contention.

**Table 2.5 Animal slaughter within the Anambra Mamu River Basin and its environs in the month of March 1955**

Station	Cattle	Pigs	Sheep	Goats
Onitsha	462	87	10	74
Atani and Osomari	-	-	-	-
Ihiala	10	11	2	47
Nnewi	18	8	-	17
Mbanesi	-	-	-	-
Aguleri and Anam	7	-	-	3
Aguata	67	30	28	67
Ugochi	-	-	-	-
Total	570	143	41	244

**Source:** Nigeria Trade Summary: Monthly Return of Animals Slaughtered in Onitsha etc. March 1955 (Enugu National Archive *MINHEALTH*, File No. vv. 1/361 A ONDIST 12/1/90).



The table shows the negligible impact of animal protein (represented by beef) in the menu of the people. It should however be noted that the figures represented slaughtering at the abattoirs while slaughtering at homes and within the villages were not recorded.

### **Government Policies on Food and Nutrition**

The overriding philosophy of the government was a passive attitude, which made it to see the challenges in the food sub-sector as a task that was left to the people to sort out by themselves. It assessed the public nutrition as satisfactory and therefore felt reluctant to intervene. The consequences of the neglect of local food production to the extent of non-establishment of agricultural research offices in Eastern Region as were done in the Northern and Western Regions demonstrated itself during the World War II leading to drastic altering of the philosophy. Exigencies of the Empire's war measures compelled the conservation of food not only to feed the soldiers but channelization of labor/manpower to war requirements. This made the Secretary of State in London to issue a general prohibition order restraining the exportation of food from the United Kingdom. This led the Colonial office to issue the "Food Stuffs Control and Maintenance of Adequate Supplies in Nigeria" General Merchant's Edict of 1939-40. It prohibited export of food except under licenced permit and strictly for persons on health grounds where no local alternatives existed.<sup>108</sup>

The war also caused cessation of rice supplies from Holland and Dutch possessions as well as sugar importation from Czechoslovakia. Alternative arrangements for rice supply from Sierra Leone and canned fish from South Africa did not materialize.<sup>109</sup> One could argue that the prohibitions hurt only Europeans and African elites who had become

accustomed to European diets judging by the items involved. These consisted of several categories of tinned foods like butter, meat, fish, milk, butter and vegetables as well as biscuits and beverages such as Ovaltine, Horlicks and Malted Milk. The masses suffered equally because moves made by Onitsha traders who turned to Bida for rice importation were scuttled by severe prohibitions issued by the Food Control Officer, Niger Province restricting rice exports from Bida as well as yams from Western Kabba as well as the Benue Province.<sup>110</sup>

It could be seen that the development exposed the food insecurity in Anambra-Mamu River Basin. The Northern Provinces suffered less because they had supplies of yam from Igala and Idoma and other communities north of Benue River even as potato from Jos and animal herders from the far north made food readily available. Control in the movement of foodstuff - a measure adopted to afford enough supplies to local military food contractors hit Eastern Provinces badly and made food items scarce and exorbitant where available. The deficits caused by the food rationing led the District Officer, Onitsha Division to ban the export of yams from Onitsha to Burutu and Warri by either ship or barge to stave hunger.<sup>111</sup> The development made the government to start making some changes from its culture of passivity to active participation in the nutritional life of the people. In 1947, it appointed Dr. Bruce M. Nicol, the Nutrition Adviser to the colonial government to carry out research on the food situation across the nation. His findings made in concert with the Medical Department showed that the nutritional standard was satisfactory in terms of quantity of food consumed. It found the lacuna however in both the quality and quantity of protein consumption. Dr. Nicol noted that

In the root eating areas of Nigeria the total intake of protein is low because its concentration in root vegetables and plantains never exceeds 2 percent. Here the bulk of the proteins is supplied by either by one, or at most two staples (yam and cassava) resulting in a deficiency of certain amino acids.<sup>112</sup>

The government followed up to this report by the introduction of nutritionally superior grains having considered the animal protein option very costly. Dr. Bruce in his report wrote off cassava and yam, which were the staple food eaten in southern Nigeria as undesirable. He advocated the replacement of them with rice to correct the protein deficiency. The “rice arithmetic gave rise to the rice lobby which led to the setting up of the British Rice Mission in 1948, headed by W. M. Clark and F. H. Hutchinson, both retired officers of the colonial service in India. The unique features of rice, which earned it the epithet of “the glamorous crop of West Africa,” were a factor that gave rise to the setting up of botanical gardens for seed development and extension services.<sup>113</sup> Enlightenment campaigns and distribution of materials and seedlings commenced with irrigation system developed to boost its productivity. In Eastern Nigeria, Abakaliki was marked out as beneficiary of the scheme.

This development expanded the cultivation of rice in eastern Nigeria to 48,000 acres in 1952 increasing further to 100, 000 fields under cultivation in the Abakaliki area by 1956.<sup>114</sup> Abakaliki thus proved the engine house from where the ferment grew and caught up with other areas in the region. It attracted the attention of private cultivation who unable to afford the costly irrigation method devised the traditional *fadama* alternative. There is no doubt that the rice gospel was highly welcomed by the people. Starting from city dwellers, it appealed to the generality of the people who were caught up with the government advertisement of rice as food of civilized people with higher

nutritional properties. In any case, in spite of the vigorous campaign effort at its cultivation and massive demand, the project was fated to failure - a factor that caused the crop to continue to grow in demand and in superiority over other local foods stuffs.<sup>115</sup> In all respects, negligence of agriculture in eastern parts of Nigeria continued unabated. As already noted, it was not until the inauguration of the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, which proclaimed Nigeria into a federation, creating the Eastern Region and proclamation of the region into a self-governing status two years later, that some changes were introduced.

Apart from rice, the Agricultural Department saw the need for vigorous promotion of fruits and vegetables, which came from diverse places of Europe and Asia. These include Irish potatoes, lettuce, garbage, carrots, avocado pears, citrus fruits, guavas, mango, pawpaw etc. These fruits and their seedlings were distributed to farmers and other interested persons for cultivation. From schools and church gardens, these fruits dispersed and won the admiration of the people. The Department of Agriculture in furtherance of its campaign considered the existing maize varieties as nutritionally too poor, which called for the massive injection of the American hybrid species. In comparison with the indigenous variety, which yielded 1000kg per hectre, the American specie produced double of that. In any case, the new variety had two major disadvantages. It did not actually command higher nutritional properties over what hitherto prevailed, more so, dependence on it amounted to a sickness called pellagra, which was feared to be widespread. The second disadvantage was the importation of maize rust (*Puccinia Polysora*), a disease, which was unknown until its arrival. This disease almost wiped out the indigenous variety, which had no immunity against it. This

ugly scenario made the price of maize prohibitive causing it to jump as high as 500 per cent.<sup>116</sup>

### **Food Prices**

Conditions imposed by the World War 11 also influenced the government to show some interest in the prices of local foodstuffs. These were however a function of a number of variables defined mainly by harvest conditions marked by rainfall regime. In some years, it caused apprehension because of its tendency of withering, shrinking and rotting of yam tubers. This was the situation in Awka Division in November 1940. The Division Officer reporting from Isuofia noted that the adverse development led to price fluctuations and variations in different parts of the Division. A similar picture was true of Abboh, Mbowu and Awgu areas where the District Officer also attributed the under average yield of yams to abnormal rainfall and lack of adequate sunshine in the month of August. In any case, such developments did not persist and did not affect other foodstuffs in view of the of fact that motor lorries were at hand to dispatch food to areas of insufficiency. Moreover, anticipation of yam shortages caused farmers to wisely sow subsidiary crops chiefly cassava, melon, okra and green leafy vegetables. This made the bellies not to be empty during the dry season, however what was consumed were filling but not nourishing.<sup>117</sup>

**Table 2.6 Comparisons of yam prices across the zone between March and November 1940 shows as follows:**

	Awka	Udi	Agbani	Aguleri	Awkuzu	Oba	Nnobi
8 very large yams @	1/6	8/-to	10/-	2/8-3/-	3/6-4-	-	-
12 very large yams @	1/3	½	9/-	2/-	3/-	2/-	2/2
16 small yams @	1/-	10/- To 11/-		2/-	-	2/-	1/10

**Source:** NAE, ONDIST file No. Op 122 vols. 11 and 111: Subject: Food stuff: Food Prices.

The above table shows that the prices of yams had by 1940 gone so high that the common man both farmers and those engaged in non farming occupations could hardly buy them. This fact could be elucidated from the following points;

- (1) Very large yams at some places like Udi and Agbani could go for large yams at Enugu.
- (2) The prices varied between village markets and “foreign” markets representing markets outside the area under reference.
- (3) Food distribution was often faulty making some communities to be short of one or more commodities and causing glut and subsequent price variations. This was what caused the government to restrain further yam transportation to Awka in November 1940.<sup>118</sup>

Price differential for the imported food were accounted by the nature of the article and the mode of transportation. For instance, goods coming into Onitsha might come by river from Burutu, by road from Port Harcourt and by rail and road from Port Harcourt via Enugu. Both Enugu and Onitsha had unofficial Chambers of Commerce comprising the marketing firms whose officials worked in close cooperation with each other. It was

these firms that fixed the prices taking into cognizance the transportation costs from ports of entry but cutting down the ultimate prices to appropriate as closely as possible. Local Price Advisory Committee were set up for Onitsha and Enugu but they had very little work to do as their formation was mainly to be in accord with the regulation.”<sup>119</sup>

### **Assessment of Colonial Rule on Food Security**

Contact with the wider world particularly the advent of colonialism impacted positively on the food system by the introduction of new varieties of crops. These no doubt boosted and widened the horizon of the food economy. Evaluation of the colonial nutrition situation therefore showed some marked improvement. For instance in the pre-colonial times yams were regarded as the optimum food. Eggs were seldom eaten, as fondness for meat was thought to reflect an extravagant and wasteful disposition and was discouraged among the young. Fruits and vegetables tended to be despised as the food of the poor and given rather disproportionately to the children. The introduction of many fruits and encouragement of their consumption changed all that. It also eradicated many superstitious customs and taboos but it left poverty largely intact, which restricted protein consumption. Children and adults continued to be admitted in hospitals suffering from malnutrition, and the diet of the poor both in the cities and rural areas consisted of cassava fufu and garri which are filling but carbohydrate.”<sup>120</sup>

The net effect of this state of affairs was that the food security profile of the people remained far below the expectations. These manifested chiefly as malnutrition, which was not only the result of insufficient feeding, but also of wrong feeding. The fact that the majority of the people remained positively unaffected by colonial rule made them

to continue to live in ignorance regarding nutritional and medical related issues. The worst of these prevalent diseases was protein-energy malnutrition, which affected not only children but adults causing them to develop stunted heights as indicated by the reports of Dr. T. P. Eddy, the Medical Officer in Nigeria in 1937 which showed that the people generally had stunted growth, which caused their rejection as recruits in the army. Dr. Eddy noted further that those recruited were easily exhausted when assigned with manual tasks. He attributed this malaise to persistent shortage of food and poor feeding. He attributed this to poor wages paid to unskilled labourers, which in the southern part of Nigeria was a ridiculous 6d and further in the north, it was 4d per day. The poor wage, which was an object of ridicule among the expatriates was so inconsequential that it could hardly buy food in the local market.<sup>121</sup> If one has to go by the food calorific value and food chemical analysis developed by Dr. F. Daniel during the colonial era, it showed that an average man weighing 60kg, doing six hours of moderate work and operating in the warm tropical environment such as Anambra-Mamu River area needed a minimum of 2,600 calories of food a day. This broken down as follows:

**Table 2.7 Minimum Calorie Requirement Per Unit, Per Day**

Rice	10 ounces (284g)	1,012 calories
Millet	5 ounces (124g)	455 calories
Milk	8 ounces (227g)	136 calories
Pulses	3 ounces (85g)	224 calories
Non-leafy vegetables	6 ounces (170g)	236 calories
Green leafy vegetables	4 ounces (113g)	36 calories
Fats and oils	2 ounces (57g)	475 calories
Fruits	2 ounces (57g)	26 calories
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 ounces</b>	<b>2600 calories</b>

**Source:** F. Daniel, *Health Science and Physiology for Tropical Schools* (London: Oxford University Press 1953), 54-55



Going by the above requirements, it shows that about two thirds of energy requirements must be provided by carbohydrates, which in the area of study was made available by yam, cocoyam and cassava, rice being almost non accessible to majority of the people at that time. It requires also one-sixth of the calorie to come from fats, and one-sixth by proteins (at least one-fifth of this protein being raw animal origin and the rest vegetable protein). In the Anambra-Mamu area, there was sheer absence of milk and pulses were in short supply. Meat was eaten sparingly and as luxury mainly at festivals. Fats and oil were plentiful as well as green vegetables. The snag however was that the latter two components as well as fruits were not often consumed because they were assumed to be food for the poor. The implication was that the food component weighted disproportionately towards carbohydrates, the raw animal protein needed for growth and repair of damaged tissues being grossly inadequate. The muscular hard work to which the people were accustomed to, required not only increased carbohydrate but also enough protein, minerals and vitamins. These were often not met.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FIRST REPUBLIC (EASTERN NIGERIA) AND THE EFFECTS OF THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

#### Introduction

#### Structure of Agricultural Policies/Programmes Implementation

It may be imperative in this chapter to first briefly survey the structure of agricultural/food development programmes, which formed the basis of intervention by the federal and state governments as well as multilateral aid/development agencies. Such a survey will in a significant way bring out the nitty gritty of issues that define the efficiency and/or hiccups in their implementation strategies. The structure was generally threefold – namely, Federal, State, and Local Government Areas.

**FEDERAL:** The Nigerian government inherited the structure left behind by the departing colonial regime, which took the option of promoting agriculture through the establishment of marketing boards. In Eastern Region, the departing colonial government created a quasi-governmental Eastern Region Produce Development Board that became the forerunner of the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC). At independence in 1960, this structure continued to remain with no federal ministry of agriculture. Generally, agriculture was reduced to a mere footnote in the First Development Plan, 1962-68. Creation of twelve states structure in 1967 by the military abolished regionalism and brought to limelight the idea of ministries of agriculture at the centre and in the states. It subsequently established the Federal Ministry of Agriculture

Lagos with offices spread across the states. Subsequent state creations over the years brought the number of states to thirty-six and the Federal Capital Territory. Each state had its own Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources/ Rural Development with their federal counterpart also establishing offices in the state capitals. Between the post civil war eras of the 1970s up to 1991, the Federal Government established the following policies/programmes;

- (a) The East Central State Post-War Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation Programme established in 1970 was charged with the responsibility of coordinating the physical and socio-economic reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts and providing food and other relief to displaced persons in the war-affected areas.
- (b) National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) 1972. With Head Offices in Kaduna, by 1975 it opened State Steering Committees in every state capital and Sub-Committees at the states' zonal level. It worked in collaboration with the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan and other designated research institutes spread across the nation. Umudike established by the Eastern Nigeria Government served for the area of study.
- (c) Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB) 1973. An apex agricultural financial organization, it offered financial assistance to farmers through cooperative societies and River Basin Development Authorities
- (d) Operation Feed the Nation (OFN). Launched in 1976, at the federal level were a National Council and a National Committee and in the states, State Councils and

- State Committees. Under these were the Local Government Committees and Food Producers.
- (e) Land Use Decree (later Act) 1978 aimed to bring all lands in the country in uniformity with the land laws that prevailed in the former Northern Region.
  - (f) Decree No. 25 of 1976 established eleven River Basin Development Authorities across the nation. Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) served the area of study.
  - (g) Green Revolution, 1980, worked in concert with River Basin Development Authorities to harness natural resources to achieve food self-reliance. It had offices in all state capitals.
  - (i) Other programmes include Presidential Task Force on Rice (PTFR) 1981, Essential Commodity 1982, Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and Better Life Programmes (BLPs) 1986, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Land Acquisition and Development Agenda (NALDA) etc. They were set up to offer employment to the rural dwellers, to cushion the harsh effects of SAP.

**Multilateral Development Agencies:** These include FAO, IFAD, World Bank, UNICEF and USAID. They initiated several projects in collaboration with the Federal Government. Examples include IFAD Multi-State Agricultural Development Project (MSADP 1, 11 & 111), The World Bank assisted Irrigation of Lower Anambra River Basin, Anambra State Rice projects Omor environs and 15 communities, Agricultural

Development Projects (ADPs), Urban Water Scheme etc. Others are UNDP Seed Laboratory at Market Garden Enugu, FAO fertilizer trials.

It ought to be emphasized that the structure created since 1970 by the military regime and retained since then made it that directives were issued from the Head of State/ Presidency with policies and decisions undertaken by a central committee bypassing the bureaucratic hierarchy of authority in the civil service both at the federal and the states. At the states, they were implemented by functional arms (committees or task forces) created for the project/programme, which were directly under the Governor's office. Each governor was expected to oversee the operations of the programme, which extended to the LGAs. The essence of the top-to-bottom coordination structure was in line with centralized, unitary nature of the military profession which was expected to mobilize human and material resources for speedy and concrete results within a short period of time. In this regard, funds for each programme were released from the federal allocation and passed directly to the states from where they were disbursed to the LGAs.

## **STATE**

**Eastern Region/East Central State/Anambra State:** Political re-organization of the country in 1953-54 following the Oliver Lyttleton's Constitution created regionalism and brought agricultural research under the concurrent legislative list. Subsequently, Department of Agriculture was created at the centre while Ministry of Agriculture was created in the regions. Eastern Nigerian Government however executed its programmes through four agencies namely, Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC), Farm Settlement Scheme, Community Development Projects and foreign companies, which

included Commonwealth Development Corporation, Dunlop, Eastern Nigeria Nucleus Rubber Estate Co. and Eastern Nigeria Smallholder Board of Management. The structure paid peripheral attention to food production. In effect, only the community projects realistically penetrated the traditional fabric of village life. Principal among the overall thirty projects mapped out for massive assault on poverty and backwardness in rural areas included:

- (a) Six Farm Settlement Schemes, which the area of study benefitted through two namely Uzo-Uwani and Igbarialm Farm Settlements.
- (b) Thirty-two State Plantations or Estates, with the area of study gaining through Oghe Cashew Plantation.
- (c) Community Plantations among discrete communities for the development of palm produce and other cash crops
- (d) Uzo-Uwani Irrigation Scheme for rice and miscellaneous crops
- (e) Self-employment Scheme through Micro and Small-Scale industries
- (f) Others include Cattle Ranch at Obudu and Cattle Kraal at Adada, Nsukka plateau, Market Garden, Enugu, Veterinary Schools at Ezamgbo, Achi etc, Umudike Research Institute and Schools of Agriculture at Igbariam in Onitsha zone etc

East Central State and later Anambra State inherited some of the structures that fell under their jurisdictions following creation of states in 1967 and 1976. Effort to correct the preponderance of attention paid to cash crop at the expense of domestic food production led to separation of their operations by the establishment of two ministries under the agriculture sector, namely Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Agricultural Extension. The administration of Jim Nwobodo designated the later Ministry of Food

Production to midwife its pet project - Food for the People Programme (FPP). The State's Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Food Production were organized at three levels namely state, zone and LGAs.

(a) at the State level were Commissioners of Agriculture/Food Production assisted by respective Permanent Secretaries, Chief Agricultural Officers, who were charged with the responsibility of overseeing the Extension and Training Division of their respective ministries. Under them were Principal Agric. Superintendents, Agric. Superintendents, Agric. Officers and others such as clerks, messengers and drivers.

**Corporations:** In addition to the above arrangement, the government adopted the strategy of executing its projects through corporations. The strategy, which was adopted during the First Republic, was invigorated by the East Central State regime and later Anambra State via Agricultural Development Authority (ADA), Adarice Productions Ltd, Anambra State Livestock Production Company, Anambra State Community Farms, Anambra State Vegetable Oil Co. (AVOP), Feed Mill Co. Ninth Mile Corner etc. The most ambitious of these was ADA set up after the Nigerian Civil War to resuscitate moribund projects damaged by the conflict. Under its frame of reference were several State farms across East Central State. Those under the Anambra basin include Uzo-Uwani, Abakaliki, Nkwele/Ezunaka, Ezillo/Nkalagu and Ibgariam. Other projects under its jurisdiction included ADARICE Company Ltd, Project Development Institute (PRODA) Enugu, two silos at Ezillo/Nkalagu, three at Ninth Mile Corner and fifteen others at different sites. Its Irrigation projects were carried out under the auspices of the following river basins: Ebonyi for Abakaliki, Do-Anambra for Ifite-Ogwari in Uzo-Uwani, Mamu for Ogboji in Awka zone and Niger for Odekpe in Ogbaru LGA. Soil

Erosion projects were carried out at Aguata and twenty five other places, veterinary schools at Ezzamgbo, Ajalli/Nawfija in Aguata Division, Enugu Ezike in Igboeze, Ehamufu in Isi-Uzo, Ezikwo in Ezamgbo and Onitsha. Other later day programmes/projects include Anambra State Tractor Company (ASTRAC), the Norwegian Church Agricultural Project (NORCAP, (inherited by the state government as Anambra State School of Agriculture) Ikwo and Food for the People Programme (FPP).

**International Donor Agencies:** These were involved in direct agricultural development in the area of study through bilateral agreements. These include African Development Bank (AfDB), FAO and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which initiated rice development through Nipon Koei Engineering Co. Ltd. Others include the Republic of Korea for rice development and Suedwest Nautik firm of Freiburg/Opfingen West Germany for the Anambra State Fish Farm. Space may not allow inclusion of all the policies and programmes, which under FPP for instance measured over thirty. Examples include, Veterinary Schools, rice production in fifteen communities, Community Farms, Young Farmers Clubs, Food Crops Programme, Pest/ Disease Control, Tree Crops Engineering Programme etc.

### **State Agricultural Zones**

Anambra State agricultural development was organized in consonant with five zones corresponding with the five senatorial or political zones of the state. They included Abakaliki, Awka, Enugu, Nsukka, and Onitsha. For this reason, the Food Crops Programme of the Ministries of Agriculture and Food Production, which included State Farms and Forest Reserves/ Resources had their activities located as follows. Ehamufu



and Ukpabi (Nsukka Zone); Ndeabor/Mpu/Uduma and Mgbowo (Enugu Zone); Ezza, Ezzamgbo, Mbu/Neke and Onuabonyi (Abakaliki Zone); Isiagu/Umuawulu and Ufuma (Awka Zone); Nkwele Ezunaka, Igbariam and Osomalla (Onitsha Zone).

**Local Governments:** With the promulgation of Local Government Edict 1977, agricultural development at the local or 'grass root' level became the responsibility of the respective local governments under the aegis of the State Ministry of Agriculture/Food Production. There were 23 LGAs in the State. Under the administration of Jim Nwobodo 1979-1980, they increased to 54 but was later returned to 23 in 1984. Agricultural development in these 'grass root' areas were headed by Agricultural Officers assisted by Agricultural Supervisors. Each was answerable to the state officers at the respective zones.

### **GENERAL SURVEY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1960-1966**

At the attainment of independence in 1960, agriculture continued to remain the most important sector of the economy providing food to the people and alleviating poverty across the land. It provided livelihood to a large segment of the population to the tune of about 63 percent particularly the rural dwellers. It was also the major source of government revenue contributing as high as 70 per cent of total exports and foreign exchange, accounting for about 65 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>1</sup> At the closing stage of the colonial regime therefore, the Anambra –Mamu River Basin like other parts of the country, was in market terms, self sufficient in food, only a small portion of its import bill (valued at about £20 million out of a total consumption of £500 million was due to food imports.<sup>2</sup> This consisted mainly of sugar, milk and wheat flour -

products (for which there were no local substitutes) as well as fish to supplement local catch at a time when animal protein was grossly in short supply.<sup>3</sup> However, the economy was an offshoot of the colonial times and soon all the logistical problems militating against adequate food production began to rear their ugly heads. It was not surprising that no sooner had the administration of the First Republic was seated into office, than it started to show a benign neglect of the food subsector of the agricultural sector. For the fact that food prices had been quite stable and food imports modest, it treated food production as a natural endowment that required no investment even for maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

The implication was that with an average growth rate of 4 percent in GDP and 2.8 per cent in population, there was not much change in the standard of living. The reason was that the sectoral differences, which became the driver of the economy did not impact on agriculture which though struggled to remain the mainstay of the economy but grew at only 2 percent, far below the rate at which population rate grew.<sup>5</sup>

### **Effects of Population Explosion**

One notable trend that occurred uniformly among African countries towards the end of colonial rule in the 1950s according to the analysis of John Iliffe among other historians was population explosion, which had accelerated swiftly rising to an average of 2.8 per cent. The chief reason for the acceleration was the drastic fall in death rates and rise in birth rates - a factor that equally led to rise in life expectancy at birth from 39 to 52 years in subsequent decades. This led to drastic lowering of infant and child mortality before the age of five from its pre-1950s figure of between 30 and 40 per cent to less than

22 per cent at independence. The decline was attributed to the conditions created in the post-World War II era, which brought into being mass vaccination and discovery of cheap synthetic drugs. This drastically reduced the outbreak of several diseases, at the same time achieved spectacular successes against severe complaints such as tuberculosis, leprosy, pneumonia, malaria, measles, polio, diarrhea and malnutrition.<sup>6</sup>

These improvements were however the outcome of educational and enlightenment campaigns which led to better diet and better use of modern health facilities. Consequently, there was dramatic reduction in the proportion of infertile women and corresponding high birth rates. There was also increase in the ratio of qualified doctors per patient, which in 1960 recorded 73,711 patients per doctor. This signified a gradual departure from the traditional healers or *dibia* - the herbal medicine man, whose unorthodox methods of treatment made many diseases to remain untreated but rather susceptible to religio-magic explanation. The result was that they often degenerated into epidemics, which many examples dotted the pre-independence history of Igboland.<sup>7</sup>

Like other parts of Africa, these and many more, were the factors that fostered exponential population growth in the Igbo enclave of Anambra-Mamu River area. It was such that at the attainment of political independence in 1960, some areas within the basin commanded a population density of about 340-600 persons per square mile, in some places out passing these figures by over 1000. These no doubt were the highest in Africa with the possible exception of the Island of Mauritius and few other places like the Nile Valley, Burundi, and Rwanda.<sup>8</sup>

The implications for the upward demographic trajectory were many and poignant. The figures of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) showed that in the early 1960s the government and people of Eastern Region of Nigeria like their peers in other parts of the world did make praise worthy efforts towards increased food production and indeed worked hard towards the lofty goals but forces at their disposal were undaunting. The statistics of OECD made it clearer. It showed that total food production rose by 115% while the developing market economies achieved a better performance with an increase of 130% over the same period.<sup>9</sup> The difference however was that the remarkable increase did not have the same effects on per capita food supplies in the two regions. Whereas in the advanced countries, per capita food supplies were satisfactory, given their low population growth rates, in the developing countries, production increases were quite often close to production increases, in some areas like the Anambra-Mamu River Basin, actually surpassing it thereby making the rates of growth per capita food production virtually insignificant. Thus while food production in Africa in the period between 1952 and 1962 was 2.2%, population growth averaged 2.5% and in some places like the area of study climbing as high as 2.8%.<sup>10</sup> The result is that food production lagged behind increase in total domestic demand leading to consequent sharp rises in import of food and diversion of available scarce foreign exchange from more production purposes. Such imports had the tendency of raising retail prices and in turn seriously affecting the ability of the marginal and vulnerable groups to access it.

Viewed further from the economic sense of it, a larger family was bound to spend more on food purchases than smaller families. This was the findings of the study carried out by Dr. Mann, an agronomist with the Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Agriculture. The

survey conducted among some villages in the area of study showed that the total annual expenditure per family kept a parallel trend upwards with increase in family members. The study showed that large families enjoyed greater supply of food because of the large number of family workers on the farm holdings.<sup>11</sup> It was this tendency that caused the Igbo traditional society not adept at food purchases to breed large number of children to act as labour reservoir. In any case, large population became one of the prime causes of food insecurity. It retarded economic and social development, led to poor health status, low stamina and low physical activity among the populace.<sup>12</sup> Uncontrolled population growth was the message relayed to the more than 1000 delegates from over 100 nations (including Nigeria) who attended the World Food Congress in Washington D.C. in June 1963. The famous British historian sounded the warning that the struggle to end hunger could not be won unless nations voluntarily decided to regulate the number of human beings. “We have been godlike in our planned breeding of domesticated plants and animals but we have been rabbit-like in our unplanned breeding of ourselves,” Toynbee said.<sup>13</sup>

## **Labour**

Population size and high rate of its increase had direct bearing on the growth of labour force. The high fertility rates since the early 1950s had the effect of giving birth to children under the age of 15 making the proportion of under aged population to be as high as 45 to 50 per hundred in the early 1960s.<sup>14</sup>

This was a grave concern to the government of Eastern Region. Their growing numbers, meant that new job opportunities had to be created particularly in a situation

where the land was scarce and increasingly growing infertile thus making the absorptive capacity of labour in agriculture overstretching its maximum.<sup>15</sup> Although manufacturing industries started springing up since the 1950s, they were however too few and only an infinitesimal proportion of the working age population were offered jobs albeit in menial categories. This meant that the bulk of the labour force had to migrate outside the region as agriculture was no longer affording satisfactory employment.

Even if agriculture held any promises, the subsistence nature of its operations repulsed a large segment of the school leavers comprising products of the teacher training institutes and secondary school graduates who had become qualified for white and blue-collar jobs and were itching for placement in the scarce employment opportunities in the government establishments, industries, trading companies and schools. It ought be noted that the euphoria of independence had produced a revolutionary ferment which in turn brought revolutionary formulas to the education sector by the rapid establishment of many schools. Out of a total of 349 Post-Primary Institutions in Eastern Nigeria, the Anambra-Mamu River area had over 101.<sup>16</sup> To these must be added several unlisted others mostly private and non-government schools, seminaries, nunneries or convents, nursing and midwifery schools, short-hand and private commercial schools etc. each of them churning out graduands every year.

By 1959, 19,000 children attended secondary schools, 10,400 were at the teacher training colleges, and 729 in technical and vocational institutions. At the university level, there were over 1,600 students from Eastern Region, nearly 1000 of whom were abroad, the remaining in tertiary institutions within Nigeria.<sup>17</sup> On completion of their studies, they usually returned to queue up and to compete for scarce employment opportunities within

the region. The growing number of job applicants made it that primary-school graduates who in the 1930s were sure of secure, respectable white-collar employment had lost out completely and by the post World War II, the tide of unemployment began to engulf the secondary school leavers as well.<sup>18</sup>

The effect of the education revolution was the creation of new class of elites with their rising expectations and its equally resultant creation of incipient social inequalities. In spite of the growing unavailability of job opportunities to absorb these incipient elitist population, the new mentality made it difficult for them to accept their parent's occupation like *ite ngwo* (palm wine tapping) or to engage in unproductive and unprogressive *oru ugbo* (farming). Even those who migrated with their parents to the Rubber Plantations or to Fernando Po were repulsed by the idea of engaging in *oru panya* (Spanish casual labour) or Ika Rubber (tapping gum from rubber trees).<sup>19</sup> In situations where the abject poverty in their families could not afford them capital for trading, the alternative was to migrate away from the villages to the urban centres where they hoped to find paid jobs. This made the rural farming communities to lose farm hands. The rising cost of labour left farm work to be the preoccupation of elderly men and women.<sup>20</sup>

### **Animal Husbandry and Fish Production**

The prevalence of chronic malnutrition was aggravated by the deficiency of animal protein. As a practice, the Igbo kept few goats, sheep and birds only for ceremonial purposes and few rich people that possessed the dwarf or short-horn Muturu cows did so for prestige and religious purposes. Thus with the exception of the favoured

minority groups found disproportionately in the cities, the daily intake of raw protein was less than 10 to 20 grammes for an adult man and in some places bordering Ogoja it went as low as 5 grammes. This compared disfavouredly with 70 grammes in the southern coastal region where there was abundance of sea foods.<sup>21</sup> The Anambra-Mamu figures fell far below the recommended requirements of FAO, which is 65 grammes. Utter destruction of forest habitats harbouring wild game following increased human activity and gradual end of the practice of entomophagy for most people was a factor that predisposed the people to malnutrition. This made the daily intake of unbalanced diet to be heavily biased towards starchy foods composed mainly of yam and cassava.

The matter could have been remedied by fish consumption but this had its own heavy dose of problems. Firstly, there were very few streams and rivers and even at that, they harboured only a limited number of small sized fish, mainly fries. This made fishing a preoccupation of women and children consigned to off-season activities using artisanal mongering techniques. The places where substantial quantity of fishes, could be obtained remained the lakes and swamps of the Niger and Anambra rivers. Usually, land owners of the lakes situated along the shores of these rivers were constantly in deep seated squabbling among themselves because of the exorbitant rent paid in kind and cash by the Sobo, Kwale, Isu and other migrant fishermen. In one instance, it went as high as £100 for three year fishing rights.<sup>22</sup> This gave the stranger elements the advantage of playing one group against the other and by so doing engaged in intensive fishing using poisonous *iweli* leaves and other chemicals that drastically exterminated the fishes. This difficulty aggravated by difficult and inaccessible terrain was true of the entire Ogbaru communities of Ogwuaniocha, Ogwucham, Ogwuikple, Ogbakuba, Atani, Odekpe,



Ohita, Umunankwo etc. It was also true of Nzam and Anam communities, as well as the hamlets of Iyiokwulu, Mmiata, Ireagu and a few other lakes on the border with Igala ethnic group.<sup>23</sup> This translated to the fact that fish production was grossly inadequate, causing considerable quantity of fish consumed in the Anambra-Mamu River area to be supplied from other geographical regions of Nigeria and from overseas.

Thus out of the estimated twelve pounds per head or 66,000 metric tons of fish a year consumed in Eastern Nigeria as a whole, only a tiny fraction of less than 1 per cent was generated within the Anambra – Mamu zone going by the data made available by Professor Barry Floyd.<sup>24</sup> The data shows that fish consumption in Eastern Nigeria was 20,300 metric tons generated from the following sources (a) marine fishing (Continental Shelf and Gulf of Guinea), 11,800 metric tons (b) brackish water fishing from creeks and lagoons of the Delta and Coastal Lowlands, 6,000 tons (c) fresh water fishing from rivers and lakes, 2,500. The second source is Northern Nigeria comprising fresh water fishing from Lake Chad, which supplied 4,000 metric tons. The major sources of fish supply however were foreign countries, which comprised Norway, Iceland, UK etc as well as marine fishing from North Atlantic. Their values in metric tons include; stock fish (dried cod), 36,000 metric tons, iced and frozen fish 5,000 metric tons, tinned fish 7,000 metric tons.<sup>25</sup> The above account shows that fresh water fishing consisting of rivers and lakes, which form the only sources of fish in the area of study, fetched only 2,500 metric tons representing 3.8 percent of the total supply for Eastern Region.<sup>26</sup> Rivers Niger, Anambra and Mamu, Ebonyi etc and their tributaries are perhaps the only rivers and lakes that qualify to belong to this category, in the area of study. If several other rivers and lakes in the Eastern Region such as Imo, Calabar, Rivers, Oguta and Agulu, Iyiokwulu Lakes etc

were to be put into the picture it means that fish supplies from the zone could be put some where at 1 percent because of the preponderance of imported fish products.

### **Food Marketing and Distribution**

The dynamics of the Nigerian economy meant that the attendant food deficits could only be ameliorated through spatial distribution from areas of sufficiency in specialty foodstuffs, what Edward Ullman in his *American Commodity Flow* called “complementarity.”<sup>27</sup> This went in three dimensions within the context of the exchange economy. The first was within the Anambra-Mamu river basin and beyond to Igbo land and Eastern region. This entailed development of the local markets into bulking centres where wholesalers assembled supplies of staples to be carried to Onitsha and Enugu or directly outside the region. This gradually transformed these village markets which hitherto held on four market days into daily market ‘rings’ or ‘cycles’ serving chiefly as feeder markets for the cities.<sup>28</sup>

Formerly, these markets remained localized in status as fora where producers and consumers exchanged their products and services with only small amounts going to neighbouring markets. Expansion I trading transformed them into markets where wholesalers purchased items, which they resold to other traders or consumers. The transformation even graduated to a situation whereby the sales were done *in situ* at the farmstead or at the homestead of the farmers at the village bypassing the market. The traders exploited the ignorance, poverty and transport challenges faced by subsistent farmers especially as regards the bulkier fresh roots and paddy rice. This made almost all the paddy rice supplied from Abakiliki zone to be sold at the farm sites to assemblers

who processed them at the local mills. Then they are resold in finished form to traders who transportation them directly to Onitsha bypassing Enugu. This was also true of yams, which the traders assembled marketable quantities directly from the farms or purchased them from the rural markets or along the roadsides and moved them directly to Enugu and Onitsha markets. It was also true of cassava, which the traders bought cheaply unharvested at the farms from its supply base at Agbani, Nike and Oghe, which lay within a ten-mile radius to the east and south of Enugu. From these points, they were processed and transported directly to feed the coal city dwellers.<sup>29</sup>

The above marketing operations made Enugu and Onitsha the collection centres for locally produced commodities as well as those imported from other regions. It also explains why Onitsha was concentrated many wholesalers and bulkers who used the main lines of the city's efficient transport system composed of waterways and road network to carry out their business of buying and selling.<sup>30</sup> The above spatial distribution of foods stuffs was among the chief causes of food insecurity in the area of study. The daily carting away of food stuffs from the rural areas denied the rural dwellers access to sufficient food even when they were the producers. Their low wages, which in Whitney's report was 2s per day for agricultural labourers (with food) meant that they could not afford to buy enough food. Besides, scarce employment opportunities in other sectors of the economy for women exacerbated the food crisis.<sup>31</sup> Financial constraints, and abject poverty combined with ignorance put the farmers in a relatively weaker bargaining position to sell away their products at the farmstead or homestead instead of exercising patience to sell in organized open markets where buyers and sellers meet. There at the

market, prices were determined by the forces of demand and supply and even at that, the market was widened by the presence of direct consumers.<sup>32</sup>

The second area by which trading contributed to food insecurity was increase in the number of market chains. It led to consequent increase in retail prices of foodstuffs. A study conducted in this regard by Thodey measured the number of times a commodity changed hands between the producers and consumers to average about 4 transactions for yams, 3.5 for dried maize, and 3 for garri. Whitney's estimate likewise puts rice at 5 times, yams 4 times and gari 3 times. This is demonstrated as follows: **producer** → **assembler** → **wholesaler** → **retailer** → **consumer**. The chain was however lower where the wholesaler also acted as the retailer. On the other hand another link was added where the smaller assembler made purchases directly from the farmers outside the market and brought the products to sell to visiting traders at the market. Additional two links were added where supplies carried into the city changed hands with another truck to be carried to another major consuming centre thus achieving seven chains of **producer** → **country assembler** → **assembler** → **transporter** → **wholesaler in the first city** → **wholesaler in second city** → **retailer** → **consumer**. In each of the chains, price increases were obtained making the less privileged unable to purchase enough food.<sup>35</sup>

The third contributing factor to food insecurity is measured in food hoarding, artificial scarcity and subsequent skyrocketing of prices willfully designed by traders to achieve price maximization. Food security objectives demand that supplies must be made available at all times throughout the year. This implies that substantial part of the crops must be stored from one harvest to the next. Apart from cassava products that could be produced throughout the year, (the only constraint being hard soil to harvest it), other

crops such as yams, cowpea, maize, cocoyam etc are all seasonal products. This made their consumption to fluctuate in the course of the year, their highest consumption rate being in the months after harvest and declining as the year advances.<sup>36</sup> A study by I.S. Dema in villages outside Enugu showed larger sales by farmers immediately after harvest than at any other time. They were usually financially exhausted and therefore sold their crops to afford money to pay school fees, taxes, debts and sundry expenses. This gave speculative traders and assemblers the leverage to buy up the crops for storage and to sell them during the hungry months when prices appreciated.<sup>37</sup> This made Whitney to say that just as farmers sold the bulk of their crop after the harvest, the volume of trade especially by bulkers and wholesalers appeared to be larger during the period between November to January than any other time.<sup>38</sup>

It need be noted that with the exception of the waterlogged areas, Eastern Provinces had by the middle 1960s the best-developed road system in Nigeria and probably the densest network of any area of comparable size on the African continent. There was one mile of road for every 1.8 square miles of territory and virtually every village in the region could be reached by motor vehicles during the dry season. Increased vehicular traffic brought the annual registration of vehicles to 6,170 as at 1962 from its 3,640 in 1958 and almost 45 per cent of these were lorries, 73 % of which were in the five-ton class or over, some weighing twenty tons. This no doubt aided and abated the daily carting away of foodstuffs from the remotest villages at very low prices leading to food insecurity in those villages. In addition to lorries, the railway system with its advantages of cheaper freight rates and bulkier haulage over long distances was able to stimulate food distribution with all its advantages and demerits.<sup>39</sup> This became

worrisome because in as much as the farmers gained by selling their agricultural products, it translated to food insecurity because commensurate food products brought into the communities from other places was negligible.

Oral discussions and interviews with a number of people showed that the perennial spectre of poverty and hunger which hunted the farmers and other less privileged people caused partly by the marketing and distribution mechanism of food stuffs were factors that made many members of the younger generation to swear not to engage in farming as means of livelihood. One of the interviewees Chief George Elusiahu, wondered how the farmers who toiled day and night throughout the farming season could, not quite long after harvests become bereft of food stuffs. Some of them propelled by poverty even resorted to selling away their unharvested farms crops. The same people came to Afor-Igwe Umudala market (in Ihiala) to purchase the same cassava and other products. This was also the scenario that made a young man from Ihembosi in today's Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State Area to write poignantly in the 1960s that abject poverty was the lot of small-scale farmers. He wondered if it was not tragic that some people will continue to work at home and Olu (the riverine areas) with their families throughout the farming season, but not quite long after the harvest they picked up baskets and trekked to Nkwo Okija to purchase yams. It was funny he said, that they were unable to provide food for themselves and their families.<sup>40</sup>

### **Food Deficits and Increase in the Level of Food Imports**

Food deficits were aggravated by unfavourable carrying capacity occasioned by shrinking availability of farmland vis-a-vis the rising population. Barry Floyd captured

this scenario when he reported that the Eastern Region covered an area of approximately 170 miles square. Here according to the mid 1960 estimate lived and worked 8.23 million people giving an over-all density of 264 persons per square mile, almost double that of any other region,<sup>41</sup> in the core Igbo areas such as Anambra-Mamu River Basin, going over 1000 persons per square mile.

The land hunger was however aggravated by infertility and impoverishment of much of the upland area. This explains why vegetation on the land did not look healthy and luxuriant but rather stunted, yellow and patchy. Besides, the land did not retain standing water for a long time<sup>42</sup>. This is the type of soil, which, the farmers described as “very heavy.” This is explained by the reddish, friable, porous and pulverized sand to sandy clays predominant in the area with the possible exception of Enugu and Abakaliki where mass of concretionary clays are found in profiles. This is unlike the brownish-black saline mangrove with mats or rootlets or the loamy soil with top soil depth of about 6 to 9 inches found in the mangrove and Middle Belt areas.<sup>43</sup> Soil infertility was however caused principally by shortage of farmland which led farmers in land hungry districts to engage in extensive over-cropping of land — what is known in local parlance as “mining the soil.”<sup>44</sup> Since no manure or insufficient fertilizer was applied on such lands, this type of over-cultivation often resulted in soil impoverishment.

However, the ugly situation was reinforced by heavy rainfall, which in the area of study is illustrated as follows:

**Table 3.0 Average Annual Rainfall in Eastern Nigeria Nkwelle Circle**

	<b>1956</b>	<b>1957</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>1959</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1961</b>
<b>Onitsha</b>	N.A	N.A	52.61	90.20	92.05	72.26
<b>Awka</b>	64.42	79.92	65.45	72.74	96.53	73.87
<b>Agwu</b>	75.22	89.61	N.A	N.A	N.A	75.79
<b>Nzukka</b>	61.38	72.00	49.95	67.89	66.48	48.19
<b>Enugu</b>	56.57	76.19	55.46	67.13	77.84	67.29

**Source:** *Ministry of Agriculture, Eastern Nigeria Crop Calendar for Eastern Nigerians, Technical Bulletin No. 8 of 1963 (Enugu: Agricultural Information Section, Ministry of Agriculture, Eastern Nigeria: 1963), 6.*

The above table shows the degree of rainfall in the different areas/divisions of Anambra-Mamu River Basin. It shows the average annual rainfall to range between 50 to 80 inches, which is satisfactory for the early and late production of various food crops such as tubers, cereals, pulses and vegetables. The topography of the region however makes the rains too heavy and by so doing not only reinforcing heavy weed growth and pest infestation but also washing away the top soil. The land hunger was brought out clearer by the economic geographer, A. E. Okorafor who noted that though Eastern Nigeria as a whole formed only 8.3 per cent of the total area of Nigeria, it contained 22.3 percent of the population going by the 1963 census. Of this the core Igbo States (later designated the East Central State) contained nearly three-fifths (58.3 percent) of the total population of the Eastern Nigeria but not quite up to two-fifths (38.3 percent) of the total land area.<sup>45</sup>

Two outstanding consequences resulted from the above state of affairs as it affected food security concerns. Firstly low per capita food production meant that Igbo



land, just like other parts of Nigeria depended on import of food from Europe, America, Asia and elsewhere to offset the diminished aggregate production. It also relied heavily on Northern Nigeria, Lagos and other parts of the country such as the coastal region for its supply of beef, fish and sundry food items. Unfortunately, the supplementary basis on which the arrangement was initially done turned out to become permanent with the result that in the post-civil war period of the 1970s up to the 1990s, the zone turned out to be a net importer of food. Initially the imports were paid for by the export of cash crops particularly palm oil and kernel,<sup>46</sup> the only export products produced in fairly large quantity in the Anambra-Mamu River basin. But as it showed, a relatively a significant percentage of the population composed mainly of small holder farmers and artisans were increasingly becoming unable to pay the cost of the imported food as their agricultural products began to dwindle in value and commanding less prices in the local and international market. At the same time, they could not muster the resources to change to other occupations even as the artisans were grossly under-paid and their services under-utilized. The siting of import substitution industries and the importation of better and cheaper iron products, plastics, and households needs etc. supplanted indigenous crafts like mat and basket making as well as pottery, roofing and building materials. An instance of this is palm wine, which gave way to beer produced by the breweries thus rendering the palm wine tapers underemployed.

Reuben Udo cited this issue as a major problem that confronted the government of Eastern Nigeria in the area of rural development until 1967. The concentration of people in few rural areas which were short of farmland while other areas (the non-Igbo areas) were virtually uninhabited made the administration of the political economy very

costly. The government therefore considered imperative, reduction in the number of persons earning a living direct from the soils of the congested districts as over cropping reinforced erosion. This was in view of the fact that in the course of rainfall, instead of rainwater sinking into the ground, it washed away the soil from the slopes and each rainstorm removed a thin sheet or layer of top soil. This stage might be followed by gully erosion, which had remained a horrible menace in several communities of the area of study as exemplified by the Agulu, Nanka, Nnewi and the area between Ukehe and Udi where severe gulling had rendered these places unfit for human habitation and food cultivation.<sup>47</sup>

Land hunger and congestion meant that much of the land in the upland area of Anambra-Mamu region were in the category of — farmed, heavily farmed or over farmed. Areas with high population densities were characterized by considerable shortage of farmland, extreme fragmentation and reduced fallows. In these areas, individual tenure had replaced the traditional systems of communal land tenure making farm sizes very small and only few farmers were able to produce enough food to feed their families. The worst is that these high density parts of southeastern Nigeria like the Sokoto district in Northern Nigeria, did not generate enough income to pay for food imports, hence the increasing migration of the population to other places in search of work.<sup>48</sup>

Exceptions to this rule however existed in the flood plains of Ogbaru, Anambra, Uzo-Uwani, Mamu and Abakaliki where fertile lands were in abundance. As already noted, environmental perturbations caused their populations not to be desirous in settling in those places. Apart from the biting insects and blood-sucking leeches, flood menace tended to destroy farms and homesteads. Farmers tended to lose their harvests if not

harvested on time and to do so meant that the yam and cassava tubers would not mature. It explains why people preferred yams from the Benue Province over those of Anambra flood plains because the latter seemed not to be ripe as they were harvested before maturity. Such yams caused stomachache and therefore remained food for the poor, attracting low patronage and low prices. Besides, to cultivate in the riverine ecology demanded making yam and cassava mounds as high as five feet and four feet in width. This attracted much labour, which was very costly. In addition to their topography, the only means of transportation was canoes or bicycles during the dry season. This made the youths to detest spending their life dreams in such backward places. More over, the government right from the colonial times showed very little interest in these places, denying them functional water supply, schools, hospitals, access roads even as missionary activities were minimal. Together with land hunger and infertility in the upland areas in almost all communities, there was bound to be insufficient food supply.

The food writer, Georg Borstrom captured the scenario when reporting the situation in the 1960s, he noted that in Nigeria which was regarded as the model African country, serious anemia was found in half the population and this was worst in the Biafra enclave even before the civil war. According to him, there was vitamin shortage among two-fifth of the population and general malnutrition, primarily protein deficiency among one-fifth others. Shortage of protein he noted was established as the crucial health problem and even at that, infant mortality and intestinal parasite sapped the strength of men and animals. The matter was aggravated by malaria leading to high cost of capital expenditure for medical and public health.<sup>49</sup>

It was in view of this problem that John De St. Jorre observed that starvation, malnutrition and infant mortality had always had a high incidence throughout Nigeria, the last rising to a phenomenal fifty percent in some places. He noted that even before the outbreak of civil war in 1967, the situation was deteriorating in the Igbo areas of the East. The zone with its high population mark relied traditionally and heavily on imported food especially high-protein foods. The imports were paid for by export of palm oil and kernels and by the remittances sent home from Igbo working outside the East and even at that, the level of feeding and protein intake was dangerously low.<sup>50</sup>

This was the message relayed by the Nigerian President Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to the World Food Conference which held in Washington DC in June 1963. Dr. Azikiwe noted that malnutrition rather than hunger was the problem in Nigeria. He emphasized that with the exception of the hungry months before harvest or during droughts, most Nigerians obtained enough calories daily through carbohydrate foods. The protein intake was however, sub-standard particularly in Southern Nigeria and this particularly affected children from six months to six years and pregnant and nursing mothers even as adult males were not immune from it. The President explained that this ugly situation complicated by infections such as malaria and dysentery, reflected in sub-normal growth and development and increased susceptibility to other deficiency diseases like kwashiorkor, marasmus (wasting), skin and eye disturbances. While detailing the revolutionary efforts already adopted by the different tiers of government at tackling the menace, the President called for direct foreign investment and the cooperation of the more advanced countries in the development of Nigeria's agriculture.<sup>51</sup>

## **Rural-Urban Migrations**

Food insecurity and general down turn of the economy were factors that led to the second wave of migrations of the population to other parts of Igbo land and yet the bulk others to other parts of Nigeria particularly to Lagos, Western and Northern towns of Nigeria and beyond. The migration syndrome defined chiefly by rural-urban movement was dictated by the remarkable urban revolution, which though was an on-going process since the 1920s but had swiftly transformed in character and magnitude following new changes wrought between 1952 and 1963. The transformation was caused by industrialization and intensification of urban-biased development/investment pattern in disfavor of rural peripheries. The result was mass movement of the able-bodied young men and women from the unbearable overfilled farms and villages to the cities in search of succor.<sup>52</sup>

The situation was so bad that the prevalence of subsistence farming made food production incapable of meeting the needs of the rural dwellers talk less of supporting the urban populace. In any case, the flocking to the cities by the youngsters trusting industrialization or other alleged city miracles only ended in despair for most of the job seekers. In the event of the rural subsistence farmers managing to provide less than two third of the food they themselves needed, the only remedy to feed the teeming millions of city dwellers found expression in food imports from both interregional trade and external (overseas) purchases. Unfortunately the burgeoning Nigerian political leaders did not quite think along the line of the example of Chinese Mao Tsetung's regime which experiencing intense urbanization malaise had to apply the brakes by forcing 15-20 million citizens back to the country side. This it did by the development of agricultural

communes, which aimed to achieve diversification of food production in all its ramifications.<sup>53</sup>

By 1952, there were 329 towns in Nigeria with 56 of them having a population of over 20,000, a figure generally accepted by the United Nations for defining urban settlements at the global level. By 1963, eleven years after, the urban centres using the same criterion had been catapulted to 183 with increase in their population from 3.2 million to 10.6 million.<sup>54</sup> These developments explain the spatial growth of cities which the four principal Igbo core cities are represented as follows:

**Table 3.1 Spatial Growth of Cities in Core Igbo Areas, 1963**

City	1953	1963	Growth Rate in % (Per annum)
Port Harcourt	59,548	179,565	10.5
Aba	58,251	131,003	7.6
Enugu	63,212	138,457	7.4
Onitsha	77,087	163,032	7.0

**Source:** *Modern Migrations in Western Africa: Studies Presented and discussed at the Eleventh International African Seminar, Dakar, April 1972, 288.*

In the second category of cities were Abakaliki (31,177), Owerri (26,017), Nsukka (26,206), Umuahia (28,844) and in the third category - several emerging and reclassified others designated as Divisional Headquarters.<sup>55</sup>

Like the Igbo dominated Southeastern cities, other Nigerian northern and western and provincial capitals likewise swelled in their numbers, the populations being accelerated by massive in-migrations from diverse places particularly the Igbo areas. For

instance, between 1952 and 1963, metropolitan Lagos received an immigrated population of 644,000 persons at an annual rate of 59,000. Of these, over 106,000 (or 16%) were estimated to have come from the Eastern region, essentially from the Igbo speaking areas.<sup>56</sup>

Similar Igbo originated emigrations were true of northern cities, towns and villages as noted in all the provinces of Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Bauchi, Adamawa etc. The immigrants who were attracted by the commercial, industrial and mining operations in the core areas accounted for a little over 50% of their inflow while the rest settled at the peripheral belts lying mainly at the Middle belt towns of Jos, Lafia, Makurdi, Minna, Bida, Ilorin, Oturkpo, Lokoja etc as well as their extensive fringe areas.<sup>57</sup>

The desire of people of the Anambra-Mamu basin who shared contiguous border with the Southern Northern districts to engage in strategic food stuff business using Onitsha, Enugu, Obollo Afor in Nsukka and other south eastern near-by markets and to secure urban employment in the fastest developing northern cities must have accounted for the estimated net outflow of some 630,000 persons going by the analysis of Professor Ikenna Nzimiro. This can be substantiated from the fact that of the total of 124,989 persons of Southern origin who migrated to the north, 110,742 were computed to have originated from the Eastern region and to have consisted overwhelmingly of Igbo-speaking persons.<sup>58</sup> The mass emigration of able body young men away from their villages and towns to distant lands must have been a major cause of low aggregate food production. At this juncture it may be important to raise comments about the monetary remittances allegedly made home by Igbo migrants to support and feed dependents left

behind at their natal villages - an issue which superficially seem as if it held the magic wand against food insecurity. In truth, not much came from this practice based on a number of empirical facts.

It should be noted that a good percentage of those who migrated were rural- urban migrants consisting mainly of school drop outs or those who were so poorly educated that they worked in the cities as gatemen, messengers, gardeners, cleaners, drivers, uncertificated teachers, rank-and-file policemen, petty traders, clerks (both in public and private establishments), newspaper vendors, street hawkers etc. The meager income and wages paid these categories of staff amidst high cost of housing and living expenses in the cities were such that they hardly saved enough to remit home. Their so-called remittances were made during visits, which usually coincided with the Christmas season if they had annual leave. During this brief stay, they exhausted whatever little they had saved during the year and returned to start saving again thus giving rise to an unending cycle of poverty. But generally visits to home were infrequent ranging from once a year or two years as the study carried out by Professor Reuben Udo showed.<sup>59</sup> Experience had shown also that there were some young men who were so long away that they were considered 'lost' by their parents.<sup>60</sup>

Expecting the immigrants, some of them better considered as stowaway, to remit money home was expecting too much. It should be noted that the Igbo migrants were allowed jobs, which only few Yoruba and Hausa were willing to make themselves available as the findings of Harm J. de Blij showed.<sup>61</sup> Besides the high tech-tribalism in those days in the areas where they sojourned kept them miserably a discriminated lot even as most of them labored under conditions resembling modern day slavery. For



example, the plight of Nigerians in Fernando Po, majority of whom were of Igbo extraction in that Spanish territory, had aptly been detailed by the work of Professor Akinjide Osuntokun.<sup>62</sup> This was what Hon. U.A. Otop of Opobo North-West constituency had in mind when appealing to the Federal Government through the Eastern Regional Government, to do something urgent to rescue them.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to this, the Igbo migrants shared one common characteristic, which were detrimental to food security objectives of their home of origin. First, they composed mainly of virile young men in the age bracket of fifteen and thirty-five. The implication is that these migrants, majority of whom, were born after the period of 1945 or few years before that, were the best their people would have needed to stay behind to produce food to feed their families and dependents. Instead, they left these kins and kiths behind indicating why there were more females than males according to the sex-ratio in the population characteristics of Eastern Region carried out by O. Adegbola. The study showed that all the zones where population growth was in excess of the carrying capacity of the land were mainly agricultural areas. They served as main labour reservoirs losing their adult males to other rural areas as well as industrial and commercial centres within Igbo land and beyond. In Awgu for example there were 90 males to 100 females and Awka had less than 95 males per 100 females. Extensive areas with low to moderate deficiency of males were found in other densely populated areas of Nsukka,<sup>64</sup> a feature also true of all other places such as Ihiala, Okija, Nnewi, Idemili and Aguata.

A second major characteristic observed by Adegbola was the large number of under aged, mainly children below the age of fifteen as reflected in the age structure in the above towns of study. In a situation where the fathers had migrated to distant lands

leaving these children and their mothers, there really existed some serious gaps to be filled. There is no doubt, that the women were certainly overworked in the area of upbringing and feeding of the children caused by sheer absence of their husbands.<sup>65</sup> The usual argument that after all such migrant husbands must have been making monetary remittances home cannot therefore hold water considering the far distances and the communication difficulties in those days which could not have afforded them the leverage to return home regularly or to send down money for the up keeping their families. It was this factor that caused some of them to take their families along with them to their destinations so as to stave off hunger as the findings of Professor Reuben Udo showed. But the cycle continued as their children remained 'abroad' after their parents had returned home on retirement.<sup>66</sup> This factor again raised the troubling questions as to the care of the aged parents who should have needed their children around them to provide for their food and welfare needs.

## **GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES TOWARDS ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY**

### **Self-Employment and Industrialization Policy**

The government of Eastern Nigeria was alive to these problems and from the onset; it adopted unprecedented radical strategies towards their resolution. It was to this effect that ab initio, it started to think along the line first, of self-employment for the citizens. The government exhorted them to explore the traditional crafts and technological innovations for which their ancestors were well known for as the surest way of resolving the unemployment imbroglio. Commenting on the outcome of this innovative idea which clarion call the people had embraced with apostolic zeal, Barry

Floyd observed that in all the super villages and peri-urban areas were concentrated these micro and small-scale industries. These composed of carpenters, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, wrought iron workers, welders, tailors and a staggering number of numerous enterprises, which also included manufacturing and service providers. Citing a survey carried out by Kilby in 1961, Floyd shows that in the fourteen towns examined in the survey, 10,728 firms were recorded employing 28,721 workers.<sup>67</sup> Floyd explained that in aggregate the small enterprises held the promise of absorbing the alarming number of jobless, partially-educated young men estimated at 350,000 in 1965, the number being added to by some 50,000 new school leavers every year.<sup>68</sup>

The second approach at arresting the spectre of hunger through sustainable development was industrialization. The government realized that holding unto agriculture as the major source of revenue and chief contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was certainly a forlorn hope. This called for the diversification of the economy, as the export of few primary commodities was no secure basis to achieve advanced society. The need for diversification became important in view of the shocks of fluctuations in the world market prices, which the primary commodities were being subjected to. The dwindling prices of palm produce had become so low that farmers were increasingly unable to provide enough food for their families and could not afford to pay their children's school fees.<sup>69</sup>

To withstand the shock and to increase its foreign exchange earnings, it became expedient that the government make a foray into industrialization. This was what made the Premier, Hon. Dr. M. I. Okpara to state succinctly in his speech, titled *The Purpose of Industrialization* that the necessity of balancing increase in population with food

production with the aim of raising the general standard of living of the people had geared all Government efforts towards agrarian revolution and industrialization.<sup>70</sup>

The importance accorded to industrialization and agriculture as main priority sectors saw the sum £10.4million, which was slightly more than fifty percent of the total expenditure in the 1962/63 and 1963/64 fiscal years going into the development of the two sectors.<sup>71</sup>

It equally expressed in the allocation of the sum of £12,930,000 or 17.2% of the total capital expenditure in the 1962-68 Six Year Development Plan. This amount originally allocated for trade and industries had the figure later reduced to £11,436,000 or 15.2% in the 1964, revised plan. These developments no doubt made the Eastern Region the brightest and healthiest in terms of economic and financial potentials, and therefore destined for leadership in industrial development in comparison with other component regions of the federation.<sup>72</sup>

The impact of the above two development strategies was that they lessened the pressure on the land, which had started yielding unsatisfactory returns. Secondly, they could reduce the degree of emigrations and absorb those extra hands in arresting the annual trade deficit, which value in terms of imported items amounted to £16,874,000 in 1960.<sup>73</sup> The fact that the imported manufactured goods covered a wide range of items including household needs, which both the small scale and heavy industrial plants had started churning out was a pointer towards redressing the long-term balance of payment problem in Eastern Nigeria.

## THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

The outcome of the 1961 overseas tour embarked upon by the Premier, Hon. Dr. M.I. Okpara and his Economic Mission team was a reiteration of the first priority attention given to agriculture in the 1962-68 Development Plan and adoption of agrarian policy to ensure its successful implementation. Perhaps its greatest strategic impact was the exhortation on individuals of ownership of farms and plantations with the slogan “One-egg-a-day.” The enthusiastic answer by the people to the clarion call saw massive poultry output with over 500 farmers trained in the raising of day old chicks to maturity and management of layers. The planned 500,000 Day Old-Chicks Project was realized halfway by the 3rd year of the planned period. This caused glut in the egg market.<sup>74</sup> This was the theme of the Poultry Seminar held at the Continuing Education Centre (CEC) of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in the 1964/65 year. At the forum, Eastern Nigeria poultry farmers in affirming their readiness to feed the country with enough eggs and chickens complained of their marketing problem for table eggs even at two shillings, sixty-nine pence (2/69) per dozen. Consequently, the government took up the task of establishing a marketing organization to that effect, courtesy of the Ministry of Commerce.<sup>75</sup>

The establishment of the School of Agriculture at Umudike in today’s Abia State with Diploma and Refresher courses (Crash programme or emergency courses) proved innovative. It quickly produced veterinary attendants who took care of the several veterinary centres such as the Awgbu Community Cattle Kraal in Awka Division as well as Obimo Kraal in Nsukka. The crossing of Local Muturu cows with the N’dama bulls were carried out with satisfactory results. Many private concerns also showed keen

interest in pig keeping. The Abakaliki Poultry Circle was established and its rapid expansion saw the expansion of commercial poultry keeping in all parts of the region resulting to increased demand for day-old chicks. This equally saw the distribution of birds to farmers, which the 1961-62 farming year for instance showed as follows: 310 Cocks and Cockerels, 120 Hens and Pullets, 5,097 Chicks and Growers, and 71, 800 Hatching eggs. Anglo-Nubian goats imported from the United Kingdom were raised for up grading of local nannies for milk production.<sup>76</sup>

Brooder houses were opened at Nkwelle Farm in Onitsha Province and stocked with day-old chicks to serve Igbariam Farm Settlement. Vegetables were promoted to height. These include tomatoes, which a new variety Coleae HS-7211 proved very successful. Chilies, the green type UN/CH-2474 selected from an Indian type gave a very high yield and proved superior to the existing ones. Nine types of Lady's Finger (Okro) and Egg Plants UM/EP2475 (including white variety) were introduced. Introduced also were differing varieties of superior beans such as dwarf French, Indian beans with UM/C1147. Spinach (Amaranthus) UM/RS-2473 suitable for growing all year round was also introduced.<sup>77</sup>

Another spectacular achievement was the establishment of the Obudu Cattle Ranch and Adada Mixed Farm. This was to overcome the thorny issue of animal protein insufficiency and to resolve the limited and erratic supply of hoofed Zebu strain supplied by the Fulani/Hausa herdsmen from the Northern Nigeria and Cameroun. The Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation found it expedient to develop the livestock ranch on the Obudu Plateau where 5,000 feet excellent tsetse free grazing on montane grasses was available. Through the crossbreeding of Gudali and other breeds of Zebu cattle with the

imported South Devon bulls using an approximately 40 square miles or 25,600 acres, about 3,500 heads of cattle was realized in 1965 out of the visualized stock rate of 4,000. The pilot scheme was to serve as beef industry using Oghe abattoir near Enugu and a beef lot at Adada on the Nsukka Plateau as fattening site.<sup>78</sup>

The government's ambitious project notwithstanding, a large number of cattle continued to be driven into the Anambra-Mamu Basin. It was estimated that about 80,000 cattle were slaughtered each year in Eastern Region. The project only scratched at the problem of beef insufficiency. It caused the government to establish the Achi Veterinary Centre among other places across the Region for the purpose of improving the inferior breeds of goats, sheep and pigs.<sup>79</sup> Another praiseworthy effort of the Government was the organization of the Young Farmers' Club which was a practical programme of educating young people with emphasis in "learning by doing". It was an integral part of the agricultural extension service aimed at development of agriculture in the region with the aim of developing the potentials of youths in the rural areas and to equip them with leadership training skills as a basis to raising their standard of living.<sup>80</sup>

It is important to mention that on the whole the government launched a total of thirty different projects in its massive assault on poverty and backwardness in the rural areas of the Eastern provinces. The most ambitious of these were in the rural and urban water supplies. The M.I Okpara Government alleviated the acute water shortage by its urban and rural expenditure of £1.0 million and £766,000 in the 1962/63 and 1963/64 budgets respectively. Out of about 75 contiguous communities and districts that benefited from the scheme, 17 were in the area of study. They include; Nnewi, Abakaliki, Ogidi,

Ukehe, Opi, Obollo Afor, Aku, Alor, Ozubulu, Oraifite, Achi, Ihiala, Obosi, Aguata, Agulu/Aguiyi, Nimo, and Effium.

Some others were under construction yet others at various stages of pipeline planning. In addition, older urban water supply schemes serving Enugu, Onitsha, Nzukka etc. were under expansion and improvement. The programme also provided hand operated shallow boreholes mainly for the southern parts of the region, though some schools in the area of study benefited.<sup>81</sup> The government efforts made water supplies adequate to meet all normal requirements in the main centres even as capacity was constantly being increased. Water rates were 2/6 pence per 1,000 gallons for domestic use and 3/6 pence per 1,000 for non-domestic.<sup>82</sup>

### **The Contributions of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture**

Agriculture being a principal item in the concurrent legislature list, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture likewise made its own contribution towards the agro revolution. It conducted researches on variety of food crops principal among which were maize, cowpea and rice. It was to this effect for instance that in 1960 two cooperative uniform trials were conducted in a number of maize growing areas, which Nkwelle Community in the AnambraMamu River Basin benefited as a research station. This gesture is demonstrated by the following table.



**Table 3.2 Maize Research Trials in Nkwele Station, 1961-1962**

<b>Maize Variety</b>	<b>Nkwele Station % Increase yield over local variety</b>	
Eafro 231 ..	1348	20
Eafro 237..	1,281	20
Trinidad..	1,302	32
Mexico..	1,089	23
ES1	1,168	35
ES2	1,200	9
Local..	1,024	
L.S. Dat 5%	NS +	

**Source:** *Annual Report on the Department of Agricultural Research 1961 — 62 (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information (Printing Division) (1964), 19.*

The above table shows the percentage of yields, drought and pest resistance of the new maize varieties over the existing local variety representing an average yield of 23percent over the local variety. The trials, which were also conducted in two other stations in Eastern Region namely Ikom and Umudike as well as Ondo, Akure and Ipokia (Western Region), Jalingo, Lafia and Kabba (Northern Province), were done in conjunction with comprehensive aspects of farming including routine disease assessment, drought resistance and palatability tests among others. They all showed encouraging results, which explained their wide distribution across the country.<sup>83</sup> The food crop experimentation being an on-going or continuous exercise was carried out in subsequent years on variety of crops. An example was the 196 2-63 session's demonstration of fadama irrigation system for rice cultivation using different varieties such as red grained

*Oryza glaberrima*, the white floating *Oryza sativa* and the indigenous floating *Oryza glaberrima* among several others. They were tested against epiphytic diseases, weed control, fertilizer applications, and hybridization schemes and in the production of new lines among other interest areas. The Anambra River Basin swamps and upland areas as exemplified by the Abakaliki zone where the natural rainfall could last for more than six months showed promises of accommodating varieties of even longer gestation than BG 79 which became the common staple produced in Abakaliki till today. The net effect of the agrarian revolution was increased yield of the various crops. An instance is yam which yield was reported to be high throughout the region. The wide spread use of aldrin dust and fertilizer was able to check the attack of yam beetles and to improve yields. The increase in production can be represented by the 1963/64 railings of yam to Northern Nigeria indicating an increase of 179 per cent over that of the previous year as shown below.

**Table 3.3 Railings of Yam to Northern Nigeria 1963/64 fiscal year**

1959/60	.....	360 tons
1960/61	.....	2,218 tons
1961/62	.....	249 tons
1962/63	.....	240 tons
1963/64	.....	670 tons. <sup>84</sup>

Similar increase in production was reported of cassava which showed brighter prospects because of its low cost of production, growing popularity of garri and fermented cassava and absence of storage problems, all encouraging the farmers to divert

attention to its cultivation. Cassava grating machines in use increased from 304 in 1962/63 to 381 in 1963/64.

**Table 3.4 The quantity of garri railed to Northern Nigeria**

1958/59	.....34,822 tons
1959/60	.....28,126 tons
1960/61	.....20,984 tons
1961/62	.....18337 tons
1962/63	.....25,677 tons
1963/64	.....32,461 tons. <sup>85</sup>

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization captured the revolutionary impact of these efforts when in its 1966 annual report, it stated that the Eastern Nigeria Government while taking the responsibility away from the Eastern Nigeria Marketing Board, issued improved varieties of maize, rice and other crops to the farmers through the Extension Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Government sought to achieve the 4000 tons of yellow maize required annually to meet the livestock feed programme.<sup>86</sup>

**Establishment of Plantations and Farm Settlement Schemes**

Under the aegis of the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC), the government promoted to a large extent plantations and estate farming. These comprised the community plantations, which were twelve in number. Work started on them in 1965. Apart from Adadana in Abakaliki zone and Affa in Udi/Enugu, which were cited in the

area of study, others were located in different parts of the Eastern Region outside Anambra-Mamu River area and were based on non-food crops, occupying 11,750 acres with 970 participants. While Adadana was a rice project, Affa had vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, peppers.<sup>87</sup> In any case, these were by no means the only community plantations. As the new tempo of development revolved around community farms, the pendulum started swinging towards that direction and it was not surprising that several smaller others including individual owned farms were springing up on daily basis. The ENDC Plantations or Estates on the other hand were government owned projects for which a total of 148,930 acres in twenty-two locations were acquired. Out of this 67,000 or 45 per cent had been planted by the end of 1965. They were sited in 22 locations. Their products comprised oil palm, rubber, cocoa, cashew and coconut. These estates are outside the scope of this study as they were overwhelmingly located outside the area of study. However, the cashew estates located at Oghe in Udi near Enugu has since then served as valuable contribution to food security going by the availability of cashew nuts which it produces mainly for domestic consumption.<sup>88</sup>

In any case it is the Farm Settlement Scheme (FSS), the most ambitious venture to revolutionize the farming system, that are of importance to this study. The government sought to inculcate in the people the conception of dignity in labour and to transform agriculture from its perceived subsistence status to a dignified career. The idea of farm settlement schemes was an enviable cue taken by the government from the Israeli example of Moshavin or plantation/land settlement plan by which Israel settled her citizens in the aftermath of the Nazi holocausts.<sup>89</sup> There were six of these farms in Eastern Nigeria but only two located in the area of study are of interest here. They are;

Igbariam and Uzo-Uwani Farm Settlement Schemes. Igbarian covered an area of 4,000 acres and was recommended for tree crops of oil palm and citrus and 800 acres suitable for growing rain fed swamp rice. It started in 1962 and was designed to settle 400 educated farmers on oil crops and citrus trees in addition to vegetables, poultry and rice grown in communal effort.<sup>89</sup> The emphasis on the 10,560 acre settlement of Uzo-Uwani was rice, to be grown both upland and on eleven-mile irrigation system. The schemes as centrally managed by the Agriculture Division of the Ministry of Agriculture were run on modern town system with a “Settlement Nucleus” which would have all the modern amenities to serve the six villages occupied by 120 families. Though the major production goals were however to be tree crops, the scheme did not in the true sense of it neglect the food economy. In any case, their cultivation was planned to be limited to ‘allotment’ farming. It was hoped that food crops settlements would be set up in future, at such a time when they would have been developed to a level, which would make their large-scale cultivation economically feasible.

Livestock also formed part of the government calculations in the farm settlement scheme. These include cattle for beef production, poultry for eggs and meat and fishpond culture. These were to be accorded priority attention because Eastern Nigeria in general was animal protein deficient region which the envisaged large scale production could alleviate.<sup>90</sup>

The planning of the settlements was envisaged to afford each of the participating farmers a gross minimum income of at least £640 a year. In any case, hard-working families could exceed this minimum requirement and catapult themselves to much higher standard of living than had existed in the region. The goal of the government was that

with adequate planning, the settler holdings would make so much gain that they would be the envy of their counterparts employed in the mercantile houses and public service. Such a scenario would galvanize others into taking up farming as lucrative business and lessen the pressure on government to provide jobs to the emerging army of school leavers.<sup>91</sup>

### **Evaluation of the Program**

The military intervention in Nigeria politics and subsequent civil war hardly four years after the establishment of the Farm Settlement Schemes could not afford a good opportunity for an assessment of the schemes. In any case, the schemes as practiced in Eastern Region like its counterpart in the Western and to a lesser extent Mid-Western Nigeria demonstrated clearly the ability of the respective regions to maximize the utility of its respective endowment abilities and efficient allocation of resources for the enhancement of food availability and accessibility in Nigeria. The policy as practiced however meant that government resources, which were somewhat limited, were concentrated on a very small percentage of the population to the tune of £2000. It achieved very little because only a negligible percentage of the target (unemployed youths), was met. The large majority others still roamed about without work.<sup>92</sup> In any case, nothing in the true sense of it was achieved because the large tenant farmers from Enugu-Ukwu had been on the Igbariam land for forty years and had built semi-permanent settlement dwellings on which their families numbering between 1,000 and 1,500 had made their livelihood. Displacing them and giving the land to between 350 to 400 settlers together with their wives and children was as if robbing Peter to pay Paul.<sup>93</sup>

The economic waste embedded in the scheme could be understood by comparing it with the extension programme as practiced in the Northern Region where the programme was designed to spread to every farmer, his status notwithstanding. It concentrated on the education of farmers on new agricultural techniques, such as irrigation system, mechanized farming, fertilizer distribution etc. This was what made Jean Philippe to describe the Northern model, as more pragmatic approach and more diversified.<sup>94</sup> Likewise Jerome Wells in describing it as “improvement” approach adjudged it successful in that it was able to economize limited resources to achieve “potentially successful” result in its vigorous transformational agenda.<sup>95</sup> This was unlike the approach in the Southern Regions where the subsistence farmers — the bedrock of food production were discriminated in favour of a tiny educated fraction of the population. This was what made Chima Korieh to say that: the intervention of the post-independence state in agriculture by establishing plantation schemes had consequences for food production. First, it led to further neglect of food production. Second, it led to large scale disuse of peasant land, which could have been used for food production.<sup>96</sup>

## **THE CIVIL WAR FOOD CRISES**

### **The Gathering Storm and the Beginning of Food Shortages**

The factors that led to the civil war and how it was prosecuted are not the concern of this work. The concern rather are the effects of the war on the food economy particularly following the desertion of farms by refugees fleeing from war zones and the also the economic blockade promulgated by the Federal Military Government against Biafra Republic, an enclave which Anambra- Mamu River Basin forms a core part of.

The first sign of food crises though mitigated was the 1966 massive return of Eastern Nigerians mainly the Igbo stock residing in various parts of Northern and Western Nigeria as well as Lagos. The 'Araba' riots which followed the 24 May 1966 Unification Decree calling for immediate secession of the North claimed many lives of people of Eastern Region causing thousands to flee back to the east. When the dust seemed to have settled the Military Governor of the Eastern Region, Lt Colonel Ojukwu pleaded with the returnees to return to their places and posts, assuring them of Federal Government protection. Many of them responded and were killed in subsequent crisis while the survivors, in their thousands again returned and resolved not to go back.<sup>97</sup>

Conflicting figures exist as regards the number of Easterners killed during the pogrom. This is not the concern here. The concern rather is that at least two million Easterners returned to their home of origin as refugees in the wake of the 1966 pogrom.<sup>98</sup> By the time the war broke out in 1967, over four million Easterners had returned home from all parts of the country some of them severely wounded.<sup>99</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross and the Eastern Nigeria Government had feared a refugee problem following the exodus from other places. However, nothing significant really happened. The reason was that by this time, Eastern Nigeria still had sufficient food from local production and imports and therefore re-absorbed their returnee kiths and kins in the spirit of extended family system. However, in as much as the various families took it as duty to shoulder the responsibilities of re-integrating their relations, the matter was still a serious one considering the short time frame and the population explosion engendered by it. This fact should be appreciated putting into consideration the fact that the area as a bloc before the crises had the highest population densities of an average of over 420



persons per square kilometer with the core Igbo heartland of Anambra Mamu region having in some places over 1000 persons per square metre.<sup>101</sup> This was against 337 in the West, 170 in the Mid-West and 106 in the North.<sup>100</sup> There is no doubt that with the influx of returnees, the number of people to be fed was overstretched. Besides, this was happening at the end of farming season and harvest period at least as regards the initial leg of the influx in 1966. The tempestuous political climate and uncertainties that followed did not also give enough room for organized farming activities in the brief period before the outbreak of the civil war.<sup>101</sup>

The socio-political problem engendered by the ugly development made Chief Bola Ige to say that while the military governors and leaders in the West, North and Midwest, were dealing positively with local issues and extracting whatever they could from the Federal Government, the leaders and government in the East were faced with entirely different problem – the massive influx of refugees thrown up by crises from other parts of Nigeria. According to him, the government had to find ways of absorbing hundreds of thousands including children whose parents had been killed and several others such as civil servants, police officers, traders and businessmen who by the government's marvelous job were re-absorbed.<sup>102</sup> The political configurations of the era had convinced many people that if not war at least some confrontation even of minor magnitude was looming. This caused some people to start stocking food and so the imbroglio translated to food hoarding and scrambling in the food market. Prices soared astronomically and by April 1967, the prices of foodstuff had gone up five fold.<sup>103</sup>

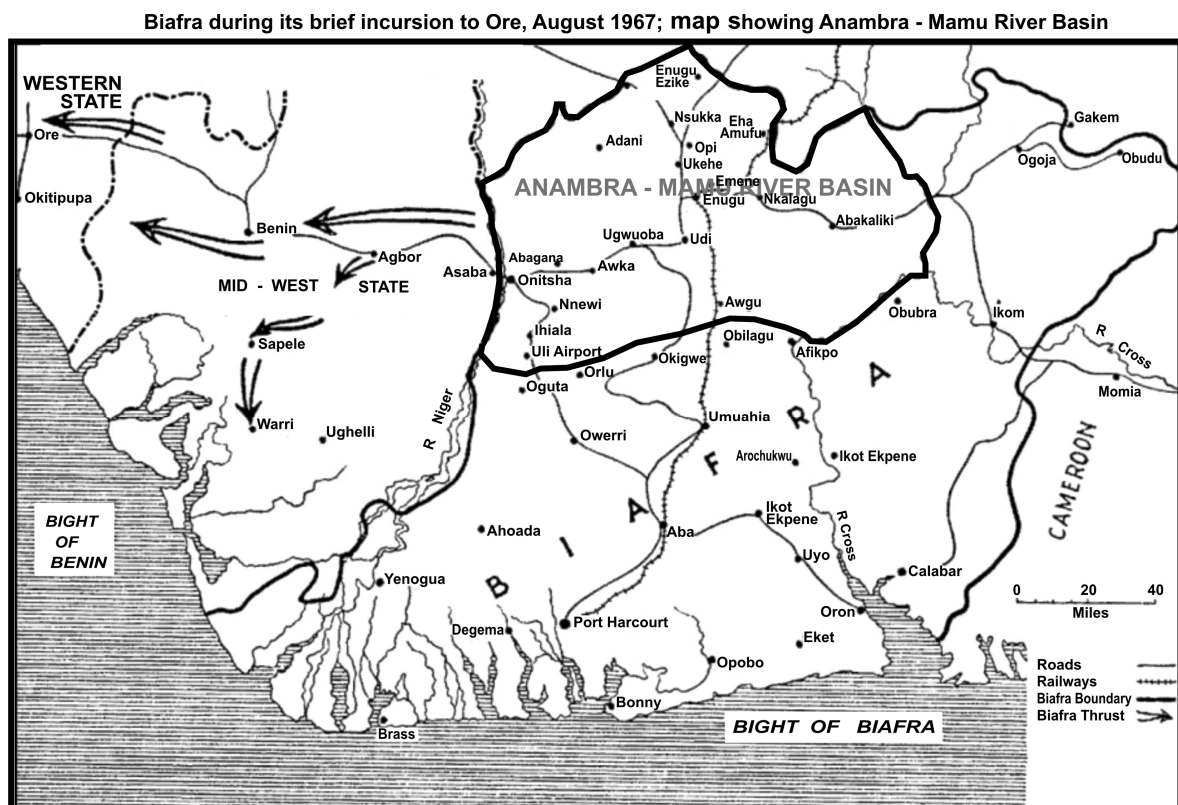
The inability of the Federal Military Government to act decisively and put an end to the crisis and to protect the lives and properties of the people, led the leadership of

Eastern Nigeria to decide that Easterners were no longer protected in the federation and this led the East to secede from the rest of the federation. With the declaration of the Republic of Biafra by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu on May 30 1967, the civil war started. One of the measures taken by the federal side of the divide to crush the secession was total economic blockade by land, sea and air. The blockade lasted from May 1967 when Biafra Republic was declared to January 15, 1970 when the war ended.<sup>104</sup> There is no doubt that the blockade of that quantum enveloped the victims into unprecedented hunger and starvation.

### **Economic Blockade**

The food crises in Biafra commenced in April 1967 when the blockade of Eastern Nigeria commenced. The British External Services Department headed by Mr. James Parker had earlier on 15 March warned Colonel Ojukwu quite categorically that, “should a showdown occur, His Majesty Government would instruct British shipping not to call at Port Harcourt.”<sup>105</sup> The implication was that such a show down would likely result to war which would make Eastern Nigeria unsafe for shipping activities not only in the export of palm produce from which the government derived foreign exchange but more importantly, in the import of food, which the zone prided highly because of its food deficit status. The blockade entailed the restriction of the movement of foreign ships as well as air traffic to the East at the same time that total telecommunication links were discontinued. This signaled the beginning of the food shortages. This was followed in May when a member of the Conference Shipping Lines operating the West Africa routes said in London that major companies no longer accepted palm oil or kernels directly from Eastern Nigeria sources.<sup>106</sup> The warning made by Mr. George Thomas, Minister of State

for Commonwealth Affairs that the blockade was wrong in international law, a matter he repeatedly stressed on his return to London was unheeded by its sponsors.<sup>107</sup> By the time the blockade was announced followed by outbreak of war in July 1967, food prices had soared over ten times higher than what it was in January the same year.<sup>108</sup> Food items imported from abroad were the first to become scarce followed by those that came from Northern parts of Nigeria. It therefore followed the pattern of scarcity starting with stockfish, rice, beverages from Scandinavia, Europe and America via Lagos, then beef, groundnut, beans, yam, dried meat from Lake Chad etc from Northern Nigeria and then sea foods like Cray fish, dried fish and others from the coastal waters and creeks, which were patrolled by the Nigerian Navy.<sup>109</sup>



**The Political Map of Biafra**  
 Source: Joe O. G. Achuzia, *Requiem Biafra*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1968, 13

## **Loss of Farmlands and Dislocation of Sources of Income**

Economic blockade notwithstanding, two other related major causes of hunger and malnutrition were economic dislocations and desertion of villages and towns following their invasion by the federal troops. It followed that as foreign foods as well as those transported from other regions of Nigeria became scarce, indigenous foods produced locally by the people were also affected because as towns fell after another, farms were deserted to enemy soldiers who became the beneficiaries. The first shots of the war were fired at Gakem in Ogoja Division on 6 July 1967, which locked the federal and secessionist forces in fierce struggle. By July 15, it stretched to Nsukka Division, where the fiercest fighting commenced. All the communities in the zone saw bitter fighting. They included the contiguous communities of Igbo-Eze, Igbo-Etiti, Udenu and Nsukka. As these towns - Enugu-Ezike, Obollo-Afor, Ogrute, Ibeagwa Ani, Ibeagwa Aka, Orba, Eha-Amufu, Nsukka Urban, Opi, Ukehe, Aku, Imiliki, Ovoko, Isi-Uzo, Edemani etc. fell to the advancing federal troops, the people were turned into refugees losing their cherished farmlands to the invading army. The implication was that Obollo Afor and some communities that formed the borderlands with the Benue Province from which the Anambra-Mamu River Basin received the bulk of its yams, cereals and vegetables were consumed by the inferno.<sup>110</sup>

The fall of Nsukka Division was followed three months later by the capture of Enugu on 4 October 1967. The bombardment the Coal City again by the same troops led by Col. Mohammed Shuwa caused the inhabitants to panic to all directions. Amidst mortaring, shelling, and fierce exchange of fire, many buildings were set on fire, provoking flight of the populations to Awgu, Nenwe and Mgbogho and as far as

Abakaliki zone while others headed towards Onitsha again losing their sources of livelihood. These were mainly civil servants, traders, company staff, which included workers of the Coal Corporation as well as service providers in the informal sector. With intensification of fighting, entirely new fronts like Uzo-Uwani on the western flank, Awgu, and Nkanu on the eastern and central axis were consumed. In the old Uzo-Uwani, Nsukka-Adani Road became unpassable as both Biafra and federal troops clashed using ferrets, armoured vehicles and mortar barrage. This made major food producing towns like Opanda, Nkpologu, Adani, Ogurugru, Igga, Omasi, Ifite-Ogwari, Adaba, Umueje, Umulokpa etc to become desolate. Baily bridges, markets, shops and residential houses were destroyed. The fighting soon extended towards Onitsha to the food producing areas of Omor, Anaku, Nando, Aguleri, Ono and Okpatu. Federal incendiary mortar bombs flew indiscriminately and the resisting Biafra troops responded with *Ogbunigwe*, Molotov cocktails and rockets.<sup>111</sup>

At the central axis of Udi, the war extended to Awka, Enugu-Ukwu, Abagana, Ogidi etc. Onitsha remained the only safe haven where the refugees from other fronts converged. Soon the troops led by Co. Murtala Mohammed having destroyed the Western Igbo towns across the Niger made incursions into Onitsh but were repulsed by the blowing of the Niger Bridge by Biafra forces. The two atomic like explosions caused by the explosions sent people scampering out of the town to Obosi, Oba, Nnewi and Ihiala areas etc.<sup>112</sup> In the course of the war, Onitsha was eventually occupied by the federal troops who gained entry through the waterways of Upper Niger. Destruction of the town meant that the bubbling Onitsha Main Market, which hitherto was the major source of income for families and major foreign exchange earner for the payment of both imported

and local food, was destroyed causing the populations to scamper to safety to adjoining towns. From their new abode, the inferno soon caught up with them even in the refugee camps and sick bays. By early 1969, refugee problem grew very high. Constant changes in war front following the fall of town after another created new wave of refugees making all well laid out plans to feed and attend to them by the missionaries and Doctors Without Borders complicated. An instance was Anambra region where blockade of Onitsha-Awka highway and the attack of Otuocha in February 1969 made the supply of relief impossible. Archbishop Francis Arinze of the Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha lamented that in Anambra Division, difficulties of getting relief materials exposed the people to “diseases, hunger, poverty, squalor... Rain, heat and cold, are their constant companion.”

<sup>113</sup> The matter was most agonizing in that the populations in areas liberated by the federal forces were subjected to dehumanizing treatment. Perhaps for security reasons, they were kept in camps, which often were enclosed compounds. They were disallowed from attending to their personal affairs. For this reason, they could not go to their farms. <sup>114</sup>

Since almost all the towns saw heavy fighting, the exception to the rule remained the riverine Ogbaru communities where the amphibious terrain disallowed the assault barrage of the federal troops. In addition to Ogbaru, populations in some parts of Nnewi, Oraifite, Ozubulu and Ihiala contiguous communities, which were receiving destinations of refugee engaged in serious farming using the bordering *Olu* farmlands of Ogbaru frontiers. All hands were on deck. In the atmosphere that prevailed, the borderline between the big man and the poor was dissolved by the necessity for survival. This became imperative because all the neighbouring sources of food supply had been closed one after another. These included Onono at the northern part of Onitsha, and the Western

Igbo towns like Osomalla and Abor. Oguta from where populations in the large Ihiala area received fresh fish, yam, and cocoyan remained the focus of attack by the Navies of both belligerents intent on controlling the oil communities of the Delta region. In the circumstances, the only source of food remained the little quantities doled out in rations by the international agencies. Unfortunately, this was also seriously curtailed by the relentless effort of the Nigerian Airforce to bomb Uli Airport out of existence. In the circumstances, hunger and starvation ravaged most families. Towards the end of 1969, hunger had reached unprecedented proportions that farming activities in the Ogbaru areas almost ended because food theft in the farms became rampant. Crops were not allowed to attain their gestation period as unknown people harvested them at night.<sup>115</sup>

### **Effects of Economic Dislocations**

The effect of these developments was that by the beginning of 1968, certain diseases previously unknown among the people began to rear their ugly heads. Standing tallest among these were kwashiorkor and marasmus. There is no doubt that before the war there were pockets of incidences of nutritional problems but these were limited to protein and vitamin deficiencies. For people not used to kwashiorkor when it first showed signs in the rural areas it was wrongly thought to be the effects of indiscriminate bombing, which made the folks to nickname it “Gowon’s boot.” The most disturbing scarce commodity was salt. This was an imported product, which the blockade caused to disappear from the market. People could manage meatless food but saltless food was distressful. The situation made Biafran microbiologists headed by Dr. Obiakor to go into action and under the auspices of the Research and Production (RAP) with headquarters at Uzuakoli, salt was mined from Uburu brine waters and from Abakaliki lead/zinc mines

for use by Biafrans as salt. But this was grossly inadequate as production was seriously disrupted by the war.<sup>116</sup> The persistence of food shortages became total affecting both the rich and poor. The effect of food poverty thus transcended from kwashiorkor to marasmus and general debility of the population. Death by starvation was recorded in thousands daily.<sup>117</sup> By the second half of 1968 shortly before international relief supplies came, people were trapped between the areas occupied by the federal troops. In the mist of this scenario, enlightenment campaigns were carried out in churches and among communities through their elders exhorting the people to utilize every available forest product as food. People were advised to feed on insects such as locusts, termites, crickets and to eat some edible leaves particularly fresh shoots of cassava. They were also advised to boil lemon grass and drink the residue not just for medicinal purposes but also to relieve the uncomfortable feeling of hunger. Children were told to forage the bushes, forests and streams for uncommon food items and to catch fries and crayfish. As for animal protein, items not usually eaten before the war such as snakes, lizards, frogs, rats, and birds found their way in the menu of many families.<sup>118</sup>

### **Responses of Biafran Government to the Situation**

The Biafra authorities initially took the matter with philosophical calmness. The government claimed it was fighting a war of self-preservation and survival and it was determined to let the world know of its ability to feed itself. That it could lose the war because of mundane factor of hunger was considered unthinkable and a remote possibility. For that reason, in the face of the economic blockade, it repudiated external aid as undignifying but instead sought internally generated means to keep the population nutritionally fit. The first approach at the onset of the crises was to use its information



service to urge the people to grow more food. The campaign, which started at the influx of the refugees in the course of the pogrom of 1966, reminded the people of their traditional culture of food self-sufficiency and the need for every one not minding social status to take to farming. This exhortation was intensified at the onset of war, stressing the fact that “we are fighting a war of survival and cannot afford to lose.”<sup>119</sup>

Schools, villages and individuals were advised to run animal farms for the production of small ungulates, pigs and raising of chicken and eggs. Farm implements and day-old chicks and raising stocks were distributed through the different agricultural research stations which were coordinated from the head quarters at Umudike, Umuahia. The cultivation of maize and beans was particularly encouraged because of their short gestation period. They could be planted twice in a year and for the additional fact that beans contained quality plant protein, which is good for children’s nutritional health.<sup>120</sup> The Biafra Land Army headed by Dr. Bede Okigbo composed of young lads, who were too young to be recruited into the army was at hand to serve in the food production campaign. These boys, given the high motivational spirit and of patriotism, were eager to serve their fatherland with zeal. There is no doubt that the public answered the Biafra government’s exhortation enthusiastically. No matter one’s socio-economic status before the outbreak of hostilities, people embraced farming with apostolic zeal. Unfortunately, much of these efforts were lost and the beneficiaries became federal soldiers who not quite long after the outbreak of war sacked many food producing zones and the people fled as refugees. The influx of refugees to the heart land of Biafra meant that schools were closed to house the displaced population. This brought to an end, the school to land programme and the young Biafra Land Army sustained serious dislocation. However, it

continued until the end of the war on a very limited scale, working hard to produce food to feed the soldiers.<sup>121</sup>

### **The Food Directorate**

The government also set up the Food and Nutrition Directorate charged with proper feeding of the armed forces and civilian population and provision of the essential items such as cigarettes and drinks to the Army. One of the tasks undertaken by the Directorate was food requisition and fair distribution, which meant that the items were sent in bulk to civilian organizations established to support each military field unit. To this effect, it mandated communities to donate food freely to the soldiers, which were prepared for consumption and sent down to the front-line troops. This was enthusiastically done and from August 1967, food was collated at intervals at specific locations for onward transportation to the war fronts. The development of refugee problem showed later that the food was rationed to serve these vulnerable groups.<sup>122</sup>

By January 1968, it became obvious that the Food Directorate could no longer shoulder the responsibility imposed on it. For one thing, it had no fund to operate as every available little money was used for the purchase of weapons. More so, much of the food producing places had been sacked by the federal soldiers and to civilian population held hostage while the lucky ones fled to avoid extermination. The Directorate was compelled to submit a report to the authorities of its inability in the face of mounting problems and sought for the assistance of international humanitarian intervention as the last resort.<sup>123</sup>

In the face of daunting odds, the Biafran authorities were forced to swallow their pride. The government was no longer indisposed to ask for assistance considering the magnitude of starvation in the land. To this end, General Ojukwu did not hesitate to discuss the matter with Mr. Heirich Jaggi, the International Red Cross representative in Biafra who took up the mantle calling for immediate assistance.<sup>124</sup> Biafra also saw the need to incorporate the mounting hunger and starvation occasioned by the total economic blockade as part and parcel of its own war propaganda.<sup>125</sup>

### **The Position of the Nigerian Government**

The official position of the government right from the on set was a total blockade of the Eastern Region as a measure to cripple the economy and force the people to capitulate. The government and high-ranking influential people within the military and civil populace held this opinion with the press enthusiastically urging the authorities to toe a hard line approach. The government enunciated its opinion that the blockade was not intended to bring suffering on the civilian population but rather to induce it to revolt against the government when the “stern economic measures” became unbearable.<sup>126</sup> The total blockade and the combat operations of the troops were what made a few doves such as Colonel Cornelius Adebayo, Military Governor of Western Region to advise in a broadcast on 4 May 1967 against such stern measures describing them as “counter productive and against morality.”<sup>127</sup> However, since the commanders and rank and file of the federal troops wanted nothing other than quick end of the war, the moral angle of the argument was not in their concern. This was reflected in the (personal) views of the commander of the Third Marine Division, Colonel Adekunle who stated in clearer terms when speaking against international food and medical aid that “I do not want to see any

Red Cross, any Caritas, any Pope, any Mission or any United Nations delegation. I want to stop every Ibo being fed, as long as these people refuse to capitulate. I do not want this war. But I want to win this war.”<sup>128</sup>

On the part of the federal authorities, part of its propaganda in alliance with the press was to keep from public knowledge the extreme hunger and misery in Biafra. Indigenous churches and humanitarian organizations were barred from the liberated areas by the authorities citing security reasons. Some organizations that insisted on seeing things for themselves were disallowed for the same security reasons.<sup>129</sup> In any case, a four men team of voluntary student group from the universities of Ibadan, Ife and Ahmadu Bello took up the gauntlet to discover the true situation for themselves. After their fact-finding mission in the liberated areas of Biafra in August 1968, they reported that in refuges camps in Uyo the refugees frightening cases of kwashiorkor among the refugees in the camps.”<sup>130</sup>

It was perhaps on the strength of the report that the Federal Government responded by giving out some relief aid as part of its contribution to the nation-wide campaign launched by the Nigerian Red Cross and the Christian Council of Nigeria. These groups had in November 1967, made vigorous calls for not just funds and supplies but also volunteers for relief work in the liberated areas of the war zone.<sup>131</sup> The military government made a donation of the sum of 100,000 Nigerian pounds in 1968 totalling about two million Nigerian pounds it committed into the project. One the whole the Christian Council was able to collect and distribute over 86,000 tons of materials throughout the period of the war.<sup>132</sup> Areas in the Anambra zone that benefitted from these largesses were the liberated war zones of Nsukka, Enugu, Awgu and Udi. The rest places

particularly, Uzo-Uwani and what is today Anambra State was still locked deep in defence and offensives.

### **Smuggling and Black Market**

Before the intervention of relief materials from the international community (that is before the Nigerian Navy invigorated its amphibious assault), organized smuggling of food stuffs with the neighboring communities of Nigeria and with far places as Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea served as veritable means of ferrying food into the Biafran enclave. Initially smuggling was carried out using canoes along the creeks and rivers of the coast. In this way, food trickled in, in unstoppable quantity and that was how scarce items like rice, cray fish, stock fish, dried fish, yams and others came in even as secret beaches were created in Oron, Opobo, Ifiayang, Eket, Ibeno, Opobo, Eket and Calabar for the purpose of the trade. In any case, the items were accessible only to a very few people who could establish entitlements to them. More so, these trading zones were too far and remote from the Anambra-Mamu zone and so near-by trading routes were devised. This was the role Osomori, Osinogo and Abor and such other riverine areas played using the waterways of the creeks.<sup>133</sup>

Biafra also derived much of her food from Nigerian army coffers. The Nigerian Army was supplied with copious quantities of food and as usual with young men, military officers on both sides of the divide were alleged to have surrounded themselves with women. These were usually their wives, girl friends and concubines, who took to the business of selling, sometimes large quantities of foodstuffs which some how found their way into the hands of Biafran women intermediaries at exorbitant costs. The

intermediaries, usually debased women and of course a few innocent ones who went into the trade for purely survival instincts were serially abused on both sides of the divide so as to be allowed the right of way across the fighting lines. The mafia courage in these women made them to locate where the Nigerian Army had their bases and such bases served for lucrative booming trade. Sometimes the women lost their lives through gang raping or they could be suspected to be spies and shot or they could be victims of stray bullets, which flew indiscriminately. Men were almost completely excluded from this trade, for obvious reasons.<sup>134</sup> There was also, though to a very limited scale, food trade across the communities between the liberated areas and the non liberated. Farmers in the safe zones though at the risk of their lives ferried foodstuffs got from their farms to areas where they were in dire need. This type of trade and others described above helped in no small measure in reducing the mortality rate particularly by 1969 when the hunger situation had climbed to stretching limits. Many people did not have the cash to pay and since the traders rejected the Biafran currency as they were unaccepted on the Nigerian side, so a sort of trade by barter subsisted. Materials like costly wrappers or other personal items like valued watches, clocks and jewelries could be exchanged for food. By selling these items to customers on the Nigerian side, the traders used the money to buy foodstuffs to be sold at the Biafra side. Items like palm oil and medicine were also sold on both sides of the divide.<sup>135</sup>

### **The Effects of Starvation**

The first effect of hunger and starvation was the rising incidences of kwashiorkor among a large percentage of the population. This caused unprecedented deaths among all age brackets but it was more on the side of children. Inability to feed well of course

resulted to general debility, which was widespread. An observation of an American survey team in 1969 showed that “slow creeping starvation of almost the entire population is the key impression today in Biafra as distinguished from early days of more spectacular ‘epidemics’ of classical kwashiorkor and mass deaths due to severe nutrition.”<sup>136</sup> The team also reported that the rate of famine in Biafra was the highest ever recorded in history as “almost one third of the population had edema, a proportion higher than in the worst sieges of the World War II, including those of Leningrad and the Western Netherlands.”<sup>137</sup>

The effect of the nutritional deterioration of the mass population was that they were so incapacitated that in the liberated areas, when the situation returned to normal, able bodied men and women were unable to work. Together with children their immune system had some what collapsed, which made them vulnerable to different kinds of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, hepatitis, anemia of varying degrees, scabies, gastroenteritis, measles, guinea worm, hook worm, round worm, dysentery, diarrhea, tropical ulcers and various disorders caused by unsafe water and unhygienic conditions. Anyone who was observant with the conditions at the refugee centres and health bays in Biafra cannot be in doubt that the suffocated conditions in which they lived could not but engender the spread of communicable diseases, particularly tuberculosis.<sup>138</sup>

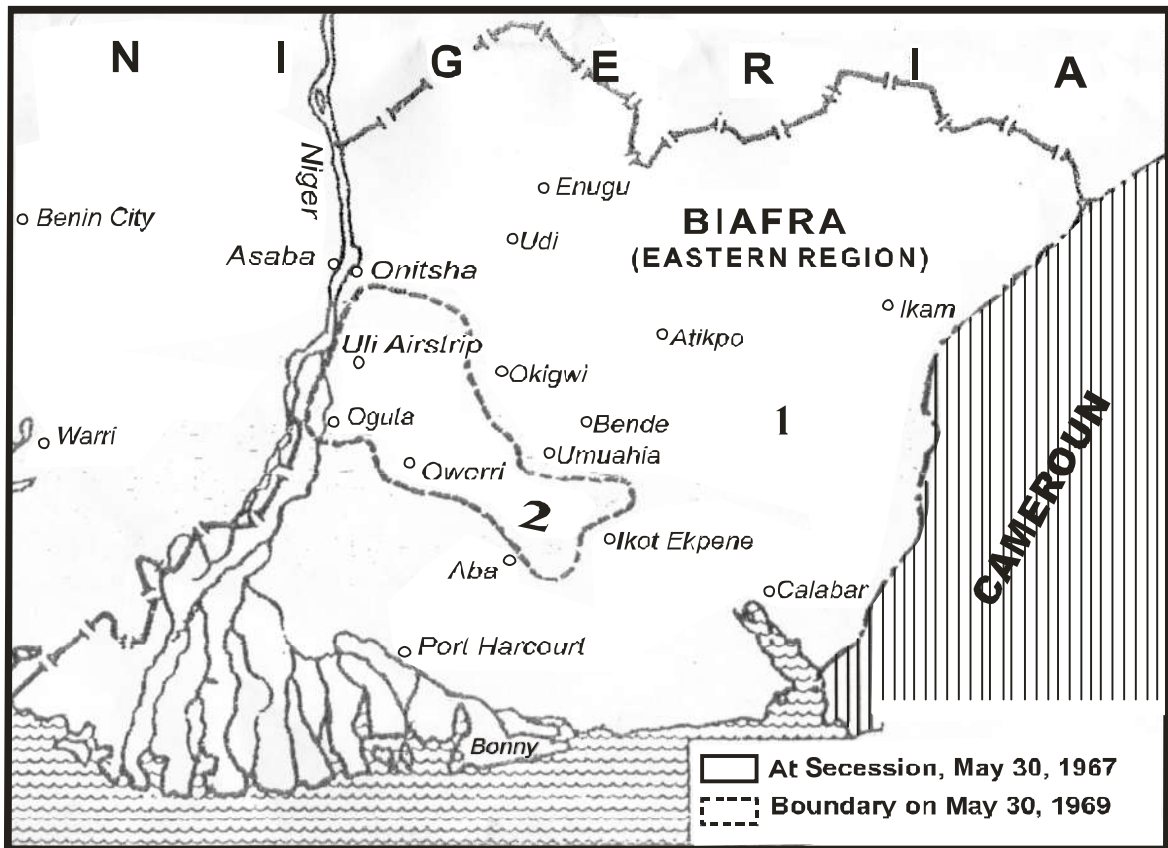
Even refugees quartered in the homes of various families were not exempted from this malaise as whole families lived in one room, as houses were inadequate in those days to accommodate the teeming population. The record of the British medical team that operated in Biafra showed that over 36.9 per cent and 26 percent of all patients treated by

them had malaria and tuberculosis respectively. <sup>139</sup> The report of Dr. Familusi of the Institute of Child Health, University of Ibadan who did some two months relief work in the liberated areas of the Igbo heart land in 1969 however showed some amelioration. The period, which coincided with the ending stages of the war, saw a gradual thaw of many of the diseases attributed to malnutrition in the liberated areas. According to Familisi, “malnutrition as judged by standards in which we are familiar with ‘normal’ population in Southern Nigerian is no longer a major problem.” <sup>140</sup> He stated further that the condition of refugees in the newly liberated areas “revealed that these people including the children were in a reasonable good state of nutrition as well.” Familusi attributed the high death toll among the refugee population to other diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and whooping cough. <sup>141</sup> This report rhymes with their other Nigerian counterparts, which indicated that farmers in the liberated areas had returned to their farms and that locally grown foodstuff such as yams, cocoyam, cassava, sweet potatoes, plantains and vegetables were freely available in the market places.

As the war progressed to the end even before 1968, the situation had truly gotten really bad. The size of Biafra shrunk which meant that almost all the food-producing areas had been lost. Most areas of the Anambra-Mamu River Basin had been lost remaining parts of Nnewi-Ozubulu-Ihiala axis as well as Orlu Senatorial zone of Imo State as indicated in the map below. As the food scarcity continued to grow from bad to worse, both the Army and civilian population lost the chances of getting reasonable food supplies. By the middle of 1969, the Army was getting not more than ten percent of all food available to the Directorate and this translated to a meal in four days for each



soldier. When such cases were widespread, it was not surprising that the morale and will power to continue the struggle was lost. The war ended on 12 January 1970.



**Old Anambra State Showing Biafra Enclave.  
Invasion of towns & economic blockade caused unprecedented  
hunger and starvation**

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE POST CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME AND THE EFFECTS OF THE OIL BOOM ON FOOD SECURITY, 1970 – 1980**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the Reconstruction Programme and its associated food policies inaugurated by both the Federal Military Government and the East Central State Government and later the Anambra State Government as measures to arrest the spectre of hunger and deprivation at the end of the civil war in 1970. The era however, coincided with what became known as the quintessential oil boom period, which caused a structural shift of the economy away from agriculture ushering in the commencement of unprecedented food imports. The development did not however favour local production thereby making a large segment of the people composed of peasants and low-income earners unable to access food in the right quality and quantity to lead healthy and productive lives.

#### **End of the War and Inauguration of Food Relief Measures**

On January 15, 1970, the 30-month Nigeria-Biafra bitter and fratricidal conflict, which earned the dubious reputation of being one of the most calamitous wars ever fought on the African continent, was officially over. This brought to an end the Republic of Biafra as a political entity. Following the creation of states in 1967, the Eastern Region

was split into three states bringing the Anambra-Mamu river basin under the East Central State with Administrator in the person of Mr. Ukpabi Asika. The ravages of the war were enormous. The area of study was in ruins even as over two million people died and an equivalent number were displaced. It was such a battered economy in which farms, industries and houses were destroyed and left comatose. Hunger continued to rage the land. However, at Okpara Avenue, Enugu, the Red Cross set up a feeding centre where rice, beans, corn mill etc were served. Hunger and destitution forced many young men and women from the war-ravaged areas to trudge to defy all odds and Enugu, the focal base of relief supports in search of survival. Some of the returnees were later encouraged to help carry out minor clearing operations of the immediate surroundings in return for raw food which they could cook by themselves. This was called Food-For-Work Program. Many civil servants who returned to Enugu took advantage of the programme for their initial survival.<sup>1</sup>

The Nigerian Red Cross spent about £10,000 per day, on the relief operations in the war affected areas with the relief and rehabilitation activities extended to the remote rural areas leading to increase in the rate of food distribution from 2000 tons to 3,000 tons.<sup>2</sup> The insufficiency of available stock of food in Nigeria as a whole, estimated 13,000 tons required that a higher rate of importation was imperative.<sup>3</sup> To this effect, 6,100 and 3,800 tons arrived shortly after.<sup>4</sup> The high demand of food in East Central State made the Red Cross to distribute over 1,500 tons of local and imported foodstuffs to more than 1,500,000 displaced persons in the last week of January 1970, two weeks after the surrender of Biafra.<sup>5</sup>

A lot of relief support came from various international organizations and governments. These include the International Red Cross, World Council of Churches, Catholic Caritas, Oxfam, the Scandinavian countries, the United States and Britain. Others were UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, Canadian Universities Service Organization, USAID and West Germany. The aid were in respect of rehabilitation projects in health, education and agriculture. An example is the Italian government, which donated to the Federal Military Government the sum of 500 million lira (approximated ₦285, 000 for the rehabilitation of war victims).<sup>6</sup> Some of the above organisations were active in providing relief to Biafra during the war. So also were Biafra students abroad. From these sources, flowed various types of materials – food items (rice, beans, fish, corn, meat, salt, and milk), and other materials and medical supplies. The East Central State Rehabilitation Commission and Post-war Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation Program was created by the government charged with the responsibility of coordinating the physical and socio-economic rehabilitation efforts and with providing food and other relief to displaced persons in the war-affected areas. The Commission's program and philosophy were based on the three principles of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation as enunciated by the United Nations as the basis of post-war resolution of the Nigeria-Biafra war. The Commission had big stores, and warehouses at Uturu, Emene in Enugu and many divisional headquarters, which housed the relief materials.<sup>7</sup>

One of the fallouts of the war at its end in 1970 however was increase in the number of motherless babies, whose parents had died or were missing, thus swelling the number of babies from destitute homes. The new development caused the Enugu branch

of the Nigeria Red Cross Society to take new initiative following the high rise of abandoned baby cases and many cases of maternal deaths because of the war. Biafran babies airlifted to Gabon during the war in fear of possible genocidal wipe out of male children were repatriated at the end of hostilities. As some of these children, identified only with nametags posted on their hands were not immediately collected by their relatives, the Enugu Motherless Babies' Home and other centres took custody of them, nursing and nourishing them with medicine and food. <sup>8</sup> By 1973, a total sum of ₦17,479.11 was donated to the centres namely Enugu, Owerri and Abakaliki by a number of bodies and voluntary agencies. These include the National Headquarters of Red Cross (₦14,060), selfless individuals (₦1,710.80), East Central State Government (₦900), State Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (₦808.31). <sup>9</sup> The measure of care to the centres by voluntary organizations and individuals, which also featured items of food, clothing, cash and other household needs, went a long way in giving succor to these unfortunate children.

### **The No Victor, No Vanquished Policy**

Immediately after the civil war, the Federal Military Government made a policy pronouncement of "No Victor, No Vanquished" by which it granted amnesty to majority of the people on the Biafra side. It embarked on positive action of welcoming the Igbo back to Nigeria; and to heal the wounds of the conflict. It launched the three R's-- Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. The Federal Government took a two-pronged action. On the Federal level, majority of those Igbo who left their jobs and scampered to safety to their home of origin in the wake of the 1966 pogrom were taken

back; special grants were given to the East-Central State Government to enable it rehabilitate projects which had been damaged or abandoned during the war.<sup>10</sup>

The “No Victor, No Vanquished” pronouncement notwithstanding, there were a number of measures taken by the federal authorities that were not in consonant with the spirit of the widely acclaimed and publicized policy and which made life really tough for the Igbo who formed the preponderance of the Biafran population. The first is that after the war, all savings of persons or companies of former Biafra were frozen, and irrespective of the amount, everyone (among the few who came forward for currency exchange mainly civil servants in Enugu) was given a flat pay of £20.00 (Twenty pounds). This was in respect of change of currency, which by the Central Bank Currency Conversion Decree, 1967, (also referred to as Decree No.51 of 1967) came into operation on 30 December 1967. By the provisions of the decree as well as Decree No.11 of 1968, (otherwise referred to as the Southeastern and other States Decree of 1968 and amended by Decree No. 49 of 1968), the old Nigerian currency ceased to be a legal tender and was replaced by new currency. It was based on the above direction that in 1970, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), asked the people in the East Central State (the former Biafra) to come forward and exchange theirs. After the exercise, every depositor was given an ex-gratia payment of 20.<sup>11</sup>

An illustration of the matter is the case of Chief J.J. Enwezor vs. CBN. The kernel of the case which dragged from 1971 at the lower court under trial judge, Savage J. to the Supreme Court in 1976 presided by Madarikan J.S.C. was that the Plaintiff/Appellant (Enwezor) deposited with the defendant, the sum of £26,659 with receipt no. Es005055 dated 7/4/70 but was denied the exchange. The Plaintiff who hired the services of a



solicitor, Chief F.R.A. Williams against the defendant's A. Odofin lost the case with the sum of £168 as cost awarded to the respondent (CBN).<sup>12</sup> The judgment was rested on the provisions of the currency decrees as cited above. The effect was that apart from a few people in the pay roll of the government, the people battled against all odds to raise their initial sum of money for takeoff. There is no doubt that the matter helped to prolong the post-war food insecurity as only a few people had cash, more so the menace of federal soldiers who were billeted in every nook and cranny of the communities made it difficult for young men and women to resume normal business activities.<sup>13</sup>

The second development was the compromise by the Federal Military Government in respect of the "abandoned property" palaver. At the height of the pogrom in 1966 when the Igbo fled to their homes of origin, their immovable property, mostly houses were taken over by the natives in those places, and who in collaboration with their states governments declared such properties "abandoned war booties." The policy no doubt caused inexplicable hardship to a large segment of the population cutting across almost every extended family who had spent their productive lives acquiring those properties. Particularly hit was the middle age bracket but worst the elderly cohort who had nothing to fall back to, the ugly development consigning them further into abject poverty which most of them never recovered.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the anomalies in the three R's programme, the people defied all odds and through dint of hard work began to put things in order immediately after the war. Indeed, it had been widely acknowledged even by the Federal Military authorities, that the development in the area was a result of the personal initiatives, enterprise and

industry of the Igbo people.<sup>15</sup> This effort also expressed in the vital issue of the food industry.

### **The Second and Third National Development Plans**

The food security profile in the period of the 1970s was dictated by the East Central State Second and Third Development Plans, which spanned between 1970 and 1974 and 1975 and 1980 respectively with their accompanying degrees of oil enclave economy. The Second National Development Plan was launched immediately after the civil war in 1970. Named a “Plan for Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction,” it had the aim of ‘restoring and rehabilitating economic activities adversely affected by the civil war, and to achieve as much development as the available resources would permit’. The Plan envisaged a total capital expenditure of £50,808 awarding the highest allocation of £12,639,000 primary production.

However, severe difficulties caused by lack of funds among others resulted in the achievement of 45.1 percent fulfillment out of a total planned expenditure of £29,231,000 for the first two years. The Third Development Plan introduced a budget of N724,077,000. Agriculture received N116,880.460 the highest allocation second to Regional Development. It also launched the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972, also called Indigenization Decree and amended in 1977. It was promulgated to satisfy the yearnings of Nigerians for participation in the operation of economic activities in the country, which was dominated by foreign firms.<sup>16</sup> The large sum of money it pumped into the economy made it to receive a big boost. The capital expenditure of £4.9 billion was earmarked in the plan at the Federal level with the public sector mainly

construction taking a N3.3 billion representing 68 per cent while the private sector got N1.6 representing 32 per cent.<sup>17</sup> The implication was mass movement of virile young men and women away from the villages to the construction sites. The wages provided by the sector afforded them access to the imported food. The majority of others who did not benefit from the boom simply languished in poverty and hunger. The period also coincided with the oil boom, which saw the real GDP recording positive annual growth rate of 15.63 percent during this plan period. The plan, which favoured building and construction sectors, strangled agriculture, manufacturing and the service sectors all of which recorded negative growth rates in comparison with the 1962 - 68 plan period.<sup>18</sup>

The Third National Development Plan, which ran its course in 1980, saw the real GDP recording an annual growth rate of 2.75 percent, a figure far below the previous rate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Development Plan. The growth of oil wealth leading to what became known as the “oil boom” in Nigeria in the mid – 1970s proved to be the underlying motivation of the nation’s leaders to carve out a development plan which would achieved balance of the social forces as stated in its ambitious objectives. It was intended to usher in and to achieve social welfare and human security particularly for the downtrodden masses. The plan was also anchored to correct the anomalies in the previous development plans, which saw a negative annual growth recorded in agriculture among other sectors.<sup>19</sup> By 1978, the oil boom was over and the nation experienced its first oil glut ever in that year. This brought down the tempo of activities in all the sectors generally. The plan failed in its objectives of food security because the creation of seven new states with East Central State divided between Anambra and Imo states, which though were a positive development, was however accompanied by mass purge in the Civil Service, which

disrupted the bureaucracy leading to poor implementation strategies of the plan. The hope of Nigerians that the indigenization policy would effect a reverse in the trend of business ownership and impact positively on the Nigerian food industry was dashed by neo-colonial interest groups particularly the Multinational companies acting in collaboration with the comprador bourgeoisie. The dependency factor was thus tightened making Nigeria an agricultural country that was unable to feed its populations.<sup>20</sup> Together with oil glut; the plan achieved an average of 5 per cent GDP growth rate as against 9.5 per cent earlier envisaged.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Immediate Post War Food Situation: Deficits in Production and Supply**

The period after the civil war saw a deplorable state of agriculture, a picture that was uniform throughout Nigeria but made worse in the Igbo area. The problem was attributed to the traditional practices and the “laissez faire” operations that generally characterized food production. This was what made the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources to say inter alia;

There is no doubt that Nigeria is currently experiencing shortage of food supplies and rise in prices of foodstuffs. Shortage of food is partly due to the continuing after effects of the civil war, which has resulted in lack of tools, planting materials, and other farm requisite especially in the war affected areas coupled with the bulky supply of large quantities of food to the armed forces. The fact that substantial quantities of food materials which under normal circumstances would have been consumed had to be used as planting materials in the war affected areas further increased the shortage. Drought late

1970 and in early 1971 in many parts of the country resulted in crop failure and reduction of yield of major staples.<sup>22</sup>

The Ministry went further to lament the shortage of high protein foods experienced in Nigeria especially the Southern states. This was accentuated by drought in the Sahelian region in the early 1970s and the decision of the republics of Chad and Niger to restrict the traditional movement of live animals across the border into Nigeria. Prior to this decision, a considerable amount of beef consumed in Nigeria came from animals imported from Niger, Chad and the Cameroons. The shortage was worsened by the fact that fish supplies were drastically reduced following to disruption of the fishing industry in the coastal waters and other war affected areas. Besides, the ban on the importation of stockfish, the alteration of the fishing pattern on the Niger by the construction of the Kainji Dam and shortage of maize and other ingredients used in poultry feed formulation following the increase and intensification of poultry feed production, were factors that led to acute shortage of food in the immediate civil war years.

The result was astronomical rise in food prices. This was made more serious by the effects of Ani Salary Award of 1970, the preliminary and final Adebo Salary Awards of 1972. The Udoji Salary Awards of 1974, however escalated it with salary increase of up to 130 percent for lower grade employees.<sup>23</sup> The uncontrolled behaviour of traders meant that they resorted to hoarding food thereby intensifying food shortages and rise in prices. The problem posed by unscrupulous racketeers was raised by the Military Governor Col. Anthony Ochefu in a speech in July 1975 when he assumed duty as the second Administrator. He promised to create a Central Trading Agency and a network of co-operatives to ensure even distribution of foodstuffs.<sup>24</sup>

It was in view of mounting food crises that the Editorial Board of the Agricultural Development Seminar held in Ibadan in 1972 called for the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Policy in which the primary role of agriculture was to provide sufficient nutritious food for the country. It also called for the establishment of policies and programmes for expanding production of food crops based on an estimation of the food consumption levels and projections for future demand which “food balance sheet” showed an average daily calorie intake of about 2,000 calories while high-quality animal and fish protein source was at abysmal low level of 8 grams.<sup>25</sup>

It was feared that with demographic growth rates estimated at 3.0% for 1970-1974; 3.1% for 1975-79, 3.2% for 1980-84, food production estimated at 2% based on the annual growth rate really portended a cause of worry for the nation.<sup>26</sup> An illustration with following table concerning the area of study meant that Nigeria’s population would double in less than 25years. This would make it difficult for food production to increase at a rate that would keep up with the national food requirements. The astronomical estimated rate of increase in food imports vis-à-vis population growth made the fear realistic. For instance, total food imports for 1962 stood at £9,250,000; 1975 - £16,300,000 and 1985 - £ 24, 700,000.<sup>27</sup>

An Estimation of Exponential growth of population also shows as follows:

**Table 4.0 Population Area and Density of the Ananbra-Mamu River Basin 1970-1972 Population Estimates**

<b>Division</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>Area (sq. mile)</b>	<b>Density</b>
Enugu Urban	138,457	164,582	168,641	172,794	28	4,943
Abakaliki	208,724	248,107	254,226	260,488	629	332
Aguata	257,938	306,607	314,168	321,907	260	992
Anambra	249,575	296,666	303,982	311,470	660	378
Awgu	212,805	252,958	259,196	265,581	439	485
Ezzikwo	227,120	269,974	276,632	283,446	455	499
Idemili	109,094	129,678	132,876	136,149	110	992
Igbo-Eze	169,847	201,895	206,874	211,969	170	999
Ihiala	136,975	162,820	166,836	170,945	119	1,151
Ishielu	191,745	227,924	233,545	239,298	695	376
Isi-Uzo	164,608	195,667	200,493	205,431	501	329
Njikoka	436,458	518,811	531,606	544,700	346	1,261
Nkanu	190,812	226,816	232,409	238,133	584	327
Nnewi	181,864	216,179	221,510	226,966	98	1,856
Nsukka	304,132	361,517	370,433	379,557	608	500
Ogbaru	33,171	39,430	40,402	41,397	186	178
Onitsha	163,032	193,794	198,573	203,464	33	4,940
Udi	220,274	261,837	268,294	274,902	613	795
<b>Total</b>	<b>3596631</b>	<b>4275262</b>	<b>4380696</b>	<b>4488597</b>	<b>6534</b>	<b>21333</b>

*Sources: East Central State Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development, Enugu and the 1963 Census*

The above table shows the high population mark of the area under study attaining an average density of about 1,185 making it far and above the Nigerian average of 300 persons per square mile.<sup>28</sup> The irony is that as can be seen from the table areas with least population such as Ogbaru, Ishielu, Abakaliki, and Anambra were the food baskets. It was based on the above national projections that the Federal Government decided to embark on comprehensive food policies and enjoined the State Governments to cooperate

with it and to adopt the policy of improving the national diet so that by 1985 average calorie intake would be raised from its prevailing 2,000 to 2,400. Such cooperative effort would also save the annual foreign exchange of ₦25million projected for food import by 1985. A projected increase of food production of 4% per annum and an overall growth of 6% per annum in the agricultural sector would in future save an ugly situation.<sup>29</sup> This was the recommendations of a study team sent abroad by the Federal Military Government to study seven green revolution countries across the world among whom were Philippines and India.<sup>30</sup> This was the genesis in the inauguration of the Accelerated Food Production Programme. However, before that, a look at the food situation in the East Central State may be imperative.

### **Challenges of the Food Sub-Sector in East Central State**

The food sub-sector of the agricultural economy of the state survived the war with heavy losses occasioned by extensive damage to equipment, machinery and plants, which were severely battered, and in some cases lost. The facilities and infrastructure essential for agricultural development were equally devastated. The worst was that with the creation of states in 1967, most of the farms and tree crop plantations developed by the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation went to the two other Eastern states namely South Eastern State and Rivers State. Indeed only 32,800 out of 83,600 of developed hectares of tree crops in the former Eastern Regions were left in the East Central State, the Anambra-Mamu River Basin owing only two-farm settlements.<sup>31</sup>

A major challenge to the agro-sector stemmed from the fact that the government's lack of subsidies and protection left the subsistent farmers vulnerable and to the mercy of



traders who went right into the villages and bought off the foodstuffs cheaply but sold them at exorbitant prices at the urban centres. With traders and transporters as the main beneficiaries of the unplanned marketing of farm produce, the actual toiling producers somewhat become discouraged resulting to low productivity of the essential food items. The matter was exacerbated by lack of good roads in much of the rich food-producing areas particularly during the rainy season. The fact that most of the bridges and roads were destroyed during the war caused most farmers to travel several miles with head loads of their produce for disposal in the markets.<sup>32</sup>

The above factors had the effect of skyrocketing the prices of foodstuffs both the locally produced and imported items as shown in the following table using the four major urban centres as illustration. The table shows that the prices of food items had gone beyond the purchasing abilities of the low-income earners both the self-employed and the low salaried workers. This was a time when salaries were very poor in the neighborhood of £5 a month.<sup>33</sup>

**Table 4.1 Retail Market Prices of Selected Foodstuff in Urban Towns in East-Central State: Enugu, Onitsha, Nsukka and Abakaliki**

(Average price in pence per unit)													
Commodity item	Unit	ENUGU			ONITSHA			NSUKKA			ABAKALIKI		
		1971	1972	Index 1973 = 100	1971	1972	Index 1973 = 100	1971	1972	Index 1973 = 100	1971	1972	Index 1973 = 100
Garri	cc.	2.5	2.0	78.7	2.8	2.3	80.7	2.2	2.0	87.5	2.6	1.9	74.0
Yam	1b.	6.1	6.2	101.9	6.0	6.9	114.5	5.8	7.3	125.1	4.6	6.3	135.8
Rice	cc.	7.8	7.0	89.4	8.0	7.0	87.2	8.4	7.5	89.4	7.8	6.7	86.3
Beans	cc.	6.5	6.5	100.3	6.4	6.7	104.4	6.6	7.2	108.3	6.8	6.9	100.7
Beef	1b.	49.7	51.5	103.6	45.3	52.6	116.1	56.3	62.5	111.0	62.2	54.6	87.8
Palm-Oil	bb.	10.6	12.9	121.7	10.8	14.1	130.9	10.0	12.7	127.3	11.7	14.6	124.6
Mangala Fish	1b.	55.9	82.2	147.0	65.1	66.5	102.1	54.4	54.1	98.5	73.5	78.7	107.1
Maize	cc.	3.1	3.2	102.0	3.0	2.8	94.2	2.9	2.8	97.4	3.2	3.5	108.9
Plantain	1b.	6.6	8.9	134.3	5.1	5.5	107.4	5.2	5.7	110.0	4.8	5.7	118.1
Goat Meat (Fresh Leg)	1b.	43.6	46.1	105.8	37.5	47.0	125.4	68.1	71.0	104.3	48.3	42.0	86.9
Frozen Fish	1b.	21.1	21.0	99.6	21.4	20.2	94.2	—	26.3	—	—	22.2	—
Shrimps	1b.	11.4	11.3	98.7	11.6	11.5	99.4	65.7	67.4	102.6	55.5	103.0	185.6
Eggs (Ordinary)	doz.	49.3	57.0	115.5	63.0	74.0	117.5	11.7	11.7	100.2	12.4	11.9	95.8
Eggs (Poultry)	doz.	69.4	61.5	88.7	65.7	61.1	93.0	46.7	47.2	101.1	48.0	61.5	128.1
Groundnut Oil	bb.	30.1	30.1	100.0	32.3	31.7	98.2	72.6	64.6	89.2	70.7	62.1	87.9
Salt	cc.	3.0	3.3	110.3	3.0	3.4	113.3	33.3	34.0	102.0	33.6	33.0	98.2
Sugar (Tate and Lyle)	1b.	15.0	18.1	120.3	14.4	17.2	119.4	4.0	3.9	98.3	3.0	3.3	109.4
Flour (Golden Penny)	5 1b. pky	57.4	45.7	79.7	55.1	43.9	79.6	15.3	17.4	113.8	15.1	15.9	105.0
Peak Milk	6 oz. tin	9.9	9.9	100.1	10.4	10.5	100.6	59.6	50.3	84.3	60.0	53.1	88.5
Tomatoes (Fresh)	1b.	17.5	16.3	91.5	17.5	17.4	99.5	10.7	10.5	97.8	10.5	10.6	100.6
Melon Seed (Without Shell)	cc.	10.6	11.4	107.9	10.8	12.7	117.7	19.5	15.9	81.3	16.4	19.6	119.4
Groundnut Seed (Fresh)	cc.	3.9	4.0	102.8	4.2	4.0	94.8	10.1	11.1	110.0	11.8	13.1	110.9
Agbono	cc.	24.6	40.9	166.1	24.6	40.2	163.4	4.5	4.9	109.6	4.2	3.8	90.3
Onions	1b.	9.5	11.3	119.1	8.6	10.0	116.0	24.6	37.1	150.8	22.5	37.1	165.0
Pepper (Dried)	cc.	7.7	7.4	95.5	9.8	9.0	91.8	6.9	9.4	136.7	10.4	9.2	88.2
Okro	1b.	12.4	13.8	111.5	11.4	10.2	88.4	7.6	9.3	122.9	7.5	9.1	121.2
Ugu Leaves	1b.	7.5	8.4	111.6	5.5	6.8	123.8	9.6	10.5	109.4	9.7	13.2	135.8
Banana	1b.	3.6	4.6	128.0	4.7	5.2	110.6	8.2	8.2	100.3	6.8	9.9	145.2
Smoked Fish	1b.	67.1	63.1	94.0	54.6	60.7	111.2	4.2	4.9	113.2	4.5	5.5	122.2

Source: Statistics Division, Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction, East-Central State, Enugu.

Note: cc. = cigarette cup; 1b = pound weight; bb. = beer bottle

The problem of the agricultural sector posed such formidable challenges to the government raising the ponderous question why emphasis was placed on growth in primary production without a corresponding growth in the secondary sector of the process, namely, the marketing, storage, processing and utilization of the by-products of agriculture. Lack of storage facilities meant that a good percentage of the produce was lost annually due to deterioration. It was estimated, that between 25 and 40 percent of yams produced locally, were lost due to poor storage conditions.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, 30 percent of post harvest vegetables were spoilt.<sup>35</sup> The search for a new strategy to tackle the aforementioned challenges was what moved the State Administrator, Mr. Ukpabi Asika to proclaim 1973 as “Agricultural Development Year” in the state.<sup>36</sup> The new approach short of tackling the development of agriculture from all its facets, it recognized it as the mainstay of the economy of the state accounting for 80 percent of the state export produce even as about 75 per cent of the population was engaged in it as means of livelihood. It was to this effect that the East-Central State 1970 – 74 Development Plan Programme allocated 25 percent of the total capital outlay to agriculture.<sup>37</sup>

It created new agencies for the implementation of the new policy. These include the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA), the Ministry of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural Production and Animal Husbandry and the Forestry Commission. Grain storage silos were installed in the major maize/rice producing state farms, two silos were located at Ezillo/Nkalagu State farm, three at the 9<sup>th</sup> – Mile Corner (near Enugu) while fifteen others were under construction in different parts of the state.<sup>38</sup>

### **The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)**

It was because of the projections noted above and deplorable food situation generally that the Federal Government as its own solution initiated the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP). The programme was designed to be encompassing and to arrest the ugly trend brought about by severe constraints to agriculture. These include, inadequate capital, small size of farm holdings, complicated system of land tenure, use of primitive tools, poor marketing and distribution of farm products, erosion and physical deterioration of soils in many areas, pests and diseases, limited extension activities and lack of educational opportunities for farmers. As an integral part of the Second National Development Plan, it was launched in 1972 and put under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance with technical support coming from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan.

The emphasis was on improving peasant productivity in staple food crops such as millet, yellow and white maize, yams, sorghum, cassava and cocoyam.<sup>39</sup> It adopted pilot projects, which were concentrated in parts of the Northern states using mini kit trials. The States Committees were designated Sub-Committees. On April 3, 1975, the pilot projects, which were based in the Northern states, were extended to all the States of the Federation during the financial year in accordance with the stipulations of the 1975 – 80, National Development Plan. Allocations were further made to States for which the East Central State got N100, 000.00 and was re-designated State Steering Committee.<sup>40</sup>

Progress report of the implementation of NAFPP in the East Central State showed that the enthusiasm generated from the 1973/74 Pilot Programme made more than 1,600

farmers to participate in the 1974/75 programme. Efforts were mainly concentrated on establishing sole maize and sole cassava variety and fertilizer minikit trials throughout the 10 zones.<sup>41</sup> The 1974/75 maize and cassava variety mini kit trials were distributed as follows as it concerned centres in the Anambra-Mamu River areas:

**Table 4.2 Zonal Distribution of Maize and Cassava Improved Variety and Fertilizer Minikit Trials, 1974/75**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>No. Established</b>
Abakaliki	120
Awka	150
Onitsha	135
Nsukka	165
Enugu	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>

*Source: Agro Extension Division, National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP), Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1975, 2*

The figure 700 represented the Anambra-Mamu River Basin share of the 1,363 grand totals for East Central State for the two crops- maize and cassava. The National Steering Committee used the services of the National Agricultural Research Centres for the successful implementation of the program. The National Cassava Centre Umudike served the need of the Eastern region where the area of study belongs. Umudike had from the defunct Eastern Nigerian days, played enviable role in promoting agricultural development in the region. With the establishment of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Umudike regularly sent out its staff for further training. In the NAFPP programme, it adopted the “Train-the-trainer” programme whereby from June 1974 to January 1975, six of its extension staff returned from Ibadan to train 18 other officers at Umudike who in turn trained 26 Agricultural Assistants, these equally trained over 1000 farmers with the cooperation of NAFPP zonal substation staff

who coordinated the performance of the field staff.<sup>42</sup> Effort to ensure the supply of improved planting materials for the 1975/76 programme necessitated the establishment of two cassava multiplication plots at Umudike with two nursery sheds set up at Enugu and Umudike for rapid multiplication. Two hectares of multiplication plots were planted with maize varieties; Planta Baja, Western Yellow, TZB x TZA and Western White.

The failure of the crops due to high soil acidity necessitated further investigations and replanting with 60447- cassava variety. The huge success recorded encouraged the utilization of more experimental plots. During the 1974/75 season, about 3,000 seedlings of *Nwaugo* and 60506 varieties were raised and these were used for the 1975/76 late planting of cassava varieties using fertilizer mini kit trials. The green house at Umudike was also used to nurture 1,774 seedlings of 60506 varieties, 1,640 *Nwaugo* and 9,552 of 40 clones.<sup>43</sup> The programme did not record the expected success because of poor management and poor remuneration for the staff. The problem of poor management also meant that much of the fertilizers were left to rot as they arrived late after the planting season. The enormous investment in the NAFPP notwithstanding agricultural production continued to stagnate<sup>44</sup>

### **The Establishment of the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA)**

As already noted, the East Central State Government in its bid to revitalize agriculture as part of its Reconstruction Programme inaugurated the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA). The agency first started with resuscitation of the moribund state farms located all over the state. Its effort to increase food production led it to transform the state owned Ezillo farm in Ishielu Division into a major food producing

centre, supplying raw materials to other ADA farms scattered all over the East Central State. The launching of a crash programme aimed at increasing the production of cereal at the end of the civil war, made the farm to be expanded in scope.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from offering job opportunities to many indigenes of the immediate catchment area to the tune of 50 percent of farm hands, the farm embarked on a gigantic expansion programme aimed at increasing the cultivation of cassava, rice and maize. Local farmers gained there from in the application of modern farming techniques such as fertilizer application and the propping of land before cultivation. ADA also bought over the bulk of their harvests at good rates. In pursuance of its animal husbandry, the farm kept more than 2,000 cattle of three main species: *Zebu*, *N'dama* and *Muturu*. In addition, the farm purchased about 50 cattle weekly for slaughtering and consumption.<sup>46</sup>

### **Collaboration with Small Holder Farmers**

Using its assets – State farms inherited from the former Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC), ADA converted these farms located in the area of study into agricultural projects and allied industries. They include Uzo-Uwani, Abakaliki, Nkwelle/Ezunaka, Ezillo/Nkalagu and Igbariam. Direct production did not however mean that the ADA cultivated these farms wholly. Rather it engaged in partnership with local farmers who in furtherance of government policy of assisting the small holders, were given portions to cultivate. The ADA cultivated a portion as a nucleus demonstration centre from which the farmers would take a cue. The small holders were given inputs of improved seed varieties, fertilizers, agro-chemicals, agronomic advice and processing facilities.<sup>47</sup> The government agency further tilled the land using tractors. The aid

arrangement to farmers, which was coordinated by the nucleus centre of the farms, equally coordinated the harvests, from which the farmers paid the cost of inputs supplied them in crop value through deductions and then retained the rest. ADA officials also trained more tractor drivers and introduced a pilot scheme called the tractor- hiring scheme whereby each driver owned the tractor assigned to him and used it to work for the government agency for its various projects. This policy stimulated increased production as the operators who hitherto ploughed only 1.2 hectares a day while on government pay, were now covering between 2 and 2.8 hectares daily.<sup>48</sup> The popularization of the tractor hiring services to smallholders gave a revolutionary formula to farming; it made it less stressful and went a long way in increasing efficiency and productivity, thus making farming an attractive venture.

### **Limitations**

The mechanization scheme however was limited to Government owned farms. In principle, the government was not committed to the idea of large-scale mechanization in view of the problems involved. These among others include; the dearth of skilled manpower to operate and maintain complex equipment, lean resources and lack of adequate capital to finance such huge projects, insufficient educational awareness of the intricacies of modern farming techniques etc. The government however encouraged private farmers who could muster the sufficient capital and expertise to invest on sophisticated farming operations. The State Administrator captured the government emphasis on light machinery as opposed to heavy and large-scale mechanization when he spoke inter alia at the launching of the State Farmers Council,



...while we do not wholly reject large scale plantations and mechanized farms, we do propose as an alternative to a policy of large-scale and rapid mechanization, a system of agriculture centred on small-holders who will be enabled to use new seed varieties, small machinery and fertilizers".<sup>49</sup>

### **Establishment of Nigeria Agricultural, Cooperative Bank (NACB) and Cooperative Societies**

Capital constituted the most serious problem to farmers causing them into seeking financial help from Shylock money lenders/traders with the consequent worsening of their financial position.<sup>50</sup> This problem brought about increase on the emphasis placed in the encouragement of co-operative societies as a way of encouraging farmers to benefit from government gestures. They were exhorted to lump themselves into cooperatives to attract funds to finance their operations and to make farming easy and capable of producing food in quantum. The idea was also to achieve a reverse of the trend of unrestrained rural-urban migrations. An additional reason for cooperatives was to identify the bona fide farmers and to stop the scarce resources from being drained into the wrong pipes - non-farmers who developed the 'long leg' of reaching the powers that-be. Besides, payment would be made easy after the necessary moratorium.<sup>51</sup> An example of the cooperative unions was the Awka Reconstruction Farmers Association, which had acquired and cleared ten acres of land for cassava, maize, vegetables, poultry, rabbitry etc. The four-year development scheme was estimated to cost £3,000.<sup>52</sup> Other notable examples are Nomeh Farmers Co-operative Society Nkanu and the Livestock Traders Association Obollo- Afor.<sup>53</sup> The following table shows food related cooperative associations for East Central State as a whole for the first quarter of 1971.

**Table 4.3 Membership of Paid-Up Shares, Savings and Deposits of Food Related Co-Operative Societies in East Central State By Type (Period Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1971)**

Type of co-operative society	Number	Membership	Paid-up Shares	Savings and Deposits	Loans Issued	Loans Repaid	Loans Outstanding
			£	£	£	£	£
Thrift and Credit Society	125	6,579	23,655	17,339	16,241	1,368	14,873
Produce Marketing Society	2	27	125	3	-	-	-
Farmers Multi-Purpose	127	7,223	23,698	4,213	9,193	1,686	7,507
Community Farms and Farmers Co-operative	36	2,540	14,206	2,861	761	92	669
Bakers Co-operatives	3	179	2,485	36	-	-	-
Rice Mills Co-operative	3	158	3,769	2,008	9,738	-	9,738
Farm Settlements	16	1,597	301	661	4,882	-	4,882
Co-operative Farm Multi-Purpose	11	1,050	2,843	516	847	-	847
Total							

*Source: Co-operative Division, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Enugu, Statistical Digest, 1972*

The table shows the different agricultural unions indicating their performance in terms of number registered and their operations. Bureaucratic issues made it difficult to obtain separate figures for Anambra-Mamu river basin. However, the data shows the rudimentary but encouraging stage of cooperative movement perhaps explained by the mood at the immediate post war era when uncertainty prevailed.

The Federal Military government came to the realization that 90 per cent of the nation's farming population composed of subsistence or small holder farmers and they were responsible for 95% of the aggregate food and fibre output in the country. The government therefore established the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank Limited (NACB) in 1973.<sup>54</sup> The apex development bank came into existence as a national

credit institution charged with the responsibility of delivering credit to the nation's agricultural sector through provision of loans to individual farmers, co-operative organizations, limited liability companies' state and Federal Government agencies. With an Area Office at Enugu, the Bank adopted the strategy of channeling its credit to the small scale farmers through the on-lending agencies such as Co-operative Societies, State and Federal Government agencies as well as River Basin Authorities, The primary aim was for these agencies to reach as many farmers as possible with the Bank's borrowed credit. Between 1973 and 1980, a total sum of N178.1million had been approved on the on-lending scheme basis for the small-scale farmers.<sup>55</sup>

Unfortunately, this strategy did not show evidence of success as the appraisal of the Bank carried out sometime in 1980 revealed. It showed that the programme was not having its desired result even as a substantial chunk of the money did not get to the intended beneficiaries. Where the loans were given, the exercise was done off-season which naturally led to diversion of loans to other purposes and which led to very low repayment. These made the Bank to rethink of its strategies in loan disbursement in the period of the 1980s.<sup>56</sup>

### **Agricultural Engineering Unit**

An estimated N4 million engineering equipment was damaged in the State during the civil war. This entailed buying new ones and servicing the manageable ones. However, the agricultural department went further in establishing two fabrication workshops one of which was cited at Abakaliki for the production of farm tools and farming equipment such as bicycle trailers, handcarts, poultry feeding troughs and

drinkers, thus ending the importation of these items. Altogether, the government spent the sum of N52, 189.82 on the fabrication projects.<sup>57</sup>

The relevant agencies also embarked upon soil conservation, irrigation and drainage schemes to promote double cropping on arable lands. The Engineering Unit also introduced better livestock conveniences to create necessary and healthy environment for higher livestock production. Repairs of roads and bridges leading to state farms and produce were also part of its services.<sup>58</sup> The agricultural engineering unit reconstructed irrigation projects in several places including the Anambra-Mamu River area of Ifite-Ogwari in Uzo-Uwani, Ikem in Ikwo and Igweneoha in Ezzikwo Division, as well as government owned farms at Abakaliki, and Ogboji and Ezira in Aguata. The Aguata Soil Erosion Control Scheme, farm tools and hydrological investigations were all part of its mandate. Between 1970 and 1975, the East Central State Government spent a sum of N986, 934.82 on agricultural engineering, mechanization and minor irrigation projects. Out of this amount, the Federal Military Government contributed N477, 871.<sup>59</sup>

### **Agro Technological Development: PRODA**

By Edict No.11 of 1971, the ECS Government established the Project Development Agency. The Agency was charged with the duty of developing projects from the laboratory or design stage through the pilot scheme and concludes it with mass production of prototypes.<sup>60</sup> The interest in food industry led it to make steady progress in the design and construction of bread-making machinery and oven, which include the kneader and dough cutter. The equipment was capable of producing some hundreds of loaves of bread a day. The experience of Biafra during the civil war as it relates to salt

scarcity was probably what made PRODA to move to Abakaliki where it conducted investigation into the extent of salt deposits in the area. It was in this connection that a gravimetric survey of the area covering 150/square miles was undertaken at one-mile interval. This led to the registering of 187 stations.

The result of the investigation was impressive and the Agency sought to go into salt industry as well as other heavy chemical industries. This effort was however not realized because of the usual dependency factor, which allowed the importation of several brands of salt into Nigeria, some of them of such low quality standards that they sold cheaply thereby discouraging local content manufacture.

Since one of the favourite dishes of the people happened to be garri, the PRODA waded into the technology of its production; not just the production of garri, but at a considerable low labour cost. To this effect, the Agency designed a garri processing plant, which peeled cassava, washed, grated, dried and fried it into garri. By 1973, it embarked on the achievement of new designs, tests, and equipment fabrications to serve as blue prints for interested investors and to be managed by cooperative societies.<sup>61</sup>

Under the leadership of Professor G.O. Ezekwe, the machinery attracted considerable research and development activity not only in West Africa but also the Far East, Europe and the Americas where cassava was also used as industrial starch, chips and pellets. The machines were fitted with blades for shaving off the cassava skin. The Agricultural Engineering Department of the University of Nigeria followed up the 1973 PRODA effort by further developing in 1974/75 an axial feed for slicing the whole tuber into discs.<sup>62</sup> Ezekwe in 1975 further devised a belt conveyer peeler, which carried

cassava slices over a slat band chain that rotated the slices. Abrasive flaps, were also attached to the conveyor, to clean the periphery.<sup>63</sup> The need for a batch-type barrel machines, which might rely on abrasion or chemical action so as to be able to achieve a wearing down of the cassava peels made Cruz et al, working in concert with PRODA, to design a machine with oblique rotating barrel with an axis that mixed the mixture. In the original experiment composed of unshelled *palay*, which was a natural agricultural product in the Philippines, Cruz and his workers applied it in the case of cassava to achieve the same result by subjecting the cassava to considerable agitation in the process of tumbling and sliding.<sup>64</sup> Another researcher, under the auspices of PRODA was E.U. Odigbo who employed two parallel inclined cylinders, rotating at different speeds on which the cassava tubers travelled downwards under the pull of gravity. It composed of two cylinders, the rough one for rotating the cassava and the other of lesser roughness, for rasping it.<sup>65</sup> The effort saw a revolution in garri processing which boosted the availability of the product in townships such as Enugu, Onitsha, Nsukka etc.

### **Food Crops Development**

Through the agency of ADA the government made available the necessary inputs and agronomic advice to assist farmers to effectively grow essential food crops on a large-scale. The establishment of a total of 277.2 hectares of maize and 182 hectares of rice multiplication plots at various centres is an illustration of the intention.<sup>66</sup> The ADA also cultivated more than 4,688 hectares of cassava in its farms across the state .The area of study benefited, courtesy of the farms at Ezillo/Nkalagu, Ibite Olo, Agusuoba, Uzo-Uwani, Umumbo, Achalla/Igbariam, Ishiagu, Odekpe and Abakaliki. Some of these farms like Ezillo/Nkalagu were in addition to maize, cassava and rice diversified to

include garri, rice, starch, flour, chips, tapioca and sago processing in addition to others like animal husbandry particularly cattle fattening and market gardening. ADA also went into the processing of maize into corn flour and livestock feed. The limiting factor posed by insufficiency in the production of these crops to satisfy food requirements and industrial usage was what made ADA to embark on veritable campaign, exhorting the natives to go into their production to find better methods of processing, preservation and packaging of local foodstuffs.<sup>67</sup>

### **Rice Production**

The effort to make Igbo land self sufficient in rice production caused the government to rehabilitate 1000 hectares of rice farm at Uzo-Uwani. The job was awarded to a Japanese contracting firm Nippon Koei Company whose consultants Dr. Michitara and Mr. Yashuhiro arrived on 19 March 1973 for feasibility studies. That year, the Rice Development Unit of ADA cultivated only 800 hectares as against the planned 24,000 using nucleus centre and smallholder approach. The possible problems that would be posed by drought were prevented by the provision of irrigation facilities to guard against crops failures. This equally made it possible to cultivate rice on the same plot twice in a year.<sup>68</sup> Together with rice production went the citing of rice processing mills dotted all over the rice producing areas of Abakaliki, Do-Anambra, Mamu and Niger basins. These were mainly on private initiatives. However the rice processing unit of the ADA made available five “*satake*” rice mills, four of which were set up in the Anambra-Mamu area of Ikwo, Abakaliki, and Uzo-Uwani and Aguleri. Each mill had a capacity of over 1,300 tons of milled rice per annum and provided milling facilities to farmers in the area.

ADA took the initiative of milling and packaging rice free of sand and stones and with high percentage of whole grains of uniform size and moisture content. The product, which was packaged neatly in polythene bags was in great demand within and outside the state.<sup>69</sup> The government went further by establishing Food Investigation Centres under a Committee headed by Mrs. Justina Anazonwu-Bello.<sup>70</sup> In its policy of making the country self-sufficient in rice, the Nigerian Government at the federal level restricted to imports 2,000 tons annually.<sup>71</sup> This no doubt stimulated local production. This is evidenced by acreage and production of rice in Nigeria 1969 and 1970, which recorded as follows, as figures made available by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) shows.

**Table 4.4 Acrege of Rice Production in Nigeria, 1969 and 1970**

	<b>1969</b>	<b>1970</b>
Acreage	250,000 hectares	300,000 hectares
Production of paddy	500,000 tons	550,000 tons

It was envisaged that Nigeria had the potential to quadruple the above figure by the use of high yielding varieties, fertilizers and irrigation. This made the ADA initiatives to receive a boost in productivity.<sup>72</sup>

### **Livestock**

The vigorous achievements of the M. I. Okpara administration during the First Republic to lay a sound foundation for livestock production was lost to the civil war which cost the State N50 million worth of livestock with the Livestock and Veterinary Division alone recording damages estimated at more than N2.5 million. The Government started afresh



in all aspects and by 1977, the first batch of twenty-nine Veterinary Assistants from Anambra and Imo States graduated at the Veterinary School Ezzamgbo. Nearly N2 million was spent in bringing back to life some of the thirty-five Veterinary centres ravaged by the war.<sup>73</sup>

The affected centres in the area of study include; Ajalli/Nawfija in Aguata Division, Enugu Ezike in Igbo Eze Division, Ehamufu in Isi-Uzo Division, Ezikwo and Ezamgbo both in Ishielu Division and lastly Onitsha. Through the broad units of the Division, which also included clinical services, the Government was determined to develop animal farming to enviable lengths. Modern abattoirs with lairages were set up in the major towns of Abakaliki, Nsukka, Aguata and Onitsha even as facilities were established to determine the health status of the animals before slaughtering and this included medical surveillance of the imported ones. Inoculation exercises were undertaken. For instance in the latter half of 1973, 1,982,649 various types of animals were inoculated, and slaughtered animals inspected within the same period were 45,613 heads of cattle, 50,285 goats, 11,774 sheep, 51,194 pigs and 3,450 others including horses, donkey and rabbits. The effort made in animal husbandry showed cattle tax revenue of N70, 711 in the 1972/73 financial year.<sup>74</sup>

The “One Egg Every Day” slogan of the M. I. Okpara administration was somewhat revived. The government’s day-old-chick and feeds subsidy scheme encouraged many families to rear birds for both the market and home consumption. Veterinary extension staff was posted to the various divisions in promotion of this objective. At Enugu, a paper pulp moulding plant was established for the transformation of paper pulp into egg cartons. Commercial livestock projects were opened by ADA in various places, which

within the Anambra-Manu river basin included Ezillo/Nkalagu in Ishielu Division, Adada in Nsukka Division, Oghe in Udi Division, Abakaliki and Nkwelle Ezunaka in Anambra Division. Each of these locations had specialized services. While Ezillo/Nkalagu and Adada served as fattening units with the former having 2,000 heads of cattle every year, Oghe farm specialized in broiler production and processing. It had the capacity of producing 200 dozen eggs daily, 7,000 broilers and twenty porkers weekly. In likewise, the poultry unit at Abakaliki had 5,900 layers and by 1975, it was producing 4,500 table eggs daily and 500 broilers weekly.<sup>75</sup>

There were of course several other private farms across the area of study. Examples include the Social Centre Ihiala owned by Rev. Dr. Hipolite Adigwe, the Holy Ghost Fathers Farm at Isieke Okija, both of which were producing over two thousand birds monthly.<sup>76</sup> There was also Mr. Mbazulike Amechi's Piggery at Ukpok established in 1963. It had over 504 pigs and was one of the farms visited by the Federal Commissioner for Agriculture Dr. J.O.J. Okezie during his tour of the E.C.S. in September 1973.<sup>77</sup>

### **Cold Store Complex and Feed Mill**

These efforts notwithstanding the protein content in the people's diet remained dismal. To make meat available to the urban centres particularly the state capital, ADA in 1972 rehabilitated the cold store complex established in 1962 by the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation at a cost of N211, 090. The store with the provision of ancillary mobile cold storage system capable of containing three tons of meat at a time served the public need of meat, packaged rice, corn flour and cashew nuts. About fifty heads of cattle were slaughtered weekly at Ezillo farm and the meat was transported by

cold vans to the stores in Enugu, Aba, Abakaliki, Owerri, Nsukka and Onitsha. The installation of 25- horsepower electric plant at Ezillo farm in 1972 enabled the management to embark upon the installation of permanent cold store facility at the cost of £9,000. This provided ice blocks to serve areas where refrigerators were not in use. To meet up with its goal of making beef, bacon, sausages and minced meat among others available to as many people as possible, livestock feeds industry was established at 9<sup>th</sup> Mile corner near Enugu with a production capacity of 12,000 tons a year.

By 1975, the mill products were made available for public consumption. Some private investors also went into the business in collaboration with the government agency. This could be attested by Ora farm hatchery which produced the best breed of boilers and layers and in partnership with ADA two incubators at Uwani Enugu with a capacity of 30,000 eggs which yielded about 10,000 day old chicks a week.<sup>78</sup>

### **Survey of Food Production in the Rural Areas**

In 1973/1974, the State Ministry of Economic Development undertook a survey of statistics for agricultural planning in the rural areas, which were the pivot of food production. The survey used a random sampling of selected communities from all the divisions including those of Anambra-Mamu River basin, grouping them into different strata. The significant aspects of the results among others showed as follows:

- (1) There was an average of five persons per rural household in the state with people aged 15 and above slightly higher than any other age groups.
- (2) The greater percentages were farmers – accounting for 78% of the rural population.
- (3) Almost every villager kept

some livestock and poultry but these were not on commercial basis. However the meat and eggs obtained there from, provided valuable additions to the diet of the people. The possibility for expansion of production to satisfy increased demands abounded. (4) Poultry farming and goat and sheep rearing constituted the major elements of the above livestock holdings. This accounted roughly 28.6 million units of poultry for the state as a whole with the Anambra-Mamu River basin contributing 27.590 million. (5) Goats, sheep and dogs constituted about 2 million, 5 million and 7 million respectively but their rates of slaughter stood at 5.5%, 2.2%.and 0.6% indicating that the animals were reared for domestic purposes other than sources of meat<sup>79</sup>

The study also obtained information on the major food crops like yam, cassava, cocoyam and rice. Using 1973/74 Agric Year the following information was obtained. Maize was not included because the survey took off in July when the crop was already being harvested. This shows as follows for the Anambra-Mamu River basin.

(1) About 252,127 acreage of yam was cultivated with an estimated yield per acre (in tons). Areas of major production were Abakaliki, Ogbaru, Anambra and their environs accounting over 90%. (2) Cultivated acreage for cassava was 341,196 with an estimated yield of 4.31 per acre (in tons). Production was wide spread in all the zones. (3) Cocoyam accounted for 47,385 acres with an estimated yield of 3.25. Njikoka, Idemili, and Aguata had the highest yield of 60%. Rice yielded 5.16 tons per acre from 23,603 acreage of cultivation. Rice was not widely cultivated in the area of study due to geological conditions, the data collected served for only four areas, Uzo-Uwani, Abakaliki, Ezikkwo, Ogbaru and Ishielu Divisions all accounting for 96%.<sup>80</sup>

Inquiries conducted on rural dwellers showed that they were largely unaffected by the Government's presence and food production campaigns. The neglect of the rural areas could be illustrated with the river rain section of Anambra Division comprising the nine towns of Umueze- Anam, Ezi-Anam, Oroma-Etiti, Umuenwelum, Nzam, Olu-Mbanasa, Ifite-Anam, Eziagulu-Otu and Enugu- Otu. The topography of these communities caused that they were utterly neglected and not put in the Government picture and this was inspite of their being prolific food producers. It was such widespread reports that moved Col. John Atom Kpera in November 1976 and later by Lt. Col. D.S. Abubakar in 1978 during their respective tenures as Military Governors to pay visits to some of these places.<sup>81</sup>

### **Fishing Industry**

Shortage of fish and inadequacy of local catch must have been a factor that stimulated the Agriculture Ministry in the development of fish culture and fish farming so that interested farmers could take after the example. The Ministry took time to identify the species that were adaptable to the environment. Although the Anambra and Mamu rivers and their tributaries housed many local varieties of fish, the most common species that were identified and recommended to farmers for artificial culturing were *Tilapia Sp (Ikpokpo)*, *Clarias Sp (Azụ-isi)*, *Heterobranchus (Azụ isi)*. It showed the advantages of prolific spawning, fast growth rate, high conversion factor, acceptance of both natural food and artificial feeds and were valued by consumers as table fish. The Agric. Ministry also introduced the foreign or exotic species of the Grass Carp because of its adaptability to the Anambra environment and its ability to spawn.<sup>82</sup>

The gospel of artificial fish farming was carried across the state and business men with adequate capital were exhorted to go into the business. Interested investors who availed themselves were taught the rudiments of the business in such topical areas as pond construction and management especially with reference to the use of vegetable materials to act as artificial feed supplement. The campaign of artificial fish culture was answered enthusiastically by the people but some teething problems which the Ministry perhaps overlooked or underestimated, reared their ugly heads and made the exercise not popular. Among these was that there was no hatchery station in Anambra State. For unknown reason, the Fish Stock Improvement and Fry Production Station proposed at Umukete Aguleri did not materialize. For this reason, fish farmers had to depend on the Fish Culture Station at Umuna Okigwe in Imo State for the supply of carp-fry for stocking their ponds. In any case the latter's supply ability was too low and epileptic to cater for the rising demand.<sup>83</sup> Inability to obtain fingerlings from cultured ponds left the Anambra-Mamu farmers with no option than obtaining it from the local streams and rivers. However, these sources had the disadvantages of unregulated spawning which over populated the ponds causing the fish to be stunted and fetching low prices at the market.

More so, very many other species, which the consumers desired to buy, could not breed in captivity or under farm conditions. Insufficient technical know-how also caused the farmers not to control the frequent changes of weather which made the fishes to succumb to mild diseases and such environmental changes as low water and oxygen content or changes of diet or temperature variations. Lack of adequate sources of fish feed meant that farmers had no option than to make special requests from livestock

manufacturing companies like Pfizer to produce for them but such arrangement could not work with small scale farmers, especially when they were not organized in co-operative unions. The farmers were therefore left with the undesirable option of using Animal feeds like rabbit pellets and poultry feeds.

These problems no doubt discouraged many prospective fish farmers, and this was happening at a time when modern techniques of fishpond culture as we have it today had not been developed. The cultivated species had to depend more, exclusively on vegetable materials, or other supplementary feeds produced by the pond itself such as planktons, diatoms, algae and smaller aquatic animals. Nevertheless, these also helped to turn the pond water greenish leading to its subsequent pollution and high mortality rate of the stocked species.<sup>84</sup> In any case; the major issue that actually delayed and continues to delay aggregate local fish revolution in the Anambra-Mamu River basin was the importation of fish. This had over the years made local production, whether from the rivers, streams and lakes or artificial culture unnecessary and discouraging. There has been no way the local farmers could match up with the ebullient competition posed by fish import and so the efforts of the government continued to yield little or no fruit.<sup>85</sup>

### **Tree Crops**

The Ministry also recognized the primacy of tree crops in the food economy of the people and so promoted it to heights. It was this objective in mind that, it recognized the fruit trees as important food providers in the vital areas of fruits, fibres, vegetables, oil, drugs, beverages and livestock feed. The Agro Ministry utilized these trees into food availability by using the budding technique. For instance, it produced new species of the

following plants through budding and other techniques. *Irvingia gabonsis* (*agbono*), *Treculia Africana* or breadfruit (*ukwa*), *Dacryodes edulis* or native peer (*ube*), *Citrus Spp.* (*oranges*), *Cocos nucifera* (*coconut*), *Elaeis guineensis* (*oil palm*), *Cola Spp.* (*kolanut*), *Garcinia kola* or bitter kola (*ugolo*) etc. Their nurseries were sold to interested farmers who were instructed on their method of planting such as spacing distance of 15 to 20 metres, the intervening space being used for arable cropping. The improved seedlings of the above trees were sold at the Forestry Development and Investigation Branch, Forestry Division No. 2 Works Road Enugu from where they were made available to all the zonal forest offices throughout the state.<sup>86</sup>

The revolutionary impact of these efforts was that it produced better high yielding, quicker maturing and more robust and palatable fruits. It did not take much time for some of these fruit trees to permeate the remotest villages. For instance, the exercise was able to produce the early fruiting *Treculia Africana* (*ukwa*) tree raised by budding at the Iva-Valley Enugu Gardens. Unlike the indigenous variety, which grew into massive tree with several years before fruiting, the new one with its extra-large gourds and seeds measured a height of about six feet. Besides, it could be harvested at will by the farmer standing under the plant after two years of planting.

The need to revolutionize the fruit tree production in the state made the Enugu Market Garden to undertake the development to new strains of citrus, mango, avocado pear, star apple, guava, paw-paw, sour sop, carambola, coconut etc. The scientific cultivation of these fruits made them available to be sold to the farmers and the public when the seedlings were of transplanting stage. This was also true of coconut, carambola, sapodilla, paw-paw, guava, star apple etc. Their increase in productivity not only



influenced the farmers in terms of earning reasonable sum of money and income but increase in the nutritional vitamin and mineral content of the peoples' diet.<sup>87</sup>

### **Infrastructure, Public Utilities, and Community Self Help Development Projects**

One of the effects of the war is that by 1976, the area of study had the dubious honour of enjoying by any stretch of imagination, the worst deplorable roads in the federation.<sup>88</sup> The gigantic destruction of infrastructure during the civil war and the lukewarm or snail speed of the Reconstruction Programme was a factor that informed the inhabitants of Anambra-Mamu River area that waiting for government assistance or intervention was a forlorn hope. To this effect, community self-help development projects were embarked upon almost everywhere in a constructive competitive basis. There were a whole lot of these projects in the period after the civil war throughout the East Central State and covering all aspects of infrastructural facilities/ utilities. A summary report of self-help projects undertaken by communities and Community Councils in East Central State for the month of April 1975 alone shows that 210 Community Councils embarked on 489 development projects at a total estimated cost of N5, 471,011.06 with total up to-date expenditure of N1,485,803.37. The sum of N13, 198.46 was realized as proceeds from some of the economic projects.<sup>89</sup>

Since these projects impacted positively on bettering the lives of the people, there is no doubt that some of them contributed immensely in achieving the food security objectives of the concerned communities. For instance, Omor Community and its environs, which was the scene of battle, saw twenty-three bridges and several culverts destroyed. This made these food-producing areas unable to evacuate their produce six

years after the war.<sup>90</sup> Similar cases was true of Ogbaru, Anambra , Uzo-Uwani, Abakaliki Divisions. Instances of these projects was the construction of damaged roads and bridges and market development without which food and materials could not be transported and distributed easily from areas of production to areas of demand. The following are some examples pertaining to the food economy.

**Table 4.5 Self-Help Community Projects in Anambra-Mamu River Basin 1975**

Community and Division	Description of Project (1975)	Amount Expended in ₦ : k
Awgu	12 projects were undertaken by 8 community councils	N31, 060.00
Opi (Nsukka Div.)	Bridge Construction	N10,500
Ukpor (Nnewi Div.)	Bridge and road constructions	N19,999.00 and N5,888 respectively
Azia (Ihiala Div.)	Construction of Omai bridge	N5, 888.
Ihiala (Ihiala Div.)	Construction of Nkwo-Ogbe market	N47,748.00
Amoka Council (Ihiala Div.)	Construction	N1,767.00
Aku (Nsukka Div.)	Market construction	2,000
Ebe (Udi Div.)	Market construction	3,000
Odekpe (Ogbaru Div.)	Planning and construction of Iyiowo Odekpe new layout.	Amount not stated
Ogwu – Aniocha (Ogbaru Div.)	Planning and construction of Iyiowo Odekpe new layout, the Ogwu-Aniocha Community on the Ogwu – Aniocha-Ihiala 9 mile project	N12,60.00
Ohita (Ogbaru Div.)	Water scheme	N2,282.00
Adani (Uzo Uwani Div.)	8.4 hectares of cassava, six hectares of rice, and two agro - industrial projects (rice milling and garri grating), a bakery	N6, 655.00
Adani-Ayamelum Mbano areas (Uzo Uwani Div.)	23 bridges that linked Omor, Umolokpa and Adani	N19, 425.14
Ifite Ogwari Council (Uzo Uwani Div.)	Development of 113.2 hectares of rice farms	N931.00
Omor (Uzo Uwani Div.)	Construction of Okpu Igbakwu, the Ofia-Ozu and Ada-Ofia Ozu bridges along Adani Omor Road and make shift bridges were also constructed to provide access to some streams	
Omor (Uzo Uwani Div.)	Resurfacing of the 25-kilometre stretch of roads linking Omor with Ifite Ogwari and Umueje	Amount not stated

*Source: East Central State Review vol.3 No.4 July-August, 1975,30-37*

The significance of the above projects could be exemplified with marketing of agricultural products which had been the biggest problem facing the entire farmers in the rural areas. This caused fruits such as oranges, bananas, mangoes, pawpaw, peers etc to get ripe and rotten on the trees due to lack of near-by markets to sell them. An example is Ezza local government council area, which had four main markets: Eke Imoha, Afo Izo, Afo Nkomoro and Orié Egbe. These markets, which were constructed under the self-help efforts of their respective communities, became the main revenue yielding sources for Ezza Local Government Council. But in spite of their being food collection centres, farmers found it difficult to transport their products to Afo Nkomoro and Afo Izo markets during the rainy season. Difficulties like this made many communities to embark on self-help projects particularly market development to be in a better position to help themselves. In 1978 for example, the two communities of Amagu and Amaezekwe in Ezza local government embarked on the reactivation of their old market places along Onueke-Ikwo Road formerly called Nkwo Ezza. This was an effort to free themselves from the hassles of getting their wares to Eke Imoha market, about seven kilometers away. The strategic repositioning of their market attracted traders from other parts of Anambra State, Imo and Cross River States for evacuation of foodstuffs from which the producers found income to better their lives.<sup>91</sup>

### **Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)**

The need to create public awareness in the lofty issue of self-reliance in food provision and to revive the flagging agricultural sector was what moved the Federal Military Government to launch on May 26, 1976 the first phase of this programme, which involved the hiring of 27,000 university students, to educate peasant farmers on the

modern techniques of farming. The second phase was launched on June 2, 1977. It was aimed at sensitizing the public about the OFN philosophy.

The year 1977 was devoted exclusively by the Ministry of Agriculture for the realization of the objectives of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN). It was aimed to mobilize the farmers and the public towards the achievement of self-sufficiency and self-reliance in food production. Among the efforts geared towards the realization of the objective was revival of the Young Farmers Club. It was designed to inculcate the lofty goals in the young people early enough. The public was also taught the rudiments of establishing proper nurseries for vegetables such as tomatoes, African Spinach (green) , pepper, egg plants (including *anara* and garden egg), lettuce, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, collard, leek, celery, curry etc. The selection of site, bed or ground nursery preparation, application of manure, seed sowing, soil mixture, etc. were other features of the programme.<sup>92</sup> Among the strategies adopted by the Anambra State Committee of Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) under the chairmanship of Dr. Chkwuemeka Oyolu and later Igwe J. Nwodo was training workshop conducted in shifts of five working days for officers-in-charge of Agriculture projects from the zones and Local Government Areas of the state. In the Herbicide and Pesticides workshops held between 20 and 30 June 1978 for example, representatives of agro-chemical companies and agro specialists gave lectures, conducted field demonstrations in the use of herbicides, and associated equipment.

The Companies that were invited included National Oil and Chemical Marketing Co. Ltd, CIBA GEIGY, Agro- Pharma Services Ltd, Mayor International and B.A.S.F. The workshop in identifying the three major enemies of crops to be weeds, diseases and

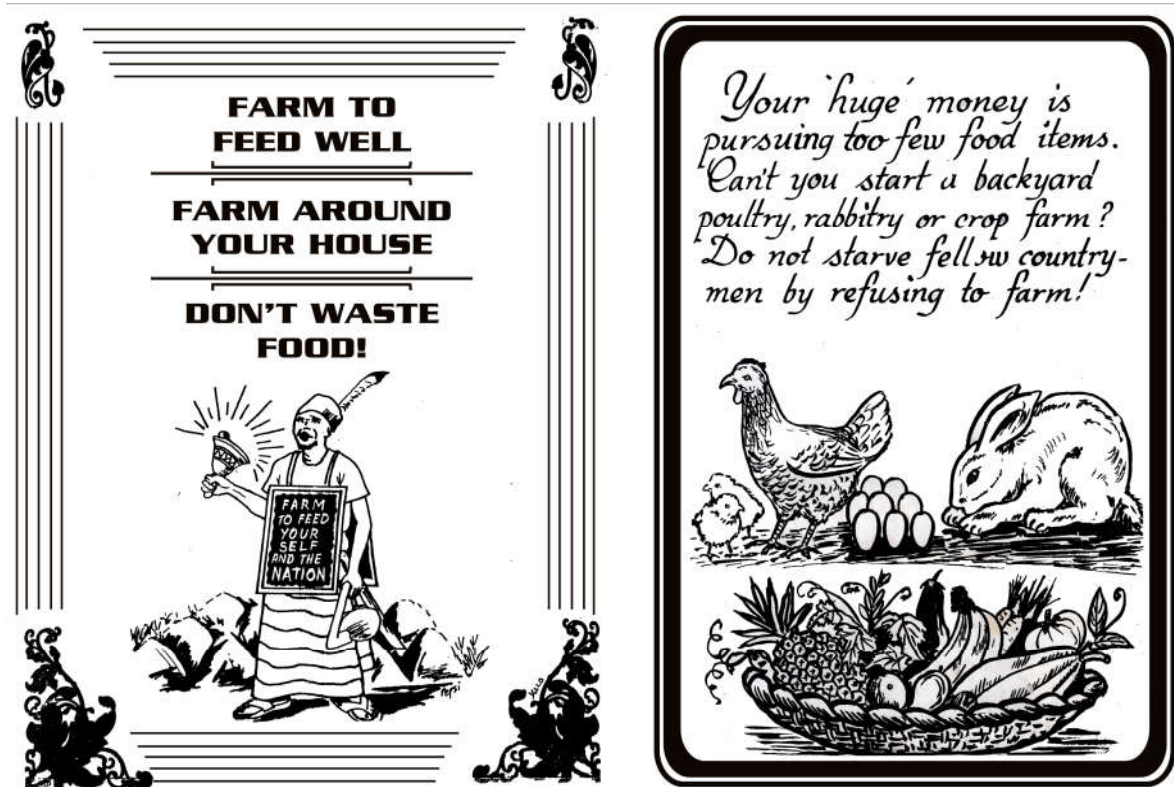
insects, it recognized motorized mechanical devices and application as the surest means of bringing vast areas of arable land under cultivation as opposed to the old-fashioned labourious, hand-weeding technique. It was recognized that the primitive, inefficient and ineffective hand weeding accounted for 35% to 40% of total cost of food production. It was for this reason that the committee requested for the supply and distribution of effective chemicals for the control of stubborn weeds such as *imperata cylindrical* (spear grass), *Eypatoricim* and *sedges*. The workshop also touched on such vital areas of food crop husbandry like proper land preparation, clean healthy seeds, improved agronomic practices and time-lines in the application of the selected herbicides. The beneficiaries of the training were to go to their various constituencies to impact on the farmers the new knowledge they had acquired.<sup>93</sup>

It is interesting that people from all professions and state institution officials – all took active interest and participated in the OFN seminars and workshop. The Police College Enugu was one of such institutions that responded positively to the OFN philosophy. Women Organizations throughout the state also organized Home Management Projects, which featured rural demonstrations. An example of this was Agbani and Nkanu L. G. A. where rural women and children showed considerable attention both in attendance and desire to learn modern methods of Home Management, Child Care and Food Preparation introduced by the Anambra State Agricultural and Rural Home Economics Unit. Children and youths were not left out in the OFN campaign. For instance, one Chief Chijioke Agu, distinguished himself as a leader in this respect by leading 30 youths with a 2.5 – hectare farm in Agu-Owa near Enugu.<sup>94</sup>

Another major break-through was achieved by the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nigeria Nsukka in collaboration with the Anambra State Operation Feed the Nation. It's modernization of the process of garri production resulted in increase in quantity and quality of garri obtained from cassava tubers. The process also reduced the Hydrocyanic Acid (HCN) content present in garri from the conventional 0.009% to 0.004%. The equipment which entire processing unit cost N1, 000 to N1, 200 with spare parts was designed to handle the 30-hectare cassava farm planted in 1976 by OFN student volunteers. Its processing capacity was one ton per day. The fact that the project made a good margin and hence quick returns after paying the labour force of 25 persons made it to be recommended for use by the public, organizations and institutions. Its efficient service was illustrated in its use to supply the University kitchen at Nsukka with 14 bags of garri and the University community 5 bags every week and with room for expansion into commercial lines. The garri processing unit was one of the items that featured in the visit of the Kenyan Deputy Director of Agriculture, Dr. J. M. Kimani when he paid an official visit to the Anambra State agricultural establishment.<sup>95</sup>

The relative success of the OFN is measured in the fact that its galvanization of farmers and the public brought remarkable downward trend in the prices of foodstuffs. This was the situation during the Christmas and New Year celebrations of 1978. The drastic fall in prices gladdened the hearts of festive shoppers. By September 1979, the retail price of garri moved down from one naira for five cigarette cups to 30 cups for the same price. Similar trends were recorded in other common food items and vegetables. The same was true of eggs and chicken which the vigorous campaign of the OFN philosophy stimulated the ADC Feed Mill at the 9<sup>th</sup> Mile Corner near Enugu into an

impressive output of 16,983 tons of livestock feeds at the height of the OFN regime. These were sold to the public at subsidized rates. This explained the relative availability of chicken both live and frozen at the market at fair prices.<sup>96</sup>



Anambra State campaign posters for OFN

**Source:** Anambra State *Agricultural Extension News Letter*, 16, no. 3, 1978, 16

The above pictures were campaign/exhortation strategies adopted by the OFN Committee to motivate the public into engaging in farming to feed self and one's family.

### **The Land Use Decree**

By the 1970s, personal ownership of land had become increasingly popular but that did not eradicate the obstacles posed by the communal, land tenure system to organized large-scale farming. Not just individual enterprising farmers and organizations

but also the Government was equally finding it difficult to acquire large tracts of land for its agricultural projects. Two instances illustrate this. The first was at Ezillo farm where the expansion programme undertaken by the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) took the natives by storm and they braced themselves to resist any “unwarranted interference on their soil by the giant bulldozers. They were prepared to make some reckless use of the machet on any labourer or ADA farm hand who would insist on “trespassing” on the land. It took a great deal of diplomacy by the ADA management led by Mr. Richard Iroegbu and the Board of Directors on the one hand and representatives of Ezillo and Nkalagu communities to renegotiate the original 1960 pact.<sup>97</sup>

The second example was the difficulties posed in the acquisition of land for the rehabilitation of the Equatorial Guinea returnees in 1976. By that year 30,000 Nigerians were evacuated by the Federal Government, following the wanton torture and humiliation meted to them by the people and Government of that former Spanish territory. The protracted nature of land negotiation delayed the full take off, of the initiative of the Anambra State Government to rehabilitate her own citizens on agricultural productivity. Out of the 4000, hectares initially offered by the two communities of Ehamufu in Isi-Uzo LGA and Ishieke in Abakaliki LGA only 1000 hectares was made available. This made the project to drag on for a long time.<sup>98</sup>

The uneconomical factor in the fragmented and scattered holdings of the traditional land system was the message relayed by the state Administrator Mr. Ukpabi Asika when he launched the State Farmers Council in June 1973. He deplored that with the prevailing small size of less than 0.4 to 2 hectares with an average of less than 0.6 hectre per farmer no meaningful production would be achieved.<sup>99</sup> Scenarios like these,



prevented major investors from acquiring land. This was perhaps what led the Federal Military Government into promulgating on March 29 1978 the Land Use Decree. The expressed intention of the Decree was to adopt for the entire country the same type of land law, which obtained in the former Northern Region of Nigeria and as applicable to the Government Reservation Areas (GRAs). The Decree was to favour the mobile and enterprising Nigerians regardless of state of origin who intended to develop land for the purpose of economic benefit to fellow citizens.<sup>100</sup>

### **Establishment of Adarice Company**

With the creation of states in 1976, the Rice Development Unit based in Uzo-Uwani was made a limited liability company named ADARICE Company. The company concentrated effort on the experimentation of different rice varieties matching them with other objectives such as rice plots, duration of growth and tolerance to lodging and blast diseases. From this experiment, five varieties were selected for seed multiplication each on large area of 5,000m<sup>2</sup> in the first quarter of 1976. They include IR 28, TOS 4121, Otomemochi, Sasanishiki and BG 90-2. The experiment showed that these varieties had the advantages of short or medium growth duration, high resistance to diseases, suitable for mechanical harvesting, very good quality in terms of palatability. In addition, ten other varieties were selected for further observation. These include IR 8, IR 630, IR 1516, FRRS-CR-CR 162 etc. Taiching 65 proved worthy of commercial production because of its extremely good quality and high yielding capacity. Equally experimented was fertilizer application, which showed that compound fertilizers (15:15:15), ammonium sulphate, nitrate of potash and lime were suitable from the spiklet initiation stage up to the full heading stage. Protection of plants against insect fauna identified case worm,

diopsis and stem borers as the main insects that seriously attacked paddies. To this effect, Kototins and Demecron chemicals were applied effectively. Additional research demonstrated that IR5 rice variety was susceptible to neck-node blast and the fungicide Hinoson was effective in its control. The availability of this chemical among various component dealers was encouraging and the company went into action in its goal of seed multiplication exercise.<sup>101</sup>

In addition, parboiling experiments were carried out using the different segments of harvest during the trial period. In December 1976 for instance, about 220 tons of paddies were harvested from 76 hectares. Almost all harvested paddies were parboiled in ADARICE compound while milling was made at a private mill at Adani with a small milling machine purchased by the company. About 60 tons of milled rice was produced in that quarter out of which about 50 tons were sold to Anambra Development Company (ADA). There is no gain saying that progressive farmers embraced the revolutionary formula offered by ADARICE Company. These were the factors that in later years galvanized Uzo-Uwani in general and Adani in particular as the rice granary of Anambra State. It indomitably rivaled all other rice-producing zones in Eastern Nigeria and beyond in terms of quantity, variety, quality, and soon all roads led to Adani - the sprawling rice market of Eastern Nigeria.<sup>102</sup>

### **Meat Consumption**

In the Anambra-Mamu river basin, like other parts of Nigeria, there was widespread underfeeding and malnutrition, the matter attributed chiefly to acute deficiency in animal protein intake. In Nigeria, generally the average total consumption

fell short of FAO's requirement, which demanded that out of the 65-72 grams of reference protein recommended for the sub-Saharan Africa, 35 grams must be obtained from animal products. Regrettably, however, only 8.4 grams of protein available in the Nigerian diet came from animal sources. Thus, only a small proportion (15.6 percent) of this protein was supplied from animal sources produced within Nigeria.<sup>103</sup> This made it apparent that since the domestic supply of animal protein did not meet domestic demand, external sources had to be sought through the importation of protein - rich livestock, especially meat. This is true of the period under consideration as illustrated by the following table.

**Table 4.6: Quantity, Value and Price of Imported Meat Categorized in Groups**

Group 011			Group 012			Group 013			
Year	Quantity (Metric tons)	Value (N'000)	Price ₦/Kg	Quantity (Metric tons)	Value (N'000)	Price ₦/Kg	Quantity (Metric tons)	Value (N'000)	Price ₦/Kg
1970	28.9	10.3	0.36	2.6	0.9	0.36	1,194.3	41.4	0.21
1971	10.8	5.4	0.50	1.2	1.1	0.89	110.5	41.8	0.38
1972	14.4	7.0	0.49	3.1	1.6	0.50	21.7	10.9	0.50
1973	15.8	12.6	0.79	0.7	0.8	1.32	27.3	23.7	0.87
1974	441.5	324.6	.074	49.1	60.9	1.24	431.7	405.8	0.94
1975	2,861.6	585.1	0.20	1,082.7	390.1	0.36	1,314.8	4,291.1	3.26
1976	14,458.6	11,739.5	0.81	154.6	301.0	1.95	3,015.4	4,314.5	1.43

Group 011: Fresh, chilled or frozen meat

Group 012: Dried, salted or smoked meat

Group 013: Canned and other meat preparations, canned or not canned.

*Source: Nigeria Federal Office of Statistics. Cited in N.A.O. Ezeh: Trends in the Nigeria's Meat Imports 1960-1980, in The Nigeria Trade Journal, Vol. 26, No. 4, July/August 1979, 23*

The above table shows the quantity, value and price of meat imported into Nigeria between 1970 and 1976, and classified into three groups. It shows not only the progressive rise in the quantity of imports but also the price fluctuations ranging from 0.36 per kilogram in 1970 to ₦1.95 per kilogram in 1975, as regards the first two groups, 011 and 012. The figures, as presented by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) showed also that the efforts of the Federal and Regional Governments of the First Republic, which saw a downward trend in meat imports from 52,361.2 metric tons in 1960 to 15.8 metric tons 1973, was not sustained. This was owing to the dramatic upward trend in the Middle 1970s as demonstrated in the upward trend from 441.5 metric tons caused largely by the oil boom of the period, which afforded many Nigerians with money to buy the foreign products. The table also showed that the large import of 1,194.3 metric tons of canned meat which formed a part of the relief materials donated by donor agencies reduced progressively in favour of fresh chilled and frozen meat but again recorded steady rise from 1974 on account of the oil boom. The origin of the imports between 1960 and 1976 is indicated as follows:

**Table 4.7 The Origin of Nigeria's Meat Imports, 1960 - 1976**

Area	Quantity Metric tons	Market shares Percent
African countries	3,445.8	1.5
European countries	160,092.8	67.5
American countries	43,861.0	18.5
Asian countries	1,811.7	0.8
Australia and Oceania	13,324.4	0.8
Unspecified	14,509.0	6.1
<b>World Total</b>	<b>237.042.8</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Nigeria Federal Office of Statistics. Cited in N.O.A. Ezeh, Trends in Nigeria's Meat Imports 1960-1980

The table shows that out of 237,042.8 metric tons representing 100% of total meat imported into Nigeria in the 16-year period of 1960-1976, African countries accounted the least supply of 3,445.8 metric tons representing 1.5% while Europe accounted the highest of the market share of 160,092.8 metric tons representing 67.5%. The FAO statistics also showed that up to 1980 with regard to the aggregate level and direction of trade on countries, the United Kingdom had the largest share of Nigerian meat imports measuring 55,035.2 metric tons or 23.2 per cent. The UK was followed by Norway (27,484.5 metric tons or 11.6 per cent) while Pakistan accounted for the least share in the ratio of 0.3 metric tons. The above situation was attributed to the changes in government regulation which in the post war oil boom of 1974 up to 1977 threw open the doors of importation of sundry goods for the rising population, thus dwarfing local effort at animal husbandry. Importation had the effect of dwarfing the animal rearing ability, which was exacerbated by the decimation of the available Muturu /Ndama cattle during the civil war. This meant that slaughtering of cattle and horses principally for festivals and ceremonies continued to come from Northern Nigeria, Cameroon and elsewhere. This is shown in the table below.

**Table 4.8 Number of Cattle Entering the Anambra-Mamu River Basin on Hoof and by Rail, 1970-72**

Division	HOOF			RAIL			TOTAL		
	1970	1971	1972	1970	1971	1972	1970	1971	1972
Abakaliki	-	12,079	13,302	-	-	-	-	12,079	13,302
Enugu	-	7,125	4,212	-	2,072	-	-	9,197	4,212
Nsukka	-	20,086	21,500	-	-	-	-	20,086	21,500
Onitsha	-	40	40	-	-	-	-	40	40

*Source: Veterinary Division, East-Central State Ministry of Natural Resources and Agricultural Extension, Enugu.*

The table shows that much of the cattle that entered the zone came by hoof, which is explained by the absence of rail system in the area except Enugu, which at the end of the war ran skeletal services even as road transport system remained comatose. The table demonstrates the abysmal low level of imported live cattle vis-a-vis the population, which for Onitsha shows total annual figures of 40 animals for 1971 and 1972 respectively. The two other zones Abakaliki and Nsukka though they fared better perhaps owing to their relative propinquity to areas of supply, they equally recorded low import rate considering the huge population. The same is true of Enugu in spite of its rail advantage. The low rate of meat consumption by the people, also reflected in the rate of slaughtering as indicated in the following table.

**Table 4.9 Number of Animals Slaughtered in Anambra-Mamu River Basin by Division: Cattle, Goats, Sheep, Pigs, Dogs and Horses**

Division	CATTLE		GOAT		SHEEP		PIGS		DOGS		HORSES	
	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972
Abakaliki	1,745	3,034	2,379	3,459	274	513	98	120	11	-	-	-
Aguata	383	361	3,796	3,417	1,046	932	662	510	3,266	3,285	-	-
Anambra	339	948	109	103	22	17	1	18	-	-	-	-
Awgu	1,012	1,245	1,402	706	281	164	319	556	-	-	161	324
Enugu	11,941	10,993	1,409	1,084	276	132	1,185	774	-	-	-	-
Ezzikwo	278	259	314	456	3	3	26	158	-	-	-	156
Idemili	668	566	1,063	284	87	55	67	7	-	-	-	-
Igbo-Eze	21	64	184	340	10	28	187	279	-	-	-	-
Ihiala	31	316	2,341	2,407	502	354	142	157	-	68	13	-
Ishielu	176	362	274	217	27	14	248	410	286	224	-	-
Isi-Uzo	426	648	284	890	65	54	351	524	-	-	-	273
Nkanu	658	965	936	381	294	86	719	452	-	154	-	83
Njikoka	1,218	1,528	2,371	1,458	53	43	7	6	77	160	-	-
Nnewi	1,481	1,437	2,746	2,285	46	8	199	16	-	-	-	-
Nsukka	1,844	1,909	498	534	149	138	384	241	-	-	-	-
Ogbaru	-	13	-	131	-	629	-	36	-	1	-	-
Onitsha	3,421	5,518	3,442	4,133	31	-	764	1,156	-	-	-	-
Udi	293	849	221	762	115	339	77	86	58	37	-	164
Total												

*Source: Statistics Branch, East Central Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Enugu.*

The table shows the low rate of slaughtered animals both at the abattoirs and in the homes. It shows that in the area of study where population density in many places exceeded one thousand persons per square mile, in the urban towns of Enugu and Onitsha nearly attaining five thousand, the rate of animal slaughtering for food as shown above was dismal. It should be noted that much of the slaughtering was done during festivals and ceremonies. The table also shows that horses and dogs were not widely eaten. The picture painted in the table buttresses the Igbo culture of non-consumption of meat on a regular basis even as many animals are adjudged totem or taboo.

### **The Effects of Oil Boom on Food Security**

The rapid structural changes that took place in the Nigerian economy in the early 1970s that subsequently made the policy makers, to dump agriculture in favour petrochemicals as the core of the nation's economy attained its climax in 1973. In that year, the Arab-Israeli war, which forced the oil producing Arab countries to place embargo against the United States and the Netherlands, quadrupled oil prices to 130 percent.<sup>105</sup> This came at an auspicious time when the Multinational Oil Companies no longer had 100% equity in their operations and the stem of transfer had terminated. This translated to economic fortunes for Nigeria, what became known as the oil boom of the middle 1970s. Oil prices rose from \$3.78 per barrel in October 1973 to \$4.69 per barrel by the beginning of 1974.<sup>106</sup> Thus by the middle 1970s, Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings had come to depend heavily on petroleum to the tune of about 85 percent of the total earnings from its insignificant figure of N3.4million in 1960 and N17 million in 1963<sup>107</sup>.

The implication was that the emergence of petroleum as the major source of government revenue came to take the erstwhile role which agriculture hitherto performed. However, contrary to expectations, the two pivotal sources of revenue remained separate entities with little or no contact. While the technology in agriculture remained largely primitive and indigenous, petroleum adopted modern and sophisticated technology but remained an enclave in the Nigerian economy. The paradox became that while petroleum provided 80 percent of government revenue and about 90 percent of total foreign exchange, agriculture continued to remain the mainstay of the nation's economy, providing employment and sustenance for over 90 percent of the populace.<sup>108</sup> In spite of the fact that petroleum possessed enormous possibilities of transforming agriculture, the marriage between the two sectors remained a sad one. The successful exploitation of petroleum in Nigeria and the attendant oil wealth disposed the agricultural sector of the much-needed farm hands and pumped too much money into the economy such that Nigerians found no need to engage in farming. Dispossessed of its worthwhile labour force and without the benefits of the modern technique and the innumerable inputs from petroleum, the agricultural sector began a downward rapid slide. Between 1975 and 1980, the sector witnessed an annual decline of about 4 percent. Its contribution as a percentage of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which stood at about 55 percent in 1965, fell to 12.5 percent by 1980. Agriculture thence contributed about 16 percent of GDP in 1983. The net effect was that in spite of the various efforts of the successive governments to reactivate this sector, the growth rate of the food sub-sector annually estimated at 2.5 percent continually fell drastically and could not match up with the rate of population growth put at 3 percent. Thus, Nigeria entered the death trap of being a net importer of



food products. Consequently, the country's import bill for food increased from N46, 968 million in 1962 to about N1.4 billion in 1982.<sup>109</sup>

The imports was at first thought to act as temporary measures to cushion the effect of the drought in the Sahelian region which caused catastrophic consequences on food supply from Northern Nigeria and to mitigate the effects of the civil war as the government explained. However, the import liberalization became permanent undermining the philosophy of self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs, which up until 1971 limited imports to minimal levels. In 1973, the Government amidst protests from the press and farmers effected the removal of import duties on some food items such as rice, wheat, milk, sugar, salt, coffee, fish, meat and tea. A Nigerian food writer commenting on the development noted that:

Trade liberalization meant that all sorts of foodstuffs found their way almost uncontrolled and untaxed into the Nigerian food market. These foodstuffs were freely available and could be bought by just anybody who could afford them. Since Nigerian currency was strong internationally, many Nigerian private businessmen saw import trade generally and food import in particular, as the quickest means to financial success. Due to the existence of low import duties, imported foodstuffs which were, of course, already subsidized in their countries of origin, were very cheap and were in some cases cheaper than indigenous foodstuffs. Thus, consumers changed over to imported foodstuffs due to favourable market prices.<sup>110</sup>

The Federal Government also took to importing substantial quantity of foodstuffs as exemplified in the 1975 importation of chilled meat for sales at subsidized rates

throughout the country. The enhanced purchasing power caused by the Adebo and Udoji Awards in 1971 and 1974 respectively and increased oil bills meant that meat was available to the extent that local live- stock production became unnecessary and failed to keep pace. <sup>111</sup> The result was the worsening of the situation of the masses whose purchasing power was not accommodated in the new affluent monetized economy and so their animal protein consumption fell drastically low. <sup>112</sup> Indeed, deterioration in the pattern of income distribution and the growth without development characteristic of the 1970s oil boom saw the rich becoming relatively better off and the poor relatively, if not absolutely, worse off. This translated to absolute poverty for more than 70 percent of the population composed overwhelmingly of subsistent rural farmers. <sup>113</sup>

The fact that the Federal government and its state auxiliaries (with handouts made from the former) became the biggest spenders in the economy, meant that private investors who could have invested in the food industry were handicapped. <sup>114</sup> This caused the agricultural sector to contribute less than 10 percent of Nigeria's national income. The non-diversification and resultant mono-cultural economy dependent on oil revenue in addition to the fact that the military was ideologically prone to unitary administration, made powers to be concentrated at the centre. This gave rise to a skewed federal structure, which since then has remained. The newfound wealth and the concentration of much of the agricultural projects such as fertilizer distribution, irrigation and credit at the federal level meant that the state governments relied on the centre for handouts. This reduced interest in agriculture leading to shift of interest in the more lucrative sector. The change in accumulative base deprived Nigeria of the erstwhile regional autonomy, making the state governments to pay perfunctory attention to agriculture and rural

development. This was the commencement of the subsequent dependency on foodstuff imports.<sup>115</sup> Even, when the oil proceeds started falling and inflation continued to accelerate, the food imports still soared. In spite of this the food consumption for the low socio-economic category did not improve. This is evidenced in the decline of total calorie consumption per capita for this category in the period from 1970 to 1982 while private consumption for privileged category made up of the middle class and upper echelon rose by about 4 percent a year according to national account data.<sup>116</sup>

The additional consequences of the oil boom was that, it made Nigerian's foreign exchange earnings very susceptible to whatever changes that might occur in the world oil market.<sup>117</sup> The competitive oil prospecting and boom in the construction and service sectors also lured many people away from the land forever. Agriculture soon faced, not steady decline but sudden death.<sup>118</sup>

### **Establishment of Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA)**

A major effort made by the Federal Military to correct the above imbalances was the creation of eleven river basin development authorities across the nation by Decree No. 25 of 9176. In the area of study, Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) was established. The broad functions of the basin like the ten others were to undertake comprehensive utilization of both surface and underground water resources for multi-purpose use. It undertook schemes for the control of floods and erosion and water shed management, construction of dams, dykes, polders, wells, boreholes, irrigation drainage systems etc. Other functions include, large-scale multiplication of seedlings, food processing, partnership with agencies and other persons engaged with similar jobs,

assistance to states and local governments in implementation of rural development works such as small dams construction, boreholes, feeder roads, agro service centres, grazing reserves, extension services, staff training etc. In the discharge of these functions, AIRBDA undertook the development of fisheries, mechanized clearing and cultivation of land for the production of crops, livestock, rice, maize, poultry and garden products. It engaged the assistance of some farmers in “Farmer Participation Programme” in large-scale multiplication of improved seeds, livestock and tree seedlings for distribution to farmers and for afforestation schemes. These operations were carried out mainly at Omor, Otuocha, Mgbakwu, Odekpe and Abakaliki.<sup>119</sup> Execution of these programmes falls under the next chapter.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **GREEN REVOLUTION, FOOD POLITICS AND FOOD FOR THE PEOPLE PROGRAMME (FPP) OF ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNMENT 1980-85**

#### **Introduction**

Ten years after the civil war and the implementation of the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Programmes, the Anambra-Mamu River Basin continued to face herculean challenges in its march towards the achievement of food security objectives. These challenges manifested in various dimensions such as natural perturbations, rudimentary farm operations, antiquated food storage/processing techniques and food wastages, high cost of labour and shoddy implementation of the interventionist programmes. There is no doubt that the aforementioned vagaries made food production business to occupy very low profile in the pecking order of the government business. At the same time, it discouraged the youths and the organized business community from investing in the sector. The result was failure at the transformation agenda of agriculture and at affording food production the necessary value addition.<sup>1</sup>

The various tiers of government and other stakeholders of course showed timely responses to the state of affairs. Through the inauguration of the Green Revolution, the River Basin Development Authorities, Land Use Act, Agricultural Guarantee Scheme and adoption of austerity measures, they sought to tackle the problems. However the high tech politicization of the food sub-sector by the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) as

well as the “Essential Commodities” regime hang over particularly during the succeeding General Buhari junta ensured that the approaches towards the resolution of the constraints to food security via the Fourth National Development Plan were fated to failures. The failure of the Green Revolution and inability to meet up with demand at the domestic level led to massive food imports, thus sealing the fate of self-reliance. Food import bill, which recorded N2.92billion between 1977 and 1979 climbed to N5billion between 1980 and 1982.<sup>2</sup> This led to serious hunger and malnutrition among the unprotected segment of the society who were unable to pay for the imported food. The aim of this chapter is to explore the operations, challenges and failures of the Green Revolution employed by the National Party of Nigeria government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari aimed to make food affordable to the masses. It also examines the high degree of political corruption, which greeted the exercise and ensured its failure right from the onset. This caused the Anambra State Government to chart a new course expressed in the Food for the People Programme (FPP). However, overthrow of the government by the military abruptly ended all the efforts. Its most serious setback was abrupt stoppage of the World Bank assisted projects, which had gone up to fifty per cent completion. The effect was that the interventionist projects by the different stakeholders ended up achieving minimal results.

### **The Advent of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP)**

The Alhaji Shehu Shagari government came to power on October 1, 1979 under the banner of NPN, thus ushering in a civilian administration after thirteen years of military interregnum. At the state level, Anambra State came under the administration of Mr. Jim Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo of the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP). It had a short-lived accord with NPN. The failure of the alliance barely after one year consigned it into an

opposition party. By this time, it had become obvious that none of the previous four major agricultural policies of the respective military regimes – National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB), Operation Feed the Nation and the Land Use Decree could proffer any solution to the food crises. The two administrations (NPN and NPP) operating under the concurrent legislative platform therefore came with a firm commitment to reverse a decade of decline in agriculture.

On its part, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) adopted food security among the cardinal points of its manifesto. A Washington-based International Food Policy Research had reported that there was a 17 million tonnes of food deficit in Nigeria. It forecasted that by 1990, more than 20 million tons representing 35-39 percent of the nation's food needs could be offset if the right prescriptions were put in place.<sup>3</sup> To achieve food self-reliance, it called for State involvement in production and supply of food in accordance with the socialist planned economy, which at that time was gaining popularity. This situation made President Shehu Shagari on assumption of office to complain that

...today, Nigeria is in a position where she cannot feed herself. It is unfortunate and embarrassing that a nation so richly blessed with all necessary human and material resources should find herself in such a sorry situation.<sup>4</sup>

This was the basis, on which the new government hinged its Green Revolution Programme. Millions of naira was injected into it with the aim of reviving the flagging agricultural sector. The Green Revolution was fortunate to be preceded by the National Accelerated Food Production Programme, which was still in currency. The two programmes were coterminous and to run simultaneously. The difference was that while

NAFPP was an indefinite programme specifically under the aegis of the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), the Green Revolution had a terminal date aimed at making Nigeria self-reliant in food within five years and to achieve cash crop production within seven years.<sup>5</sup>

### **Inauguration of the Green Revolution Programme**

The joint team of experts from Nigeria and the World Bank who drew up the ambitious Green Revolution Programme document as contained in the 1980- 84 Fourth Development Plan had the goal of putting to a logical end, the inconsistencies and anomalies in Nigeria's agriculture. This was captured in the opening paragraph of the document drawn by the team headed by Professor F. S. Idachaba of the University of Ibadan. It stated inter alia:

“If the country's worsening food problem is to be solved within the shortest possible time, old policies should undergo close scrutiny. Radical policy revisions are suggested and new areas that were traditionally not the responsibility of the agricultural establishment are strongly recommended... some of our suggested changes may not be popular in some quarters within the agricultural establishment...”<sup>6</sup>

The background issues embodying the Green Revolution were thus in agreement with the views of the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) as outlined in its election manifesto, and so it was enthusiastically adopted by the Shagari government.<sup>7</sup>

### **Operations of the Programme**

The programme, which was under the administration of the National Council headed by Mr. President, had its Anambra State Coordinating Committee. The latter's

members were drawn from the five agricultural zones of the state and sub-committees from appropriate ministries and institutions.<sup>8</sup> They were charged with the responsibility of applying science to agriculture, forging linkages between agriculture and industry and intensifying efforts to harness the enormous water resources so that farmers could reduce their dependence on the erratic rainfall regime.

Between 1980 and 1982, the Federal Department of Agriculture bankrolled the training of 1,233 states' officials in various aspects of agricultural mechanization at the cost of about ₦689, 126.00.<sup>9</sup> By 1982, twenty rice mill engineers from the states and two from the Federal Department of Agriculture had received training in Korea in rice milling technology at the cost of ₦121, 000. 173.<sup>10</sup> Officials of the Federal Department of Agriculture and 80 staff from the respective states had also benefited in trainings on principles of crop production and herbicide use at the cost of ₦57, 000.<sup>11</sup> Thus, within two years of launching of the Green Revolution Programme, the federal authorities, had invested about ₦3, 691,240.000 in training nearly 1,333 states and 175 federal officials.<sup>12</sup>

Major policy reforms were engineered in all aspects of food production system. Instances include 50 per cent input subsidy to participating farmers through the River Basin Development Authorities.<sup>13</sup> Co-operative societies and Farm Insurance Scheme were extensively promoted among the rural farmers courtesy of the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects and the RBDAs. The banks were obliged to give a minimum of 6 percent of their total loans to the agricultural sector. A crash programme for agriculture costing N18.3million (£14 million) was announced.<sup>14</sup> The amount was to be used to import 500,000 tonnes of fertilizers and to purchase 500 tractors to be distributed among the states. The sum of N2.3million (£2 million) was given to each state



for the clearing of a minimum of 4,000 hectares for large scale farming operations.<sup>15</sup> These efforts were made to support the meager sum allocated to agriculture in the 1980 budget covering the nine months from April to the end of the year.

The budget gave agriculture N24.4 million (£20 million) for recurrent and N260 (£20 million) for capital expenditure.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, these efforts like others before them, showed epileptic results. For instance, bureaucratic inefficiency caused fertilizer to arrive late in Anambra State, more than two months away from the planting season, which meant it had no impact on the harvest as envisaged.<sup>17</sup>

In any case, exhortation and enthusiasm commanded by these efforts made many individuals and organizations to become increasingly involved in farming even when non-beneficiaries. An instance was the Aguleri Otu Community Health and Farm Development Project. Its Rural Health Services Scheme was initiated under the aegis of the Anglican Hospital Iyienu Ogidi.<sup>18</sup> Other examples include the Spiritan Farm Okija promoted by the Holy Ghost fathers<sup>19</sup> and Raymond Oyeka Poultry Farm at Alor,<sup>20</sup> which like others of its magnitude reared chicken and turkey.

### **Implementation of the Green Revolution Programme in Anambra State**

The Anambra State civilian administration that was ushered into power in October 1979 under His Excellency Mr. Jim Nwobodo was lucky to have a good start in the Green Revolution Programme that was inaugurated shortly after. The preceding military governments before it had despite their shortcomings, prepared ground for the programme take off. This showed in the considerable progress made in the area of food production particularly rice. The Jim Nwobodo administration therefore continued under

the platform left by the departing Col. D. S. Abubakar administration, which saw rice production performing relatively well, having received more attention than other food crops. Production had not only been mechanized but also had been highly commercialized by the two rice production firms namely the ADARICE and the World Bank Rice Production Project. In terms of acreages cultivated and the physical quantity of the harvested crop, rice cultivation surpassed the 61 per cent output of April 1978.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the usual problems encountered under the military dispensation continued unabated. An example was shortfalls in the release of budgeted amount for agriculture, which only N3.1 million out of the N11.3million budgeted for rice production in 1978 under Col. D. S. Abubakar was actually spent.<sup>22</sup> This misadventure continued in the Green Revolution Programme compounding it with the late arrival of inputs. As ought to be acknowledged, primary production, especially as it affected the development of the perennial crops was influenced by the season of the year. Late release of funds had the obvious implication of not only retarding the growth of crops planted late within the season but also preventing the planting when the growing seasons was past. An example of this was that even though substantial progress was made in the areas of fertilizer promotion programme, the product usually arrived late after production had taken place. Surprisingly this anomaly, officially explained as logistic problem, and which was a feature of the military regime continued. The same bureaucratic inefficiency and poor funding also meant that the livestock and fishery sector performed relatively poorly. In the fishery sector, out of the budgeted N201, 000 for the plan period, only N191, 000 had been spent.<sup>23</sup> In any case, fishing received substantial attention as fish firms yielded results. The AIRBDA had established five of such firms in parts of

Anambra and Imo states at a cost of N250, 000 each.<sup>24</sup> Between October 1979 and end of 1980, the National Accelerated Fish Production Project was established at Akali-Ogidi Ogbaru. It was launched by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Food Production Professor D. M. Ekpete in March 1980. It provided fish market, net and processing shed in the area. Under agricultural engineering services, seven agro-meteorological stations were established at Awka, Nkwelle, Ezamgbo, Otuocha, Igbariam, Ifite Ogwari and Enugu Market Garden.<sup>25</sup>

### **Rice Production Campaigns: ADARICE and World Bank Projects**

The Federal Government rice project in the state was concentrated in Uzo-Uwani within the axis of existing Anambra State owned ADARICE Co. Ltd. Before the Federal Government expressed its interest, the project covered 720 hectares of the available 1,120 hectares suitable for paddy cultivation under gravity irrigation system. The remaining 400 hectares went to the World Bank Project in 1976.<sup>26</sup> Between 1976 and May 31, 1980, ADARICE Company realized over N 1.9 million as sales from milled rice obtained from 6,225 tonnes of paddy rice. Its directors had planned to expand the operations of the company to other parts of the state where rice and other food crops would be grown. This objective partly explained the attraction and intervention by the World Bank.<sup>27</sup> To this effect, the Anambra/Imo World Bank Assisted project, which was planned to cover 6,200 hectares of irrigated land was expanded into Omor in 1981. It was to be completed in 1982 to bring into cultivation 30,000 hectares. By the end of 1982, about 17,534 hectares of land had been put into cultivation giving an estimated 58,165 metric tonnes of paddy rice, which represents an increase of 126 over 1981 production.<sup>28</sup> From Omor, the project was extended to Omasi, Ifie-Ogwari, Ogboji, Enugwu-Abo, Akpugo, Omogho, Ikwo,

Ogbaru, Igbariam, Aguleri, Nenwe-Nomeh-Okpanku and Okija-Ozubulu. About 3,400 hectares of swampy land was intended to be cleared, out of which 3,800 were to be banded while additional irrigation facilities were to be extended to 2,000 hectares. About 2,600 farm households were to benefit from the programme, which the sum of N7million was earmarked. Training commenced for farmers in these and other identified communities involved in the cultivation of improved varieties under the guidance of the Project's Management Unit. The ambitious project achieved minimal results because of 1984 military coup.

Between July 8 and 11, 1980, President Shagari and his entourage were guests to Anambra State visiting Agulu/Nanka Erosion sites and two rice projects in Uzo-Uwani State Farm. These included the ADARICE Production Nig. Ltd and the rice project funded jointly by the World Bank, AIRBDA and Anambra State Government also located at Omor environs and other parts of Uzo-Uwani LGA. Uzo-Uwani was however only one out of the twenty-two locations of the World Bank Rice projects in Anambra State. The elements of the projects as defined were land clearing, drainage and field bunds, irrigation, diversion and distribution systems, feeder roads, erection and operation of milling, marketing and storage facilities, provision of credits for farm inputs and provision of agricultural extension services.<sup>29</sup> By the time of the civilian administration in October 1979, the World Bank Rice Project in the state, which started in 1976, had attained three years of operation. Together with Imo State, it had 2,500 project-trained farmers, 2,640 hectares of land fully developed with field bunds and irrigation facilities. In addition, it had constructed 31 kilometres of feeder roads, produced 9,760 tons of rice paddies in the 1979 planting season and put into operation, 0.5 per hour rice mill. A

second mill was being reactivated and two more mills were in the process of establishment<sup>30</sup> when the civilian administration that handled the project was overthrown in a military coup d'état.

The capital investment on the twenty-two project locations was 8.9 million while the project which was appraised at N4.1 million in 1973, had by 1980 risen to N29 million because of inflationary trends. The maturity of the projects were projected at 1982. By that time, it was expected to have developed 6,200 hectares and 6,000 farm families comprising 40,000 people who were expected to benefit from it.<sup>31</sup> The Federal Government under the NPN had generally demonstrated seriousness in rice production in Nigeria by earmarking the sum of N103 million to boost the product in the Fourth National Development Plan period 1981 - 1985, which allocated about 13 per cent of the total capital investments of all governments of the federation to agricultural investment.<sup>32</sup> To this effect, the law governing agricultural credit guarantee scheme for rural farming population was amended to make loans available and easier access to the rice farmers. The Federal Government also put in place, input delivery, extension services, farm mechanization, crop processing, storage and marketing schemes.<sup>33</sup>

### **Integrated Rural Development Projects: Agricultural Development Project (ADP) and River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs)**

An essential component of the Green Revolution was strengthening of extension education through the ADPs. Its aim was to improve the welfare of the rural farmers. Federal Government intervention in this regard became necessary because of the poor extension services suffered by the farmers. The guidelines of the Fourth National

Development Plan estimated the ratio of extension workers to farmers in Nigeria to one staff to 2,500 farmers. When this is compared to 1:200 in India and 1:250 in Kenya during the same period,<sup>34</sup> one could then see the extent of difficulties involved in raising the level of agricultural education. This necessitated the employment of more extension staff. In Anambra State, agricultural extension services which bills were footed by the World Bank and Federal and State Governments were organized at three levels, representing the three tiers of government. This included, State Headquarters at Enugu, the zones, which corresponded to the zonal districts of Abakaliki, Awka, Enugu, Nsukka and Onitsha and LGA's. At the local level, it was organized in 54 units and coordinated by relevant officers.<sup>35</sup> By virtue of the 1976 Local Government Edict; agricultural extension at the local level became the responsibility of the respective local governments.<sup>36</sup> The staff serving in these areas either opted to become local government staff or remained on secondment to local governments. The aim was to make extension services a "grass root" affair.<sup>37</sup>

The functions of the extension service in Anambra state in broad terms were to guide and educate farmers and provide guidance on crop and animal husbandry, plant protection, fertilizer application and uses and crop processing and storage. It also carried out other "non extension" duties such as supply and distribution of inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and improved seeds.<sup>38</sup> Evaluation of the programme showed that the extension service in Anambra State could not achieve the desired objectives. The usual "Nigeria factor" was at work and this caused it to go the way of other efforts before it. Among these was lack of understanding by the LGA authorities who failed to accord the programme its specialized place in the scheme of things. This factor discouraged staff

retention, which explained why they preferred to be in the employment of the state government. There was also the dearth of fund for provision of staff incentives such as traveling allowances and vehicle loans. Besides, staffs were arbitrarily deployed, in some cases to jobs unrelated to their field. This destroyed incentives and made their presence unrecognized at the village levels where farmers needed their expertise. These conditions were not markedly different at the state level where financial constraints, late arrival of inputs, immobility and non-promotion of staff as well as poor definition of responsibilities between Ministries of Agriculture and Food Production hampered effectiveness.<sup>39</sup>

Another ambitious programme designed by the World Bank under the Green Revolution was the integrated rural development. Utilizing the advantages created by the oil economy, it was envisaged that contrary to the earlier practice since 1962 in which the transfer of resources from the rural areas were used to develop the urban centres, the paradigm shift would be rather, channeling the resources of oil sector to the agricultural sector.<sup>40</sup> This called for the establishment of not only the ADPs but also River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs). It was aimed at multifaceted and comprehensive development of the rural areas. It delimited the strategic zones of operation from where innovations were to be carried out using 'progressive' farmers and from there trickle down to the rest of the country.<sup>41</sup> Working in concert with the ADPs were the eleven River Basin Development Authorities across the nation, which acted as the performance indicators of the Green Revolution Programme. In 1980, the cumulative total area cultivated was 29,000 hectares. In 1982, these figure rose to 120,341 hectares and 40,706 hectares (a fourfold and twofold increase) respectively.<sup>42</sup> In 1982, 136,246 metric tonnes

of rice and 596,338 metric tonnes of maize were produced by the RBDAs. These figures were exclusive of the 90,000 metric tonnes of rice that were produced by farmer-assisted programmes of the RBDA.<sup>43</sup>

In the Lower Anambra Irrigation Project, work started in December 1981. It was implemented via the RBDAs up to 50 percent. The 93.3 million Naira project was to irrigate 5,000 hectares of land for rice. By the end of 1983, it was envisaged to cultivate twice yearly along the 61/2-kilometer irrigation canal built in the area. The project was executed by the Lower Anambra River Basin Authority through a Japanese firm; Nippon Koei Co., Ltd of Tokyo.<sup>44</sup> Among its other efforts was the Integrated Agricultural Development of the Niger Flood Plain Area with emphasis on the Oroma Etitu-Umueze Anam project. Feasibility report on it dated 1st December 1980 was prepared by the Authority in collaboration with Motor-Columbus Inc. of Switzerland.<sup>45</sup> Both the ADPs and AIRBDA did not in the long run achieve their desired revolutionary changes in the agricultural system. Critics attributed this to the fact that its designers (in the case of the former) had assumed wrongly that once the perceived limiting factors were removed, production would automatically rise and the income and standard of living of the rural dwellers would improve. The ADP's design however failed to address the fundamental structure of social relations of production in agriculture, which defined the ownership, appropriation and disposal of agricultural products. In addition, the strategy adopted in its execution was highly technocratic involving the use of experts whose basic understanding of peasant life was at variance with reality. The programme failed equally to look inwards and to utilize what was on ground. Its reliance on foreign content made it extremely expensive and out of the reach of the majority of rural dwellers. This involved



the use of capital-intensive methods, dependence on foreign technical staff and finance and its associated importation of technologies.<sup>46</sup> To these issues must be added the ‘Nigerian factor’ which leprous hands hand always been at the root cause of failures of most governmental formulated policies.

The AIRBDA however fared better in its direct food production. Its yield of rice for 1981 and 1982 fiscal years in five locations were as follows:

**Table 5.0: AIRBDA Direct Rice Production for 1881-82 Fiscal Year**

<b>Production Unit</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Tonnes</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Tonnes</b>
Omor	75.5	66.52	490	100
Otuocha	325	40.52	500	440
Mgbakwu	161	51.82	220	100
Odekpe	29	10	50	27
Abakaliki	140	99.53	137	274
<b>Total</b>	<b>730.5</b>	<b>268.39</b>	<b>1397</b>	<b>941</b>

Source: *Monthly Progress Report of the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority April 1982.*

Apart from rice, AIRBDA also engaged in the production of maize, poultry, maize and vegetables. It engaged the assistance of some farmers in the area of operation through “Farmer Participation Programme.” The farmers were given the necessary assistance in order to achieve large-scale multiplication of improved seeds, livestock and tree seedling. Production of maize for 1981 and 1982 showed as follows: Odekpe: 37

tonnes from 30.3 hectares for 1981; 100 tonnes from 300 hectares for 1982; Mgbakwu: 10 tonnes from 15 hectares in 1981; 120 tonnes from 360 hectares for 1982<sup>47</sup>

Under poultry operations, it produced broilers, spent layers, point of lay pullets (POL), table eggs, hatchable eggs and day old chicks. Production of table eggs meant for consumption started in Mgbakwu in 1981. Performance in the 1981 and 1982 fiscal year showed that between January and August 1982, 106,000 eggs were produced while 10,000 layers were housed. Four poultry houses were completed and fully equipped. 5 tons per hour-feed mill was constructed.<sup>48</sup> The Authority was however unable to meet up with the high demand for its poultry products. This was accounted by slow pace of construction work for hatchery and feed mill.<sup>49</sup> The products, which were sold at fixed prices were as follows:

**Rice:** N4.00 per 5kg bag containing 22 cups of rice; this stood @ N18k per cup.  
**Eggs:** Normal size @ N3.30 per crate; under size @ N3.00; cracked eggs @ N150.00.  
**Table Birds:** Live birds between N5.00 - N6.00 each depending on the weight of bird; dressed birds sold @ N6.00 each. **Maize:** 3-4 cobs for 10k during the season; 2 cobs for 10k during the off season. **Fish:** N2.50 per kg. **Vegetables:** Tomatoes N0.50 per kg; Okro N1.00 per kg; Garden eggs N1.00 per kg, kukumba N1.00; Anara (for *ugba*) N0.50 per kg; African Spinach (green) N0.50 per kg; Telfaira (*ugu*) 0.50 PER KG; Pepper N1.00 per kg.<sup>50</sup> The effectiveness of AIRBDA's direct production could be examined by comparing the prices of its products with their open market equivalent.

**Table 5.1: Comparative prices of some AIRBDA products with market prices of such products**

<b>Product</b>	<b>AIRBDA Selling Price</b>	<b>Market Price</b>
Rice	N4.00 per 5 kg or 22 cups	N4.40 – N5.50 per 5 kg or 22 cups
Eggs	N3.30 per crate of normal size N3.00 per crate of under size N1.50 per crate of broken eggs	N3.80 – N4.20 per crate N3.50 - N4.00 per crate N2.50 – N3.00 per crate
Live Bird	N5-6 depending on weight	N6 -N7 depending on weight
Dressed “	N6.00	N7.00
Fresh Fish	N2.50 per kg	N4 –N5.00 per kg
Tomatoes	N0.50 “ “	N1.20 per kg
Pepper	N1.00 “ “	N1.00 “ “
Telfairia	N0.50 “ “	N1.20 “ “
Spinach	N0.50 “ “	N1.00 “ “
Anara	N0.50 “ “	N1.00 “ “
G/ eggs	N1.00 “ “	N1.00 “ “
Maize	N3 or N4.00 for 10k during the season and N2.00 for 10k during off-season.	N3 or N4.00 for 20 during the season N1 for 15k during off season

**Source:** Market survey conducted by Ezechukwu Ikechukwu Michael, “Marketing of Agricultural Products: A Case Study of Products of Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority,” Thesis submitted to the Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, June 1983, 39.

The above table showed that AIRBDA products were relatively cheaper than open market prices.

Summarized report from the Monthly Report of the Authority on the fishery project also showed that Mgbakwu project using flood pond fishing technique and constructed on 10 hectares of land had three flood ponds. Two dugout canoes were purchased in 1981. Production output year was 0.366 tonnes of fish and 0.056 tonnes as at August 1982.<sup>51</sup> Otuocha fishing project equally relied on open water/flood pond

fishing. It produced 0.500 in 1981 and 1,300 as at August 1982. Three flood ponds were acquired and one utility boat and two dugout canoes were purchased.<sup>52</sup>

### **Land Resources, Conservation and Erosion Control**

Under this portfolio, the Federal Department of Agricultural Land Resources embarked on soil survey, land evaluation, soil fertility testing, soil conservation and cartographic services, which in Anambra State covered Abakaliki and Igbariam. However, the work was concentrated on the latter because it had an existing agricultural station, which did not need much preparatory work. Maize and cassava were used as the test crops. Soil conservation programme and erosion sustainability work were carried out on Agulu-Nanka-Alor gully complex. The area covered was 15, 700km<sup>2</sup>. Work on these sites were awarded to Romsco Ltd on 22/10/80 at the value of N13.5million. The second contract also awarded to the same contractor was signed on 7/12/83 at the cost of N2million.<sup>53</sup> By 1985, the percentage of work done was 99%. They were mostly on interceptor drains, embankments, earth fills, mixed structure dams and wickerwork fences. The summary of the work output showed as follows: (1) Nanka Gully Area, marked 4/310, had 100% works completed on channels 1, 2 and 3. Work also commenced on channel No. 3 at Oko but was not completed. (2) Alor gully Area, marked 1/33, had all the interceptor drains completed; Dam A<sup>5</sup> was completed but work was still in progress at A7.3. Gully No. 5 was also unfinished. 3,710 metres of interceptor drain was completed. (3) The second site Alor Gully Area, marked 2/300 had interceptor drains 1 and 2 completed. Gully finger 3 was yet to be completed while surveying work was going on in five other dam locations. Here about 2,737 meters of drains were achieved. This represented about 48% completion. (4) Agulu Gully Area, marked 6/301 had only

clearing and alignment going on in the period under review. (5) The third Alor Gully Area, marked 2/301 had no work started on it. The commencement of austerity measures in April 1882 and shortage of staff led to the cancellation of some of the projects while it halted the completion of the ongoing others. The challenges also ended the prospects for sheet erosion (pilot) scheme, which was earmarked to start in 1983 by the Italian Government.<sup>54</sup>

Anambra farmers would have benefited immensely because of the aggravated sheet erosion problems encountered in the zone. In 1983, work continued on the Agulu-Nanka-Okoko and Alor complex where performances rose from 50% to 99%. Erosion control measures were taken in places such as Uga and Nnewi of which the latter alone had 25 menacing gully sites out of the 550 gullies devastating 220 communities in the state.<sup>55</sup> Soil conservation and reclamation checks were provided at the Ngwo Comprehensive School.

### **Land Use Act**

The change of government from military to civilian administration necessitated a change of nomenclature in the Land Use Decree, to divest it of its military legal term and mentality. Thus, the qualifying legal term Decree changed to Act, and so it became Land Use Act. In any case, the essential features remained the same.<sup>56</sup> Under the democratic dispensation, the practice by members of the Nigerian dominant class (whether in or out of government) to use their influence, connections and official positions to expropriate lands from peasants and rural communities in the name of rural development programmes continued unabated. The rapacious proclivity for land acquisition for variety of projects:

agricultural, educational, industrial or housing purposes continued. The ugly part of it was that majority of them were acquired for no developmental reasons whatsoever. In any case, thousands of peasants and rural dwellers were displaced, turning them into refugees or at best tenants in their ancestral lands. Before they left office, the military rulers had adroitly inserted the obnoxious Land Use Decree No. 6 of 29 March 1978 into the constitution ostensibly to protect their vested interests.<sup>57</sup>

The matter was, exacerbated by the so-called “opening up” of the remote and backward areas for development as a measure of attracting foreign investment into the country. This had been a concerted official policy of the Nigerian governmental elites acting in concert with international capital agencies: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO) etc. Under the arrangement, the latter provided financial and technical wherewithal while the former provided the necessary land (usually appropriated from the peasants and rural communities) and the needed security (usually police and army) to secure and protect the projects and programmes from the unwilling, “unprogressive,” and “backward” peasants and communities. In spite of protests and agitations from the peasants and rural dwellers against the policy as detrimental to their interests and survival, the various tiers of the Nigerian government forced it on them using the police and the army to achieve the repression. In the process hundreds of peasants lost their lives, while the survivors lost their source of livelihood (their ancestral lands and homes), often without compensation by the government or the private individuals – the absentee landlords who owned the projects.<sup>58</sup>

The above-generalized scenario notwithstanding, the one singular factor that led to unprecedented grab of large tracks of land by influential individuals and private

companies in the Anambra-Mamu river basin was the Green Revolution Programme. A major factor that induced many business men to go into competitive land acquisition was the requirement by the federal government, that the issuance of the 'hot cake' import duty licenses and agricultural loan, rested on acquisition of large tracks of land. This was the policy of the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB). It served as evidence of agricultural investment.<sup>59</sup> Composed mainly of politicians, retired and serving military and police brass, top bureaucrats, influential business tycoons, rich and influential traditional rulers, they used their positions, influence and connections to take advantage of the so-called rural development policies and programmes to become large-scale "progressive/modern" farmers and absentee landlords. In the low land area of the Anambra-Adada-Do River Basin, for instance it was unlikely that any strategic land, which the owners could be intimidated or influenced to part with, was left un-purchased, majority of them composed of several hectares of over one mile square. The large-scale purchases were affected through bribery of community leaders, majority of who had not seen large sums of money in their lives. In the former Uzo-Uwani Division, for instance many of these illiterate, uninformed and timid community leaders used their lion's share of the deals to buy Peugeot cars and pick-up vans, tractors, built houses and owned irrigated rice plots courtesy of the World Bank and Anambra State developed rice fields at Adani and Omor in addition to other undisclosed landed properties. More importantly, they engaged in frivolous titular initiation ceremonies with such vain glorious titles like *Ofia di Ulu* (wealth emanates forests/bush lands), *Ideji Ogu* (the holder of traditional authority) and *Okaa Omee* (one whose pronouncements always come to pass).<sup>60</sup>

The roll call of the private companies that acquired lands in the area include; Sico Farms at Omasi (owned by an Nnewi based businessman), Alpha Farms at Umueje, Ferdinand Farms and Pokobros Farms both at Atida village Ogurugu and Rabiw Farms at Ugbomaja off Ogurugu, and Ekene Dili Chukwu Farms at Anaku. Others also within Ogurugu include Jimbaz Farms, Ojukwu Oil Palm, Edward Farms and Izuagha Farms (both at Okpotokpu village), and Gonic Farms at Atida village. Respondents had it that at least about ninety of such privately owned farms existed in the former Uzo-Uwani Division alone.

It was such that no influential politician particularly of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) excluded himself/herself from the rat race to grab land in the state.<sup>61</sup> As it concerned Uzo Uwani and other contiguous communities of the lowland Anambra-Adada-Do river basin, so it was in other parts of the larger Anambra-Mamu river basin be it Ezza of Abakaliki, Ogbaru, Njikoka, etc. One thing characterized them all: the investors remained in all intents and purposes, absentee landlords with no intention of actual farming operations whatsoever. Most of them had resident managers whose only duties were to rent out portions of the land to tenant farmers who paid exorbitant rents annually. Interestingly the same members of the communities who sold out their lands at give away prices composed majority of the tenants and were, subjected to rigorous rules and regulations mapped out by the now de jure and de facto owners. At Omasi for instance, the indigenes remained tenants to Sico farms, a large track of land sold out to a business man from Nnewi.<sup>62</sup>

There were in any case some exceptions to the rule. A few of the new land owners while engaged in renting out large parcels of the land, at the same time established



skeletal farming operations of their own with a handful of staff superintending them. Such were true of Pokobros Farms (owned by Chief Paul Okonkwo), Rabi Farms (owned by Chief Ekwenibe), Ferdinand Farms (owned by Chief Ferdinand Anaghara), Austin Farms (a subsidiary of Ekene Dili Chukwu Transport Co. owned by Chief Austine Ilodibe) and a few others; all owned by private businessmen/companies.<sup>63</sup>

The implication was that the indigenes, whose only source of livelihood remained subsistence farming, were faced with acute land hunger, their leaders and elders having parted with their large tracks of ancestral lands. The majority of their off springs and younger elements were forced by the circumstances, to migrate in droves away from the communities to seek the greener pasture elsewhere. Land hunger, inevitably enveloped the people. That was the major cause of communal warfare between Omasi and Igga people over Itono land. The latter was perhaps a few of the communal lands yet to be sold away largely because of its disadvantaged location in a far off inaccessible terrain at the interior of Uzo Uwani. The covetous disagreement over the Itono land by the two communities who laid claims to it embroiled them in a bloody campaign, which lasted between 1991 and 1993. Before the war, which cost many lives and destruction of several houses and property, the two communities like the rest of Uzo-Uwani had not much need of Itono but having sold away their valuable assets at ridiculously low fees, hell was let loose. The consequence was that even though Adani, which served as melting pot distanced itself from the war, it often served as the battlefield as the campaigns often played out in this neutral ground. This caused the large farming population to desert the town en mass leaving behind their worthwhile investments.<sup>64</sup> The net effect was dismantling of all the efforts of the Federal and Anambra State governments as well as

the World Bank, and donor agencies and other stakeholders including the people themselves.

### **Food Marketing and Distribution: The “Essential Commodities” Policy**

By 1980, food security question had become completely tied up with national politics. The slow pace at which the objectives of food self-reliance were being achieved gave room to the opposition parties particularly the Unity Party of Nigeria to capitalize on it in its campaigns. To shore up and to live up to its promise of affording food to the populace in view of the 1983 forth-coming general elections, the ruling party sought to achieve its objectives through the back door. It categorized a whole lot of food items into the “Essential Commodities” and engaged in massive importation to flood the market. With the exception of traditional Nigeria staples such as yam, plantain, and cassava products, a host of others belonged to the category. Despite stringent opposition to this policy, the Federal Government expanded the coast of the Nigerian National Supply Company, a parastatal established in 1974, and used it to import and distribute food to the public at controlled prices. From 1980, the company was allocated more money to import the essential commodities. Its discretionary powers also included opening of warehouses and issuance of import duties to its numerous agents and distributors nationwide. To this effect, NNSC engaged the services of 5,000 agents to enhance smooth distribution of essential goods to the grassroots level “and to eliminate the unscrupulous activities of the middlemen.”<sup>65</sup> Ten distributors were appointed in every local government area for operations different from those of the 38 depots and distribution points. Retail shops were opened in every state. The company stopped its distribution through cooperative societies, as the later could not handle the bulk commodities, which caused the NNSC to

be saddled with large quantities of items leading to losses to the company through deterioration and demurrage charges.<sup>66</sup>

The operations of the company, was designed to make food cheap and affordable to the common man. This was because the foodstuffs were imported at cheap rate due to the overvalued naira currency. Besides, they were further highly subsidized by the government making them far cheaper than the indigenous food. In reality, however the objectives were fated to failures and the common man bore the brunt of the mismanagement and inefficiency. The import licences and distributorship became political tools to reward loyal party faithful. The foodstuffs were allocated to ministries and parastatals, schools, government hospitals on rationing formula. The masses and private established persons were thus excluded from benefiting from the so-called “national cake.” Even at that, the allocations were done in half hazard and epileptic manners and so the supposed allocations made appearance at the markets at exorbitant prices. Investigations showed that pontificating governmental officials not only used the exercise to reward cronies but also cornered the commodities to open their own supermarkets. The racketeering and dubiousness, to which the activities of the NNSC were turned to, raised stringent calls for its proscription.<sup>67</sup> Indeed the company started to find it difficult to ‘flood the market with essential commodities’ as it promised because of the difficulties of obtaining import licences, non-availability of foreign exchange and non-confirmation of letters of credit. Foreign suppliers became increasingly unwilling to confirm letters of credit coming from Nigeria and when they did, they charged high interests ranging from 10 to 15 percent of the value of the goods imported. The result was increase in cost of the commodities. This experience, which was also faced by other local

manufacturing companies engaged in the production and importation of raw materials made majority of them to close down because of difficulties in sourcing them.<sup>68</sup>

The worst of the negative influence of the NNSC and other food marketing agencies was the creation and reinforcement of the “prestige” qualities of certain processed imported foods through availability, advertising, packaging and pricing. The efforts were supported by the increasing urbanization in which a large percentage of the population was lured away from home-produced, home-preserved, and home-consumed foods. With population concentrated in the urban centres, people bought their food in stores and market places. They no longer grew it themselves. Distanced from the point of production, their eating habits changed to reflect the choices of foods available to them.<sup>69</sup> An example is Uncle Ben’s Rice and wheat bread. It caught the fancy of the population mainly those of elite homes as well as bachelors/spinsters - some of them in the low-income group. The exotic packaging and the fact that they needed no washing to remove the stones which was the bane of the homegrown rice made every “serious minded” supermarket to have more than enough of it stocked in their shelves. A similar case was wheat bread, which the conditions in urban living so much encouraged that the importation of wheat almost turned into national calamity.

The inefficiency in the operations of the NNSC was further expressed in the fact that food safety was no longer observed. It was so bad that in 1981 large quantities of its imports were destroyed by the Foods and Drug Administration of the Federal Ministry of Health. Between November and December that year, almost all NNSC warehouses were affected across the federation. The problem was attributed to inefficient distribution network, poor storage and over-importation. The items included sardines, stockfish,

corned beef, milk, salt, vegetable oil, sugar, beans, rice etc. While the sardines were rusty, leaking, and blown, the stockfish were mouldy and infected by maggots. The cartons of Carnation and Greenland milk were congealed with curdled content, even as the cans were rusty, blown and leaking. In similar way, the NNSC corned beef were destroyed. Rice destroyed in many places including Enugu and Onitsha was heavily mouldy, powdery and rotten. The large bags of granulated and refined sugar were destroyed in Enugu and Onitsha because they were found wet with extraneous matter. The same was true of the 370 × 90 (170gm) several cartons of milk destroyed in Onitsha.<sup>70</sup>

The company further contravened the Ministry's directives that food items must be imported directly from the producers and not through agents. For instance instead of importing stockfish directly from Iceland and Norway, the company chose to import it through agents in Germany and Denmark. This not only caused escalation of prices but also left large bales of the product lying waste at the Calabar, Port Harcourt and Owerri warehouses because they were unconsumable.<sup>71</sup>

NNSC failed in the discharge of its original goal, which was to regulate the flow of food in the nation by buying from areas of plenty and selling in areas of relative scarcity. Its inefficiency reinforced the wide gaps in the prices of foodstuff between the different parts of the country. For instance, while garri sold cheaper in the southern states, in the north it sold at prohibitive price. Rice, which sold at ₦45 a bag in some parts of the country sold at other places for ₦70. In the coastal regions of the country and the riverine areas especially during the dry season, fish was wasted while inland areas like the area of study experienced scarcity.<sup>72</sup>

## **Politics of Rice Importation**

The shoddy manner with which the NNSC officials handled the onerous responsibility entrusted to them made hunger to become widespread. Every morning civil servants came to office, left their work and engaged in collecting money to source for their share of the limited essential commodities which in several occasions, they failed to collect. The federal government feared that that food riot, the type that preceded the overthrow of the President Tolbert of Liberia in 1981 by the military could happen. It therefore set up a Presidential Rice Task Force (PRTF).<sup>73</sup> Shortly, before this action, the unprecedented rise in urban population had suddenly made rice a popular menu leading to its high rise in market price. The campaign for domestic production of the commodity caused the military government in 1979 to place rice under the prohibitive import duties of 40 per cent. The measure succeeded in driving away the small importers and raised the price so that the local variety could compete favourably.

The coming to power by the NPN altered the arrangement and apart from the NNSC, which hitherto controlled 60 per cent import quota, import duty was recklessly issued to private importers. The result was that by late 1982, Nigeria had started to accumulate trade arrears as foreign exchange earnings and could no longer pay for debt-servicing and current imports. Due to arbitrariness and corruption, licenses often went to those who had no need for them but only used their connections to obtain them and sell to genuine businessmen and companies.<sup>74</sup> The measure discouraged domestic production causing the price of rice to climb northwards. Hoarders went to work making the product scarce. It was so bad that some people canvassed that hoarding should attract death penalty.<sup>75</sup>

This, was the auspicious circumstances that made the government to effectively control rice importation. Political animus was added to it. Issuance of rice import licences was removed from the Ministry of Trade and transferred to the Presidential Task Force on Rice. Headed by the Transport Minister and in-law to the president, Alhaji Umaru Dikko,<sup>76</sup> the exercise turned out to be a political weapon used to punish non-NPN states. Corrupt practices engendered by it made it to fail. Apart from appointing only NPN stalwarts as agents in the distribution of the commodity, the allocation formula brought out the matter clearly. According to an internal memorandum of the PRTE, the following order of priority was used in the allocation and distribution of the ‘hot cake’ which rice had become. First was “to high party officials according to their position and contribution to the NPN, to federal ministries, to states under NPN rule, to local governments under NPN rule, to states under the rule of other parties.”<sup>77</sup> Anambra State was not under NPN rule and so the “national cake’ which was used to import rice presumably eluded the commoners. In effect, monumental corruption that greeted the rice question made it more of a political gimmick that was designed to punish the masses across the federation. It was observed that a large percent of the product like the ‘essential commodities’ found themselves outside the shores of the nation through smuggling. In fact, the rapid increase in prices that greeted the announcement of austerity measures by President Shagari in 1981 was immediately followed by massive hoarding and smuggling of foodstuffs across the borders. Many motor parks in Lagos, Shaki, Badagry and several others in the northern parts of the country especially those close to the borders witnessed trailers and buses busy carrying on the illegal business without interruption by men of the Customs and Excise Department.

The rate of smuggling was massive. It was to the extent that ECOWAS countries such as Ghana, Togo, Republic of Benin, Chad and Niger virtually depended on Nigerian food.<sup>78</sup> Estimate had it that a third of food crops produced in the country were smuggled out to the neighbouring countries even as investigations showed that several tons of the Presidential Task Force rice were smuggled to these countries on daily basis. The rice was found displayed conspicuously in some of their markets. It was alleged that the services of some international airlines was used to ferry the product to these countries. Some business men travelled to all corners of the country to purchase the rice at fair prices to sell to neighbouring countries at exorbitant prices.<sup>79</sup>

### **Evaluation of the Green Revolution Programme**

At the end of the four years of the programme, the goals for which it were mapped out namely, to make food bountiful and available to the generality of the people especially the masses and at prices they could afford remained elusive. Ever before the Green Revolution ran its course, there were indications that it had like its predecessor the OFN, failed in its objectives going by the massive food importation and the rising market prices. Thus, the popular statement credited to President Shagari, that “our ultimate aim is to phase out food importation through self-sufficiency as quickly as possible”<sup>80</sup> proved a mirage. Statistics revealed that towards the attainment of the objective, the sum of N1.9 billion was allocated to the agricultural sector in 1983 representing about 16.5 per cent of the national budget and in 1982, N1.03 billion sectoral allocation was made to it.

Although the programme altogether gulped N6billion, yet over N5 billion bill was expended on food imports despite restrictions on importation. This contrasted with the



N2.92 billion food bill for 1977 to 1979 representing an increase of N2.08 billion or 71 per cent increase over the 1977-1979 figure.<sup>81</sup> In deed during the Shagari administration, Nigeria experienced not only a high rise in food imports but hunger and starvation among the masses and other unprotected vulnerable groups.

The Green Revolution also witnessed the shortage of maize - the chief ingredient in the production of poultry feeds. The shortage nearly led to imminent collapse of the poultry industry. As at December 1982 there were about 41 million chickens reared in pens and cages throughout the country and these required about 75,000 metric tonnes per month of maize to survive. This translated into about 900,000 metric tonnes of maize per annum. Out of this, the Nigerian Grains Board (NGB) could only supply 150,000 metric tonnes between March and August 1983. Hence, there was shortfall of about 750,000 tonnes, which must be met to sustain the poultry industry in Nigeria. The shortfall was due to scarcity of foreign exchange, which led the Federal Government to ban further importation of maize. This made PAN to call for the urgent step up of the production of maize directly by the federal and state government and their agricultural agencies and indirectly by assisting farmers to grow large hectage of maize in the country to save the poultry industry, which was the cheapest source of animal protein.<sup>82</sup>

The government further killed the success of the programme by its alleged indulgence in favouritism even as allegations of several unethical acts were leveled against many officials of the regime. The huge amount of money spent on the programme did not produce tangible results but rather produced more hunger than the programme. There is no doubt that production in all aspects including forestry, livestock and fisheries were impressive but they could not reconcile the rising volume of import bill. In 1979,

for instance, Nigeria spent \$1.3 billion on food import. By 1982, it had risen by almost 79 percent to \$2.3 billion. The yearly growth in food import bill was nearly 26.3 percent. Food imports consumed ₦5bn in the three years between 1980 and 1982, representing an increase of N2.08 billion or 71 per cent above the 1977-1999 figure of N2.92.<sup>70</sup> The implication was that food production went down behind 1971 levels giving ascendancy to importation. Using 1980/81 production year for example, about 15,371,240 tonnes of the principal food crops were produced. This represented a decrease of 36.68 percent on the production figure of 24,276,000 tonnes obtained in 1971/72. Ecological perturbations such as drought and pest menace but more importantly, continuous drift to the cities meant that 17.71 million hectares representing 25 percent of Nigeria's total arable land cultivated in 1971/72 was reduced to 8.95 in 1980/81, nearly half of the 1971/72 level. This represented about 13 percent of the total arable land. The annual rate of about 4.08 percent of decrease in production since 1971 level made analysts to predict that the Green Revolution would likely go the way of other programmes before it.<sup>83</sup>

Reports had it that the Shagari administration increased government spending, which reinforced financial irresponsibility causing Nigeria's foreign debt to increase from N3.3billion in 1978 to N14.7 billion in 1982.<sup>84</sup> Instead of accepting responsibility for its acts of omission and commission, the administration sought to put the blame for the shortage of food on the food "hoarders." The issue of hoarding was however taken too far. There was certainly an element of corruption and politicking about it.<sup>85</sup> For instance, high tech corruption in the activities of the Presidential Task Force in Rice headed by the Minister of Transport, Alhaji Umaru Dikko led to the loss of over ₦11million in one single transaction, which saw 326,474 bags of rice worth ₦11, 426,590 million got

missing in transit. The loss allegedly occurred when the bags of rice were being transported by an agent of the task force, Pan Atlantic Company through the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) to deposit them to the Nigerian National Supply Company (NNSC). The original consignment from the Pan Atlantic was 692,681 bags of rice. By the time the consignment got to the NRC, it was 537,201 bags, and when it finally got to the NNSC depots, it was only 366,207 bags.<sup>86</sup> In another development, 10,000 bags of the rice were stolen at Ikorodu Warehouse of the Taskforce without any traces. There was of course no record of anybody arrested or taken court as result of the losses recorded.<sup>75</sup> In deed lion share of the rice consignments were usually not off-loaded for popular distribution from the ships that brought them because they had been 'allocated.' For instance, the 220,000 PTF bags aboard on UNIC ALLIANCE ship at Apapa Wharf on 8/11/83, only 90,000 were hastily off-loaded and about 220,000 bags that berthed on HELENIC NAVIGATOR at Tin Can Island on 14/11/83, over half had been allocated to a single company with offices in Kofi Abayomi Street, Apapa Lagos.<sup>87</sup>

The method of procurement made the cost of rice very high. The Task Force bought a tonne of rice at \$140 higher than the price it was sold to other importers. High price of procurement was attributed by the refusal of the task force to put the procurement on open tender. The magnitude of corruption showed in the fact that the sum of N3 billion was traced to the overseas account of Alhaji Umaru Dikko after the overthrow of the government.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, the NNSC London branch manager embezzled the sum of N5.5million of the company leading to the sale of his five London houses and some other properties. In any case, he was not arrested or prosecuted and failed to pay up the remaining amount after the expiry of dateline.<sup>89</sup> The effect was that a single bag was

sold at N65 by distributing companies such as Eurotrade instead of N35 stipulated by government.<sup>90</sup>

Uninformed analysts of the failure of the Green Revolution seem mindlessly to attribute it to two major factors; failure of domestic food supply judging by its numerous constraints, particularly, out dated, unprogressive farming operations and secondly, the general movement of world market prices for grain and other foods.<sup>91</sup> In reality however, these were not actually the case. The matter was dictated by the dependency syndrome. As Andrea and Beckman analyzed it in their *Wheat Trap*, the programme failed not because of failure of domestic production but because of massive and unrestricted imports, which gave rise to uneven struggle between domestic producers and importers in expanding local markets making the rules of the game tilted heavily in favour of the foreign foods. The effect was that the prices of domestic food achieved accelerated increase much in comparison with the imports.<sup>92</sup> The high rate of oil spending since the middle 1970s provoked unprecedented inflation, the rate being as high as 20 per cent annually, indeed doubling the rate in those economies, which supplied Nigeria's imports. A related factor was that Nigeria's petroleum strongly protected the naira in foreign markets, while it was crumbling back home. This equally precipitated the high rate of prices of locally produced foods while favouring imports.

The failure of the successive governments to regulate and stabilize the flow of people and resources between the sectors of the economy worsened the matter because if prices of domestic food had remained favourable, the youths would have chosen to remain on the farms and engage in expanding economic opportunities within agriculture itself.<sup>93</sup> The imports of course encouraged new food preferences and therefore new

patterns of demand, favouring the convenient foods, the so-called essential commodities. Political considerations were made to take precedence over economic altruism, a situation that was manipulated by political jobbers within the rank and file of the NPN and opposition parties. It created the ugly circumstances whereby the masses were unable to establish enough entitlement to the massively imported presidential rice and essential commodities even as salubrious atmosphere for their own production was lacking.

### **FOOD FOR THE PEOPLE PROGRAMME (FPP) OF THE ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNMENT**

At its inception, Jim Nwobodo's administration accorded priority to food production. To this effect, it added the food component in the nomenclature of the concerned ministry by naming it the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production. The services of the renowned agronomist Professor D. M. Ekpete, formerly Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nigeria Nsukka was sought as its Hon. Commissioner. The epileptic implementation of the Green Revolution but more importantly, the end of the political accord between the NPN and NPP, were factors that motivated the Anambra State Government to chart a new course of action in its desire to achieve increased food production. Professor D. M. Ekpete made this known on Tuesday March 3 1981 in a public lecture titled "Towards Self-Reliance in Food Production."<sup>94</sup> He stated that the most important line of attack for Nigeria to bridge the food gap was by establishing projects where by the government went into sincere partnership with the farmers by assisting them with packages of technology for maize, rice, cassava and yam production as well as their complimentary marketability.

This was the concept of the “Food for the People Programme (FPP)” adopted by the state government as complimentary alternative to the federally piloted Green Revolution Programme. According to Ekpete, the FPP was deemed more appropriate in support of the objectives of food self-sufficiency than the Federal Government’s Green Revolution Programme, which appeared to have been adopted in a hurry. More so, the technological innovations of the Green Revolution lasted all over the world from 1950 to 1974 and actually fizzled out by 1975. By that year, the gains made by it were wiped out by poor harvests around the world exacerbated by international developments such as rising oil prices, restriction of fertilizer supplies and persistent growth of population in the poorer countries.<sup>95</sup>

In its FPP, the Anambra State Government made short-term and long-term measures. Under the short-term measures, the first priority was greater domestic production and for this over N6 million was made available by the state government to the agencies, engaged in rice production. Rice producers at Abakaliki, Uzo-Uwani, Ogboji, Ogbaru etc were beneficiaries through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production. The producers sold their products to the Government who distributed them to consumers at greatly subsidized prices. The long-term programme was directed along three lines namely, the farmers, the production agencies, with small farmers participating as in the Anambra/Imo World Bank Rice project and thirdly food production companies with government partnership as well as technical experts and local entrepreneurs.<sup>96</sup>

In taking the initiative, the government was of the equivocal condemnation of the sole dependence on imports for bridging Nigeria’s food gap. The government was rather of the conviction that it was cheaper and more honourable to invest the funds, which

would have been used in the imports into local crop and livestock farms. By permanently closing the gap through self-reliance, instead of imports, Nigeria, would have to cultivate an equivalent of 94,000 hectares of rice and rear 100 million broilers per annum and these would not in over five years cost up to N3 billion, which represented the import values of the above items. In the rice campaign of the FPP, the farmers in the selected rice-growing locations in fourteen LGAs were encouraged to step up their production substantially. To this effect, a subsidy of N730, 000 was made available to the 5,600 participating farmers who cultivated 11,200 hectares.<sup>97</sup> The success of the programme was the milling of rice worth N1.7 million produced by ADARICE Production (Nigeria) Ltd at Uzo-Uwani and by the World Bank Rice project. The rice was sold at the highly subsidized price of N35 per 50 kg bag by the state government in the 23 Local Government centres of the state.<sup>98</sup>

The mass attack policy of the Jim Nwobodo's administration made the Agricultural Ministry poised to boost agricultural activities of all types and from all possible angles. To achieve the Food for the People Programme, the government sought the services of a number of agencies. They include, the Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme, Community Farm Scheme, the Agricultural Produce Marketing Board and several extension/ education programmes aimed at assisting the farmers in their arduous but honourable pursuit for increased food production in the state.<sup>99</sup>

The Integrated Rural Development programme was embarked upon with the aim of improving the infrastructural facilities in the rural areas to enhance the productivity of the farmers and raise their incomes. It was hoped that with good road network development, rural water scheme, as well as rural mobile health programme, the living conditions of the farmers would improve and excessive migration into the urban areas

would be curtailed. The FPP was made realistic by the adoption of the National Food Production (NAFPP) methodology. To this end, the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production and the Local Government Department of Agriculture, were exposed to highly organized training for massive food production campaign in accordance with the policy and philosophy of FPP. These staffs were trained in awareness in the use of recommended varieties and practices to make feedback of their experiences to the extension staff and agricultural research workers. By 1980, over 10,980 hectares of maize/cassava cultivated in the state were exposed to NAFPP technology.<sup>100</sup>

In line with the government policy, thirteen Community Farms were as early as October 8, 1979, established in four zones. These include Eha-Amufu (Nsukka zone) and Ndeabor/Mpu/Udoma (Enugu zone) each with 1,500 hectares of land. The other two zones, Ezzamgbo (Abakaliki zone) and Isiagu/Umuawulu (Awka zone each) were provided with 1,000 hectares. The nine others established later were located at Ezza, Mbu/Neke, Ossomala, Igbariam, Enugu-Ezike, Amagunze, Achi, Ufuma and Iboko.<sup>101</sup> In the community farms, cooperative societies were organized to facilitate granting of credit and for cheaper procurement of farm input and marketing of produce. Through this means, 466 hectares of land were mechanically cleared on the four farms while 349 farmers participated in the land-clearing scheme. This enabled the participating farmers to plant 127 hectares of maize/cassava and 22 hectares of rice. The Ministry went ahead by incorporating agro-service centres in each of the five agricultural zones namely Onuabonyi (Abakaliki zone), Nkwelle-Ezunaka (Onitsha zone), Ukpabi (Nsukka zone), Ufuma (Awka zone) and Mgbowo (Enugu zone). In addition to this, 3,500 hectares of



land were obtained at Ibite-Olo in Ezeagu LGA for mechanized arable farming. 2,725 hectares were allocated to rice, maize and soya beans farming. A modern rice processing plant, maize drying crib and storage silos were installed at the farm to attend to its needs and to serve farmers within the vicinity.<sup>102</sup>

Under the Food Crops programme, about 60-trained staff were posted to the LGA's for the purpose of maize production, which was intended to be used to curtail importation for livestock feeding. Participating farmers were required to cultivate a minimum of 0.5 hectares, communities 20 hectares minimum and maximum of 100 hectares. 57 tons of improved maize seeds and chemicals were distributed. Their expected yield from initial 1,630 hectares was 4,075 tons of maize. Likewise, 46 tons of improved rice seeds were distributed to farmers with expected 2,300 tons of milled rice. 8,000 bundles of improved cassava cuttings were distributed as well. The ambitious project was aimed at producing about 30,000 tonnes of cassava tubers with a yield of about 75,000 tonnes of garri by 1985. These were complimented by over 10,000 metric tons of fertilizer.<sup>103</sup> A seminar of fertilizer use was organized for extension staff at the respective local government headquarters with ten fertilizer agents appointed for each on efficient use and storage of fertilizers. Each LG Secretariat was constituted into sales depot. The arrangement was to ensure that farmers did not travel more ten kilometers from his farm to obtain fertilizer.

The recognition accorded to boys and girls in primary and secondary schools as "tomorrow's farmers" led to the establishment of ninety Young Farmers Clubs in ten out of twenty three LGAs. They were engaged in poultry, rabbitery, vegetable gardening, maize/cassava and rice cultivation. The Clubs were supported through free issue of farm

impliments, seeds and fertilizers. Under the rural Agricultural Home Economics Project, four women groups were formed in four LGAs. These include Agbani (Nkanu), Ngwo (Udi), Ikwo (Ezza) and Okpuje (Nsukka). The total number of women involved was 211. The supervised Agricultural Credit was reactivated, which 90 farmers benefited with loan totaling N269,800 as at the end of March 1980.<sup>104</sup>

The agricultural information section provided communication channels in support of the extension programmes. The Section issued regular news releases, features for Radio and Television programmes, conducted cineroma film shows in the rural areas, distributed newsletters and technical bulletins, organized agricultural shows and exhibitions and established display rooms at zonal agricultural extension offices.<sup>105</sup>

### **Veterinary Division**

The policies, strategies and objectives of the veterinary division were geared towards development of modern and viable livestock industry, assist in the prevention and control of animal diseases. These objectives were sub-divided into the following: Human Health Programme; Clinical Services Project; Preventive, Advisory and Control Post Services Project; Veterinary Public Health Department; and Training and Investigation Unit. Each of the above projects was manned at the headquarter level by a project officer, thus ensuring that all facets of activities were given detailed and prompt attention. At the field level, the services were organized in the divisional pattern based on the local government system. The aim was to ensure that the services were brought to the doorsteps of the farmers.<sup>106</sup> Instances include the Abattoir complex in Emene, main veterinary laboratory building at Oji-River, veterinary clinic complex at Otuocha, and

that of Ogidi, (which project was abandoned by the Military regime two years earlier). These were completed within the first 100 days of NPP Government. Under the veterinary programme, the third batch of veterinary clinic attendants at the veterinary school Ezzamgbo completed courses and were posted to various stations for fieldwork.<sup>107</sup>

The state government signed a contract with the Suedwest Nautik firm of Freiburg/Opfingen, West Germany, for the management of Anambra Livestock Limited.<sup>108</sup> Contract for the Lower Anambra Irrigation Project was also signed between the Federal Government and a Japanese Consortium, Nippon Koei CO., Ltd, Tokyo at a cost N93.3m. The contract, which was divided into two phases, had the first phase at the cost of N42.3million for which the money would come from N4.9 million loan granted Nigeria by Japan. The contract commenced with the visit of the Minister of Water Resources Alhaji Ndagi Mamudu and witnessed the development of 5,000 hectares of land at Omor, Umumbo and Umuleri.<sup>109</sup> Another contract was signed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October for the construction and management of the Anambra State Integrated Feed mills Complex Onitsha. The N2,150,000.00 contract signed with Afro-Equip (Nig) Ltd included the civil engineering works, provision of silos, mixers, crushers and pelleting machine. It was hoped that the mill with capacity of maize silos of 3,00 tons and silos of 1,500 tons for preservation of other ingredients would solve the problem of import of semolina and semovita.<sup>110</sup>

Nigeria also signed bilateral agreement, the Joint Agricultural Consultative Committee (JACC) with the United States. It was a private sector affair, which would facilitate American investment in Nigeria's agribusiness. The bilateral talks held in Lagos in July 1981 with the two Vice Presidents, Walter Mondale and Dr Alex Ekwueme

signing on behalf of their countries, US and Nigeria. JACC visited Anambra State on 5 June 1981.<sup>111</sup>

The Anambra State Government on its own signed a similar bilateral agreement with the government of the Republic of Korea, for the development of rice cultivation at the designated rice producing areas of the state. By September 1981, a group of nine Koreans (out of 46 being expected) made up of engineers, agronomists, architects and technicians arrived Anambra State to help in irrigation and planting of hecharcs of food crops and vegetables including designs and construction of fish farms and industries for the manufacture of agricultural tools and machines.<sup>112</sup>

### **Control of Plant Diseases**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production also embarked on plant disease, control measures, for which it divided the roles into different units. These included, (a) Field Investigation, (2) Training (and retraining of extension staff); (c) Vital Link. (This coordinated the usage of chemicals and equipment), (d) Field Operations (for combating pests, diseases and weeds), (e) Subsidiaries (which handled the sales of inputs and equipment at government subsidized rates to farmers), (f) Periodic Warning (which ran vital plant protection and weather statistics and forecast of possible pests or disease incidence). Through the above roles, the Agriculture Ministry was able to control crop diseases and helped farmers to maximize profit. Some of the diseases were yam beetles and termites, cassava mealy bugs and termites, rice stem borers and army worms, rice blast diseases, oil palm freckle disease, cocoa capsid bugs and black pod disease, citrus scales and aphids, vegetable cut- worms, caterpillars, grasshoppers fruit/root rot diseases

as well as stored agricultural produce weevils. Others include of bee swarms, rodents and black ants. 944 bags of maize were fumigated for farmers across the state. Assistance was extended to the Nigerian Grains Board Company in Enugu. Plant Protection Field Officers were posted at the Agricultural Departments of the local governments.<sup>113</sup>

The Information Unit disseminated information through newsletters, radio, television, seminars and workshops. Training programmes were organized through vocational agricultural institutions such as College of Agriculture Umudike and School of Agriculture Igbariam. Farmers Forum and Farmers Councils were organized at the village, Local Government and State levels respectively. Home Economics Programmes were opened for rural women aimed at improving the living conditions of rural families. It laid emphasis on environmental hygiene, income generating activities, nutrient education, home management and childcare. The joint ventures and cooperation between the State and the Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Home Economic units resulted in the founding of Home Economics Centres at Nise, Ikwo, Ozubulu, Nachi and Ngwo. There were also the Young Farmers Club (YFC) (also called “The Out of School” Farming Programme), Agricultural Shows, Fertilizer Promotion Campaign, Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme, and Staff Training Schemes.<sup>114</sup> All these were aimed at revolutionizing food production capacities in their different ways.

### **Other Pest Control Measures**

The menace caused by pests had posed recurring decimal of threat to food security. Their devastating effect on the cassava crop for example was disturbing in part because it was the staple food of the people after yam cultivation had drastically declined.

From April 1979, farms in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin had become infested by cassava mealy-bug. This resulted in devastation of thousands of hectares of farms across the basin. It was however worst in Ishielu, Nkanu, Awgu and Izzi in Abakaliki. It was confirmed that the hazard had reached epidemic proportions in the more eastern ecologically drier parts of the basin while remaining endemic in other areas. By the 1980s, the infestation had spread to Oji River, Isi-Uzo (Nsukka), and several other places while continuing its devastation in the Ikwo and Ezza areas of Abakaliki. Field inspection conducted in parts of the state at the time showed that over 30,000 hectares of cassava farms had been infested with mealy-bug. The disease cut farmers unawares and before solution could be got for it, it had caused untold crop failures, hardship and widespread hunger.<sup>115</sup>

The disease was caused by bacterium *xanthomas manihotis*, which is characterized by leaf wilt, defoliation, and tip dieback, which caused the plant to die off or new shoots may remain stunted and produce a bunched growth accompanied by creamy yellow exudation from infected parts. Before curative solution could be found for it, farmers were advised on a number of interim control measures. This included the use of clean and healthy planting materials, (cassava cuttings), and to avoid cuttings from infected plants. Since the infestation occurred most during heavy rains, planters were advised to plant early in the seasons between March and April and at the end of the rains between September and October. They were, equally advised to use balanced fertilizer and resistant cassava varieties such as “*Nwaugo*” (also called “*Nwaocha*”) and “*Aburu-asu*” (synonymous with “*Iwa-Panya*”).<sup>116</sup>

To control the epidemic, zonal agricultural extension staff working in tandem with local government agricultural departments organized series of workshops for farmers to educate them on the rubrics of the disease, how to detect it earlier for easier control measures. The farmers were, advised to use clean cassava stem cuttings and to cut off older infested cassava shoots and to burn young infested cassava plants. They were, also advised to adopt crop rotation by planting maize instead, which was not attacked by cassava mealy bug. The Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production launched a six month campaign (March to August) aimed at eradicating cassava mealy-bug disease all over the state. To achieve this, the Ministry spent N0.5 million for the purchase of insecticides. The ministry also purchased large quantities of healthy cassava stems, which it distributed free to farmers in all the 23 Local Government Areas of the state as one of the measures to combat the mealy-bug infestation.<sup>117</sup>

Farmers were taught the control measures such as non-application of organic fertilizer, lining of the soil to obtain PH of 6 to 6.5 and using seed resistant varieties among others. Similar control measures were, recommended for fungus diseases, which include use of resistant rice varieties such as IR 5, IR 8, the practice of clean culture to remove the secondary host of the fungus and non-application of excessive nitrogenous fertilizer. It was in this respect that the Agricultural Extension office marshaled out its staff to educate farmers on the control of the pests. Such measures include broadcasting of Gamma-BHC granules at the rate of 33 per hectre, the use of nets or light traps, collecting and destruction of the eggs, practicing of clean culture to get rid of alternate hosts and applying the following alternate chemicals; *malation, methyl, parathion, serin* or wettable powder BHC to be mixed with kerosene or water as directed. The farmers

were educated on the elimination measures of this pest, which included reduction of harbourage through destruction of the weeds after harvest and forcing them to migrate. They were, also advised to use rodenticides – rat poison. Apart from the aforementioned, rice was, attacked by fungus, bacteria, virus or nematode. The diseases, which were also physiological in nature, appeared on the leaves, leaf sheaths, stems, and grains. These include fungus diseases such as rice blast or rotten neck; *Helminthosporium* leaf spot or brown spot; *Cercospora* leaf spot-narrow or brown leaf spot. The physiological diseases include bronzing (iron toxicity) – the only disease of that category that occurred in most of the rice fields. It was, caused by strongly acidic, lateritic soil with un-decomposed organic matter. It usually occurs in soils that are poorly drained and always underwater. In such soils, iron poisoning is rife inducing too much iron and phosphorus and lack of potassium in the soil.<sup>118</sup> The Anambra-Mamu river basin soils are of such composition. Similar measures were applied to control it.

### **Resuscitation of Indigenous Fruit Trees Project**

The effect of the civil war was seen in the fact that, ten years after, certain food items whose farms were destroyed started disappearing from the people's menu. To reverse the trend, under the Horticultural Development, the ministry managed one hectare of citrus, three hectares of vegetable seed multiplication plot, one hectare of other fruit tree nurseries in support of horticultural extension services to farmers.<sup>119</sup> Examples of these include the winged Bean (*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*). It was called wing bean because it has four “wings” that run the length of the pod. It produces edible green pods within two and a half months after planting and the beans are ready for consumption after four months. The effort to revive the planting of this crop made one Mr. I. O. Nwerri of



the Anambra Information Section (AIS) and the Market Garden Section, Enugu to use some seeds obtained from Dr. Caroline Mba of the Soil Science Department of the University of Nigeria in April 1981 to produce substantial quantity of the seeds. Farmers were invited to call at the AIS and the Market Garden to collect a few seeds for their gardens.

This was how this bean with its poly saturated oil and fats started finding its way back in the menu of the people. The fact that nutritionist regarded it as superior to saturated oils and fats made it welcome. More so, a mixture of the beans and maize has a protein value as high as milk. In similar way, efforts were made to resuscitate other indigenous food crops that were going into extinction.<sup>120</sup>

The project involved the selection and improvement of indigenous edible fruit/vegetable plants for food production and agro-forestry. So far, over 150 species were identified and the work on the determination of their food values was in progress. Significant progress was made in the development of suitable propagation techniques for fruit trees such as *Treculia Africana* (bread fruit), *Irvingia gabonensis* (*agbono/ugiri*), *Dacryodes edulis*, *peterocarpus spp.* etc. Fruiting was recorded in these plants within four years from budded trees. Trees of *Treculia Africana* raised from stem produced viable fruits within three years. The improved seedlings were available at the Forestry Commission, Forestry Development and Investigation Branch, No. 2 Works Road, Enugu at subsidized prices from April of each year. Vigorous efforts were also made in vegetables and seed multiplication promotion such as different varieties of tomatoes, big-fruited garden eggs, onions, pepper, pop corn, cabbage and lettuce and maize *Fartz 7* and *Fartz 27*.<sup>121</sup>

The high rate of importation of vegetable oil by Nigeria had become so staggering that the import forecast for oil for domestic consumption (which in effect was palm oil in bleached form) for 1982 was 25,000 tonnes. This was a considerable drain on the country's foreign exchange reserves. It was in an effort to revive the palm oil production that the Anambra State Government embarked on its own palm oil rehabilitation and encouragement of new plantations. Between 1979 and March 1980, 11,330 hectares of oil palm plantation were developed by farmers while the ministry developed 473 hectares.<sup>122</sup> However, its most ambitious effort in this regard was resuscitation of the Anambra Vegetable Oil Production Company (AVOP) Nachi established earlier by the Military Government. By September 1981, the government had renegotiated the subsisting sum of N9.12million through the maintenance of the plantations in the following locations to generate raw materials for AVOP. (1) Ibite Olo with fully developed 571 hectares and envisaged to cover 4,000 hectares at the cost of N4.00. (2) Ugwuoba/Inyi with existing fully developed 483 hectares projected at 4,000 hectares by 1985. An oil mill with capacity of 12 tonnes of fresh fruit bunches per hour was installed. The cost of the project was N4,000. (3) Nando and Umunze /Ezira. These were new projects designed to afford farmers with high yielding tenera oil palms from the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR). They were integrated into the Oil Palm Development Project, which commence during the First Republic. These projects underscored the government's determination to develop the vegetable oil component of the people's food system and to create as many jobs as possible through the effort.<sup>123</sup>

Cashew production Project was an existing project proposed to achieve 1,534 hectares to ensure improved yields. Farmers in the vicinity of existing plantations at Oghe

and host of others were encouraged through financial and technical incentives to increase and improve the output of their holdings.

### **Fish Culture Management**

The high cost of beef following the Sahelian drought of 1973 made the Anambra people like other parts of Nigeria to increasingly turn to fish consumption as alternative source of animal protein. By 1983, Nigerians had become the largest consumers of fish in Africa with annual requirement for fish had climbing over one million metric tonnes.<sup>124</sup> The Federal Department of Fisheries responded to the demand by executing the following projects; National Accelerated Fish Production Project (NAFPP); Fish Terminals; Inshore Fishing; Fish Storage, Processing and Marketing; Fish Seed Multiplication Project and UNDP/FAO Freshwater Fish Farm Development and Demonstration. Others include UNDP/FAO Artisanal Inshore Fisheries Development Project; Pilot Fish Farms; Fisheries Inspectorate Equipment and Licencing of Fishing Vessels.<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, Anambra State being an inland area did not benefit from the projects, which were mainly cited in the coastal and mangrove zones.

The matter was compounded by the fact that though Anambra State had about 2,000 fishermen resident in about 115 villages and scattered around the Niger, Anambra, Mamu etc and their tributaries plus the inland lakes of Agulu and Nike Lakes, yet the the State was grossly deficient in fish supply. Local production accounted for less than 7 per cent of the State's fish consumption requirement. This made dependence on other ecological zones and overseas to subsist. These consisted mainly frozen fish such as Titus, *Kote*, *Shawa*, *Kpanla*, *Atoko* etc and mangala or dried fish from Lake Chad Basin

to continue unprecedentedly making the common man unable to access them sufficiently. In its effort to increase fish production, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Production laid more emphasis on fish farming as opposed to extension services, which was the policy adopted in the Third Development Plan. It expanded the facilities at the existing Fish Station at Umukete by constructing about five hectares of fish ponds and water channels for the production of fry and fingerlings for supply to farmers. The Ministry adopted a novelty idea towards growing table fish profitably and cheaply in rice fields as a complimentary practice. This idea had worked in countries such as Madagascar using the following fish species: *Tilapia nilotica*; *T. rendalli* and *T. zilli*. In Indonesia, *T. mossambica* proved successful while in Italy, Japan and India, *Carassius* was used. This was the recommendation of foreign experts on their visit to Anambra State. They saw the area as suitable for the practice.<sup>126</sup> Even before the recommendations, Anambra State Fisheries Division had carried out trial culture of some *Tilapia*, which showed some promising results in the irrigation reservoirs of the Ogboji Rice fields in Aguata LGA.

This led to the stocking of *Clarias lazera* (*Azu isi* in Igbo) fingerlings early in 1980. It was in view of the success obtained and the recommendations of foreign experts that the Division embarked upon the culture of the common *Carp cyprinus carpie* and *Tilapia*s in the reservoirs of the Adani World Bank Rice project in Uzo-Uwani LGA. This was followed by culture of both species in separate adjacent fishponds that were subsequently constructed in the zone.<sup>127</sup>

The experiment showed that common *Cyprinus carpie*, *Tilapia rendalli*, *Tilapia nilotica* and *T. zilli*, grew fast, tolerated shallow rice field water with rather high temperature and reduced oxygen tension. Because of their tolerance of these conditions

and for the fact that they were readily available, this made them adapted to the rice environment. The experiment also showed that the cost of raising fish in rice fields was minimal which indeed constituted one of the major attractions. This is in view of the fact that the technology does not require expensive engineering works except the use of bamboo and screens as construction materials, which were cheap and locally sourced even as the technology involved was simple.<sup>128</sup>

The advantages of the rice-fish culture were enormous. It is environmentally friendly and reduced the cost of weeding since fishes feed on weeds. It reduced drastically or removed completely the development of mosquito larvae and snails. The practice was not only a cheap provision of animal protein; it also brought additional income to the rice farmer. Assessment also showed that the presence of suitable species in a rice field increased rice field by 5 to 15 percent. This fact was made possible because of supplementary fertilizing coming from feces of fish, from effects of artificial feeding of fish, from better tillering of plants and from fish control of rice parasites and from better aeration of soil. The rice fish culture also taught the natives that fish could be grown in not only the canals and trenches inside the rice fields, but also in all the water reservoirs where no rice was grown. This idea led to conservation of land by the construction of artificial ponds in wet lands. The farmers harvested the fish fields simply by the temporary draining of the rice canals and reservoirs.<sup>129</sup>

## **Poultry**

In the effort to re-launch the feat of the 1960s when the average person could afford to eat one egg a day, the government sought to take advantage of the huge

investment into agriculture made by the Federal and State governments. To this effect, every family was encouraged to keep some birds however, small the number to provide the much-needed animal protein to the diet as eggs and meat. Attention was concentrated also on the raising of broilers because of fact that it comes in handy as a source of meat and because of its fast growth. It is also a small stock, which an average family could purchase and consume conveniently. The farmers were educated on the feeding of broiler birds with two types - Starter and Finisher Mash. They were also educated on the vital areas of feed efficiency with the aim of achieving healthy growth in terms of protein, energy, vitamins, minerals and water. Particular attention was paid in the provision of amino acids like methionine and lysine, which were lacking in some farm-fixed rations. Similarly, the starter ration was formulated to contain conceidio and broad-spectrum antibiotic for adequate protection from “specific” and “non-specific” diseases.<sup>130</sup>

The fact that the Igbo like meat of high “chewability” suggested that the birds were reared a little longer than the normal ten weeks. Another important area of concern was monitoring of the health status of the birds to check diseases such as *coccidiocis*, *enteritis*, *toxicosis*, worms and deficiency diseases and to check out for heat stress and entry into the pen by vermin. The boisterous campaign of both the Federal and State governments to achieve success in the poultry production had caught the enthusiasm of the Nigerian poultry farmers, which led to the formation of the Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN). The Anambra State branch was launched at the Polo Park, Enugu on Friday, 16 October 1981 coinciding with the World Food Day. The biggest problem that faced the poultry industry was the prohibitive costs of maize. This renewed the call for intensification of the local production of maize and soya bean as a way of “arresting the

exodus of foreign exchange.” The use of cassava as substitute to maize was also canvassed.<sup>131</sup>

In 1981, the Anambra State Governor, Mr. Jim Nwobodo in pursuance of Food for the People Programme (FPP) took a radical step by setting aside the sum of N0.43 million for the production of day old chicks. Three hatcheries were opened in Abakaliki, Nkwele-Ezunaka and Mgbakwu, the first two with capacity to produce 33,000 day-old chicks weekly while the third produced 3,000 turkey poults weekly. This was in recognition of the need to end the dependence on imported Day old Chicks, which was not just costly but was supplied erratically in piecemeal.<sup>132</sup> The effort was supported by the gesture of the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria Mr. Ola Vincent who on 26 June 1981, made available a loan of N84 million to 2,604 farmers across the country under the Agricultural Credit Scheme. The maximum amount for an individual was N50,000 and to a corporate body, N1 million.<sup>133</sup>

### **Cooperative, Thrift and Credit Societies**

This was an existing project designed to monitor, co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation of the State’s extension services through farmers’ organizations. To this end Farmers’ Forums, Councils, Unions and Societies as well as Rural Home Economics Groups were formed. As at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1984, the following were a list of these organizations.

**Table 5.2: List of Farmers' Unions, Home Economics Groups and Cooperative Societies**

Type	No.	%	Type	No.	%
Farmers' Multipurpose	860	72.26	Community Farms	23	1.93
Fishermen's Society	-	-	Div. Cooperative Council	4	0.34
Poultry/Livestock	6	0.50	Thriffs and Credit	57	4.79
Produce Marketing	2	0.17	Produce Marketing	2	0.17
Multi Purpose	67	0.59	Consumer / Supply	32	2.67

**Source:** *Cooperative Division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Enugu*

### **Conservation and Reclamation Programme**

Concentration of the erosion control by the Federal Government around Nanka-Agulu axis left the Anambra State Government to face numerous others with effort concentrated mainly on checking sheet erosion. Check dams and terraces were constructed on the following erosion sites: Ngwo-Nsude-Oghe zone, Ukehe, Nsukka, Neni-Nimo-Adazi complex, Onitsha-Obosi-Idemili complex, Udi axis, Opi, Akunkpologwu, Oraukwu-Alor complex, Achi-Inyi-Awgu zone etc.

### **Assessment of the Food for the People Programme**

The programme made landmark achievements having recorded impressive production targets for 1983 for main crops and forestry, livestock and fisheries. However, this could not reconcile with the rising import bill. In 1979 for instance, Nigeria spent



\$1.3 billion on food import. By 1982, it had risen by almost 79 per cent to \$2.3 billion. The yearly growth in food import bill was nearly 26.3 percent. The effort by government to introduce stringent economic measures in April 1982, reduced imports from N11.3 billion in 1982 to N8.5 billion in 1983 showing a decrease of 25 percent which was quite significant. However, this was achieved at the cost of consumer hardship and increased misery and hunger even as balance of payment deficits of N2.9 billion were recorded for 1983.<sup>134</sup> The three-year implementation of the Green Revolution therefore yielded only epileptic results. In as much as President Shagari inherited enormous problems from the predecessor military government, his government made matters worse by issuing import licenses recklessly to all and sundry thereby compounding the economic crises. As prices rose faster than salaries and incomes/earnings, the purchasing ability of the general population was substantially reduced and faced with this reduction in demand for their products, manufacturers started to retrench staff.

The situation was worsened by hyperinflation, which co-existed with unemployment and gross under-utilization of industrial capacity.<sup>135</sup> The inability of the governments to control the corruptive excesses of the ruling party barons both at the federal and states led to the abysmal shoddy implementation of the Green Revolution, which was the last hope of the common man. By the time, the military took over power in December 1983, hunger and famine was so high that many of the country men and women were daily scavenging the refuse heaps for survival.<sup>136</sup> The parlous state of the economy made Brigadier Sanni Abacha who announced the coup d'état that overthrew the government to say that

Our economy has been hopelessly mismanaged; we have become a debtor and beggar nation. There is inadequacy of

food at reasonable prices for people who are now fed up with endless announcements of importation of foodstuff... Unemployment figures including the graduate, have reached embarrassing and unacceptable proportions. In some states, workers are being owed salary arrears of eight to twelve months, and in others, there are threats of salary cuts.<sup>137</sup>

It should be realized of course that three years was insufficient to assess the performance of an agricultural programme as complex as the Green Revolution. The culprit rather was the military overthrow of the three-month government of Chief C. C. Onoh (who succeeded Chief Nwobodo in 1983). It scuttled the efforts at achieving food security in several ways. For instance, it destroyed the irrigation projects - a combined effort of the World Bank and Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority in fifteen communities. The worst hit was the Uzo-Uwani Project, which out of the planned 3,850 ha; only 1,000 hectares were eventually achieved later in 1998/99.<sup>138</sup> The coup put to irreversible end the multimillion-naira giant rice processing plant built at the rice-producing town of Omor. The project was planned and executed with over three square miles of irrigated rice fields constructed to feed it with paddy rice. The military putsch happened just as the machinery installation was about being completed. Equally wasted was the rural electrification scheme and installation of high-tension wires from Nsukka to Omor and entire Uzo Uwani. The military overthrow meant that the high-tension cables were under the watchful eyes of government officials vandalized by hoodlums, as they had not been energized before the junta struck.<sup>139</sup>

#### **Advent of New Military Government (Gen Buhari Regime 1984-1985)**

Military overthrow of the government on January 1, 1984 brought Gen. Buhari as Nigeria's new Head of State and Navy Capt. Alison Madueke as Governor of Anambra

State. The effect of the empty treasury and debt burden of N1.2billion inherited by the new Anambra State Government was drastic cut in public spending hitting families whose breadwinners were owed several months' salaries. In spite of this agriculture secured N17.35million or 10.22% of aggregate capital spending.<sup>140</sup> A task force on rice production was appointed and charged with mobilization of available resources to increase output. Attention was also paid to other staple crops particularly cassava and maize. The interest paid to food security was seen in the slight increase in capital provision of N19.40million in the 1985 Budget.<sup>141</sup> To woe private participation in farming, the policy of acquiring agricultural lands for lease to genuine investors at personal rental was started. The World Bank Rice Project and ADARICE Production Company Ltd were merged. The government also started the Tractor Hiring Scheme and established the unit in all the LGA headquarters. This was in effort to boost the activities of the World Bank assisted Agricultural Development Projects, which started operations in 1985. The sum of N1.6million was provided for takeoff of the scheme.<sup>142</sup>

Sight was not lost in the interests of the non-farming population. Since a large section of the population depended on trading for livelihood, some markets were accorded some face-lift. Examples include Onitsha Relief and Kenyatta Markets. These were rebuilt following fire disasters that engulfed them in late 1984. The efforts of Gov. Madueke notwithstanding, hunger visited the poor families with renewed severity. The economy continued its downward slide. Stringent economic measures (euphemistically called "tough medicine") were adopted. These include abrupt currency change, prolonged border closure, wage freeze expressed in large-scale retrenchment of public workers, abrupt and untimely retirement of staff, embargo on new recruitments and hunting of

ghost workers. Other cutback measures include re-introduction of school fees and withdrawal of food subsidy to students of tertiary institutions. In its bid to sanitize the society in compliance with the draconian War Against Indiscipline, the Madueke administration appointed a number of task forces, the most notorious of which were the Awote Panel on Recovery of Public Funds and Property and Wing Commander Monday Ikpeazu crack Task Force on Works and Environmental Sanitation. The latter demolished trading shops and workshops of artisans rendering thousands of families destitute.<sup>143</sup>

The second contributory factor to hunger was aggravated unemployment exacerbated by the comatose state of the State industries. All State owned corporations, banks and enterprises without exception had been run down. Examples include Anambra Vegetable Oil Products Nachi, Sunrise Flour Mill Emene, Premier Breweries Onitsha, Nigeria Mineral Waters Onitsha, Orient Bank, Cooperative and Commerce Bank, Hotel Presidential Enugu, several other hotels, other financial institutions to mention a few. The government however endeared itself to the masses by redeeming within four months its promise of the payment of arrears of salaries owed workers across the states by the ousted civilian governors. In spite of this, the agonizing measures hit people in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin, badly. The wheels of government were grounding to a halt. The magnitude of suffering could only be compared with the last days of Biafra war. Nevertheless, the Buhari junta feared that stoppage of the food imports particularly wheat (for bread), would aggravate the incessant street riots often led by university students and the Nigeria Labour Congress. It therefore continued with the imports and widened it to include milk, rice, sugar and vegetable oil. Even though the scarcity of basic foodstuff

stared it on the face, it tried to win popular perception by popularizing the public sharing of the “essential commodities” out of proportion.

The measure seemed to prove the only source and access to food. It was so bad that every morning when workers, including professors, permanent secretaries, directors-general and messengers came to work, they would abandon everything on their tables, armed with their polythene bags like refugees, queued up and engaged in scrambling over their share of the “essential commodities.”<sup>144</sup> The acute scarcity of the items was brought about by the fact that Nigeria was going through a balance of payment crises and the banks were finding it increasingly difficult to open and confirm letters of credit for their Nigerian customers including government’s food imports. The junta then resorted to military braggadocio. Stores belonging to suspected ‘hoarders’ were routinely broken into by State Task Force officials and the goods auctioned. When there was, nothing left to auction; harassment of innocent private shop owners ensued resulting that only few families could take the morning tea with milk. It became clear that the junta had no solution to the economic problem and was no better than the democratically elected government it had overthrown. Not surprising, by October 1984, the Head of State, Gen. Buhari appreciated these anomalies and declared that the government was “to all intents and purposes bankrupt.”<sup>145</sup> The Buhari government was overthrown in a palace coup by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida on August 27 1985.

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## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (SAP) AND THE SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF ANAMBRA STATE, 1985-1991**

#### **Background to SAP**

As noted in the preceding chapter, the economic crises that enveloped the nation and subsequent overthrow of the Shagari government by the Gen. Mohammadu Buhari led military junta did not assuage the living conditions of the people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin. It rather worsened it. It abruptly dismantled the machinery set in motion to achieve the objectives of the Green Revolution promoted by the Federal government, the World Bank and the Anambra State Government. It also heralded the failure of the Fourth National Development Plan with emphasis on structural changes primarily rural development and much enhanced self-sufficiency in food provision. It equally dislocated the Food for the People Programme (FPP) of the Anambra State

Government, which likes the Green Revolution, had started showing appreciable results. Hunger, want and deprivation resumed in unprecedented severity. The coup saw death knell hammered on agriculture on which more than 70 percent of the population depended for their livelihood.

The worsening economic crises led the Buhari government to tighten even more, the austerity measures adopted in 1982 by the Shagari government. It was stretched to such an unbearable extent that hunger and malnutrition were decimating a large section

of the population. In the area of study, the name Buhari, (mispronounced by the rural, mostly illiterate folks as *Mbughari* meaning change for the worse), became synonymous with adversities. There were nationwide riots and demonstrations and the regime responded by more coercive measures. The statement made not quiet long by the Chairman of the defunct Presidential Rice Task Force (PRTF) Alhaji Umaru Dikko that Nigerians had not yet started feeding from the refuse bins proved to become a self-fulfilling prophesy as the refuse heaps across the cities became the resort of poor folks who besieged them daily, scavenging for discarded food particles.<sup>1</sup>

The Buhari government, caught up with credibility problems and carrying to heights, its pet project “War Against Indiscipline,” (WAI), had no time for, or rather did not show any interest in agriculture and food production. It launched what it called “Back to Land Programme,” which effect fizzled out the day after its launching. Its message, exhorting the youths to go back to the land, was like other programmes before it unheeded.<sup>2</sup> The hardship engendered by the circumstances paved way for the overthrow of Gen. Buhari’s government in a palace coup led by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida on August 27, 1985. On coming to power, the latter decided to break the deadlock between Nigeria and IMF. It therefore took a pragmatic step by asking Nigerians by way of public debate to choose either acceptance of a US\$2.5billion IMF loan to bail out the battered economy or devise an “indigenous” economic reform programme. The loan was rejected. The government then took the option of declaring a 15-month state of national economic emergency beginning from October 1, 1985, which ushered in SAP.<sup>3</sup>

Spirited efforts were made within two years of implementation of the programme. Unfortunately, SAP failed in its corrective measures because of policy inconsistencies



and insincerity on the part of the government especially in relation to Gen. Babangida's deceitful transition programme, which gulped billions of naira. In any case, Nigerians in their usual way of expecting immediate and dramatic results began to grumble and to protest. SAP was accused of lacking "human face" and did not enjoy the support of the populace particularly the masses who bore the brunt most. The poverty alleviation programmes namely Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) inaugurated by the government to cushion the effects of SAP were ineffective as they were largely saddled with corruption and administrative ineptitude. As a result, the initial commitment was not sustained leading to resultant policy stoppages, and subsequent abandonment of the programme. There is no doubt that SAP in content had all the imprints of the IMF and World Bank conditionalities. General Babangida's protestation that it was homegrown could not hide the fact that it was designed by the two Breton-Woods twins even as its implementation was at their behest.<sup>4</sup>

### **Inauguration of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)**

In brief, SAP aimed at restructuring and diversifying the economy; to achieve self-reliance in the provision of food and industrial goods and to lessen the burden of importation. It aimed at achieving industrialization, to reduce government's chocking involvement in business particularly where public officials had become thoroughly corrupt and inefficient in the discharge of their duties. It thus aimed to achieve deregulation, commercialization and privatization of the economy.<sup>5</sup> It aimed to limit government's role to enactment of regulations, bureaucratic controls and laws governing them. The programme sought to achieve reduction in the spectre of unemployment, which caused a large number of people to migrate away to the cities in search of jobs

while the high-level professionals also migrated away to other countries on the brain drain syndrome. SAP was designed to offer window of opportunities in the rural agricultural sector so that domestic food production would achieve high measure of self-reliance to take the people away from the foreign foods which high price they were unable to meet up with.<sup>6</sup>

The people of Anambra-Mamu River Basin were like other citizens of Nigeria badly chocked by the harsh realities of the Nigerian economy as at the middle 1980s. Structural adjustment was therefore a welcome development, which was hoped to diversify the economy and afford the people a wide range of opportunities to better their lives. To finance SAP, Nigeria had to obtain from the World Bank the sum of \$452.00 million in 1986, and another loan of \$500.00 million in 1989. Besides these, the Bank also approved a number other loans of smaller dimensions to be used in the sub-sectors of the economy and which had no direct relevance to SAP.<sup>7</sup>

It should be stressed that the implementation strategies of SAP is not relevant to this discourse but the impact on the quest for food security. Suffice it to say however, that the moment the programme was introduced than the Nigerian economy took a nosedive from bad to worse. The naira, which enjoyed a position of near parity with the dollar before the adoption of SAP in June 1986, fell to about 45 to the dollar at the parallel market in December 1993 and 22 to the dollar at the inter-bank market.<sup>8</sup> Even at this, the implementation generally was no smooth ride. In as much as the Nigerian government had willingly implemented much of it even during the austerity measures of the regimes of Shagari and Buhari, the World Bank and the IMF were dissatisfied with some aspects of its execution by the Babangida government. In effort to abide by their wishes, the

government took steps to effect the removal of some subsidies. However, the attempt by government to raise the prices of refined petroleum oil from 70 kobo per litre to N3.25 per litre in 1987 provoked strikes and urban violence.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Fuel Price Increases and Implications on Food Security**

The increase of petroleum products took effect from April 9, 1988. One litre of petrol moved from N39.5k to 42k, a 6.3 percent increase. Engine oil SAE 40 brand attained a new mark from N17 a gallon to N20.50 about 20 percent increase. Similarly, diesel gained N5.5k increase from N29.5k to N35.0k, an increase of 18.7 percent. Kerosene increased from N10.5k to N15.75k, about 50 per cent increase. It was even learnt that 70k subsidy would eventually be removed on prices of petroleum products; with 10 percent gradually being removed over a period of 15 months that would last until July 1989. The effects of the differential price hike were that prices of every conceivable product and services increased astronomically. Starting with commuting services, transportation costs jumped more than 100 per cent, and with it, the cost of food as commercial motor drivers hiked fares. In Enugu for instance, intra-city taxi and bus fares moved up from 30k and 20k a drop to 50k and 40k. Inter-city transport fare from Okigwe to Enugu doubled from N4 to N8 over a period of 15 months.<sup>10</sup>

Compounded by inaccessible roads, rice, gari, yams and palm oil, which were generated from notable food producing areas like Abakaliki and Uzo-Uwani together with other foodstuffs like beans from Northern Nigeria became too exorbitant. This was the experience of purchasers at Orié Abor Market and other food deficit towns of Udi LGA such as Ngwo, Ukana, Okpatu, Awhum etc. It showed the unsettling effect of high

prices on the purchasing ability of low-income earners. The situation forced households that were not used to eating some local foods like tapioca, cassava, dried cocoyam/ pigeon pea recipe (*achicha ede*) to start including them in their menu.<sup>11</sup>

In similar way, a kilogramme of frozen Titus and Mackerel fish in 1987 sold for N6.50 against 50k two years earlier in 1985. This was in reaction to the high cost of automotive gas oil (AGO) - the fuel used by fishing trawlers, which in 1985 sold at N170.00. By June 1987, it went up to N640.00, an increase of 300 per cent. The implication was that, whereas it cost about N210, 000 to fuel a medium sized trawler, which consumed about 1,500 tons of fuel per month in January 1986, by March 1987, it needed about N682, 500 to fuel the same vessel. Many fishing companies were on the verge of folding up as every berthed vessel consumed about 3 tonnes of diesel daily, that is, N1, 920 daily for each vessel or N42, 240 every day for the country's 22 registered fishing trawlers. The rise in the cost of operations was of course passed on to the final consumers at higher costs.<sup>12</sup>

Like a pebble thrown into a stagnant pool, the price hike sent a wave of agony across the country. There was nationwide rioting. In the area of study, the demonstrations took place like elsewhere with the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Anambra State University of Technology, Anambra State Polytechnic Oko and the Nigerian Labour Congress (Anambra State Chapter) taking the lead. It saw the participation of the different national trade unions that formed a joint committee to co-ordinate the protests. The slogan of the rioters which read, 'Babangida Must Go,' "SAP Must Be Abolished," "SAP has sapped us dry" etc found more ready supporters among market women, motorists, the lower cadre of government civil service and hoodlums.<sup>13</sup> This development

compelled the government to introduce minor adjustments of SAP in the 1988 budget to blunt its sharp edges. Similar demonstrations and riots in opposition to SAP prompted the government in the 1989 budget to make some extra budgetary concessions, which saw the raising of minimum wage, unfreezing of wages in the civil service and removing the ban on civil service recruitment.<sup>14</sup>

### **Inflation**

Inflationary trend associated with SAP was pervasive but affected more, persons with fixed incomes such as civil and public servants – judges, university professors, career civil servants etc. Adversely affected or worst hit also were low-income earners particularly pensioners and petty traders whose allowances and earnings did not increase with rising cost of goods. The harsh economic conditions, which the populace faced, had engendered much suffering in the land. The cost of feeding was outrageously high even as the standard of living was low. In 1987, for instance, the real worth of the minimum wage was N35 at a time when four naira was equal to one dollar. Since that time, the value of the naira had deteriorated further and most economic experts were of the opinion that N125 in 1987 was probably less than N15 in 1989. Prices had spiraled in most sectors of the economy, yet workers' wages had not increased appreciably. Food items, especially the staples – garri, yam, cassava etc., continued to go beyond the reach of most Anambrarians.<sup>15</sup> A dealer on foodstuffs at Enugu-Ukwu market in Njikoka LGA, Mrs. Eunice Okafor complained that SAP grounded her business. According to her, a few years before the *mbughari*, (meaning the economic crunch), a tin of garri, which cost N4 dramatically climbed to N38 and before one knew what was happening, it climbed to

N50. She observed also that a bag of rice, which was difficult to sell at N70 because incessant complaints of customers, suddenly went as high as N650 in 1989.<sup>16</sup>

A study conducted by Orji Kinsley Chukwudi on food consumption pattern of consumers in Enugu metropolis, showed that 25 per cent and 15 per cent of the respondents had reacted by quantitative and qualitative changes respectively in their consumption pattern. 58 per cent of the respondents aged between 18 and 40 years reacted by substituting the goods they were used to and 42 per cent reacted by withdrawing from the products completely to make ends meet.<sup>17</sup> Consumers with monthly income level of about N1000.00 especially those with large families were the worst hit. They had nothing left at the end of the month even as proper feeding eluded them. Such households lived in sub-human conditions. 346 or 96 per cent of the respondents agreed that SAP altered their food tastes, attitude and lifestyles while 14 or 4 per cent disagreed. In any case, SAP had its good sides. It made consumers to be more conscious, economical and rational in their purchases and consumption habits. It made them to be prudent, cost conscious, more resourceful in addition to acquiring maintenance culture and appreciation of locally made goods.<sup>18</sup>

Analysis by the World Bank (1991) showed that of the 80% rise in price inflation between 1987 and 1989, 29% could be attributed to the import bans, 38% to general price inflation and 19% to the fall in production within this period. It was based on the realities that critics of SAP dismissed the argument of government officials that food was cheaper in the rural areas. It was only diversionary and meant to induce an urban-rural migration. In reality, otherwise such assertions were borne out neither by facts nor by logic.<sup>19</sup>

## **Bread Consumption**

Hunger was aggravated by the sudden scarcity of bread, which before SAP, was the most popular and cheapest food for the urban poor across the nation. The regime of Gen Buhari had observed this in 1984. The government at that time knew the implication of ban of wheat, which in effect remained a major import item. SAP however did not have such face saving value for bread and wheat imports. The ban of wheat in January 1987 was preceded a year earlier by the imposition of a 50 per cent import duty which dealt a blow to the “Wheat Lobby” – a major promoter of the dependency syndrome.<sup>20</sup> The eventual ban witnessed a situation where bread had become so scarce that it was no longer a diet of the masses. A respondent - a teacher at Ogidi Girls Secondary School, Mrs. Angelina Okafor Observed that even if the masses saw the bread, it was another thing to purchase milk, Bournvita or Ovaltine, sugar and other beverages with which to eat it. She noted that tea was no longer included in her family menu.<sup>21</sup>

An earlier discussion the researcher had with Late Lady Margaret Emembolu, former Chairperson and Managing Director of De Pesto Bread Enugu, showed that her bakery was unable to roll out the product, which had become a household name in Enugu especially among the elites. She attributed the lull to acute scarcity of flour.<sup>22</sup> Her explanation which was in consonance with the report of the *African Guardian* showed that even before the ban, local wheat production in Nigeria was mere 80,000 metric tonnes compared to the two million metric tonnes capacity of the country’s flour mills.

This warranted the protest of the Flour Millers Association to the Minister of Industries, Bunu Sherif Musa on the matter. But that was unheeded as the government's decision was final.<sup>23</sup>

The essence of the ban was to find patronage for cassava as alternative to wheat in bread baking. This would afford increased income to local farmers. However, the ban also of rice and other foodstuffs continued to elicit protest. The protesters alleged that it would have been proper for the government to make allowances for a gradual ban to enable local production take root before imposing the ban. However, an apologetic of SAP, Professor Chimere Ikoku, the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, advised such consumers who could not do without wheat bread, to hop out of the country to have their full dose of wheat bread breakfast and then hop back.<sup>24</sup>

## **CONSEQUENCES OF SAP ON FOOD SECURITY**

### **(a) Deterioration in the Standard of Living**

The epileptic implementation of SAP meant that stabilization of the economy continued to remain elusive. The exchange rate, which it wanted to regulate took a continuous dawn ward slide in relation to other currencies of the industrialized nations and throughout the SAP period and thereafter its deterioration remained worrisome. The sharp and astronomical rise in interest rates despite the expansion of the financial sector made the revival and growth of business extremely difficult. Besides, the slow pace of economic recovery translated directly to increased unemployment and inflation grew so dramatically that the purchasing ability of the ordinary Anambrarians was drastically reduced. This had implication on industrial capacity utilization and economic growth.



Galloping inflation, massive lay-off of workers followed as restructuring of public sector enterprises as well as shortage of raw materials and increasing cost of production in private industries ensued. To compound the matter, the debt problem worsened as the ratio of debt service payment increased from 41.1 percent in 1986 to 151.5 percent in 1991.<sup>25</sup>

The effect was deterioration in the quality of life in the urban and rural areas alike. This could be seen from the ratio of the food to non-food consumer price index using 1985-1989 fiscal year. It showed that SAP caused tremendous rise in retail prices of foodstuffs from 250 per cent in 1985 to 700 percent in 1989 along consumer's price index. This was opposed to non-food items that recorded 28 Per cent and 56 per cent a year within the same period. When compared to the records obtained from countries like Kenya and Senegal, these fluctuations were more pronounced in the reduction of food security quotients of households. Their implications on price stabilization policies made food prices to be far higher than non-food items. This posed greater burden on the ability of households to attain to other family encumbrances. This was of course salutary given the large weight of food in the consumer price index.<sup>26</sup> Cassava (garri and fufu) in particular, recorded the fastest increase in price, in part because of its use as substitute for barley in beer production. The effect was that Anambra region started importing cassava in fermented form from the Benue River Region. Mrs. Evelyn Ejiogu who traded in this article said she got her supplies from Otukpo, Yandev and Idah areas with selling points in Ihiala and Orlu axis. She noted that soils in the Anambra zone had become so impoverished that cassava which replaced yam as principal staple failed to do well. This

was in addition aggravated by cassava blight and mealy bug, which drastically reduced productivity in most of the zone.<sup>27</sup>

Studies showed that rural households in the Anambra-Mamu region were spending increasing portions of their income on basic household needs such as drugs, transportation, education and clothing, leaving them with virtually nothing to meet their basic nutritional needs, talks less of saving for future needs or for investment. The tremendous rise in the prices of foodstuffs in comparison to the 1985 levels confirmed this contention. For instance, in the local markets across the state exemplified in Onitsha urban, a standard measure of beans, which was N2.50k in 1986 by September 1990, went for N8.00 and a measure of imported rice, which was N4.00 rose to N18.00. The local one, which sold for N3.00 went for N10.00. Similarly, a measure of garri, which used to be N1.50k increased to N4.00 and maize rose to N2.50k from 80k. The astronomical increases gave the consensus was that the condition of life was hard which no one knew when it would abate.<sup>28</sup>

One strategy, though unpalatable alternative, which many housewives and roadside food vendors adopted to mitigate the effects of high food costs, was to wait patiently until other buyers had finished purchases. Then they would pay for the bottom part of the basket content. This refers to the spoilt or squashed tomatoes, pepper or other items at the bottom, which had blackened due to the effect of weight and heat in the course of transportation. The bottom part of tomatoes for instance sold at Relief Market Onitsha and Nkpor Junction Market for N1.50 measure as against a measure of the fresh robust ones that sold for N5.00.<sup>29</sup> University students also suffered the harsh effects of SAP. In the pre-austerity measures up to 1984, students of tertiary institutions were fed

free by the government on adequate diets of eggs, tea, milk, custard, Quaker oats, sardine, margarine, bread, morsels of dried and fresh fish as well as meat and other high nutritious foods both foreign and local staples. Their meals tickets took care of breakfast, lunch and dinner, with each meal comprising balanced diets. The withdrawal of meal subsidy and introduction of SAP measures permanently deprived ‘the leaders of tomorrow’ the benefits of the so-called ‘national cake’ and state magnanimity hitherto enjoyed by their predecessors. The new feeding formula, which students and their parents entirely bore the brunt, led to abolishing of all catering facilities, which were hitherto bankrolled by the government. Example is the popular Margaret Ekpo Refectory at University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In their place, private arrangement composed of what in the local parlance was referred to as ‘bukaterias’ or ‘bukas’ in the short form of cafeteria, came on board. These eating joints, which were referred to by one interviewee as “Mama Ade syndrome,” symbolically and graphically described the filthy standard of these ‘bukas’ that dotted all over the campuses. In these ramshackle structures built to shed the customers from the sun and rain, the students had their meals on ‘eat as you pay’ basis.<sup>30</sup>

In the face of the high cost of food in the market, and in effort by the operators to maximize profit and to pay the miscellaneous taxes and fees charged by the university administrators, there is no doubt that nutritious food was not within the reach of most students whose parents and guardians had already been emasculated by SAP. From 1985 and subsequent decades, it became normal for university students to feed sparingly on what become popularly known as 010 or 001. The figures represent the breakfast, lunch or dinner, which the student ate or skipped. Thus, the figures ‘0’ represented the meals skipped and ‘1’ represented the ones he or she ate. The meals of course went ‘with’ or

‘without’ indicating respectively whether the student ate with meat/fish or not. The so-called meat or fish were cut in very small pieces. With the cost of bread on the high side, many students like low-income workers who survived the mass retrenchment exercises, survived by “drinking” garri with sugar to serve as meal. Some students, particularly the females who could not endure it found other outlets of survival. There is no doubt that the harsh condition predisposed some of them into incipient prostitution.<sup>31</sup>

**(b) Decline in the Earning Capacities of Workers**

Trends in real wages of civil servants in the Anambra State judging by the corresponding inflation rates in the middle 1980s up to 1991 showed that they were like their counterparts in other states, the lowest paid group of workers in Nigeria compared with the private sector and informal sector. By 1990, the minimum wage payable to civil servants was about N200 per month, and a university graduate on Grade level 8, step 10 in the civil service earned less than N500 per month. This made wages in private manufacturing to be much higher than those in the public sector. The fixing of minimum wages did not solve the problem as they were quickly eroded by inflation. More so, they were sometimes beyond the budget of state governments as exemplified with the Anambra State Government that was unable to pay workers resulting in arrears of unpaid salaries and continuous flexing of muscle between the government and workers’ unions. The effect was demoralized and disgruntled workforce whose take home pay were unable to make purchases of the essential foodstuffs and other household need. This explains the disdain with which ‘government work’ came to be seen and looked down. The condition of teachers proved worse. They were discriminated in the review of salary structure. The poor condition of service, prolonged salary arrears sometimes up to five months and

subsequent low standard of life led by teachers was to such an extent that it was almost a curse to be a teacher.<sup>32</sup>

It could be said that with the exception of the oil boom period of the early and middle 1970s, real wages declined on average by some 34 per cent during the 1970-91. Much of the decline was on account of the high inflation rates that the economy was experiencing. In spite of efforts made in the review of salaries and wages to reverse the trend, there was no success as galloping and runaway inflation continued to undermine the real wages.<sup>33</sup>

The findings of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) as regards per capita income in Nigeria in comparison with other oil producing nations such as Venezuela, Gabon and Kuwait showed that Nigeria was far behind which explained the hardship, that swept among the workers. While per capita income at that time was N14, 257 in Kuwait and N1, 351 in Gabon, it was N541 in Nigeria. The minimum wages in Nigeria in comparison with Gabon, Cameroun and Cote d'Ivoire showed that Nigeria paid the least – N125 or \$30 per month – compared with N364 or \$90 in each of the other countries. The NLC findings showed that Nigerian workers earned 58 percent less than workers in comparatively, poorer countries of Gabon, Cameroun and Cote d'Ivoire. Graduate earners in Nigeria were even worse off in comparison with their counterparts in these countries because they earned 73 percent less in a month.<sup>34</sup>

**(c) High Rise in Unemployment/Underemployment and Aggravated Loss of Jobs**

The worst consequence of SAP was unemployment. The problem, which started in the early 1980s exacerbated by austerity measures of the Shagari and Buhari regimes,

was compounded by SAP. The imposition of cost-recovery measures occasioned by removal of all welfare packages in health, education, housing etc put most people especially those whose real wages had fallen, in a quandary. Many retrenched workers in the cities made a U-turn back to the rural areas to find ways of survival and to engage in agriculture. Mr. Augustine Ikueze testified how life became so tough after he lost his job as clerical staff at the Presidential Hotel Enugu. He had no alternative than to relocate with his family to his native home of Ubahuekem Ihiala to engage in farming as survival strategy. He noted however that it was no roses in the village. There, the rural dwellers were already being squeezed out. Nevertheless, he maintained that rise in unemployment was higher in the urban sector than the rural areas.<sup>35</sup> This is supported by the fact that in September 1988, it recorded 10.0% (urban) and 3.8% (rural) with more men than women being employed. This was one area the introduction of SAP achieved partial success as the programme was intended to reverse rural-urban migration through the efforts of NDA, DFFRI and Better Life Programms.<sup>36</sup>

As the example of Augustine Ikueze showed, steep increase in unemployment was a result of large number of people who became redundant following mass sack of workers in manufacturing companies and government establishments and drastic reduction of government spending. The matter could be appreciated in the fact that government expenditure via contract awards and other avenues was until 1986 the greatest source through which cash recycled into the economy. The SAP measures therefore led to drastic reduction of investments both in the private and public sectors and therefore generalized redundancy. The devaluation of the naira directly translated to high-rise in the prices of commodities and services. International businessmen and women

were faced with such unfavourable foreign exchange rates that such difficulties they experienced in prices were transferred to the ultimate consumers. This explains why there was over 300 per cent increase in the cost of living between 1986 and 1989.<sup>37</sup>

Urban unemployment grew from 5.8 percent in 1983 to 14 percent in 1989. The situation in several places such as Okpoko in Onitsha demonstrated the wide scale impoverishment of the population. The result was wide-scale food deprivations among some marginal groups and within certain families even though there was no food shortage in the society. Food poverty was greater in urban areas than in the countryside. While rural dwellers cultivated their own food, urban workers depended on market purchases. The matter was compounded by weakening of the purchasing power through high inflation and devaluation of the Naira. With no corresponding increase in incomes to match the rate of inflation, it meant that many families found it almost impossible to feed properly. Between 1986 and 1989, the average urban household suffered a 31 percent fall in real incomes.<sup>38</sup> The situation in Anambra State reflected the entire Nigeria. This is demonstrated in the percentage of households that spent less than the minimum threshold. In Anambra, it was 17% for the urban sector and 9% for the rural areas indicating that the rural dwellers were more food secured than their urban counterparts.<sup>39</sup> This picture, which was likewise in other states of the federation however showed some variation. These include

**Table 6.0: Comparison of Anambra State and Selected Other States of Nigeria on Rural and Urban Households that Spent Less than the Minimum Threshold**

Zone	State	Urban	Rural	State	Urban	Rural	State	Urban	Rural	
S/W	Lagos	18	28	Ogun	4	4	36	Oyo	24	10
Ondo	30	29	Bendel	35	31					
S/E	Rivers	37	16	C/River	20	12	Imo	15	20	
<b>Central</b>	Kwara	30	22	Benue	21	9	Plateau	26	17	
Kaduna	18	21								
N/E	Gongola	13	17	Borno	36	16	Bauchi	17	15	
N/W	Kano	11	13	Sokoto	11	15	Niger	17	18	

**Source:** *Nigeria: Strategy for Food and National Security: World Bank Document Report on the Nutritional Situation in Nigeria, June 28, 1991.*

The above table shows that Anambra State fared better in the percentage of households that spent less than the minimum threshold on food. The State proved to be better than most states except Imo, Sokoto, Gongola, Kano and Niger. Anambra was in the same pedestal with Kaduna, Benue, Bauchi and Cross River. This shows that the food insecurity in Nigeria during the SAP regime was pervasive.

The adverse conditions of SAP were a resemblance of the situation during the Nigerian Civil war in the Biafra enclave. The loss of jobs for a large section of the society and grossly dwindled value of the wages of those in paid jobs and the informal service sector meant that a deprived person had no friend or relation to fall back to. This was happening in a lacerated context of total absence of welfare packages by the government.



This was unlike the situation that prevailed in the advanced countries, (the same nations that designed the removal of subsidies and welfare packages on which SAP based its prescriptions). There, food stamp administrations were put in place. These were used to cushion the effects of unemployment and deprivations on their citizens who continued to receive the aid until the person got a new job. This was the situation in the United States and several other technologically advanced Western countries.<sup>40</sup>

Since Nigeria had no such provisions and the churches and charity organizations were bereft of such programmes, many households were really stranded and strangled in the face of the foods scarcities. Some of them could not afford even a meal a day. Those who could took the option of rationing. By 1989 at the height of the deprivations, most fairly comfortable homes expended about 70 per cent of their incomes on food. This was in an effort to maintain the 1986 standard when the economic crises had first hit the nation hardest. In the pre-1986 period, it was conventional for some families in the middle class bracket to throw away leftover food, which made the rubbish heaps the destination of the poor and vulnerable groups every morning. By 1989, however, the middle class had been obliterated and the rubbish heaps became bereft of left over foods.<sup>41</sup>

One outstanding consequence was dramatic reduction of enrolment in school enrolment especially males, which Anambra State became noted for since the late 1980s. Many parents in concert with their sons considered schooling waste of resources. They were influenced by the high turnout of unemployed school leavers and the worst university graduates. Unable to cater for their upkeep, children were before the age of ten given out for trade apprentice mainly to uncouth traders whose operations covered all

parts of Nigeria and beyond. Low and high cadre civil servants, teachers and even head masters and secondary school principals especially the retired officers belonged to this category of parents who were forced by circumstances to terminate some of their children's schooling to join the rat race of trading.<sup>42</sup>

Interviews conducted across the Anambra-Mamu River Basin gave a uniform answer of hardship and paradigm shifts in the pattern of household food consumption. The slow pace of SAP in combination with leadership wrangling within the military brass and the political class consigned Nigeria into a pariah status in the international community. This denied her the needed external finance to support further structural reforms. Foreign private investments also dwindled substantially. The naira further depreciated to the point of nearly losing all value. Those who lost their jobs were unable to be absorbed in the private sector, which was not growing correspondingly. At Nkwo Okija Market, a picture that was true across Anambra State, the price of imported food went as high as two hundred times what it was 1980 even as the price of domestically produced food went as high as the imports.<sup>43</sup>

These were the areas where critics of SAP hinged their grouse from the onset. They knew that job creation was not as easy as the advocates of SAP sounded. The private and informal sectors were ill equipped to absorb the massive number of workers who were retrenched from the over bloated public sector. Both the government and the advocates of SAP forgot that even if deregulation and privatization went as planned, most private sector organizations were bound to come under severe stress. Besides, SAP did not put in place, intrinsic mechanism for checking the debilitating impact of the massive inflation that accompanied the programme. Thus, the forces emanating from the market

place generated such high inflationary trends that led to progressive fall in the labour share of national income. The effect was drastic reduction in the purchasing power of workers leading to dire consequences on individual and household ability to purchase food. The aggravated suffering which SAP subjected the masses can be summarized in the following statement credited to Adebayo Oluyemi-Kusa who pointed out succinctly that:

Structural adjustment entails draconian measures that are often unpalatable to the majority of the people. Unemployment and inflation rise steeply at the same time as subsidies are removed and wages frozen. The combined effect of these measures cause real incomes to fall by as much as 50 percent. Given that 40 percent of the people already live below poverty lines, structural adjustment entails far-reaching inconveniences. These programmes cause deep despair, widespread malnutrition and premature death and as UNICEF reports indicate, much of the burden of adjustment falls upon children and women.<sup>44</sup>

A renowned Nigerian management expert and former Commissioner of Finance in East Central State, Dr. Ukwu I. Ukwu also summed up the economic disarray when he asserted that

Our production system is in disarray. Our output is down, employment is down, income is down, prices are up ...and we have recently achieved the distinction of being ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> worst country in the world on the international human suffering index.<sup>45</sup>

### **Health Implications and Complications Induced by SAP**

The major experience, which SAP demonstrated was that emphasis was put on the high energy yielding foods such as cassava products, potatoes, coco yams, maize, plantains and bananas. These staples could be grown by the people directly on their

farms. In the past, many of these food crops were eaten as secondary or minor diets. However, the hardship occasioned by SAP revived their importance. A related development was that like the Biafra days, monetary cash became very scarce. This ugly experience was first noticed after the sudden change of currency in 1984. The SAP era brought it to the fore once more, making it clear that people could only eat what came directly from their farms. Rich calorific protein foods almost completely disappeared from the menu of the urban poor and their rural counterparts. These include milk, egg, beef, pork, mutton, chicken, fish and other seafoods etc. Tinned foods including baby foods and the cheap canned sardines and Giesha brand, which was relief to college students were scarce in the markets. It was worst in the cities where many people could not afford to buy even the carbohydrate foods, which though not scarce, were unaffordable because of low purchasing power aggravated by acute unemployment and underemployment.<sup>46</sup>

This major factor induced a U-turn in the pattern of migration thereby causing the populace to find wisdom in returning to their natal villages where they hoped to find farmlands to cultivate food for survival. It therefore goes in agreement with the findings of the combined research of CBN and NISER that Nigerian rural families who were joined by their returnees from the cities during the SAP era, relied exclusively for their food needs, on those items, which they could produce by themselves in their farms.<sup>47</sup> Food items outside these sources, were inaccessible to them. Informal discussions with a number of respondents showed that the landless and infirmed/weakened people who were in the majority could not muster the economic, financial and physical resources to produce what could barely feed their families. The option opened to the landless category

was to work as farm labourers but their wages, which was about N5 a day with two meals left their respective families in want and deprivation. The effect of the food deprivations and wrong eating habits forced on the people by SAP was that there emerged such fatalities as kwashiorkor, marasmus, measles, chickenpox, mumps and anemia among the unprotected category of the citizenry. The reality was captured by the Federal Ministry of Health, which reported that cases of anemia among pregnant women increased from 8 per cent in 1986 to 15 per cent in 1989. Similarly, cases of children born with jaundice and anemia increased accordingly.<sup>48</sup>

The attention of UNICEF was caught on the nutritional imbalance caused by SAP in the same way the Commonwealth made its report on the plight of women under SAP. Children under five years of age were the worst hit. Cases of kwashiorkor and anemia increased from 5 percent in 1986 to 14 percent in 1989. It ought to be expected that poor nutritional status made the people to succumb to infections such as gastro-intestinal diseases, pneumonia even as these diseases made resistance to endemic ailments like malaria and typhoid fever difficult. The net effect was that epidemics like cholera and measles reared their ugly heads. These diseases had disappeared since the colonial times. They made their reentry during the civil war when hunger and starvation was elevated to heights as weapon of warfare against people in the area of study. The sicknesses were once more banished with the return of normalcy in the post civil years. The hardship and mal-nutrition engendered by SAP brought them back with uncontrolled intensity.<sup>49</sup>

Fieldwork carried out by this researcher showed that the above malaises, was gnawing in the area of study. The adumbrated nutritional catastrophes particularly the protein fiasco left trails of permanent impairment on the vulnerable groups even when the

victims eventually survived the ravages of hunger and deprivation. The worst of the lot fell on children. A pediatric practitioner, Dr. Maxi Ike, noted that such children when admitted in his hospital did not prattle as expected of children of their age group, but would remain in half-crouching position like dwarfed pregnant women. Their over bloated stomach, pale motionless eyes, sparse brownish grey hair and cadaverous physical appearance all indicated one thing – kwashiorkor. Dr. Ike was pained that such cases were rife. The worst of it was that their parents who brought them for medical attention were too poor themselves to shoulder the costs; even so, they themselves were in the same nutritional status, equally begging for attention which intensive care on protein diet which they could not afford was the only answer.<sup>50</sup>

Responses from the staff of the Department of Human Nutrition at the College of Medicine, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, showed that more than 60 per cent of children that were referred during the period under study suffered from acute malnutrition related cases. These were the findings of a panel of discussants on “Solving Protein Deficiency in Nigeria.” It declared that one out of every four children who were in the age bracket of three years old, suffered from stunted growth because of the escalating cost of nourishing food. The panel noted that while the average consumption of protein in developed countries was 60 grams per person, developing countries like Nigeria had less than 12 grams.<sup>51</sup> UNICEF’s report was even more revealing. It noted that “most of the nutritional problems manifest in the period when 80 per cent of the human brain is developing; therefore those who survive may be handicapped for life.”<sup>52</sup>

Two Midwives Ms. Rosemary Okam of the General Hospital Nnewi and Mrs. Juliana Ibe of the General Hospital Okija, indicated that vitamin deficiencies was very

serious among the cases they handled in their respective hospitals during the era of SAP. These include rickets caused by calcium and phosphorous deficiencies; anemia from iron deficiencies and other diseases such as beriberi, scurvy and goitre. These were common in both the old and young while bowleg or knock-knees, bleeding gums caused by Vitamin C deficiencies, blisters, odema, swollen legs and skin diseases were particularly rife among the children. The respondents observed that though these diseases continued to manifest in the post-SAP era, their severity was unprecedented during the great famine era of SAP.<sup>53</sup> Another respondent, Dr. Emeka Mgbenwelu observed that the cases that were reported in hospitals were perhaps not up to 30 per cent as poverty and ignorance compelled most people to take to self-medication. In alternative, they chose the option of traditional healing. This category of patients only came to the clinics when the matter had gone out of hand.<sup>54</sup> The explosive cases of poverty and malnutrition during the period of SAP had caught the attention of UNICEF, which reported that

The growing factor of poverty caused by the severe austerity measures have drastically reduced the well being and nutritional status of families, in particular of children and women...The steady decline in agricultural production adversely lowered the income of women who constitute 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force and subsequently their welfare and that of their children. It is this escalation that has led to tendencies to shift to less balanced diets, thus worsening the existing protein, vitamin and calorie deficiencies of most children and women who worked for long hours at the expense of child-care and their nutritional status. These socio-economic factors, have led to child abandonment, child labour and street children now prevalent in the society.<sup>55</sup>

The above issues were the grounds on which the vitriolic critics of SAP hinged their grouse. One of them was the former Head of State, General Obasanjo (rtd.) According to him, SAP which he initially supported had in its implementation strategies

undermined the standard of living of workers, while rewarding speculators and commission agents. It sapped the economy and sapped the “energies, resources and vitality” of the masses. Like other protesters of the harsh economic regime, he was perplexed by the rigidity of the programme and its lack of “a human face, human heart and milk of kindness.” Obasanjo’s grouse was registered more on the fact that the regime was erroneously spending far more on defence, which expenditure when Nigeria was not at war saw no signs of downscaling. Even at that, debt servicing had in the two years prior to 1987 returned to the 44 per cent ratio of the Buhari government while crucial sectors like employment, food, shelter, health care and education languished.<sup>56</sup>

## **ADVANTAGES OF SAP TO FOOD SECURITY OBJECTIVES**

### **(a) Back to Land**

A significant effect of SAP was inculcation in the people, the spirit of part time farming. This philosophy was first imbibed in the aftermath of the Operation Feed the Nation in 1977 but it did not endure. However, the realities created by widespread hunger in the course of SAP, convinced many people of the need to engage in food cultivation albeit in low-key levels as a way of augmenting household food supplies. Two respondents Mrs. Evan Obiesie and Lolo Nkiru Ifeanyi testified how SAP jostled women from their complacency to utilize every little space in their compounds to augment family ration. Obiesie noted that in Uwani metropolis of Enugu where she lived, by 1986, the practice had become so widespread that people utilized every available space to plant crops such as amaranth, pumpkin, yams, cassava, tomatoes, and other vegetables. Premises of public offices, schools, residential apartments and undeveloped plots were



used as temporary farms. Lolo Ifeanyi added that it was to an extent that wives of the 'Big' men in the Government Reservation Areas (GRAs) where she lived were not left out. Flower gardens gradually became converted into vegetable gardens. She noted that it became expedient for many civil servants and their counterparts in the informal sector to travel to their natal villages during weekends and public holidays to utilize available ancestral farmlands into food production. They usually left the investment under the care of trusted relatives and routinely visited to make harvests.<sup>57</sup>

Those who did not travel home sought such facilities in nearby frontiers. Such were true about the staff of the University of Nigeria Nsukka according to Mrs. Ebere Okafor. They owned farms on rented plots at the outskirts of the university town such as Obukpa, Ovoko, Ehaelumona, Opi, Obollo, Ukehe, Orba etc. Some went down as far as Opanda and Adani in Uzo- Uwani LGA to seek for more fertile land. Mrs Okafor affirmed that among her colleagues, domestic animals equally formed part of the part-time food production philosophy. Like Nsukka, little spaces within compounds in other cities were utilized to install small cages for the rearing of chicken as few as five to ten.<sup>58</sup> A teacher, Mrs. Ann Ezeobi noted that supplementary sources of income and non-dependence on salaries made her group to embark on vegetable, crop, poultry farming and mini-trading. She observed that utilization of the techniques taught them at a seminar organized by the Catholic Women Organization at Maria Regina Church Nnewi increased their household protein needs. She cited the example of eggs which little droppings by birds reared by families improved children's calorific intake. The novel idea of fish and snail cultivation also taught them at the seminars started gaining the attention of the members.<sup>59</sup>

The message of SAP exhorting the citizens to go back to land was answered enthusiastically. However, land hunger and soil impoverishment, which had gripped most communities, made places like Uzo-Uwani, and Abakaliki the destination areas. These areas were in the late colonial and early independent era delineated by the ethnographers Daryll Forde, G.I. Jones and L.T. Chubb in their respective works as “under-farmed.”<sup>60</sup> However, the zeal at which people embraced farming in the spirit of SAP largely changed their status in this regard consigning them to join the category of ‘heavily farmed,’ and ‘over farmed.’<sup>61</sup>

This explains why Adani for example started teeming with population, and like some outskirts of Abakaliki such as Effium and Ikwo, it served as melting pot for the farming population who migrated from diverse places as far as Imo and Bendel States. Their farming operations covered the entire Uzo-Uwani towns such as Ifite Ogwari, Omasi, Opanda, Ogurugu, Igga, Umumbo, Omor etc. As Adani was the most centralized town and better developed in terms of housing, it served as residence as well as market, the source of inputs and cheap labour. The population comprised laid off workers of diverse categories and other unemployed strata. They came either to invest in farming or to work as farm labourers. The seriousness with which the people embraced the philosophy of SAP was the fact that by 1987, land and housing became a major problem in Adani and some adjoining communities. It was to the extent that plots of land and ramshackle room apartments were three times costlier than their equivalents in Onitsha or Enugu.<sup>62</sup>

A remarkable outcome was that the real income of unskilled agricultural labourers rose by more than 40 per cent between 1985 and 1989 according to World Bank

assessment. A major contributory factor according to the world apex bank was the rapid fall in the wages of the construction sector. SAP witnessed a reverse in the wages of urban population vis a vis rural dwellers. While the former earned more than their counterparts in the rural setting in the period between 1981 and 1984, this had reversed by 1988.<sup>63</sup>

The introduction of SAP followed by the devaluation of the naira lowered the standard of living of the lower socio-economic groups, particularly the urban areas. This situation was lent credence by the World Bank data for 1980-87. It showed that incomes in the urban areas did not keep pace with inflation and rising food prices – the average real income for both rural and urban households could be seen to have declined during the period but the decline was more prominent in the case of urban households.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, the rising price levels from the mid 1980s must have led to more households becoming food insecure. Income differentials, the higher urban employment rate and the fact that rural households tended to be producers themselves suggest that households in the urban areas were likely to have been hurt more than rural households by SAP. Consequently, Anambra was hurt more because of higher rates of urbanization than the Northern and Middle Belt States and because of higher unemployment rates, which was particularly high in Anambra State like other Southeast and South-South States.<sup>65</sup> The matter, which was nationwide, is supported by the records of the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) as follows:

**Table 6.1:**

**National Consumer Survey (NCS) Average Monthly Per Capita Household (HH) Consumer Income 1985-86**

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<b>Wage Earners</b>	<b>Salary Earners</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>All HHs</b>	
<b>Urban</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>44</b>

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**Source:** Federal Office of Statistics Consumer Survey 1988

The table shows the appreciation in the wages of rural dwellers occasioned by the reverse in urban-rural migrations. It shows that while rural household consumer wage income rose to 72%, its urban counterpart achieved only 66%. Similarly, salary earners in the two sectors achieved 41 and 39% respectively. This pattern of differential was indicated in all consumer items.

**(b) Large Scale Farming**

The philosophy of SAP also brought catalytic effect through large-scale commercial farming. Before SAP, private investment into commercial farming was not in the strategic thinking of the Nigerian business community. However, the ban of a number of agricultural crops such as maize and wheat that hitherto served as raw materials for industrial plants created innovative ideas in the once neglected commercial farming. There was therefore concerted effort to replace wheat bread with cassava, maize and guinea corn for the bakeries and breweries. Pineapples, kola nuts and coconuts were integrated in the production of local wines, soft drinks and beverages. Companies like

TEXACO went into cassava farming, which was processed into TEXACO-Garri and sold at the company's fuel stations in the townships of Anambra and on the high ways.<sup>66</sup> The scarcity of raw materials perhaps compelled the management of Premier Breweries Onitsha to establish a large maize farm at Anaku in today's Oyi LGA of Anambra State. In a similar way, the moribund Starch Mill Co. at Uli in Ihiala LGA was revived with Indian expatriate staff under its management. It went into cassava farming going as far as Akwa Ibom and Kwara States to seek large expanse of fertile land as its supplies of raw materials dwindled. It however continued to buy from the Anambra public to augment, adopting suffocating business strategies that exploited the local cassava suppliers. Some soft drinks plants like Gina Co. at Ninth Mile Corner, Enugu, and Pepsi Cola at Onitsha established pineapple and other farms for the same purpose.<sup>67</sup>

The example of some retired Army generals like Olusegun Obasanjo who established thriving farms served as fillip to other high-ranking retired military brass, career civil servants, and business tycoons particularly former government contractors whose business came to abrupt end. They felt the need to go into large-scale farming to supply the much-needed raw materials required by the industries. The shortage of foreign exchange and strict currency controls were other factors that opened the vista for commercial farming as lucrative business. The readiness of the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB) to make funds available to this category of farmers reinforced their will to invest in the sector.<sup>68</sup> In any case, this zeal did not endure as it fizzled out at the expiration of SAP.

**(c) Growth in Agriculture**

Elimination of import licencing which proved the albatross against food self sufficiency was a principal achievement made during the reform period. This made it possible for agriculture to achieve growth of 3.8 per cent during the adjustment period of 1986 – 92 compared with the 0.5% of the pre-adjustment period of 1980 – 86 and the post-adjustment period of 1993 – 94 when it fell to 1.9 percent. Since the adjustment focused on the rural areas, it saw a decline in poverty.<sup>69</sup> According to Survey by the Federal Office of Statistics, the number of Nigerians falling below the poverty line decreased from 43 percent of the population in 1985 to 33 percent in 1992. This was quite a remarkable improvement.<sup>70</sup> It did not however endure. This is in view of the fact that decline in food imports did not reduce food prices. It rather rose phenomenally, in part because of inflation, and secondly because of the devaluation of the naira. In the five full years of SAP, food prices rose by an average of 27.9% as indicated in the Survey by the Federal Office of Statistics. It showed that although daily calorie per capita went from 2,146 to 2,200 in 1991, these aggregates marked high-level of malnutrition in the population because the protein consumption level remained dismal.<sup>71</sup>

**(d) Agricultural Reforms Achieved by SAP**

There is no doubt that life was more pleasant for the Anambra people like other Nigerians during the earlier years of the petroleum boom than the years associated with SAP but that was deceitful pleasure. The first among the lasting reforms of SAP was the abolition of the agricultural marketing boards, which achieved higher prices of agricultural marketing commodities. SAP reduced drastically Nigeria's food import

profile and made the country the world's largest exporter of cassava. Between 1986 when SAP was introduced and 1991 when this study terminated, there was sharp decline in food imports from 13.4% of total imports in 1986 to 8.8% in 1989. The decline was attributed to government's agricultural policy under SAP, which emphasized self-reliance in agricultural production. It should be noted that the food import bill of N1.57billion in 1989, did not reflect the volume of imports but was rather a reflection of the fall in the value of the naira as against the world's currencies.<sup>72</sup>

This no doubt reduced Anambra's share of food imports and made locally produced food to gain in value and price. This is supported by available records, which suggest that between 1985 and 1991, the Anambra-Mamu River Basin had achieved a measure of improvement in the production of staple food items such as yam, cocoyam, cassava, maize, vegetables, and plantain. A director in the Food Security Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture Enugu Mr. Patrick Njom noted however that the improvement was fragile and unsustainable. The expected level of self-sufficiency was not attained because adequate attention was not paid to the issue of food storage He explained that most of the outputs were produced seasonally but needed all year round. Unfortunately, most of them had very short shelf life. These include tomatoes, cassava, fish, meat, potatoes, garri, bananas, day-old chicks, eggs, fresh maize, plantains, mangoes, oranges etc.<sup>73</sup>

This explains why the basin continuously experienced the regular pattern of cycle of food surplus in one season to be followed by near shortages and high prices in the offseason. When manufactured foods like bread, cake, ice cream, tin tomatoes, milk etc are added to the list, it showed that perishables formed about 90 per cent of total

household food need. A situation where refrigerators were unavailable, and where epileptic or illusive power supply rendered the available few in the cities comatose, most families continued to experience differing degrees of stress in their feeding management.<sup>74</sup>

This problem, which was generalized among the other Nigerian geo-political zones made the Federal Military Government to initiate a national grains storage programme involving the following: a national strategic grain reserve programme; a grain buffer-stock storage programme; and an on-farm storage programme for grains. These programmes were geared towards establishing national grains storage facilities at strategic locations across the country for use in times of national disasters, either natural or man-made. The initial target of one million metric tonnes of grains to be stored under the programme by 1992 led to the construction in 1989 of grains stores in five locations each tonnes of dry grains. However, the measures did not benefit the Anambra-Mamu River Basin, as it was not included in the grain complex or grain-producing zone.<sup>75</sup>

## **MEASURES TO CUSHION THE EFFECTS OF SAP**

As already noted, the SAP implementation entailed draconian measures that were not palatable with the lives of majority of the citizens who groaned under its debilitating effects. The excruciating sufferings had led to several outbreaks of street riots, public demonstrations and industrial actions. The protests, which led to nation-wide riots, saw the Enugu, Onitsha, Nsukka and Abakaliki having their fair share. There were loss of several precious lives and destruction of public and personal properties worth several millions of naira. To cushion the effects and to give SAP a human face as demanded by



well-placed critics, the Federal Military Government embarked on a number of programmes. Through the Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), propaganda machinery set up by the government to ginger the people into cooperation with the regime's policies, the lofty objectives of the cushioning programmes were executed. These include the following:

**(a) Workers' Relief Package**

In May 1989, President Babangida announced increases in allowances such as transportation, rent and meal subsidies. This included the N250 million promised by the federal government to the States to ease the SAP implementation pains.<sup>76</sup> The package was also designed to improve the transport system, and therefore ease the pains commuters faced every day. It therefore provided for the removal of import duties on commercial vehicles and spare parts for the remaining part of 1989, providing also \$30 million for the importation of motor spare parts. The measure also while promising to create more jobs instructed the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to employ 62,000 graduates and non-skilled workers.<sup>77</sup> In any case, the package, other than being a relief became the headache of the State governments who were unable to pay it. The issue immediately degenerated into widespread industrial action throwing out of gear, the entire apparatuses of the civil service. Some states that agreed or promised to pay such as Kwara State excluded the teachers who constituted the bulk of the public service, limiting the benevolence to workers in the ministries and parastatals. The discriminatory action no doubt, provoked head-on-collision with State governments. Anambra State had its own share of the showdown. Like its counterparts that were unable to pay, the government was of the opinion that paying the relief would mean dipping hands into the reserves and

the unbudgeted expenditure would equally deprive the government its commitment on capital projects. Besides, the payment would entail the unpalatable retrenchment of large segment of the workforce. The State had among the highest of the industrial actions of diverse types.<sup>78</sup>

The Federal Government also reneged on its promise. This gave the workers the impression that it was only a ruse to calm tempers and not actually to cushion the impact of suffering brought by SAP. For instance, not only that the money promised to the States were unpaid, no directives was given to the Customs and Excise as regards the waivers on the duties on commercial vehicles and spare parts. This made them to pile up at the ports.<sup>79</sup> In any case, the relief package made available the sum of N22.0 million to the Ministry of Works and Housing to facilitate the employment of 10,120 workers and 612 graduates while N4.4 million was given to the Ministry of Education to employ science and technical teachers. Others include N5.0 million, which was earmarked for the establishment of farms in Federal Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education; the allocation of N75 million for the duty free importation of spare parts for commercial vehicles.<sup>80</sup> In Anambra as elsewhere, these only scratched at the matter.

**(b) The Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN)**

The Peoples Bank of Nigeria was established in October 1989 “to cater for professional people and traders who, because of stringent requirements of orthodox commercial banks, might not have access to loans.” By 1992, the Bank had 200 branches throughout the federation with many towns in the area of study benefitting. In 1991, it had adequate funds of N280 million with 8 zones in the country. Within this period,

140,000 people comprising 84,000 women and 56,000 men benefitted from its loans, a number that was considered inadequate in the face of prevalent mass poverty. The cumulative loans disbursement as at March 1991 stood at N207 million. Unfortunately, agriculture did not benefit much as emphasis and preference was given to petty trading. Like other public institutions of its kind, the PBN did not endure. In its first 15 months of operation, it incurred a loss of N2.208 million with assets and liabilities of N245.790. Frauds and financial impropriety in the Bank's financial resources could not make it to live to its objectives. For instance, its first Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. Tai Solarin resigned in 1992 "in protest of the government's delay in bringing to court senior bank officials implicated in a financial and corrupt scandal."<sup>81</sup>

Discussion with a high placed government official, Mr. Boniface Afugbuom showed that the inability of the political authorities to manage properly, the fortunes of the Bank made it extremely difficult for the poor folks in the Anambra-Mamu river basin to benefit from the lofty objectives for which the Bank was established. From available evidence therefore, the Bank did not impact positively on the food security quest of the people even as its branches in all Anambra State local government headquarters made negligible impact on traders.<sup>82</sup>

**(c) The National Directorate of Employment (NDE)**

The NDE was set up by the Babangida regime on twin broad lofty objectives. Firstly, to re-orientate the mind of youths away from white-collar job mentality and inculcate in them the philosophy of self and gainful employment through productive labour force. The second aim was to achieve incremental food production for the teaming

population plagued by acute food crisis following the abysmal neglect of the once proud agricultural sector and consequent massive importation of food by past government. A relief package of N65.0 million was allocated to the programme to ensure that 62,000 graduates and non-graduates were employed under the programme.<sup>83</sup>

The NDE was designed on a four cardinal programmes. This research limits itself to the agricultural programme, which was of animal husbandry and arable cropping. The programme was open to high school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions, the course of study notwithstanding. Some rudimentary training or orientation courses were organized for them at the temporary office of NDE Ogui Layout Enugu. Five hectares of developed land was to be made available for those under cropping. The intending beneficiaries were compelled to submit the originals of their certificates and relevant particulars including the NYSC discharge certificates and evidence of local government of origin. These documents served as collateral securities. The prospective participants were required to submit feasibility studies and to provide guarantors who must be civil servants on Grade Level 10 and above and whose gratuity were to serve as additional collateral security.<sup>84</sup>

Lastly, the participants were to make themselves available to routine supervision of the farm sites and to receive technical guidance by extension officers of the Directorate after the project must have taken off. The loan package was N11, 000 for school leavers and N15, 000 for graduate participants under the arable/cropping scheme while prospective animal husbandries would receive double the amount. The interest rate was 9 percent to be paid within five years of annual installments as agreed by both parties and with one-year moratorium.<sup>85</sup>

It is important to note that this nicely cultivated programme was fated to failures because of relay of factors orchestrated by the various actors on the scene. Sadly enough, this was overwhelmingly the deliberate handiwork of the very midwife assigned with the successful delivery of the babies. Firstly the organizers were of the opinion, rightly or wrongly that the beneficiaries were not matured enough to manage the loan facilities if given wholly in cash. The Directorate therefore adopted the policy of disbursing it in kind by way of agricultural inputs and the rest spread over some years in cash. This also included monthly stipends. The lopsided nature of the implementation was that the participants were starved financially because of the beggarly amount made available to them. Using the Ogurugu 1990 cropping set as example, the sum of N9, 450.00k was disbursed out of a supposed loan package of N15, 000. When broken down, the figures were as follows: N6, 525.00k for inputs, N800.00k for insurance policy and N2, 125.00k paid in cash. Instead of five hectares as initially planned, the participants were to be given two hectares. Tractor services was to take the sum of N1, 600.00.<sup>86</sup>

In the actual disbursements, no insurance cover eventually took place because the participants did not sign any insurance cover documents nor were they given any certificate to that effect. In similar manner, the amount mapped out for tractor services, which was supposed to include ploughing, harrowing and ridging (as most of the participants cultivated maize and cassava) was allegedly embezzled by the staff of the Directorate. All the interviewed participants said they saw the tractor even as efforts made by them yielded no fruit. The effort made by one of them, Mr. Ted Eze who confronted the operator and the accompanying officials who were allegedly using the machine for private business, landed him in the cell at Adani Police Station.<sup>87</sup>

The Directorate further chose the policy of contracting the procurement of inputs to contractors who as it were, inflated the cost of the items not needed by the participants but which were forced on them. This raised their unit cost far and above the market prices. A little illustration may suffice her, also using the 1990 Ogurugu cropping set as example. The following table shows the supplied inputs and their prices with corresponding costs at the open market.

**Table 6.2: Official Prices of Inputs Supplied to NDA Participants in Ogurugu Zone 1990 vis a vis Open Market Price**

Description of item	Unit cost	Total Cost	Prevailing market Prices	
				Total Cost
12.5 litres Primextra Herbicide	70.00	875.00	40.00	500.00
10 litres Nuvacron Insecticide	140.00	1,400.00	65.00	650.00
2.5kg actellic 2% dust	60kg	150.00	25.00	62.50.00
3 Units weeding hoes	25.00	75.00	7.00	21.00
2 units knapsack sprayers	1,000.00	2,000.00	750.00	1,500.00
250 produce / storage bags	3.50.00	875.00	250.00	625.00
3 units cutlass	50.00	150.00	45.00	135.00
40 bags of fertilizer (NPK)	20	800.00	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2669.50.00</b>	<b>6325.00</b>	<b>925.00</b>	<b>4293.50.00</b>

**Source:** *Data supplied by five participants, 1990 NDA Cropping Set, Uzo Uwani*

From the above table, it could be seen that each of the participants was short changed of the sum of N2,031.50 in the supply of inputs alone. To this amount should be added the following:

**Table 6.3: Other Deductions Effected but not Supplied to NDA Farmers, Ogurugu  
1991**

<b>N</b>	
1.	Phony Insurance scheme/cover 800.00
2.	Tractor Service Charge (not supplied) 1600.00
3.	The remaining upkeep stipend supposed to be spread during the cultivation year. (not paid) 3,950.00
<b>TOTAL 6,350.00</b>	

It is therefore evident that each participant was shortchanged the sum of N8, 381.00 which accrued to him or her as loss ever before the commencement of the business. Again, many of the items supplied were unnecessary for the business. For instance, the participant did not need the knapsack sprayer since he could engage the services of professional sprayers who charged as low as N10 for the two hectare size of his farm. It should be borne in mind that the services were required only twice during the entire farming operations, that is for herbicides and pesticides. The argument that the two large knapsack sprayers were meant for each of the two operations proved spurious as one small sprayer could serve both purposes, that is, if the apprentice farmer must own his own equipment. In similar way, the 250 storage bags, herbicides, pesticides, cutlasses and weeding hoes were unnecessary. Starving him of fund when it was clear that he was to arrange for his accommodation, pay medical bills, transportation costs and up-keep services as well as the high cost of labour, were ways of discouraging him from the onset.<sup>88</sup>

The loan was even disbursed as late as July and August when the farming season was ending. Cropping at this period was invitation to destructive pests and diseases such as corn smut, streak, stem boners, cassava mealy bug and mosaic, gullmidge, armyworms and blasts. These pests are known to manifest their virulence and pathogenicity at the peak of the rainy season between July and September especially when the crops are tender. This was exactly the time the Directorate officials expected its farmers to go into operation. Even so, the soil texture of places such as Uzo-Uwani and Abakaliki where they were posted to, had at this time of the year, become swampy, muddy, and gummy which made heavy farm machineries like tractors dysfunctional and inoperative and the cost of labour too high. Likewise, agro chemicals were easily washed off by frequent rainfall if they were applied during this period.<sup>89</sup>

Another angle was that the land made available by the Directorate was too small to go round its participants. Perhaps some shady deals took place. The majority of the participants knew from the onset that they had to make their own arrangement at exorbitant costs because even those on the Directorate's farmland were oftentimes scared away by hostile, machet wielding natives, as was the case of Ogurugu site where most of the land had already been cultivated before the posting of the beneficiaries. The fact that the authorities made no adequate arrangement with the community elders, made the indigenes to encroach on the land at will. The only lucky beneficiaries, not quite ten percent, were allegedly wives, relations and friends of the Directorate staff who were posted early enough after the land clearing. They of course appropriated enough acreage. Respondents among the participants showed that they had no communication whatsoever with the Directorate staff after the first and only disbursement at Enugu where they



collected their cheques of N2,125.00 each. The supposed monitoring staff never knew anything about the fate of the recipients to whom they made the credit facilities available. Yet, the same Directorate used the pages of the newspaper to advertise its presumed success stories and to report the colossal amount of money it disbursed to its beneficiaries.<sup>90</sup>

From the foregoing analysis, it was evident that the Directorate staff programmed its scheme to fail. In effect, majority of the participants having seen themselves swindled licked their wounds and disengaged from the programme. The few who remained looked elsewhere, usually family support to continue with the programme. At the end of the day, both those who stayed back and those who disengaged saw themselves heavily indebted and poorer.<sup>91</sup>

**(b) Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)**

The aim of the establishment of DFRRI under Air Commodore Larry Koinyan was to stimulate basic infrastructural development in the rural areas where over 70 percent of the population resided and worked principally as farmers and reverse rural-urban migration. The Government initially made budgetary allocation of N2.033 billion to the project up to 1991. Out of this, the sum of N1, 433 billion was actually disbursed by the Directorate to the various Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAS), particularly state governments for the execution of specific programmes. According to DFRRI final comprehensive inspection team (FCI), more than 40,000 kilometres of rural roads costing over N250million were completed nationwide in 1989. These roads were however

untarred which raised posers as to their durability. The Directorate also embarked on Horticulture/Fruit Seedling Multiplication Schemes as well as Fisheries Programmes.<sup>92</sup>

Although data for respective states do not exist, Anambra State benefited from the 38,107.16 kilometres of feeder roads across Nigeria constructed by DFRRRI as at 1991 and gained from the 5,054 potable water and sanitation programmes for rural communities. The programme also complimented agriculture and the efforts of research institutes in many areas of food production and research through financial grants and other measures. These include assistance to the nationalized service funding for production of fruit seedlings, support for seed research activities, promoting locally designed agro-processing machinery. In addition to these medium and long-term measures, some short-term protective measures, incentives and other reforms in favour agriculture were put in place by the Babangida administration. These include, liberalization of agricultural loan to make it accessible to small scale farmers to obtain up to N10, 000 without collaterals, reduction of import duty on agricultural equipment, creation of agricultural insurance scheme to protect farmers investments and encourage the flow of credit to agriculture etc.<sup>93</sup>

Anambra communities that benefitted from the programme include the following LGAs: Awgu-Ndeaboh road (12 km), Oraifite-Nnewi road (10 km), Abakaliki-Onueke road (21 km), and 20 others. Borehole projects were completed in many communities such as Owerre-Ezukala I Aguata, Nsude in Udi, Ezillo in Ishielu and Ndiabo in Abakaliki.<sup>94</sup>

The programme did not however benefit majority of the communities for who it was designed. Such communities include Ihiala, which according to one observer witnessed governmental presence in terms of amenities last in 1967. This is verified by the fact that the last rural water supply in the peripheral areas outside the urban section was in 1964/65 fiscal year.<sup>95</sup> Muddling of its operations made them devoid of specifics. This led to inter-ministerial conflicts. Some of its projects were not within the portfolio of agriculture sector. Under its frame of reference were roads, water supply, fishery, fruit, electrification, housing, vocational skills development, sanitation etc. This made its activities unwieldy. This was what M. C. Ejoh, director of DFRRI in Anambra State meant when he complained about the apathy showed by other government establishments who failed to lend their assistance towards the successful prosecution of the programmes.<sup>96</sup> Besides, failure to monitor and evaluate the programme resulted to monumental corruption, which became rife and endemic. An example of corruption and misdirection of resources was reported in 1989. A monitoring team on the activities of the agency was told by the Enugu office that it had supplied 360 communities with portable drinking water at the cost of N5, 322m. But after a ten day tour of selected 14 local government areas out of the existing 23, the team discovered to its chagrin that 64 of the communities listed as beneficiaries were non-existent and 153 had no functioning water scheme as claimed.<sup>97</sup>



Source: *The African Guardian*, February 19, 1987

**(c) Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLPRW)**

Studies showed that women in the Anambra hydrological area like their counterparts elsewhere in Africa made up about two thirds of the workforce in the agricultural sector. They accounted for about 70 per cent of food producers, nearly 100 per cent of basic foodstuff processors and they undertook 60 to 90 per cent of the marketing. In spite of the pivotal role they played, their condition of life remained deplorable because of the patriarchal obstacles to the realization of their potentials. In effort to bring vibrancy into the office of First Lady of the federation and to alleviate the burden of the toiling rural women that, the First Lady, Her Excellency Mrs. Maryam Babangida introduced the business of caring for the poor. In line with the administration's transformation of the rural life, she set up the BLPRW popularly called Better Life Programme (BLP). The programme aimed at putting smiles on the faces of

rural women who as it were, bore the brunt of family upkeep. It was such a welcome relief that would provide rural women through their co-operative societies soft loans and appropriate equipment. It was aimed to increase their productivity, improve their income and reduce physical exertion in whatever locally viable ventures they undertook.<sup>98</sup> Unfortunately, the programme did not live up to its expectations. Like other government piloted poverty alleviation programmes, it ended up making millionaires out of the BLP officials and friends. The better life for rural women became the better life for rich women. State and local government organizers of the programme hijacked it in such a way that the poor rural dwellers whom it was designed to lift out of poverty and morass became the losers. Mrs. Angela Ifechukwu and Mrs Florence Mgbekwute reported that the application by their co-operative society for loan to improve the group's palm oil processing venture never saw the light of day in spite of the fact that the group complied with all the requirements and followed it up tenaciously. They noted that in spite of the fact that they were educated enough and knew their right, they were frustrated several times when they intended to use the BLP stand at the various trade fairs, which they attended at Enugu, Kaduna and Lagos. They noted that the stand, which was supposed to be free of charge for women exhibitors from Anambra State to encourage them were hijacked by the organizers. It was such that the participants paid through their noses. These views agree with those of Mrs. Beatrice Eze, who testified that the fertilizer and farming inputs, which were supplied by the BLP to help the local women, were used by the organizers to enrich themselves. At Ihiala, according to her, the products were openly displayed in Nkwogbe Market at exorbitant price. This fact proved to be true about other LGAs. She summarized the corruption that trailed the BLP by noting that

“the Nigerian poor did not know what hit them; before the poor could say ‘Food at Last,’ the food was taken away from them, and they were left gapping and hungry as usual.” The BLP was of course estimated to have gulped billions of naira with the usual state machinery but the poor folks became poorer at the end.<sup>99</sup>

**(d) Nigerian Agricultural Co-operative Bank (NACB)**

The socio-economic realities of SAP went a long way in enkindling people’s interest in farming, again raising the ponderous question of the problem of finance. The seriousness shown in the sector by both the old and new entrants led to formation of many farmers’ groups for the purpose of attracting credit facilities and for repayment strategies. One such group was the Nigerian Council of Farmers. The NACB re-strategized its operations by the recruitment of about 300 staff mainly holders of the National Diploma in various fields in agriculture. They were employed to oversee the 267 representative offices nation-wide and to work as Agricultural Credit Assistants (ACAs). The nomenclature was later changed to Assistant Supervisors Credit (ASCs). They were to serve as immediate contact personnel for the rural farmers in all the local government areas of the federation. To make the work easier for them and to achieve easy penetration into the rural areas where the majority of the farmers lived, they were provided with motorcycles. Records have it that by 1988 and 1989, 44,000 and 50,964 Nigerian smallholder farmers respectively benefited from the scheme from its 31,000 figure in 1986.<sup>100</sup>

The Anambra State share of the disbursements was as follows: 8,892 loan applications were received. They applied for 37,289,208. The number of loans approved

was 4,483 in the loan volume of N10, 297,485. The amount disbursed was N9, 428,484.<sup>100</sup> The loan package was at the national level organized on the basis of small, medium and large scale. The first category got N10, 000 and below, the medium and large scale got N10, 000 and above. In as much as the small scale farmers made up 90 per cent of the farming population and were responsible for 95 per cent of the aggregate food and fibre output and also constituted over 80 per cent of the NACB beneficiaries, it was the large scale applicants that got the lion's share of the credit facilities and resource outlays. Some farmers in this category got as much as N20 million which could serve as much as 10,000 small farmers judging at the rate of about N1,500 and N2,000 which majority of them got. In any case, by 1991 the Bank had disbursed a total of N2 billion and 40 per cent of this went to small scale holders while the rest were invested in investment loans.<sup>101</sup> The loans covered all aspects of agribusiness. For instance, it invested into the national livestock project, in the first quarter of the period of study, making available as loan, the sum of ₦8 million to 800 small-holder sheep and cattle fattening farmers, and another tranche of about ₦5.8 million during 1987/88. Goats and sheep were vaccinated using the tissue culture rinderpest (TCR) vaccine and de-wormed in many places. In any case, Anambra State benefited in the rehabilitation project in which Adada ranch was established with pastures, fences, stock handling facilities and boreholes for water supply.<sup>102</sup>

A major impact of the viability and efficiency of the NACB was that it served as fillip in galvanizing the commercial banks to take a cue from it and invest in agriculture as directed by the Federal Government. To this end, some of them started opening branches in the rural areas. An example is United Bank for Africa (UBA), which opened

vista in rural banking. Under a new programme “UBA Credit Scheme for Rural Women,” the bank under the leadership of Chief Mrs. Kuforiji Olubi Okojie, introduced the idea of small groups of co-operatives among the women. It made the women to organize themselves into joint liability forces for the purpose of obtaining small loans to pursue their varied enterprises. It was designed to improve the standard of living and to encourage banking habits of rural and sub-urban women. Individual participants could borrow up to N5, 000.00.<sup>103</sup>

Another instance is the Allied Bank, which established in Adani as well as all the food producing areas such as Abakaliki, Atani and Otuocha. In as much as it did not show interest in offering loan facilities to farmers and was not popular with that objective as responses from a cross section of respondents showed, its operations was nevertheless a relief to the farming population of the farming zones and their environs as illustrated with Adani. Farmers began to cultivate banking habits.<sup>104</sup> A rating appraisal of the overall performance of the government sponsored SAP programmes made by Orji Kinsley in Anambra State showed as follows in %:

**Table 32 Assessment/Rating of SAP Programmes in %**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>FAIR</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>V.POOR</b>	<b>INDIFFERENT</b>
DFRRI	12.4	22.2	27.0	12.6	11.8	14.0
Better Life	5.3	19.1	23.7	16.6	21.1	14.2
PBN	8.9	21.0	20.0	16.4	14.1	19.6
NDE	8.7	31.7	22.8	12.3	9.7	14.8
MAMSER	7.8	20.0	26.3	17.4	15.1	13.4
Others e.g. Mass Transit	3.4	1.9	3.5	2.9	3.6	8.7

**Source:** Respondents in a field research by Orji Kinsley Chukwudi, on the “Effect of SAP on consumer’s buying behaviour in Enugu Metropolis 1995



The table showed that the rating for each of the SAP programmes indicated that they under performed. The highest percentage of the responses “good” 31.7% was attained by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) which indicated its popularity among the youngsters, albeit its failure. It shows that the other programmes made less impact on the public.

### **Self-Help Projects of Anambra State Government**

In line with cardinal objectives of the Gen. Babangida Military Administration, with special focus on rural and community development, social justice and economic recovery, the Anambra State Government first under Group Captain Sampson Emeka Omeruah and later his successors adopted the Self-Help Programme as their pet project for boosting economic development. Its short and long-term priorities were firmly in the area of food, water supply, electricity and health facilities. It also sought to create jobs for unemployed young school leavers to check rural-urban drift. It worked to achieve this through agencies such as town unions, age grades, social clubs, and cooperative, thrift and credit societies. The underlying philosophy was to tap the latent well-known penchant and traditional ethos of the Igbo people, which even before the civil war many communities had utilized them to attain their infrastructural facilities with minimal input of the government. It was a conscious effort to harness the intangible but abundant resources in the land and use public machineries to put a new spirit abroad to enable the government and people to work together.<sup>105</sup>

Self-reliance in food production through efficient exploitation and harnessing of the agricultural potentialities proved to be the corner stone of the project. The objectives

were to achieve massive increase in food production and to lower the prices of foodstuff. It also aimed at achieving a substantial increase in the revenue that accrued to the rural dwellers who were predominantly farmers. The government sought to achieve this through substantial increase in hectareage of cultivated land and modernization of farming techniques and technology for increased food productivity. It also aimed at the creation of rural employment opportunities using the low land plains of Anambra, Uzo-Uwani, Ogbaru, Abakaliki, parts of Onitsha, and parts of Nsukka areas, which contained some of the richest agricultural lands of Nigeria.<sup>106</sup> The government introduced special agricultural schemes such as the Village Adoption Scheme and the Graduate Farming Scheme. The first involved the injection of private capital from banks and other organizations into the agricultural efforts of specific “adopted” communities. Its aim was rapid agricultural transformation of groups of villages to be sponsored by these organizations. The Graduate Farmers Scheme was also designed to provide employment opportunities for unemployed graduates and to increase food and cash crop production. In Ihiala for instance; three social clubs, Oganiru, Igwebike, and Alaoma Social Clubs formed the cornerstone of the projects that attracted government’s attention and support.<sup>107</sup>

In any case, the main thrust of the government’s agricultural activity was in the area of inputs supplies and extension services. This led to the establishment of agencies such as Agricultural Development Project (ADP), the Tractor Hire Services Scheme (ASTRAC), the Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme (SACS) and the Mini set Production Technique Scheme. In addition, the government set up the Task Force on Food Production Preservation and Storage which spearheaded the much needed drive to

save wastage and conserve abundant food and cash crops from season to season. Under the ADP, improved extension services were offered to farmers, especially in seeds and fertilizer distribution and on farm adaptive research.<sup>108</sup>

The ADP Contract Farmers Scheme needs some comments. Under this programme, the agency went into partnership with progressive farmers. It involved seed multiplication using new and improved species of rice, maize, cassava and other crops. It required the farmer making his arrangement of land, labour and capital, including tractor services. The ADP supplied him with inputs like fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides and the required seeds. The proceeds were shared between the contracting parties. The aim was seed multiplication so that the new strains got to as many farmers as possible in the next planting season. An ADP contractor under this scheme, Engr. Bertram Ofordile testified that he was able to multiply 80 bags of new varieties of paddy rice and 148 bags of new strains of maize, which were shared 50-50 between him and the contracting agency. He noted that the advantage of the new variety of rice was that though it is tiny in size, it rises (after cooking) far and above the existing varieties such as BG 29 and could last three days after cooking which made it ideal for social functions.<sup>109</sup>

Task Force on Rice Production was set up to undertake massive production. Within one of its operation, it was able to produce, package and sell its own rice. ADARICE Company was reconstituted to absorb the State's World Bank Project in order to achieve optimum production.<sup>110</sup> The Anambra State Tractor Company (ASTRAC) was established with head offices at Okpara Avenue Enugu where ADP also had its offices. Its duty was to hire out tractor to farmers on weekly renewal of payments 60 tractors were purchased for this purpose at the cost of about N3 million. The objective was to

achieve increase in cultivated hectarage and to introduce the people to mechanized farming. The operations, which involved ploughing, harrowing, ridging and trailing, covered all parts of the state from Abakaliki, Uzo-Uwani, Anambra, Ogbaru, Lower Mamu River Basin particularly Ogboji and Achalla near Awka etc. There is no doubt that the project achieved a revolutionary increase in the acreages cultivated and subsequent increased food production. Apart from the fact that it drastically reduced the drudgery of farm operations, it inculcated the spirit of enterprise in many farmers particularly the new entrants who began to take special interest in farming as a career. Some enterprising men and women adopted it as new business, renting the tractors on weekly basis and using them to offer services to farmers. An agro allied business man, Mr. Kennedy Bosah said that he utilized the opportunity offered by this scheme to uplift himself from unemployment which became his lot after he was retrenched from service. He noted that with small amount one could start the business, which required weekly returns to ASTRAC, Enugu. The business though was paying well was however tedious and frustrating because of the frequent breakdown of the tractors caused chiefly by storms which usually destroyed the bores. The scheme was however a huge success, he enthused as it was able to cover large tracks of land in terms of ploughing, harrowing, ridging and conveyance of agricultural products.<sup>111</sup>

Another participant of the scheme Mr. Paddy Ijere, described it as a welcome revolution in farming which made the sector to become revived after it was relegated to the background. He cited the example of a young woman Agatha Ofor who was operating a tractor. This served as veritable encouragement to the youths to tap the resources

created by the revolutionary formula introduced by the Group Captain Omeruah government.<sup>112</sup>

The Palm-for-Palm Project was another agro-economic venture and one of the innovative aspects of rural development embarked upon by the Omeruah administration. Launched by the governor at Udi on June 1, 1987, the aim was to systematically, replace old wild and less productive palm trees with a dwarf-high yielding variety called *mybrid tenera* obtained from NIFOR, Benin. The programme was designed to reinvent the past stories when the state was among other areas of the former Eastern Nigeria, the principal producer of palm produce, which earned it enviable position and affluence. It was therefore a project aimed at affording the rural families higher palm oil to feed the vegetable oil factory at Nachi, near Udi established about four years earlier during the civilian administration of Mr. Jim Nwobodo. It was expected that Anambrarians would supply 95 percent of the palm produce required as raw material by the factory. In essence, the Anambra Vegetable Oil Produced (AVOP) had already become a household name, radically replacing the assorted imported vegetable oils. More than 400,000 palm seedlings were distributed to farmers in the 23 local government areas of the state at subsidized rates. In 1987 alone, the target of 10 million palms of new variety was projected.<sup>113</sup>

The giant strides made in agriculture were also replicated in the industrial development campaign launched by the governor on June 2 1987. The philosophy of the campaign was to increase the number of profitably run industries in all the villages, towns and cities of the state. These would be cottage, small-scale, medium or large scale in line with the structural adjustment programme of the country's economy especially as

it related to a self-reliant industrialization strategy. Since some of these industries were food processing based, they were expected to reduce the volume of food imports and to resolve the logjam of unemployment, which was among the social problems SAP aimed to correct. The significance of the campaign was also underscored in the fact that the great majority of the Anambra people remained in the distributive trade, marketing and distributing other peoples' products. Agriculture was designed to benefit greatly from the campaign, in that it would form the raw material base of the new industries. To make the objective realizable, the All Anambra State Industrial Association was formed to galvanize the people towards the setting up of industries. Membership of the body was open to all industrialists in the state irrespective of size, nature or location of their industries. To broaden the base of its membership, financial houses and cooperative societies involved in production were also incorporated into it. The viability of the Anambra Vegetable Oil Product factory at Nachi was one of the factories promoted in the course of the campaign.<sup>114</sup>

To speed up the development of rural roads and to ensure the easy evacuation of food products, the Omeruah administration set up a Task Force on Road Construction and Maintenance. It worked on about 288 kilometres of rural roads, 15 inter-town link roads, four baily bridges and drainage system and twin-call box culverts. Some of these include Awgu-Ndeaboh road, (12km), Oraifite-Nnewi road (10 km), Abakaliki-Onueke road (21 km) These successes were achieved by the task force working in partnership with the concerned communities. In addition to this, the combined efforts of the Rural Works Unit of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Matters, the 23 local governments and the task force worked cooperatively in constructing 2,000,208

kilometre roads in 20 local government areas. Before the expiration of Omeruah administration, a total of about 3,000 kilometre roads had been constructed or rehabilitated. The desire in these projects was to open these places to ensure easy evacuation of farm produce and attract cottage industries.<sup>115</sup>

### **Portable Water Supply and Road Rehabilitation**

In pursuance of portable water supply to the communities in both the rural areas and townships, the government set up a Task Force in 1985 to facilitate water generation and distribution. 56 rural water supply schemes covering 77 communities at estimated cost of N20.3million was planned. Contracts were awarded for the bigger projects while direct labour and community participation was to be used in the minor ones. This proposal however did not see the light of day owing to project discontinuities. Many communities however, initiated their own self-help projects by depositing funds with government as part of their contribution for the construction needs. In any case, the two water projects, Greater Enugu and Abakaliki schemes started in 1985 at the cost of N78, 486. 00. Eleven satellite communities in Enugu metropolis benefitted at a cost of N10, 000. The Onitsha Water Supply and Sanitation Project, which was established with the assistance of the World Bank, gulped N66.3million. Overall, the Portable Pipe-borne Water Phase 1 cost the Anambra State Government about N206million.<sup>116</sup> These were designed to provide an estimated urban population of 900,000 people with an average supply level of 100 litres capacity per day. These efforts made the rehabilitation of federal governments' bore holes possible. Some of the water projects were completed in several communities. These include Owerre-Ezukala (Aguata LGA), Nsude (Udi LGA), Ezillo (Ishielu LGA), and Ndiabo (Abakaliki LGA). Enquiries however showed that up to

the early years of the 1990s, almost all communities in the rural areas as well as urban peripheries and slums such as Opkoko in Onitsha still relied on their own traditional water supplies. These included underground tanks, which collected water from the zinc during the rainy season to be stored for use in the dry season. Drinking water still comprised supplies from the streams and rivers for communities that were accessible to them. Water tankers served the need of most residents of the urban centres. The taps were however often dry. This also applied to the rural communities noted above who were yet to be connected to the state water scheme.<sup>117</sup>

Mr. Robert Ubozor testified that as a university undergraduate, he utilized the baby tractor obtained by his mother, courtesy of the Better Life Programme for Rural Women to engage in brisk water business during the vacations. According to him, with a 50 litre tank mounted on the vehicle, he fetched water from Atamiri stream located at the border between Umuezeawala village in Ihiala and Amamputu village in Uli to supply families in dire need especially during the Christmas and New Year festivities. Another respondent Mr. Anthony Nwabinele noted that the joint water scheme put in place by Ihiala community and the Eastern Nigeria Government in 1964 had the pipes destroyed in the course of digging the trenches during the Nigeria Civil War. Since then, they had not been replaced. The water scheme launched during the Jim Nwobodo administration of the Second Republic was limited to “up town” – along Onitsha-Owerri Road. Inland villages on both side of the road were excluded.<sup>118</sup>

Water supply went in consonant with road rehabilitation. The sum of N670,000.000 was committed to the maintenance of some 2,000 km of urban and rural roads. An Example is the rehabilitation of Achi-Inyi-Ufuma Road.<sup>119</sup>



## **Employment Generation**

The unemployment situation in the state involving people of all categories, the skilled and non-skilled labour alike, made the government to initiate the bold step of the Volunteer Service Scheme. It operated like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Under the scheme, unemployed persons were recruited, trained and guided to operate businesses of their own as companies, cooperatives or informal groups. During the training period, which lasted about two years, they were placed on monthly stipend. By 1987, four groups of 500 volunteers had been trained and deployed and were fully engaged in various projects in the areas of agriculture, small-scale industrial ventures, construction and repairs. It need be noted that these projects were continued under the successive tenures of Col. Robert Akonobi and Lt. Col. Hebert Eze.<sup>120</sup>

## **Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and Rural Development.**

During this period, rural development was made a major function of the various integrated ADPs now brought under the control and supervision of the respective state governments. They were charged with not only their principal goal of effective extension services, distribution of improved seeds and agricultural inputs, but other wide range of activities. These include provision of rural infrastructures, such as construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of rural feeder roads, wells, boreholes and small earth dams. To achieve effective coordination, the Federal Agricultural Coordinating Unit was established to coordinate the effort of the states. In 1986/87, this unit directed its efforts to introducing a strengthened extension system based on the training and the “training and visit” models in ADPs. The goal of achieving effective performance was in fact, a factor that led to making the ADPs to go statewide. The aim was to obviate duplication of

efforts. The Anambra State Government sought to make her own staff mobile and to encourage effective training of extension staff by research scientists, via regular monthly technology review meetings. For this reason, brand new motor cycles were provided each of the extension staffs who were necessarily university and polytechnic graduates with courses of study in related fields. They were posted to various Agricultural zones within the state. The revolutionary invigoration towards this end, perhaps explains the high production records made in 1987, which exceeded the output of 1986 by an average of 30 percent.<sup>121</sup>

However, the feelings made known to this researcher showed that majority of the extension staff as exemplified in the Uzo-Uwani zone had their own personal farms, in excess of those of the farmers they were assigned to supervise. This made them unable to exercise their duties since their own farms often at different locations required all round attention. The implication is that they diverted both time and inputs supplied them on behalf of the farmers into their own farm operations. Besides, many of them were at the same time registered for and attending different postgraduate courses in different universities particularly University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Enugu campuses and the Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu. Some of them were even registered for more than one course running concurrently. They only wrote proxy reports and attended monthly meetings and seminars armed with false reports. The result was that the farmers were left with their antiquated farming techniques and bereft of new science and technological innovations that could have accrued to them through the absentee and non-effective extension officers.<sup>122</sup>

## **Home Economics Unit**

At the federal level, the Home Economics and Community development Division worked vigorously for the formation of women co-operative societies in the rural areas. The Division built-multi-purpose home economics centers in some states, including the sister state of Imo.<sup>123</sup> However, Anambra State did not benefit from the gesture. This made the Anambra State Government to build on the progress made by previous administrations towards this objective.

## **Fertilizer Procurement and Distribution**

Fertilizer use in Anambra State like the rest of Nigeria was generally quite low, the farmers using a mere five to ten kilos of fertilizer per hectre. This contrasted with Europe's 100 pounds per hectre, the United States of about 100 pounds, and Kenya about 35 pounds.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, Nigeria was a huge importer of fertilizer. In 1988 alone, about 377,500 metric tonnes of fertilizer was imported. The emergence of the National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria (NAFCON) brought revolutionary formula to the situation. Although it took eight years between 1979 and 1987 for the international tendering and for the contract to come into force, the commencement of engineering design work by M.W. Kellog Co. at Onne, a riverine community in today's Bayelsa State brought the National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria (NAFCON) into limelight. It became the supplier of the following chief products: 1,000 metric tons per day of ammonia, 1,500 metric tons per day of high-grade urea, and 1,000 metric tons a day of NPK (Nitrogen, phosphorus, potash) compound fertilizers. Before then, Nigeria was importing up to one million tons of fertilizer a year, sometimes paying well over the market price for the products. Apart from affording employment to close to 2000 Nigerians, the company's

products no doubt was essential for realizing the goal of enhanced food production in not only Nigeria but the West African sub-region.<sup>125</sup> NAFCON supplied 315,000 tons of compound fertilizer while the Federal Super Phosphate Fertilizer Company (FSFC), Kaduna, made available about 20,000 tonnes of super-phosphate. Altogether, about one million metric tonnes of various types of fertilizer were made available to farmers in the 1988 cropping season.<sup>126</sup>

It is remarkable to note that at the national supply level, the regimes of SFEM and SAP and the general increase in prices of food items and sundry commodities altered the price of fertilizer, which generously removed another small portion of the subsidy on the product. This made NPK and UREA, which sold for N20.00 each per 50kg in 1986 to sell for N40.00 in 1991. In Anambra State, it was so scarce that when available, it went as high as N60.00 and N70 respectively.<sup>127</sup> Even at that, supplies came after the farming season. This problem was caused by a large number of speculators and profiteers who jumped into the fray, and made the price of fertilizer to escalate. This practice was declared illegal and criminal act by the government but that did not stem the tide. Governor Omeruah took steps in January 1987 to outlaw the use of middlemen and traders in the sale and distribution of the product and directed that farmers in the 498 communities in the state would deal directly with the government to get fertilizer.<sup>128</sup> The die-hard speculators then disguised as farmers, compounding the menace.

### **Livestock Development**

In 1988, the Anambra State Government took advantage of the promulgation by the Federal Government, of the Animal Diseases (Control) Decree, which aimed at

preventing and controlling animal diseases. It also aimed at achieving collaboration between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the states towards that objective. Institutional reforms under the umbrella of the decree empowered the Federal Livestock Department to set up surveillance units at the major sea ports of entry into the country namely, Apapa and Port-Harcourt. Animal control ports were also located at strategic units along Makurdi and Jebba - the two major cattle routes for the north-south ward journey. On May 3, 1988, the Veterinary Council of Nigeria was inaugurated at Abuja where the Council secretariat was eventually built. This enabled the Anambra State Veterinary Department to take a closer inspection of cattle entering the state.<sup>129</sup>

To ensure that Anambrarians consumed wholesome meat of hygienic standards, the veterinary department through the collaboration of UNDP/FAO took some collaborative initiatives, which were however geared towards assistance to animal rearers in the state. It should be noted that the Anambra-Main River Basin hardly benefited from the National Livestock Project Department loans made available to states in the federation with large livestock development. The loan made available in April 1981 involved a total of \$128 million with cattle farming as its primary target. The area of study did not belong to the cattle complex system.<sup>130</sup>

### **Fish Consumption**

Fish consumption also suffered remarkable decline. This was in view of the fact that fishing could also not substantially be exacted from the local rivers, streams and lakes. What could be exacted from them was very negligible using the artisanal fish mongering technique, which was the standard fishing practice. The worst was that

because the pond owners in the major fishing communities of the Niger and Anambra low lands, were in constant squabbles among themselves, tenant fishermen from Isu in Imo State, Kwale and Sabo both in today's Delta State, used that as opportunity to routinely exterminate the fishes. This they did by squeezing *iweli* leaves (obtained from a certain tree) on the surface of the water and later gamelan chemical to poison the fishes. This practice was of course common in other rivers and streams throughout the area of study. Like marauding hunters and their dogs that kill everything on sight including females and the young, the fishermen, poisoned fishes of all varieties and other aquatic creatures including their eggs and fries. The routine nature of the exercise ensured permanent scarcity of fish for commercial and domestic consumption.<sup>131</sup> This made supplies from the coastal region and from the northern parts of Nigeria mainly from the Lake Chad basin the sources of fish. Their grossly insufficient supplies and exorbitant price made imported fish, (referred to in the local parlance as *azu fridge*, (that is, refrigerated/cold store fish) to occupy favoured position in the order of fish consumption.

By the late 1980s, the refrigerated fish, which in the hay days of the oil boom, was hardly patronized by the rich and middle class families, had in the course of the SAP regime, become grossly so scarce that it completely went out of the reach of the poor households. Trade liberalization meant that indigenous fishing companies like Ibru and Tomab among a host others who before then provided some 6,000 jobs to Nigerians were nearly squeezed out of existence. Even before the SAP regime, these companies were unable to meet up with projected demand. For instance, the 1983 figures demand of fish in Nigeria was 920,000 metric tonnes while local supply was 358,350 tonnes leaving a deficit of 601,370 tonnes. By the first quarter of 1987, the demand of about 1.5 million

tones could not be met by local production because of the soaring cost of AGO, high Customs and Excise duties, high cost of fishing inputs and menacing growth of the seaweed called water hyacinth. Trawlers owned by the Federal Department of Fisheries were of course not insulated by the vagaries. It was not surprising that the prevailing market price of N2.80 per ton was unacceptable to the local companies. The difficulties, which they encountered in their desire to sell at N6.00, opened for them the attractive option of selling abroad.<sup>132</sup>

The implication for the Anambra-Mamu River Basin was that the poor folks who formerly relied almost exclusively on meagre quantities of frozen fish which they could afford as their only source of animal protein found it extremely difficult to make purchases based on the prevailing market prices even as scarcity greeted those who could afford to buy. As it were, the menu of most poor homes routinely did not contain any fish, meat or egg. Crayfish from the coastal waters had also climbed northwards. The acute deprivation was the message relayed in his music by the local popular musician Promoter whose album was released in the era of SAP. It was titled *Ogiri ka m jiri si ofe, azu alaa la*. It translates literally to mean that, “I used *ogiri* (the native soup seasoning agent to cook because fish has gone beyond the purchasing power of the people). This was the emotional effusions and lamentations of a poor rural house wife whose, irresponsible husband came home with his equally irresponsible friends and on demand for food, they were served without fish and meat. Out of shame and in a show of macho, he descended on the poor hapless woman and beat her mercilessly.<sup>133</sup>

## **Pest Control**

The battle against tsetse fly remained a concern in view of its limitation in the growth and effective development of the livestock industry. In concert with the initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the Anambra State Government sought to go beyond the conventional control methods by embarking on the biological control project (BICOT) which showed satisfactory results. It targeted the worst breeding places located along the low land areas for the control of *glossina palpalis* under phase 1 of the programme. An assessment mission for the establishment of guinea worm monitoring and forecast network in West Africa, sponsored by the FAO, was also in Nigeria to assess the guinea worm situation in the country. Its aim was to help the government to set up a warning and forecasting system for future out-breaks. Abakaliki in Anambra State noted for infestation and the worst ravages of the disease was naturally among the places the mission visited.<sup>134</sup>

## **OTHER CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY OBJECTIVES**

### **(a) The population Conundrum**

Exponential population growth was a worrying issue in view of the average number of children per woman, which were seven with growth rate of 3 per cent higher than the African average. Infant mortality rate had dropped from 187 per 1,000 in 1960 to 90. Adult death rate also dropped significantly from 27 per 1,000 to 13, while life expectancy rose from 37 to 54 years. These favoured high population, which in Anambra State was in the neighborhood of 7 million out of Nigeria's estimated 100 million. This portended grave consequences for food security and other social security objectives.<sup>135</sup>



Observation showed that families with larger number of children faced herculean challenges of feeding and providing for their basic needs. The phenomena of illegal abortions, abandoned babies, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, overcrowding, low standard of living, and low life expectancy were all thought to be direct consequence of rapid population growth. Ironically, the households with bloated families were those on the low-income cadre. It was worst where single parenthood pervaded caused by increasing estrangements, divorce and widowhood. The rapid and unchecked growth at an annual rate of over 3 per cent, made the Population Bureau International and other concerned international agencies to sound a warning note to the country's leaders to embark on vigorous family planning programmes to avoid deleterious consequences. The need to curtail the fecundity gave vent to the Federal Government to approve a population policy – the first in the nation's history – limiting the number of children per woman to four.<sup>136</sup> It did not however see the light of day. The anti-natalist policy was aimed at preventing the ugly experiences of Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia, which famine and starvation made them almost permanent objects of international relief operations. The government therefore embarked on a number of strategies. Among these was setting up of Fertility Control Clinics, otherwise called Family Planning Clinics in virtually every village of the federation.<sup>137</sup>

The population explosion had peculiar implications for the Anambra-Mamu River Basin. In the traditional system up to the outbreak of the civil disturbances in 1966, compound gardens constituted veritable means of household food supplies to the tune of between 40 and 60 per cent. The gardens comprised about two hectares of land on which was planted diverse cultivars ranging from economic trees, tuberous crops, grains,

farinaceous crops, vegetables, and suckers such as bananas and plantains. Animals also formed part of the multistory complex. It harboured snails and rodents even as manures from animal dung were used to enrich the soil. The richness of the gardens, made it compulsory to be owned by every man and woman.<sup>138</sup>

The population increases in the course of time led to gradual erosion of the gardens with grave effects on household feeding in the rural areas. Population explosion characterized by expansion of residential houses and development projects drastically reduced the availability of land for food cultivation. The ugly experiences of the civil war must have been a factor that induced most out-migrated citizens to lay claim to their ancestral land and to erect houses on them to serve as security and personal identification even in their absence.

The “Abandoned Property” syndrome in which people painfully lost their landed properties in other parts of Nigeria outside Igboland at the same time they had no accommodation of their own at their natal homes was the case. The alacrity at which people turned cultivable lands into buildings immensely contributed to scarcity of land and curtailment of not just the compound gardens but also the outer farms, which were also increasingly being utilized for developmental purposes. Interviews with a cross section of respondents, (mainly young women) showed that by the time of SAP, landlessness had reached such an alarming proportion that women of childbearing age had no gardens or farms of their own. They were forced to share the drastically reduced portions with their mothers-in-law and co-wives if any was left. It was so bad and against the traditional Igbo ethos that some indigenes living in their ancestral lands right in the rural areas had to buy items like pepper and vegetables from the markets.<sup>139</sup>

### **(b) Soil Degradation and Erosion Menace**

During this period, soil degradation made the staple food, cassava, which usually tolerates poor soil not to do well in much of the area. Even before the colonial rule ran its course, it caused yam, which was the favourite food of the people, not to be produced in commercial quantity making a large percent of the yam consumed in the zone to be imported from the Middle Belt of Nigeria mainly from the Benue River basin. Likewise, cassava, which circumstances conferred the major staple food after yam lost out in the equation became so insufficient that in Onitsha, Nsukka, Enugu and Awka zones, supply came increasingly from the Benue Basin in fermented form. Land scarcity and infertility had become so serious that able young men and women were compelled to migrate in droves to the cities in quest of better opportunities.<sup>140</sup>

The problem of erosion (*mbuze*) proved to be more serious. Population growth coupled by the activities of sand quarries who excavated the soil for sand and gravel, set the stage for the most devastating soil erosion in many parts of the state leaving no upland area unaffected. The immediate effect of the erosion menace was bitter loss of lives and valuable property especially buildings and farms worth millions of naira. The Anambra State Government set up a Task Force on the matter. It was head by the soil scientist Dr. Frank Akamigbo of the University of Nigeria Nsukka with hydrologists such as Dr. Boniface Egboka of the Anambra State University of Technology Enugu as members. Their study showed that during the period under review, Anambra State housed the biggest and largest number of gullies in the federation. There were about 550 major awe-inspiring gullies devastating 220 out of the 441 communities in the state while about 155 lives were lost. Most of the gullies were young, severe and acute. They had claimed

about 10 per cent of land mass of the state, sank many houses and devastated farmlands with costs hovering over N5.3 billion.<sup>141</sup>

Examples include the Agulu-Nanka-Alor erosion sites, which endless ugly gashes spread in all directions as far as the eye could see. Nnewi LGA gully sites, which housed over twenty-five major gully sites equally proved to be among the worst. These include Mbanakwu-Nnewi-Ichi sites, Otolo (six sites), Umuogbo Akabor-Obiofia Nnewi-Ichi sites, Hundred Foot Road/Agbo Edo Market Gullies, Amichi Gully, Ukpor (Ogboakuba Village) and Umuezena Umudim (near Eme Court). Others were Aзуigbo, Oraifite (both featuring channeling), Utu/Ebenator/Ezinifite Stretch, Ozubulu (three sites), Umuezeagu Uruagu Nnewi, Ekwulumili-Urueze, Ndingbo Otolo Nnewi, Ichi, Osumenyi, Unubi (behind Girl's Sec School). The above communities like the case of Uga in Aguata LGA, each had an estimated mean annual rainfall of about 1900-2000mm. Their poor vegetation with topography characterized by a rolling terrain in the range of 5% to 15% slope as well as high population density with its associated high human activities and severe pressure on the soil, all contributed to the menace. The construction of highways during the Third Republic linking Onitsha-Oba-Nnewi-Okigwe; Nnewi-Nnobi-Ekwulobia; Nnewi-Agulu-Amawbia/Awka; Onitsha-Owerri; and Oba-Nnewi-Okija roads as well as industries and other developmental projects were equally contributory factors. Several conservation interventions such as agronomic measures, soil management and mechanical methods were applied to check the menace. These include reduction in the velocity of rain and wind runoff, use of check dams to build up sediments to fill the gullies, direct filling of the gullies with selected materials, improvement in the aggregate stability of the soil and construction of all structural embracing concrete works such as

wide gutters and culverts. These only helped to minimize it.<sup>142</sup> These were the basis of calls on the federal government to reverse the trend in the cropping system in the study area and to ally with crop specialists in conducting adequate tests to identify other possible cropping system.

Related to erosion were incessant market fire disasters. Examples include the Main Market (1985 and 1989), Ochanja Market (1985), Ogbete (1986) and others, which wrecked havoc closed the channels on which thousands of households depended for food entitlements. Interview with Mr. Florentus Agbasiere, formerly an importer of fabrics at Main Market Onitsha showed that he survived three misfortunes. First was seizure of his goods by men of the Customs and Excise Department. The other two were fire disasters. The last incident, which occurred in 1989, forced him to go into transportation with his 504-saloon car, plying from M.C.C. Park in Onitsha to Old Park Enugu. He explained that he was still suffering the effect of the misfortune, which reduced drastically his social standing and ability to fend for his family. He explained that several of his colleagues were not fortunate as hundreds succumbed to early death leaving behind widows and orphans.<sup>143</sup>

### **(c) Rice Gull Midge Epidemic**

The greatest threat to food security particularly rice cultivation was the epidemic gullmidge which attacked rice farms and within six months of its outbreak, about 95 per cent of all rice farms in Uzo-Uwani zone were decimated. The fact that it was air borne gave strength to its veritable virulence and invasiveness. Equally the fact that local farmers were not knowledgeable about its dynamics made them to think along the line of

controlling it with the use of herbicides. This caused them to incur huge losses. The effort to control the disease proved forlorn because once it hit one single crop in a farm, the several thousand others including surrounding farms were affected in less than twelve hours. The ravages were such that misery became the companion of Adani dwellers about 95 per cent of whom depended on the rice economy. If they were not farm owners, then they must be labourers, threshers, agro-chemical dealers and professional sprayers, parboilers, millers, traders, transporters, suppliers of parboiling wood, food vendors and consumers. The menace equally put an end to the thriving Adani rice trade between that town, Onitsha and Nsukka, the two outlets from where the popular Adani Rice found its way as far as Lagos and northern Nigeria.<sup>144</sup>

Two farmers were reported to have committed suicide one at Umumbo and the other at Igga because of the losses they incurred. Before long, the pest had found its way to other rice producing zones of Abakaliki, Anambra and Ogbaru. It was a huge loss to not only the farmers but also the Federal and Anambra State governments and World Bank. It saw a reverse in the effort invested into rice crop promotion. However, by 1993, the epidemics came to an abrupt end.<sup>145</sup>

Related to the above was a host of other pests both of which cost the farmers much loss in terms of reduced yield. An instance was *abba*, a troublesome weed that proved almost impossible to eliminate in any farm it found its way. Within a short time, it had spread widely. It was believed to have been spread by migrant Fulani cattle in which dung contained copious quantities of *abba* seeds. The conflict menace between the cattle-rearers and cultivators though not in the magnitude it assumed in later years caused farmers to lose a great deal because the mere illegal passing across a cassava farm by the

herd ensured crop failure because the stamping of their foot on the shallow cassava tubers caused their rotting before harvests. Similar damage was true about other crops.<sup>146</sup>

#### **(d) Official Corruption**

The worst of the constraints that dwarfed interventionist programmes was the hydra headed menace of corruption that infected almost all sectors of the economy. It killed the efforts of the public corporations designed to afford employment to the people even as it proved to be the albatross to the implementation of the food security programmes. An instance was the 1988 scandal that rocked the Anambra Vegetable Oil Products Ltd (AVOP). The company was set up to revive the flagging palm oil industry, which was the backbone in the economy of the area of study and to put an end to importation of vegetable oil, which per se was palm oil in bleached form from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore – countries that collected palm seedlings from Nigeria in the 1960s. Its Sole Administrator, Dr. Sam Orji was indicted by a panel of inquiry of serial embezzlement, which included alleged N13, 200 spent on the purchase of 3 air condition units, N25, 000 contracts on financial appraisal of AVOP, and N42, 113.55 he appropriated for “business travels.”

The same Dr. Orji was in 1976 indicted in the Government White Paper on the report of the board of inquiry into the affairs of Water Supply and Construction Co. Ltd, which he was the Chairman. The Government of East Central State had earlier recommended that the same Orji and two others should refund the sum of N200, 985. 000 which was overpayment on the purchase of Wirth Bz Rig. The example of just one man cited here in several scandals, which he continued thereafter, as Chairman of Enugu LGA

is only a tip of the iceberg in the monumental corruption that bedeviled the *agricultural* programmes inaugurated between 1970 and 1991.<sup>147</sup> By the middle 1980s, virtually all the State owned industrial and development projects had collapsed largely due to political interference, maladministration and mismanagement. Examples include Premier Breweries, Orient Bank, the Cooperative and Commerce Bank, Presidential Hotel Enugu to name just a few out of over fifty. The State was carrying a heavy debt of over N1.2 billion excluding N60.25 million unpaid teachers' salaries plus heavy burden of debt owed to contractors, and several other cadres and categories. The result was real hunger and starvation.<sup>148</sup> To this must be added the sectional rivalry and hatred between the Anambra north (Wawa) and their southern counterpart (Agba-enu). The albatross of dichotomy was so serious that no meaningful progress was achieved. Everything seemed to have stood at a still.



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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### EPILOGUE: FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN ANAMBRA-MAMU RIVER BASIN, 1991-2017

#### **Introduction**

On 27 August 1991, old Anambra State was split into two states, namely new Anambra State with capital at Awka and Enugu State with the coal city of Enugu continuing to remain the capital of the new state. The population of Enugu State was 3,267,837 as at 2006. It has a population density of 460/km<sup>2</sup> (1200/sq mi) with a geographical area of 7,161 km (2765 sq mi).<sup>1</sup> On its part, Anambra State has a land area of about 4,416 sq km, and an estimated population of 4.18 million people as at 2006. (National Population Commission, 2006) It is the most thickly populated in Nigeria with average population density of about 951 persons per sq km.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Food Situation Profile; Political and Economic Crisis, 1991-1999**

The food security situation in the 1990s was shaped by the political and economic crisis of the military regime. The costly and dubious transition to civilian rule, which ended with the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) provoked unmitigated crisis. The crisis generated by it was exacerbated by the hanging of the environmentalist Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni men, and indefinite incarceration of Chief Abiola and several other anti-military campaigners. Several other developments virtually brought the economic life of the nation to its knees. Besides, the economic policies and mismanagement of the economy continued to wreck incalculable damage on

the lives of the people. While harsh economic policies were imposed on the people, the government and its officials relished in financial profligacy and reckless public spending, for instance reports of the Okigbo Panel on the activities of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) confirmed that between 1988 and 1994, some \$12.5 billion were unaccounted for in the nation's oil earnings.<sup>3</sup> Crisis of gargantuan proportions however, forced Gen. Babangida to "step aside" from power giving away power to an Interim Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, which was subsequently overthrown by Gen. Sanni Abacha in less than three months. Under his reign, the national crisis worsened leading to series of economic sanctions slammed on the nation by Canada, USA, European Union, the Common Wealth and other members of the international community.<sup>4</sup> Multilateral donor agencies kept very low operations. IFAD in particular excluded Nigeria in its boisterous crop regeneration campaigns. It was only in 1999 after the military hand over power to the civilians that it initiated an eight year Cassava Multiplication Programme (CMP) aimed at raising the country's food self-sufficiency level with the poorest segment as its prime target.<sup>5</sup>

The worst crisis that confronted the nation was lingering petrol scarcity and hike in the price of the product. It provoked repeated nation-wide riots in May 1992 and skyrocketed the prices of public transportation and subsequently made the prices of food and essential commodities to go hay wire. The perennial problem which was prevalent throughout the 1990s was as a result of poor managerial skills in the sector and subsequent shot down of Warri and Kaduna refineries.<sup>6</sup> Importation of fuel, which had been going on for some time was aggravated in 1990 when the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) tried to compensate the shortage through importation of

about 40,000 metric tons of petrol.<sup>7</sup> The result of the gargantuan nationwide political and economic crisis, the worst the nation had not witnessed since the end of the civil war in 1970 had the effect of dislocating all the interventionist programmes put in place to alleviate poverty. All the palliative measures put in place to halt the sliding economy failed. For instance, a set of measures announced in the transitional budget of 1993 of Chief Ernest Shonekan Interim Government were greeted by defiance and a mockery of its logic. This was true about the four-point price control strategy announced by the Secretary of Finance Prince Oladele Olashore as fiscal measures to achieve stability in the commodity prices of foodstuffs and manufactured goods. The N2.5 billion annual tax relief granted to manufacturers failed to do the miracle because of the rising costs of industrial production caused partly by inflationary pressures and increase in the tariffs of imported raw materials which rose from 15% to 20%.<sup>8</sup> The effect was astronomical increase in the prices of foodstuffs and essential manufactured goods. This is illustrated by the prices of 50kg of rice which rose from N1, 200 to N1, 500 between 1992 and 1993. A similar bag of garri increased from N860 to over N1, 000 during the same period. The same mark-up in prices affected other commodities. Cooking oils (*ororo*) rose from N330 in December 1992 to N425 in February 1993; medium size Blue Band Margarine (48x1) from N691.20 to N835; a tin of Peak Milk sold for between N13 and N15 compared to pre-budget price of N8 and a tin of Three Crowns milk rose from N6 in January to over N10; 400gm of SIMILAC from N70 to N130; 400gm of SMA Gold from N80 to N150 and 400gm of NAN (baby food) rose from N60 to N90. Likewise, Bournvita and Milo beverages rose from N30 to N45 and N35 to N50 respectively.<sup>9</sup>

## **Localized Political Crisis**

Apart from the nation-wide crisis, the area of study was enveloped by crisis of frightening dimensions. In Enugu State, the administration of Dr Okwesilieze Nwodo replaced dichotomy - the rancorous political disunity that rocked old Anambra State with his own brand of discrimination and divisions - 'tricotomy' representing the three constituent zones of Enugu, Nsukka and Abakaliki. His lopsided appointments in the civil service, which hitherto had 23 directors: 12 from Enugu, 10 from Nsukka and 1 from Abakaliki was replaced by 70 new directors almost all of whom came from Nsukka, Nwodo's zone.<sup>10</sup> The impunity in their appointments generated serious tensions that almost grounded the civil service - the executors of the agricultural programmes. With a population of 11, 411 and annual emolument of N284 million which increased to N327.8 million at the end of 1992, and doubled to N642.5 million at the end of 1993, it took more than 90 per cent of the revenue accruing to the state to sustain civil servants that were not more than 10 per cent of the State's population.<sup>11</sup> The agitations emanating from the state of affairs formed the *raison d'état* for the creation of Ebonyi State later in 1998 out of Enugu State. Thus, Abakaliki zone and six other LGAs that were formerly part of Enugu State made their exit to join six others carved out of Imo and Abia States to form the new state. Anambra State also suffered a bloated civil service population caused partly by the large numbers who disengaged from the old Anambra State. As expected of new state starting from the scratch, it grappled with such financial, infrastructural and logistical problems that temporarily put on hold issues relating to agriculture and poverty interventionist programmes. The worst crisis however, was inter-communal feuds that almost grounded food production. These include the Igga-Omasi warfare, which started

in 1991 and ended in 1993 under heavy fighting. It grew to such an extent that Adani, the commercial nerve centre of Uzo-Uwani - a major food producing area was hit badly. The populations, both the indigenes and stranger elements were forced to flee in droves.<sup>12</sup> Insecurity of lives and property soon engulfed other areas of the zone making food production business unsafe. As if waiting for the feud to end, another major food producing zone – Anambra North and West, was engulfed in the Aguleri-Umuleri warfare, which lingered throughout the 1990s and even entered into the new millennium. Abakaliki zone soon joined the league of war zones leaving Ogbaru zone as the only exception of food baskets of the Anambra-Mamu basin left out in communal fiascos. At the same time the Ezza resumed their old habits of domination of their neighbours, border clashes with Cross River State resumed in many locations engulfing the zone in intractable clashes that claimed several lives and disrupted food and agricultural value chain.<sup>13</sup> In spite of the adumbrated crisis and several others that space cannot allow to be enumerated, they did not however stop efforts at engineering some worthwhile interventionist programmes albeit on low keyed basis. These composed mainly the programmes and policies, which the new states inherited from the old Anambra State. These included Grains Production Agency (1991), Anambra Tractor Hiring Services (ASTRAC) and its Enugu State counterpart (1991), Small Holder Management Unit (1991), State Agricultural Credit Scheme (SACS), 1991 and National Board for Community Banks, (1991).<sup>14</sup> These programmes were all tied to integrated rural development for which reason a little discussion under that platform would suffice.

### **(a) Integrated Rural Development, 1991**

In the front burner of the programmes carried over from the days of old Anambra State that merits some attention was the integrated rural development, which was an essential part of the Direct Participation Projects (DPPs) of DIFFRI. Both Enugu and Anambra States keyed into it in the form of Community County Councils' projects (CCCPs). The Enugu State Community County Council (ESCCC) for instance was set up to stimulate development in the rural areas and to discourage rural-urban drift. The financial obligations were to be shared between the state government, the local governments and respective communities on a ratio of 50%: 25%: 25% respectively.<sup>15</sup> The promoters were to choose the projects after their heart and to design, execute and monitor them to successful implementation. Like Enugu State, similar rural development programmes in Anambra State had their greatest challenges coming from inadequate funding caused by inability of the State and Local Governments to provide their own counterpart funding. The communities were sensitized enough such that many of them were ready to pay their counterpart fund but were unable to embark upon these projects because the state and local government shares were not forth coming. Even when the funds were made available the amount provided was too poor to build durable projects. Besides, the long time it took between project conception and project execution dampened the moral of the people.<sup>16</sup>

### **(b) National Board for Community Banks, 1991**

Another programme carried over from the old Anambra State was Community Banks inaugurated earlier in 1991 by the Federal Military Government. It recorded a

phenomenal growth from 9 in June that year to 98 in December, rising further to 510 in December 1992 and 897 in December 1993. It had total assets amounting to N3.2 billion at the end of 1993 even as the banks were insured by the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) at a much lower premium of 0.526 of 1 per cent as against 16/17 of 1 per cent for the commercial and merchant banks.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, these banks could not penetrate the remote villages of Anambra-Mamu River Basin just like other places across the nation as their operations collapsed irretrievably.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the National Directorate of Employment, already riddled by corruption, operated at an awkward speed. With its agricultural programme almost ended, it tried to remain relevant by giving assistance in the form of artisanal tools to only 29 out of several hundreds of unemployed applicants in Enugu State under the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, otherwise called the Vocational Skills Development Programme.<sup>19</sup> In 1999, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and National Fadama Development Programmes were inaugurated with the aim of eradicating poverty in the land. NAPEP provided for subsidized credit to farmers. It consisted of four schemes: Youth Empowerment; Rural Infrastructural Development; Social Welfare Services Scheme; and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme. Likewise was the National Fadama Programme 1 aimed at increasing the income of the beneficiaries by 20 per cent. In addition to the above programmes, there were others that space could not allow to be discussed. Some of these include, Supervised Agricultural Loans Board, National Input Subsidy, Input Supply and Distribution, Agricultural Mechanization Scheme, Agricultural Cooperatives, Volunteer Service Agency (VSA),

Small Holder Management Unit (SHMU), Grains Production Agency (GPA). These ran from 1996-2000.<sup>20</sup>

### **Military Disengagement and Emergence of the Fourth Republic**

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999, the military disengaged from power and the civilian government of Chief Olusegun came on board. The following were programmes introduced by the new administration.

#### **(a) National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)**

To correct the anomalies created by non diversification of the economy, the new administration initiated the NEEDS programme as a comprehensive economic package aimed at positioning the nation as a healthy and dynamic state that would be able to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) mapped out in 2000 by the United Nations. Seeing agriculture as key contributor to wealth creation and poverty alleviation, its policy trust was to provide the right environment that would achieve annual minimum growth rate of 6 per cent in the sector, and to drastically reduce food imports from 14.5 per cent of total imports to 5 per cent by 2007.<sup>21</sup>

This objective was complimented by similar goals mapped out by the African Union (AU) following its transformation from OAU to AU. In the creation of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Union sought to achieve a continent-wide food security by making Africa's agriculture more productive. To this effect, in 2003, it created the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development (CAADP) as its working strategy and named 2004 its Year of Agriculture. It focused on improving



food security, nutrition and increasing incomes among farm-based communities.<sup>22</sup> In spite of these efforts, the fortunes of the agriculture sector continued to stagnate in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin and failed to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly growing population. There was progressive increase in import bills for food even as the potential of the agri-business sector as major employment and earner of foreign exchange continued to be undermined. Consequently, poverty caught up with a large majority of the population many of whom lived in rural areas and urban slums.<sup>23</sup>

**(b) Nigerian Agricultural, Co-operative and Rural Development Bank Ltd (NACRDB)**

In October 2000, NACRDB was created as the single largest development finance institution in Nigeria following the merger of the moribund People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), the defunct Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB) Ltd and the risk assets of the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). The Federal Ministry of Finance subscribed it to the tune of 60 per cent while the Central Bank of Nigeria contributed 40 per cent.<sup>24</sup> The bank established 201 branches spread across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. Enugu Branch was and still located at Independence Layout Enugu while the Awka Branch is located at Aroma Awka. The two banks together with the Abakaliki Branch coordinated its operations in parts of Anambra-Mamu River Basin. It operated its credit schemes on three broad categories namely micro 'Direct Credit,' 'On Lending Schemes' (through the State Local Governments and agencies/farmers' groups and 'Collaborations,' aimed at collaborating with local and international organizations. The loans were structured on short, medium

and long term durations for specific well defined projects consistent with the bank's mandate.<sup>25</sup>

The Bank's mission and vision of accelerating capacity building and virile economic base in the rural areas through provision of affordable credit facilities to the less privileged segments of the farming population who could not access the services of the conventional banks was unsatisfactory and largely unmet in the area of study. It failed to tackle the growing spectre of unemployment and was unable to achieve the goal of inculcating banking habits at the grass root level. It failed to accelerate growth and development of the rural economy as the cooperative societies enshrined in its mandate and operations could not be sustained.<sup>26</sup> There is however enough reasons to believe that the funds meant to revamp agriculture were not properly utilized. For instance, at a seminar on food production held at Aiyeye, Ogun State, the over 200 farmers at the forum demanded to know from the Minister of Finance, Shamsudeen Usman, how the N50 billion agriculture loan by the out-going Obasanjo administration fizzled out without the farmers accessing it.<sup>27</sup>

### **(c) Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF)**

The ACGSF had by December 2004 guaranteed a cumulative total of 397,422 loans valued at N7, 603 billion with distribution in the varying categories of cropping, animal husbandry, and food processing amounting to 1,588 or (4.8%) valued at N191.6 million at the national level.<sup>28</sup> The 2005 report by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) indicated that as at 31<sup>st</sup> December of that year, the total investment under the scheme was N4.4billion.<sup>29</sup> Up to December 1999, the maximum loans that could be granted without

tangible security was N5, 000.<sup>30</sup> Individuals who offered tangible securities could borrow up to a maximum of N199, 000 while cooperative societies and limited liability companies with collateral could borrow a maximum of N1m. <sup>31</sup> These limits were however reviewed upward in the light of rising farm operational costs. By 2009, the reviews upgraded them as follows: N20, 000 for unsecured loans, N1m for individual secured loans to cooperative entities.<sup>32</sup> Figures for beneficiaries in the Anambra area are unavailable but responses from some interviewed rural farmers showed that they were unaware of the funds. This is not unexpected because the funds largely went to the large scale farmers who were socially connected with the authorities. Responses from some staff showed also that the bank had been unwilling to give out increased credit facilities on account of a number of factors such as increase in the amount of default loans attributed to natural disasters, deliberate attempt at default, poor project management by farmers, inadequate monitoring by bank officials, late disbursement of funds by the banks, which encouraged diversion of monies to other purposes. <sup>33</sup>

#### **(d) National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS)**

In an attempt to address the problem of food insecurity in the country and to improve the nation's GDP, the government in August 2011 launched the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), targeting the households that experienced food insecurity as part of the rural development programme. The programme evolved as an aftermath of the November 1996 World Food Summit following the request of the federal government for assistance from the FAO special programme for food security. With the request granted, NSPFS was extended to the 36 states including the three states in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin. Emphases were placed on food security at family,

household, and community, sub-national and national levels.<sup>34</sup> The overall objective of eliminating hunger and rural poverty could not be achieved in the area of study as indicated in a study by V. A. Chukwu et al, which showed that majority (84.40%) of the women were not involved in the planning of NPFS programmes, hence its goals were not fully realized due to low level of participation of all the target beneficiaries. The study further revealed the gender disparity in the planning and implementation of most human capacity building projects and interventions in Nigeria.<sup>35</sup>

It is significant that among all the litany of programmes implemented in Nigeria since the 1970s, only the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and National Special Programme for Food Security, NSPFS are still ongoing.<sup>36</sup>

### **Integrated Agricultural Programme (IAP)**

In 2007 the new administration of President Musa Yar'Adua who succeeded Chief Obasanjo took proactive measures to curb hunger and poverty and to improve the lives of 140 million Nigerians. He named his pet programme Integrated Agricultural Programme with the sum of N1.3 billion approved for Agriculture in the 2008 budget. The sum of N80 billion was approved for the importation of 500,000 metric tons of rice and 11,000 metric tons of grains to complement local output.<sup>37</sup> As part of the palliative schemes to keep hunger away, Federal Government approved the release and distribution of 65,000 metric tons of assorted foods from the Strategic Food Reserve to cushion the effect of low yield during 2007 season and followed it up by securing the approval of \$39.0 million for financing rural projects.<sup>38</sup>

## **Nigeria Vision 20:2020 and the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs)**

President Yar'Adua suffered from prolonged ill health and died in office. The mantle of office passed to the Vice President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan who in 2009 continued with the economic roadmap of Yar'Adua. Named Nigerian Vision 20: 2020 (NV: 20: 2020), it aimed at launching the country onto a path of sustained and rapid economic development for the eleven-year period between 2009 and 2020. The blueprint, which commenced with the approval by the Federal Executive Council in collaboration with the National Planning Commission, was designed to achieve a bottom-up approach anchored on first point agenda of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of eradicating extreme hunger and poverty.<sup>39</sup> Vision 2020 aimed at reducing the number of people who suffered from hunger and malnutrition by 50 per cent by 2015 and 75 per cent by 2020. Its first approach to achieving the laudable goal was to reverse the previous approach of top-down approach – with government developing programmes for the people rather than the programmes designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated by the people themselves.<sup>40</sup>

The above measures failed to uplift the lives of the vulnerable groups in the Anambra region like elsewhere. Given the preponderance of poverty among rural agricultural workers who constituted a significant proportion of the population, agricultural and rural development failed neither to stimulate accelerated economic growth nor to tackle poverty reduction. The situation agreed with the (2006) Report of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), which indicated that Nigeria had about 12 million undernourished citizens (about 9 per cent of the population) as at 2003.<sup>41</sup>

Access by the people to sustainable portable drinking water remained a mirage. The unimpressive performance made the MDG Number 1 unachievable by 2015.

### **Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund**

The Goodluck Jonathan's government further saw the need to expand the frontiers of governmental intervention by adoption of social security as a credible shortcut to ameliorate the social pressure pile on socially disadvantaged persons. To this end, it implemented the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Act of 1993, which covers areas like unemployment benefits and social pension or assistance to the aged, children and other vulnerable groups.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, this noble objective failed as the scheme was reserved for the privileged group on public and corporate employment, excluding the informal sector particularly poor farmers. In any case, the governmental authorities in the three states also continued with the execution of existing programmes which included the Root and Tuber Expansion Programme, Presidential Initiatives on Rice, Cassava and Oil Palm, and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Others included the Agricultural Credit Support Scheme (ACSS), Fadama (Irrigation Projects) 11 and 111, National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), Large Scale Agricultural Credit Scheme (LASACS) and Growth Enhancement Services (GES).<sup>43</sup>

### **Buhari Regime and the Green Alternative, (2016)**

The administration came into power amidst lingering fuel scarcity, which commenced and lasted more than the first six months – the worst the nation had witnessed at a stretch going by its intensity, prolongation and over five hundred

increments in the price of the product.<sup>44</sup> Backlog of salaries owed civil servants in many of the states including the area of study grew to the extent that they could not buy foodstuffs, skipping meals daily. 'Forced fasting,' begging, borrowing, part-time jobs,' selling of jewelries and household appliances and truancy to survive the hardship were some of the measures resorted by the people for survival. The problem was attributed to dwindling federal allocation and inability of the concerned states to prioritize salary payments.<sup>45</sup> The problem, which was worsened by the economic recession of the Buhari administration, was attributed to devaluation of the naira and its effect on key agricultural value chain. It made every thing expensive. It started with imported food because naira was needed to buy the same amount of foodstuff. When people ran away from expensive foreign products, the local products were unable to meet up with increased demand and had to increase in concert with up front increase in the price of fertilizer, pest control etc. Smallholder farmers were entirely left on their own devices. Combination of fall of oil prices in the international market, inflation and population growth caused the GDP per capita to fall from \$2, 200 in 2014 to \$1, 180 in 2016 – a shocking 47 per cent drop.<sup>46</sup> The deliberate policy of banning the import of some food items caused local prices of items like palm oil, rice and garri to shoot up following devaluation of naira, which exchanged to dollar by N480 from N250. The matter was exacerbated by the Chinese government policy, which cracked down on producers of sub-standard agricultural products in China leading many of such companies to shut down. This reduced production capacity from Chinese side, which meant that the prices of these products increased in China and subsequently, Nigeria was at the mercy of the increased prices, which between 2014 and June 2017, increased by 157 per cent.<sup>47</sup> Many businesses went

down while others were on the edge of collapse. Unfortunately, indecision, lack of comprehensible policies and lack of clear national development objectives underscored the government's approach to the problems. In its naivety, the Federal Executive Council in February 2017 sought to tackle the problem by setting up a panel to force down prices of foodstuff. The amazingly extraordinary decision to use force, direct intimidation and threats to intervene in a free market economy largely dependent on food imports clearly missed the point.<sup>48</sup> The idea together with its use of task task force to enforce it fizzled out. However, the 'change' mantra on which basis the administration won elections in 2015, was given momentum in the agriculture sector. It adopted the Green Alternative 2006 as its core programme and entered into bilateral understanding which led to the signing of the Nigeria-China mechanization Implementation Committees.<sup>49</sup> In any case, President Buhari acknowledged the Growth Enhancement Scheme (GEC) of the previous administration as a good initiative and subsequently mandated the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to implement it to the letters.<sup>50</sup>

A policy of agriculture export particularly yam was invigorated. This policy hurt food security profile in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin because preponderance of yams consumed in the area came from the Benue River Basin areas of Nassarawa, Wukari, Zakibiam, Danicha, Tivland etc. This made the cost of yams to climb over 300 per cent.<sup>51</sup> However, the state governments embarked on concerted efforts to reposition agriculture as the prime sector of the economy. In Anambra State for instance, the government of Chief Willy Obiano embarked on the export of cash crops including fruited pumpkins and bitter leaf to the United Kingdom starting from January 2016 at an estimated value of USD 5million boost foreign exchange. The administration encouraged the formation of



cooperative societies as an avenue to attract agricultural loans from the government. A major development was the entry of the private sector into rice cultivation. To this effect, investors like Coscharis and Joseph Agro among a host others embarked on the integrated farming of rice, tomatoes, maltin plants etc. By 2016, an estimated 230,000 metric tons of rice was produced exceeding the target of 210,000.<sup>52</sup> However, it was not able to meet up with the consumable quantity of 320,000. Similar milestones were also being achieved in Enugu and Ebonyi states where over 85 per cent of the population depended on the land. The popular Abakaliki Rice rejuvenated together with the production of cassava, yams, cocoyam, maize etc through the injection of resources by the administration of the governor, Mr. Umahi.<sup>53</sup>

### **Constraints to Food Security**

The litany of constraints bedeviling food security achievement as witnessed in the old Anambra State continued to pose herculean challenges in the new dispensation. It may not be necessary cataloguing them but for the sake of memory refreshment, these include uncontrolled population growth, unrestrained rural-urban migration, wavering policy formulations and implementation hiccups, insufficient infrastructural support, poor input distribution system and focus on oil economy at the negligence of other sectors of the economy. Others include over dependence on rain-fed farming, poor capacity utilization, and low investor's confidence, environmental degradation, poor access to funds, poor socio-economic status of farmers, insufficient technological transfer system, corruption and poor commitment to implementation of agricultural policies. Added to these was lopsided pricing system, which did not favour the rural farmers. Since agricultural revolution ought to serve as catalyst to industrialization, the above factors

failed to transform the agriculture sector with the result that it robbed Nigeria her dream of transforming into one of the 20 leading economies in the world by 2020. Besides, the targets of the MDGs of reducing hunger and extreme poverty and stimulating sustainable development, which could only be attained through increased attention to agriculture, food security and sustainable water resources became unrealizable.

**(a) Avian Flu:** In any case, entirely new dimensions of problems cropped up since the beginning of the new millennium and became serious in the subsequent years. The first of these was outbreak of Avian Flu that decimated birds and brought untold hardship to poultry farmers. Since 2009 when it was first reported, the epidemic had continued to flay up intermittently. For instance, in the first quarter of 2015, over 1.4 million birds were lost to the disease which affected eighteen states including the area of study.<sup>54</sup>

**(b) Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen**

The worst challenge however were terrorist menace of Boko Haram in the Northeast parts of the country, which drastically disrupted food distribution channels among and between different sections of the country. It started in 2009 and by the following year, it became worrisome because the Anambra region depended on the Lake Chad Basin for its dried fish and meat.<sup>55</sup>

**(c) Fulani Herdsmen Invaders:** The crisis engendered by Fulani herdsmen left several communities in Anambra basin under subjugation. With their sophisticated weapons such as AK 47, poisoned arrows and daggers, no community appears to be immune from their deadly attacks. Notable communities attacked include Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani LGA where seven villages were invaded by over 500-armed herdsmen on April 25, 2015. Over 50

people were killed and several others lay critical in hospitals at Nsukka.<sup>56</sup> Four months later, other communities in Ogidi, Ekwulobia, Alor, Agbo, Orukwu etc all in Anambra State were invaded. An instance was the attack of Ugbene, Ugbenu and Achalla communities in Awka North L. G. A. who in December 2016 and January 2017 suffered repeated attacks by herdsmen who with over 2,000 grazing cows destroyed their rice farms, destroying also tools and facilities worth over N50 million. On August 25 2016, Ndiagu Atakwu in Enugu State was invaded. Several communities followed suit amidst killings, raping of women and destruction of houses and farms.<sup>57</sup> The invasion, which extended to Ebonyi meant that farming activities were curtailed. Unfortunately, the Federal Government treated the matter with kid gloves. It even went to the ridiculous extent of demanding from the people to part away their farmlands in favour of the attackers as grazing land. Related to the Fulani invaders were the widespread nefarious activities of kidnappers and ritual killers. Armed with sophisticated weapons, their attacks have excluded local and foreign investors from making their input in food production business.

#### **(d) Menace of Soldiers, Mobile Police men and Kidnappers/ Ritualists**

Other nefarious activities are those of soldiers and mobile unit of the Nigeria Police who mount illegal roadblocks in all parts of the region and use them to extort local people including women going to their farms or market. They seize their bicycles and motorcycles and hold them ransom until illegal fees ranging from N1, 000 to N5, 000 are paid.<sup>58</sup> Virile young men and women have subsequently left the villages for fear of soldiers who attack at will. Related to these are the fearsome activities of kidnapers and ritual killers who sprawl the land looking for victims. Armed to the teeth with deadly

weapons, their menace has prevented people from going to their farms except in groups, which is not feasible as the farms are located away from each other.

#### **(e) Raging Floods**

Natural disasters particularly misfortune caused in the wake floods were among the most devastating upheavals that claimed many lives and caused more property damage than any other natural phenomenon. The 2012 floods affected and displaced more people than any other disaster; it also caused more damage to property. In Anambra State, farms and homes of almost the entire Ogbaru LGA communities as well as Anambra areas of Otuocha axis were submerged in the raging flood. Ogwuaniocha, Ogwuikpere, Atani among a host others as well as Anambra North areas of Otuocha also suffered greatly as their farms and homes were consumed. Ogwuaniocha people sought refuge in the mainland areas of Ihiala where they were quartered at St. St Paul's Old Church as well as schools and private homes in Umuezeawala, Umuduru, Ogboro villages among several other camps. The trail of woes that visited the affected communities including those in Ebonyi and Enugu States had the effect of making basic foodstuffs scarce. They also increased food prices, which provoked price inflation. This called for government intervention as well as other non-government agencies that donated foodstuff and materials. Politicians on vote campaign mission seized the opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity with the flood victims. Among the sympathizers was the Orjiakor Foundation headed by Dr. A. B. C.Orjiakor.<sup>59</sup> Together with several others, several tones of food and clothing was donated to the flood victims.

## **(f) Erosion Menace**

Erosion menace threatened to wipe away many communities. An example is Oko in Anambra State. In June 2013, it destroyed buildings worth about N7.5 billion at the Federal Oko Polytechnic located in the town.<sup>60</sup> The erosion menace agrees with a study by Igbokwe, et al. and a collaborative research conducted by Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the National Space Research and Development Agency, (2008), which deduced that Southeastern Nigeria as a whole was typically a gully erosion region that called for urgent external intervention by concerned authorities. They also called for the development of Geo-information-Based Early Warning System (GEOBEWS) for estimating soil loss.<sup>61</sup>

## **Evaluation of the Programmes, 1991-2017**

From the above survey, it could be seen that between 1991 and 1995, nine programmes representing 37 per cent of policies, initiatives and programmes were implemented while 3 programmes representing 12 per cent were executed between 1996 and 2000. Four programmes representing about 18 per cent were implemented between 2006 and 2010 and 2 programmes representing 8 per cent were implemented between 2011 and 2013.<sup>62</sup> Studies show that on the whole, eleven programmes representing 46 per cent of all the programmes were concluded, some ended unaccomplished while others were abandoned. Instances of the abandoned ones include Fadama 1 that transited to Fadama 11 and 111. DFRRI, Grains Production Agency, Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme and National Poverty Eradication Programme were concluded but under controversial circumstances of corruptive influences.<sup>63</sup> Massive corruption of the era

prompted the Chairman of DFRRI, Air Vice Marshal Larry Koinyan to admit that his agency was riddled by mitigated corruption.<sup>64</sup> Examples of abandoned programmes include the Presidential Initiatives on Rice, Cassava and Oil Palms. The weak effort made in the 1998/99 fiscal year to resume the World Bank assisted irrigation programme at the Lower and Upper Anambra River Basin again failed to see a logical conclusion.<sup>65</sup>

The above perspectives agree with the research findings of Professor C. J. Arene and R. C. Anyaeji conducted in the three quarters of Nsukka metropolis namely Onuiyi, Odenigbo, and Ogige. With population composed mainly of traders, artisans, and civil/public servants, the study found out that(60%) of the respondents were food insecure since their monthly per capita food expenditure fell below two-third (2/3) of the mean monthly per capita food expenditure used in the analysis.<sup>66</sup>

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **SUMMARY**

This study examines the interventionist programmes and policies inaugurated by the successive federal and state governments and multinational development donor agencies as well as efforts made by other stakeholders including the people themselves towards achieving food security in Anambra-Mamu River Basin of Nigeria between 1960 and 1991. The study underlines the importance of food security in national development and underscores the fact that food acts as stabilizer as well as destabilizer in national politics. It demonstrates that a nation, which cannot feed its citizens well, cannot truly claim to be sovereign because it can neither withstand the stresses and strains of domestic politics nor stand up to the challenges posed by external aggression. Growing problems of hunger and malnutrition and increasing inability of national governments in the developing countries to feed their nationals have continued to elicit topical and provocative discourse among national leaders and international actors. It has also generated controversial, analytical and lively discussion among scholars and professionals of varied shades, which include scientists, economists, sociologists, historians, demographers, agronomists, geographers etc.

In contemporary times however, the food crises was brought into sharper focus by the United Nations, which on its birth in 1945 established the Food and Agriculture Organization as a body to banish hunger and malnutrition and to monitor food security development in various nations across the world. It followed it up by establishing

complimentary organizations such as International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP) and a host of other international bodies to assist developing nations in their quest for food security. The importance accorded to food by the UN was seen in the fact that in its overall goal of achieving peace-building, sustainable development and poverty alleviation, majority of its agencies have food security objectives embedded in their portfolios. This is true of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, WHO, World Bank, IMF and World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Regional organizations such as Organization of African Union (later African Union) and ECOWAS also showed concerted concern to the food problems within their areas of jurisdiction. This could be illustrated in the role orchestrated by the African Development Bank, which increasingly financed food crops and animal husbandry. In consonance with the interests shown in food security by the above organizations, the Nigeria government in its membership and commitment to their goals, was signatory to all the declarations, treaties, conventions and action plans on food security objectives entered into during the various food summits to which she was fully represented. Instances include the World Food Summit in Washington D.C. 1963, the Food Conference in Rome 1974, the United Nations Water Conference in Mar de Plata Argentina in 1977, and the New York UN conference in September 2000 where the assembled world leaders made a solemn pledge among other objectives, to half poverty and hunger by 2015. This pledge formed the basis for the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In concert with the above goals, in 1964, the Nigerian government established many research centres, which the Anambra-Mamu area benefitted through Umudike

Agricultural Institute. Vigorous researches were carried out on rice, maize, yam and cassava using Nkwelle, Abakaliki and Umudike as demonstration centres. Agricultural development was a concurrent legislative responsibility and so the Eastern Nigerian Government between 1960 and 1966, made worthy contribution in all the facets of food security concerns. Through the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC), it invested heavily in animal husbandry, food crops, vegetables and tree crops. It established cattle ranches at Obudu and Adada, thirty-one plantations or estates and farm settlement schemes through which Anambra-Mamu River Basin benefited immensely. It engaged in the hybridization of South Devon bulls, Anglo-Nubian goats, Yorkshire pigs, Fulani *Zebu*, Sokoto *Gulali* and Senegal *Ndama* cattle with the local species. Unfortunately, the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970 destroyed much of the effort and unleashed on the people, unprecedented hunger and malnutrition manifesting mainly as kwashiorkor and marasmus.

Following the total economic blockade embarked upon by the Nigeria Federal Military Government against the beleaguered secessionist Biafra Republic, the Biafra government in its bid towards achieving food self sufficiency established the Biafra Land Army (BLA) and Research and Production (RAP). Using the research center at Umudike, these units were able to mobilize the people towards increased food production. Unfortunately, the scorched earth policy adopted by the federal authorities did not provide enabling environment for any meaningful food production to take place. Consequently, international relief agencies notably the Caritas Organization, the World Council of Churches and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) embarked on vigorous airlifting of foodstuffs and materials to stave off starvation particularly among

children. The Nigerian Air force responded by bombing not just Biafra's Uli Airport but also civilian population. It also embarked on attacking foreign relief agencies including decapitation of air plane ferrying relief materials to Biafra.

After the war the different tiers of government continued with their programmes of providing food to the people. At the federal level, the principal programmes and policies put in place include, the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) 1972, Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB) 1973, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) 1976, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) 1976, and Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) 1977. Others include, Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) 1978, Land Use Decree 1978 (later changed to Act in 1980), Green Revolution (GR) 1980, Presidential Task Force on Rice (PTFR) 1981, 'Essential Commodity' 1982 etc. Worsening economic recession in the middle 1980s led to the inauguration of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) 1986 and its cushioning programmes: Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDA), Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) and National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), 1991. All the above programmes and minor others, which space would not allow to be mentioned, were engineered to achieve bumper harvests all year round and to ensure sustainable food self-sufficiency.

Multilateral donor agencies were not left out. Instances of projects engineered by them include FAO's fertilizer trial scheme in 1971, the World Bank's assistance in the establishment of Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), IFAD's vigorous cassava multiplication and eradication of mealy bug and mosaic diseases while UNDP assisted in setting up green houses at Enugu Market Garden.

The East Central State government which was created at the outbreak of the civil war continued with the agrarian policies by resuscitation of the war-damaged projects. It inaugurated the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) and through its aegis, restored the state farms at several places such as Ezillo, Nkalagu, Ninth Mile Corner, Uzo-Uwani, Nkwelle-Ezunaka, Igbariam. In 1971, it brought into being the popular engineering Projects Development Agency (PRODA), which fabricated agricultural tools and machineries, a task also accomplished though on quite smaller scale by the Department of Agricultural Engineering at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. When Imo State was excised in 1976 and Anambra State created, its successive state governments up to 1991 continued along the goals of providing food to the people through their own pet programmes and projects as well as in concert with the federal government, the World Bank, IFAD, UNDP and FAO. Examples include World Bank assisted Lower Anambra Irrigation Projects and Government-Community Self-Help Development Projects.

Unfortunately, implementation strategies in the execution of all the above mentioned programmes and projects left much to be desired. They were often executed so tardily that they achieved poor performances. The major set back towards reviving domestic food production and to give it its place of pride was the structural changes in the economy brought about by the massive oil wealth. The quintessential oil boom led to propitious food imports that permanently consigned agriculture to the rear position in the national economy. The result was that the Anambra-River Basin like the rest of Nigeria fell prey to food dependency, importing an overwhelming percentage of its food needs from abroad and from others ecological zones of Nigeria. Before the oil boom, about 70

of the population hitherto depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The result was that as the Food Entitlement theory showed, 70 per cent of the population having been deprived of their means of livelihood was unable to establish entitlement to enough food and so they suffered varying degrees of hunger and malnutrition.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE INTERVENTIONIST PROGRAMMES, 1970-1991**

This study has amply demonstrated that the Anambra-Mamu River Basin was beneficiary of a litany of interventionist programmes engineered and bankrolled by the different tiers of government both at the central, regional and state levels. The area was also a beneficiary of the development programmes sponsored by different donor agencies such as the World Bank, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, USIAD and WFP as well as religious and private organizations as exemplified by the indefatigable role played by the Norwegian Church Organization at Ikwo in Abakaliki zone. The respective regional and state governments that piloted the affairs in the Anambra-Mamu area also made worthwhile contributions towards sustainable food security. These included East Central State (and later Anambra State), which took over the baton from the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation in the management of the several programmes initiated between 1960 and 1966. Regrettably, these projects and programmes were fated to failures and subsequently achieved epileptic performances.

This brings to the fore, the crucial question often asked by concerned stakeholders why the programmes were frustrated and failed to achieve the lofty goals for which they were designed. This was the question addressed in 1988 by the then Chairman of the



Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure Air Commodore Koniyan. He asked, “Why should we have food crises in spite of the huge funds pumped into World Bank-assisted agricultural development programmes, river basin authorities, Operation Feed the Nation and Green Revolution?”<sup>1</sup> Earlier in 1980 while inaugurating the Green Revolution, former President Shagari addressed a similar paradox, wondering how a nation so richly blessed with abundant human and material resources should find herself in such a sorry situation that she could not feed herself.<sup>2</sup> Answers to these posers centre on lack of foresight and poor planning of the agrarian programmes. Their respective design weaknesses notwithstanding, they all had lofty intentions and were well articulated. The problem had always been with implementation. Space will not accommodate the implementation of all the programmes, hence a few examples will suffice.

### **Credit Constraints and Operations of NACB and ACGSF**

Taking credit facility as example, in the early 1970s, a study carried out by the Central Bank to find out the reasons for the growth constraints and declining agricultural productivity revealed that credit was among the major factors inhibiting the incremental domestic food production. The commercial banks were reluctant to advance credit to farmers because of high default risks caused by too many vagaries attendant in the industry. Inability of borrowers to provide the required collaterals hindered the farmers to access loans. This led to the establishment of Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme fund (ACGSF) in 1977 to share in the risks of the banks in agricultural lending and to encourage banks to extend loans to farmers.<sup>3</sup>

As lofty as the programme sounded, it was sabotaged by non-cooperation by the partner banks. Had ACGSF been managed judiciously, and had the Federal Government mustered the required will to make the partner banks cooperate, the farmers would have gained immeasurably and agriculture would have regained its place of pride. Consequently, the high level of sophistication of the banks created wide gap between them and the rural people who they were supposed to serve.<sup>4</sup>

To ameliorate the problem of finance, the Federal Military Government in 1987 adopted a new policy thrust, which reviewed its credit policies by increasing the grace periods for agricultural loans and the minimum ratio of rural deposits that would be granted to rural farmers. The proportion of loans and allowances that went to agriculture increased by 8 per cent as illustrated in the case of Nigerian Merchant Bank (NMB).<sup>5</sup> On their part, the International Bank for West Africa (IBWA), United Bank for Africa (UBA), Union Bank, First Bank and Allied Bank apart from opening branches in the rural areas, also liberalized their loan facilities in order to encourage small-scale farmers. They encouraged investments in farming, poultry, fishing and animal husbandry.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, this initiative did not endure. The usual excuses of low returns from investment in agriculture in comparison to other sectors made the commercial banks reluctant to fund the sector. Even though ACGSF made it possible for a total of N102 million loaned to 16,209 farmers nation-wide in 1987, most bona fide farmers in Anambra State did not access it because of the incongruous 20 per cent high interest rate.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond this however, the regularity of armed robbery attacks on the rural branches of these ACGSF partner banks was very frightening. The rural terrain on which

they operated did not give them the required security protection. At Adani in today's Enugu State for instance, the frequency of armed robbery on Allied Bank situated along Adani-Ogurugu road in the period between 1987 and 1991 led to abrupt closure of the bubbling branch. This was after repeated loss of lives of staff and customers and carting away of huge sums of money by the daredevils who, armed to the teeth visited with their fast driving Santana Volkswagen cars with which they escaped using the several outlets along the Onitsha-Nsukka, which at that time had an efficient new road network.<sup>8</sup>

Partial privatization of NACB made it more difficult for smallholder farmers to access loans because of collateral obstacles. Subsequently, the new Federal Government agricultural loan's policy rather favoured large-scale farming. This gave a measure of commitment to household industrial names such as UAC, John Holt, Nigerian Breweries Ltd, Ibru, Mitchell Farms and Betta Feeds. They were encouraged by the government's subventions to invest in the sector.<sup>9</sup> The study area had only few of these companies engaged in farming. They included Premier Breweries Onitsha and Gino Bottling Co. Ninth Mile Corner (near Enugu) and owned by Chief C. C. Onoh.<sup>10</sup>

The Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) in any case performed admirably well in financing food production judging by its slim resources. Through its Small Holder Loan Scheme, it was able to finance the operations of small-scale farmers who constituted about 80 per cent of its loan portfolio and contributed 70 per cent of the nation's agricultural output. The maximum amount advanced to them was N10, 000.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, numerous teething problems bedeviled the bank's performance. It lacked sufficient funds to cater for the large number of applicants that trooped into its branches in quest of loans. Late release of funds to the agency sometimes made its loan

disbursement to come late after the rains had started. Logistical problems such as shortage of staff and materials, immobility and inability to pay reasonably the available officers under its employment due to paucity of funds constituted other angles of the constraints. The worst of the problems was the fact that Cooperative system on which platform the bank's operations were hinged had started to break down irretrievably.<sup>12</sup> Anambra was one of the states where the cooperative system collapsed completely. Consequently, the bank had to revert to the pre-1981 costly direct lending method, which demanded reaching the numerous small-scale farmers on face-to-face basis. Anambra State's constraints were made more manifest in that the citizens took more to trading than farming, which majority of the people repudiated as poor man's occupation fated to fatalities of backwardness. This explained the low loan application quotient compared with other states. It was even suspected that the sum of N9, 428,484 disbursed by the bank between 1981 and 1990 to Anambra applicants went to the wrong people judging by the high rate of defaults and large number of absentee farmers.<sup>13</sup> It also explained the high loan default rates in Anambra State. Like Ondo State where the administration of Navy Capt. Olabode George sustained heavy losses, inherent belief of some people that government loans were part of the national cake made them to collect it and evade repayment.<sup>14</sup>

### **Quick Succession and Duplication of the Agro Programmes**

Quick succession at which the programmes/projects were formulated and launched was another explanation for the high failure rates. There were certainly elements of pettiness and partisan politics behind it. The federal agricultural programmes proved to lack continuity and ended abruptly with the frequent changes of government. They

were greeted with vain self-glorification, undemocratic change of baton and desire to paint their predecessors in the image of non-performers. This made successive regimes to rubbish their predecessor's good intentions. It was often a practice of throwing away the baby together with bathing water because the latter was adjudged dirty. For instance, as at the time the Murtala-Obasanjo regime came on board in 1975, the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) inaugurated in 1972 by the Gen. Gowon administration had started stamping its feet in the arrest of the deplorable food crises. NAFPP was a comprehensive package designed by a team of experts even as a mission was sponsored to Philippines and India to study their Green Revolution success. Its pilot schemes were enthusiastically embraced in the Anambra-Mamu River Basin. Its supporting International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Ibadan and its junior research counterpart at Umudike were through their green houses churning out new plant varieties and undertaking vigorous training programmes of agronomists and extension officers. The success story attained through these measures was exemplified in the formulation of drought and disease resistant cassava varieties such as *Nwugo* and 60506 and the new maize varieties of Planta Baja, Western Yellow, TZB, TZA and Western White. By 1975/76 fiscal year, together with other improved crop varieties, the gospel of food security revolution was spreading fast to all the nooks and crannies of the Anambra zone. More than 1,600 farmers selected from different parts of East Central State who participated in their minikit trial schemes were fast spreading the new ideas they had learnt to other farmers in their constituencies.<sup>15</sup>

Then suddenly the Obasanjo regime without allowing NAFPP to gain a foothold came up with his own pet programme - Operation Feed the Nation. The politics, noise,

jingles, fanfare and glamour, which greeted the inauguration and launching of the national and state steering committees of the new programme in the 1976/77 fiscal year had the effect of taking the shine away from NAFPP. Anambra State Steering Committee membership composed of distinguished personalities with Chief John Nwodo, a renowned former Minister in the First Republic and Igwe of Ukehe as its Chairman. The pomp and pageantry that accompanied launching galvanized the attention of everybody. Staff members of the Agric. ministry began to struggle for relevance in the new programme. Consequently, the staff facilitator strength of the NAFPP Anambra State sub-Committee dwindled drastically. NAFPP extension facilitators in the local governments also decamped to OFN.<sup>16</sup> One could be tempted to argue that the two programmes were to run concurrently. After all, OFN was more of propagandist or exhortation programme aimed to re-orientate the philosophy of the people away from foreign foods and to engage them in producing their own household food irrespective of one's status or professional calling. It was an imitation of Ghana's "Operation Feed Yourself" (OFY) launched a little earlier before its Nigerian counterpart.<sup>17</sup> All things being equal, inauguration of OFN should not have posed any danger to NAFPP if it was properly managed. Its operations were however defeatist and killed incentives of its predecessor.

The nail on the coffin of NAFPP was finally laid in 1980 when Green Revolution (GR) was launched by the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. GR had a terminal date of five years for food production and seven years for cash crop. It was therefore supposed to be coterminous with NAFPP, which had no such time reference. Again, the national planners and organizers bungled it. Like OFN, GR was popularized; the media

was awash with it as the only possible answer to Nigeria's agricultural revival. Expectations of higher remuneration and improved conditions of service through participation in its hot cake projects made both the mainstream staff of the state agriculture ministries and field extension officers to lobby for inclusion in their working teams. Expectedly, the new programme was favoured with direct federal and donor agency subventions, which bankrolled the local and overseas short services courses, workshops and conferences. As NAFPP attracted no such attention, its projects were jeopardized and gradually consigned to the doldrums of irrelevance.<sup>18</sup> In spite of the fact that it actually made the profound and worthwhile contribution on which Nigeria's little success in agricultural development within the period rested, it was never given the required recognition, which explains why its existence was not even known to the generality of Nigerians including the intellectual class. Ironically, Green Revolution on which all attention was focused failed in its objectives. During the four years of its operation, agriculture consumed a sectoral budgetary allocation of N5 billion. In spite of the restrictions placed on importation during the period, Nigeria's food bill within its first three years (1980 and 1982) was N5 billion. This compared unfavourably with N2.92 billion spent on food imports between 1977 and 1979 representing an increase of N2.08 billion or 71 per cent increase over the 1977-79 figure.<sup>19</sup>

A former federal minister of agriculture of the Fourth Republic, Alhaji Bukar Tijani in 2012 summarized the hiccups in the implementation of Nigeria's agricultural policies and programmes as follows:

“Policy instability and policy implementation, inadequate institutional arrangements for policy and programme coordination which often led to duplication of

efforts and general inefficiency in resource use among agencies and ministries of the same government, between federal and state agencies, and between states. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation arrangements for policy implementation had also led to situations in which policies and programmes tended to lose sight of their focus and original goals without correct measures being taken.<sup>20</sup>

### **Frequent Changes of Government, Policy Stoppages and Project Abandonment**

Constant changes of government mainly through coup d'état was a major constrain to the successful execution of the projects. For instance, overthrow of the Shagari government by the Gen. Buhari junta in 1984 led to discontinuation and eventual abandonment of the World Bank assisted 5, 000 hectares irrigation project in the Anambra -Do low lands as well as fifteen other communities across the state. Before the coup, the N93.3 million projects being executed by the Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA), which started in 1981, had been implemented up to 50% and the nation as a whole had almost attained self-reliance in maize production through the eleven River Basin Development Authorities. And in Anambra State, AIRBDA was playing the catalyst role in diversifying the methods of food production. An instance was canal construction for which it achieved 16.2kilometre success even as the fish farming was yielding results. Similar projects were established in various parts of Anambra and Imo states at the cost of N250, 000 each.<sup>21</sup> Buhari's coup was therefore a great set back because it derailed the dividends of democracy under the administration of President Shehu Shagari. The coup led to the stoppage of not only the irrigation projects but also stalled the opening of the almost completed Rice Mill at Omor under the construction of the Japanese firm Nippon Koei Ltd. It led to the abrupt end of the



Nsukka-Onitsha electrification scheme, which had almost been completed waiting energizing it. Under the watchful eyes of the government, the electrical cables were vandalized by hoodlums. In any case, some of the projects that had been completed before the coup were of immense benefit to the people. These include the irrigation of about three mile square at Omor axis, the Nsukka-Onitsha new federal road network, which linked Nsukka with GRA Onitsha through Adani. Significantly also, the Ogurugu-Adani road was completed to ease the transportation of food from Ogurugu-Ugbomaja axis to the townships where they were needed.<sup>22</sup>

### **Substantial Gap between Good Intentions and Performance**

The above issues were compounded by the substantial gap between good intentions and achieved performances of the programmes, which made them fail to address the situation making hunger to resume in greater intensity. The government often failed to live up to its promise of redeeming agriculture and achieving food self-sufficiency. The objectives of revamping agriculture particularly the food security side of the equation were clearly mapped out in all the development plans. When summarized these include reduction of unemployment and increase in productivity through agriculture, reduction of dependency of the economy on a narrow range of activities, balanced development between the different sectors of the economy and reduction in rural-urban migration. All the plans envisaged accelerated food production, establishment of fertilizer industries, adequate policies to encourage private sector investment and encouraging growth of manufacturing and agro-sector industrialization.<sup>23</sup>

As lofty as the objectives sounded, the problem had always been unsatisfactory execution arising largely from dilatory political processes involved in obtaining government decisions on the projects. In spite of the fact that successive regimes recognized the dangers of almost total dependence on oil, which was an average of 85 per cent of all government revenue and 90 per cent of all foreign exchange earnings, the urge for diversification remained a long term goal.<sup>24</sup> This led to consistent under fulfillment of agriculture in all the Plans. The growth rate achieved in the sector always remained disappointing, usually around 2.5 per cent per annum compared with 8 per cent p.a. for the economy as a whole as the 1973-79 showed.<sup>25</sup> The problem was as old as political independence. It started during the colonial era and continued during the pre-oil period of the 1960's as the observation of Professor Arthur Lewis showed. In his "Reflections on Nigeria's Economic Growth, 1967," Lewis estimated that "between 1950-52 and 1961-63, the overall index for Southern Nigeria prices paid to farmers fell from 100 per cent to 73 per cent while that of wages paid by the Federal Government to unskilled labour increased from 100 to 297 per cent."<sup>26</sup> This was before oil became significant. Oil economy however worsened the neglect of agriculture as the incentives and reward accrued to the sector declined relatively. The policy malaise, which was also happening in non oil producing countries such as Liberia and Ghana, made food production to remain at epileptic performance.<sup>27</sup> The result was continued importation of basic foodstuffs and industrial raw materials such as palm oil and palm kernel, which Anambra-Mamu River Basin had hitherto commanded proficiency in their production.

Neglect of agriculture did not stop here. The worst of it was that the little budgeted for the sector was often not released adequately. In the 1986 budget for

instance, while the Babangida administration allocated N5.9 billion to agriculture, it actually released only N2, 134 representing 3.6 per cent.<sup>28</sup> Not only that agriculture was not given priority attention in budgetary allocations, the little that was released often came too late after the planting season. This usually gave room to misappropriation of the funds by the implementation agencies. Lip service to agriculture particularly the interventionist programmes made them to be psychologically distanced from the intending beneficiaries and so could not stand the test of time in spite of the huge amount budgeted for them. This was the case with the Better Life projects, which were hijacked half way by urban women.<sup>29</sup>

The savings grace was that finances towards execution of the projects had often come through the assistance of donor institutions. An example was the World Bank loan of N1 billion granted to Nigeria in 1986 to develop small-scale agricultural industries.<sup>30</sup> A host of other international agencies also advanced easy access to credits. They include the United States Import Export Bank (Exim Bank), European Economic Community and industrialized countries. The irony was that miasma of corruption messed up these efforts.

### **Globalization Effects**

One of the greatest threats to food security was the capitalist threat promoted by global economic realities, which had of course been going on through the ages but their effects particularly since the 1970s compounded the failure of the interventionist programmes and worsened food insecurity. An instance was price fluctuations emanating from advanced countries, which did not favour Anambra farmers who became vulnerable to violent

fluctuations and price gyrations that characterized prices at the international market. For instance, trade protectionism and high subsidy paid by industrialized countries to their farmers made cheap food to flood world markets. This caused havoc for Anambra farmers whose own production incentives were harmed by the availability of inexpensive imported food. One need to concede the fact that urban workers benefited from lower prices, but that was not so for the poor rural dwellers and urban counterpart who did not have enough purchasing power to buy it. The effect was that since 1970s, Nigeria became a net importer of all sorts of foodstuffs from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. The food imports were not limited to Europe. Asian countries were major exporters of rice, grains and sundry products. For instance, Nigeria started importation of palm oil (in bleached form, in the name of vegetable oil), from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.<sup>31</sup> This was the same product hitherto, produced copiously in the Anambra-Mamu region.

The table however turned in the 1980s against cheap food imports following increasing demand of grains for animal feeds in the advanced countries. The demand, which was 10 per cent in 1900 jumped to over 38 per cent in the early 1980s and was approaching 50 per cent by 1991. It witnessed a situation where 1 calorie of poultry required the use of 3 calories of grain, and 1 calorie of beef 7 calories of grain in non-pasture systems.<sup>32</sup> The search for alternative sources of energy demand complicated the situation. The conversion of grain and oil seed crops into bio-fuel meant that the amount of grains it took to fuel a CVU tank with ethanol could feed one person a year. These “global catastrophes,” as the UN’s World Food Programme described it, had the effect of jacking up world food prices, yet the Anambra region like other Third World countries continued to rely indefinitely on food imports. Even at this, the

advanced countries continued to subsidize their own farmers with billions of dollars, refusing to reciprocate food imports from developing countries.<sup>33</sup>

The most serious problem was however, posed by the liberalization policies of the Bretton Woods institutions following the introduction of SAP. Their uncontrolled demand for currency devaluation and for the removal of protectionist tendencies imposed restrictions on public support to the principal economic sector, agriculture. Donor partners also reduced their support to agriculture from 18 per cent in 1980 to 4 per cent in the SAP era. The Nigerian government likewise limited budgetary financing to agriculture to less than 4 per cent.<sup>34</sup> The adverse effects of globalization became evident during the Structural Adjustment Processes following the enforcement of the conditionalities of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The administration of the Structural Adjustment Programme based on these conditionalities led to widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. It further impoverished the masses and drastically reduced their standard of living. Besides, a consortium of international food importers in collaboration with comprador class within Nigeria ensured that the table turned against local production. Using high cost of agricultural inputs, fertilizer racketeering, and other economic strangulation strategies, they ensured a reverse in government's agricultural policies including ban on the importation of some food items.<sup>35</sup> The effect was that in the face of decline of agriculture on which about 70 per cent of the population formerly depended for a living and in the absence of viable social institutions to ensure the welfare of the poor and marginal groups, the quest for survival remained the priority concern of the citizens which entailed looking up to other sectors including questionable and undesirable means of avenues of livelihood.<sup>36</sup>

## **Food Security Assessment in Anambra-Mamu River Basin**

Food security may be defined as access by all people at all times to sufficient food for a healthy and productive life. It rests on four pillars: the food must be adequate to go round to all the populations; it must be sustainable and therefore available at all times; it must be accessible to everybody and above all, it must be safe and of nutritional properties.<sup>37</sup> The benchmark for measuring food security is poverty rating, which is of two types: relative and absolute poverty. The World Bank's assessment put it at \$1.25 a day calculated at purchasing power parity rates. The two most physical measures or indicators of food security are food production per capita and carryover stocks of food. The first gives a sense of whether food availability is improving or not and the second shows if production is exceeding consumption or if the opposite is occurring.<sup>38</sup>

Nutritionists have worked out how much food a person living in tropical region like the area of study requires to lead a healthy productive life based on the Law of Conservation of Energy as it relates to animals in the biological system. Studies carried out by Professor Stamp in 1958 showed that a person in the tropical region, of median age of 18, weighing 60 kg and putting in 6 hours of moderate work needs 2,400 kilocalories of energy a day. When broken down, this must include 1/6 of protein, 65 grams of which must be of raw animal sources, another 1/6 of minerals and vitamins and the rest composed of carbohydrates, sugars and fats.<sup>39</sup> 2,400 kilocalories was the official figure adopted by the federal and component regional/state governments in Nigeria since 1960 including the respective governments that had piloted the affairs of the area of study up to 1990.<sup>40</sup> It formed the working indicator used for this project. The food balance

sheet on its own measures the food situation at every point in time and the average daily energy intake for future projections and strategic planning.

Having analyzed the basic indicators and parameters of food security, the pertinent question then, is to what extent did the Anambra-Mamu River Basin achieve food security in the period under assessment? Answers to this poser shows that the food security profile of Anambra State during the period of study was largely unimpressive. This ugly situation was attributed to a number of factors, which include high degree of unemployment/underdevelopment, extreme poverty and wide gap between the fortunes of the rich and the poor and more importantly, institutionalized official corruption, which rendered the government's food and agro-policies difficult to implement. These factors meant that though the zone commanded some comparative economic advantages on which platform it could stand to provide food to its teeming population and raise their standard of living, this was not possible because Nigeria was tied closely to the apron strings of neo-colonial capitalist manipulators who flooded the system with imported food, which discouraged aggregate local production. The cost of the imported foods was however beyond the reach of the common man whose legitimate sources of income and for obtaining food had their doors closed one after the other by the persistent economic recession and mismanagement of the economy. It is in this regard that the postulations of Professor Sen's Entitlement theory are instructive. Food insecurity persisted in the land not because nature had not done its part, but because of man made political and economic shocks, which have led to massive food imports even when the advantages of local production abounded.

The effect was that like other areas of Africa, food output per capita in the Anambra-Mamu region fell drastically. The recommended national average daily food intake of 2,400 calories could hardly be attained. This compared unfavourably with 4,000 calories attained in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.<sup>41</sup> Even at that, 93.6 per cent of the diet of the masses in the area of study was plant based carbohydrates, lacking lipids and protein.<sup>42</sup> The reality was that when food prices were going up and the Nigerian currency reserves were shrinking, the demand for food imports continued to increase dramatically. In as much as Nigeria used its oil wealth to offset the high cost of imports, aggravated poverty made a large segment of the population unable to pay for the imported food at the same time they lacked the resources to produce for themselves. The results were high cases of malnutrition among the unprotected group of citizens, majority of who were farmers.

### **Effects of the Oil Economy**

In the middle 1960s before the Nigerian Civil War, petroleum made an insignificant 6 per cent contribution in the economy<sup>43</sup> and so Eastern Nigerian government like its counterparts in other regions invested meaningfully in agriculture, which was the main stay of the economy and fetched the much desired foreign exchange. The oil boom of the early 1970s changed all that. The massive oil wealth witnessed a rapid growth in the non-agricultural sector, triggered off primarily by the spending of oil money by the state. Labour was pulled away from agriculture and a declining number of producers were left to feed a greatly inflated number of non-producers. Uninformed analysts tried to heap the blame on the backward, stagnant peasant economy unable to respond to new markets. This was not the case. The case rather was the excessive rate by which the non-agricultural population was allowed to expand largely due to the rather



reckless manner in which the state pumped oil money into the economy. This brought about the changing structure of demand for food leading further to the creation of openings and competitive advantage offered to food importers of differing kinds to the disadvantage of domestic producers. Importers were recklessly issued import licences and allowed to import almost anything for which they were expected to deposit naira equivalent to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). These were guaranteed by the Export Credit Agencies and their liabilities were automatically assumed by the government.<sup>44</sup> The competition tilted the balance in favour of importers against local producers because the overvalued naira made the imports cheaper at the same time creating 30-35% runaway inflation at home as against 10% in the importing countries.<sup>45</sup> In the face of inability of the government to check the excesses of importers, Nigeria became a dumping ground of all kinds of foreign foods. Consequently, all the interventionist programmes were fated to failures. Achieving self-sufficiency in food production remained a mirage. For instance, in 1976, the food import stood at N441 million and rose to N987 million by 1979. This figure doubled to N1, 438 million by 1980 and sky rocketed to N2, 116 million by the end of 1981.<sup>46</sup> These were happening despite a number of major food production programmes such as National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the popular Green Revolution Programme, Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank, Land Use Decree, World Bank and IFAD assisted projects. Statistics for domestic production supplied by the Economic and Statistical Review 1982 publication showed that about 15,371,240 tonnes of the principal food crops were produced during the 1980/81-production year. This meant that despite OFN and Green Revolution, food production

was still below 1971 level. This represented a decrease of 36.68 percent on the production figure of 24,276,000 obtained in 1971/72. The average annual rate of decrease was 4.08 percent.<sup>47</sup>

The changes wrought on the food system by the oil paradigm shifts had their far-reaching consequences. It made Anambra-Mamu River Basin to become food deficit, importing virtually from abroad and other parts of Nigeria the food her people ate. The imports did not favour the poor folks whose abysmal condition had perpetually consigned them to swim in the sea of poverty amidst vast ocean of wealth and prosperity. The net effect was that the preferences of the rich and middle class diverted to foreign food. Imitation of the latter by some ordinary citizens gradually enveloped the society into food imperialism or 're-colonization through the stomach.'<sup>48</sup>

The food imports of course had their dire consequences. It discouraged the subsistent farmer from producing the little he was used to because of the competitive price of the imported variety. This made the imports to favour only the rich and affluent members of the society who had the money to buy it in the quantity and quality they wanted. For the disproportionate majority less privileged and the down trodden, it had not been smiles as hidden hunger defined as malnutrition became their constant companions. Protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) the most serious and widespread disorder known to medical and nutritional science<sup>49</sup> proved to be the most telling of these maladies. In Anambra-Mamu river basin, it ravaged the population because the majority composed of the poor strata, were not able to meet up with the protein equation of their daily kilo-caloric requirements. A related impact was that the government's inability to achieve sectoral linkages of the economy denied it the forward and backward integration. This made agriculture sector to lag

behind and the inability of the subsistent farmers to benefit from the government's policies caused the young men and women to migrate to the cities refusing to listen to the government's jingles exhorting them to take to farming as a means of livelihood. This meant that the farming population was fast aging without being replaced.<sup>50</sup>

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS**

- Going by the entitlement thesis, food security was largely attained during the First Republic because its imperfections notwithstanding, the administration enjoyed regional autonomy and had a functional democracy; it was less corrupt and had less bloated cost of governance. Conversely, the long years of military rule had its scale tumbled by several political shocks such as civil war, frequent coup d'état, abrupt changes of government, policy stoppages and absence of early famine warning system. The thirty-one year period of this study witnessed thirteen regimes. The vicissitudes in the frequent deployment of governors made the interventionist programmes directly under the table of the State Chief Executive Officer, to be often floundered by policy somersaults and project abandonment. An example was the dismal end of the World Bank-Lower Anambra River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) irrigation projects in the Anambra- Do River Basin and fifteen other communities in the state by the Gen. Buhari's coup of 1984.<sup>51</sup>
- The interventionist programmes achieved limited results because the region had its fundamental limitations of soil degradation caused by the predominantly, reddish, friable, pulverized and porous soil, exacerbated by excessive leaching of the top soil and by violent and prolonged rainfall of the Cameroon type. These aggravated sheet erosion and gave rise to fearful gullies. In 1988, there were about 550 awe-inspiring

erosion sites claiming 10% of farm land.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, ecological hazards in the synclinal flood plains dispelled the farming population making them incomparable with the banks and deltas of the Nile, Java, Tigris-Euphrates, Hwang Ho and Mississippi where alluvial, volcanic soils sustained heavy concentration of the farming population.<sup>53</sup>

- Anambra's population densities of about 730-806 persons per square mile (1973 estimate)<sup>54</sup> were among the highest in Africa with the possible exception of the Nile valley, Burundi, and Rwanda.<sup>55</sup> The derisory 1% to zero% growth in food production failed to keep pace with population growths of 3% and food demand at 3.4% p.a. Consequently, food prices jumped to 27.9% annually.<sup>56</sup> Pressure on land decreased the average man-land ratio in the villages from 1.02 hectares in the 1960s per man to less than 0.04 hectares in the 1980s.<sup>57</sup> Extreme fragmentation of farmlands phased out in many places, compound gardens, which hitherto served about 40% of household food needs.<sup>58</sup> Exponential growth rates exceeded budgetary projections made by the Ministry of Economic Planning which in 1974 projected unemployment growth at an annual rate of about 9% of the workforce (based on persons above the age of fourteen), estimating it to increase from 168,500 in 1970 to 229,400 in 1980. However, growth rate of about 2.5% in 1965-1980 and climbing to 3.3% between 1980 -1985 with fertility rate of about 71% of average of six children per woman rubbished that estimate.<sup>59</sup>
- The gap between the income of the rich and the poor was too wide. In the 1960s, the differential income (p.a.) was as follows: senior civil servants/politicians £3000, junior counterparts £174, farmers and low income others £60-£80, Indian expatriate science teachers £2,500. (This was a time the highest paid public officer in India

received about £1,000).<sup>60</sup> Efforts made by the Premier's Office and the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly to bridge the gap was inconclusive. The advent of military rule widened the income differentials into gargantuan proportions, drastically reduced the purchasing power of the poor, thus rendering the interventionist programmes ineffective.

- Urban sector growth between 1965-1980 averaged 4.8%; it climbed to 5.2% in 1980-1985 with 1974 and 1976 (the peak of oil boom and creation of new states), ranging 7.8% against 1.6% for rural areas.<sup>61</sup> It deteriorated life in the rural areas to the extent that absolute fall in the standard of living was only prevented by remittances made by workers in the towns. Consequently, rural and urban poor folks spent about 75-80% of their household earnings on food, contrasting with 16% in USA, 25% in Britain, 35% in Japan, and 58% in the former Soviet Union.<sup>62</sup> Disproportionate developments of the cities to the neglect of the rural districts encouraged the disastrous fulfillment of the Parkinson's Law, which states that any piece of work or project will continue to expand in volume as long as time and resources are allocated to it. In line with this law, the five urban centres of Enugu, Onitsha, Awka, Abakaliki and Nsukka together had an estimated population of 1.3 million, thereby constituting about 20.4% of the total population of the state.<sup>63</sup> Instead of the ratio of 20% to 80% sharing formula for social amenities, the 80% rural dwellers were so neglected that it caused ceaseless out migrations to the cities particularly Lagos where population grew at about 24%, of which 49.9% comprised of under sixteen.<sup>64</sup>

- Food production was almost exclusively an affair of the State and the subsistent farmers, the business community being completely excluded. Private concern that showed interest was limited to capital-intensive non-arable agriculture like poultry farming with its comparatively low value. The usual excuse about difficulties encountered in the acquisition of land, attributed to the chaotic land tenure system, was not actually the case. For instance, about 85 rich citizens and companies who obtained swathes of land in old Uzo-Uwani in the second half of the 1980s, some of them appropriating over one mile square of land left them undeveloped. They turned into absentee landlords and used them to extort the natives.<sup>65</sup> Inability of the food sub-sector to attract private sector investment meant that in the face of inefficiency, which characterized the modern large-scale government farms, food production remained comatose. Disinclination of professional biochemists and microbiologists made food processing exclusively an affair of local women whose traditional methods proved insufficient to the formidable challenges.
- Notwithstanding that agriculture afforded employment to over 70% of the population in Nigeria, the sector occupied low profile priority in the pecking order of government's public sector investment from 1960-1991. For instance, in the Third Plan period 1975-80, only 2.5% was allocated to agriculture, 14% to manufacturing, 28% to transport and 11% to education. From the 1970s, government policies affecting agriculture became contradictory. Instead of funds going to existing smallholders or extension services, they were used largely to promote large-scale parastatal farms. Like their numerous Anambra State farms, poor management rendered their success stories minimal. Green Revolution success stories in India and

Indonesia were not recorded in Nigeria where rain fed agriculture continued to be in vogue. <sup>66</sup> It shows why the ratio of extension workers in Nigeria was 1: 2,500 compared with 1: 200 in India and 1: 250 in Kenya. <sup>67</sup>

- Against the practice during the First Republic, Anambra State like its cohorts became over reliant on the Federal Government for much of its revenue needs. This curtailed the size and execution of its projects. For instance, the 1979-1980 fiscal budget showed that of the N202m recurrent revenue, only N31m or 15% was generated internally, N170m came from federal sources and 1% from donor agencies. <sup>68</sup> The long standing error of expectation of resource transfers from the national policy maker for the implementation of the State projects usually led to budgetary hemorrhage and project failures because financial resources and inputs budgeted for perennial crops were consistently released late after the planting season. In 1978, only N3.1 million out of N11.3 budgeted for rice cultivation was spent. <sup>69</sup> The misadventure, which was uniform for all the projects and in all the fiscal years, is illustrated in the first two years of the Second Development Plan 1970-74, when 50% of the 9.9% of capital expenditure allocated to the sector could not be accessed by the states from the federal authorities. <sup>70</sup> Since 1976 when the Federal Government took over the distribution of fertilizer and lime, these items were consistently delivered late. In 1979, only 14,900 out of the 29,000 metric tons imported into the State could be distributed to farmers. <sup>71</sup> The military Government consistently failed to make matching grants due to the State for the execution of jointly sponsored projects. Inability of the latter to raise internal loans or to rope in the

private sector in the form of bonds often left it with dependence on external sources such as the World Bank, UNDP or industrialized countries.<sup>72</sup>

- Government emphasis was on growth in primary production without a corresponding growth in the secondary sector, namely marketing, storage, processing and utilization of the by-products of agriculture. Consequently, post harvest losses were to the tune of 35-40% as the analysis of leading agronomists – Idachaba, Olayide and Okigbo showed.<sup>73</sup> In concert with the menace of pre-harvest vectors such as dynastic yam beetles, maize stem borers, rice blasts, epidemic gull midge, lizards, ungulates, monkeys and rodents especially the troublesome weaverbirds and highly migratory *Rattus argentiventer* (field rat), the magnitude of losses could be over 50%.<sup>74</sup> An example is the endemic cassava mealy bug in Nkanu, Ishielu, Awgu, Izzi, Oji River, Isi-Uzo, Ikwo and Ezza, which recorded N8 million losses in 1973/74.<sup>75</sup> The magnitude of losses shows agreement with the Second Law of Thermodynamics (as it relates to the biological system of atrophy or atrophic levels of the food chain). It states that transfer of energy between the atrophic levels is not achieved at 100% efficiency.<sup>76</sup> This was a factor that killed incentives in the OFN bountiful harvests of 1978,<sup>77</sup> a similar experience recorded in Ghana's Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) in 1976-77.<sup>78</sup> It also led to decline of about 20% in per capita calorie intake (about 2,040 calories) in the 'famine months' running from April-June (cultivation months) and grew worse to about 40% (2,000 calories) during pre-harvest months of May-October, otherwise called the 'hungry months.' It peaked up to about 2,700 calories during the "plenty period" of harvest in November and December (a time of little activity).<sup>79</sup>



- High levels of official corruption rubbished the interventionist programmes. An instance was the National Directorate of Employment (NDA). Out of the N15,000.00 allocated to each of the beneficiaries under the arable crop programme in 1991, they each received only N2,125.00 (in cheque). They were shortchanged by N8,381.00 (money meant for land allocation, tractor services and insurance coverage). The remaining N4,494.00 was largely siphoned through over inflated prices of unnecessary input supplies. Consequently, out of the 50 participants posted to Ogorugu zone that year, only three stayed back on their own financial support.<sup>80</sup>
- Low technological receptivity of the farmers such as use of knives and hoes instead of mechanized equipment marred the intervention efforts. Their abject poverty led to diversion of credit facilities to nonfarm life survivals and inability to repay the loan. Besides, their distrust of government programmes led to low loan application of 8,898 in the Direct Loan Scheme of NACB Enugu Branch against Yola 25,767, Kafanchan 30,242 and Akure 20,591.<sup>81</sup> Low business operations kept them below parity with workers and operators in the other sectors of the economy. In spite of the large number involved in farming, the sector played marginal role in employment generation compared to South Africa where 5,000 large farms employed close to half of the agricultural population and produced 95% of all output reaching the market.<sup>82</sup>
- Double-digit inflation rates was to the tune of about 25 -30% between 1971 and 1991.<sup>83</sup> This was against the 6.0% envisaged by the Central Planning Office in the Third Plan period. It caused thin spread of the scarce resources to many projects contributing to very little or zero accomplishments. Real wages declined on an average of 34% from 1970-91.<sup>84</sup> Food prices rose 500% between 1970 and 1991, as

against 200% increase for other commodity prices.<sup>85</sup> The condition of the informal sector was however worse off. It made the situation in Anambra to tally with the results of the National Integrated Survey of Households carried out in Lagos State in 1980. It showed that over one third of wage earning households and nearly half of all self-employed households were in the lowest income deciles for the population.<sup>86</sup> Attempts to bridge the gap through tax relief, subsidies, cooperatives, agricultural loans, rural development programmes and further wage and salary reviews did not prevent it from serious erosion.

- Anambra State piloted agricultural programmes were more grass rooted and achieved the active involvement of the downstream farmers than federally sponsored counterparts, which were formulated on imported Western models and implemented in over centralized, bureaucratic and ad-hoc basis. This gave the comprador class the opportunity to hijack them.
- Women were the backbone of food security; they performed almost exclusively 100% of the food processing, reared 60% of the livestock, did more than 70% of the cropping;<sup>87</sup> they were burdened by pregnancies, childbirth, and family encumbrances. Yet, cultural ethos and pervasive gender insensitivity constrained them from accessing credit, extension services and land ownership.
- The five-year SAP regime reversed the trend in urban-rural household incomes and food consumption expenditures. It drew a large population of the urban poor to the rural sector where incomes of unskilled agricultural labourers appreciated by 40% between 1985 and 1989.<sup>78</sup> Since rural households tended to produce their own food themselves, the percentage of household that spent less than minimum

threshold in Anambra State reversed to 17 percentage urban and 9% rural areas<sup>79</sup> as against pre-SAP era. World Bank data for 1980-87 put the “food poor” differentials of urban and rural households at 22% and 17% respectively.<sup>88</sup> However, SAP induced austerity measures, and conditionalities especially devaluation of naira lowered the standard of living of the low socio-political groups in both sectors, soaring food prices to 27.9%, and making more households in both sectors to become food insecure. In relative terms, Nigerians were worse off than Kenyans but in a better position than Malawi, Burkina Faso and Madagascar, where the food insecure were estimated at 28%, 45% and 35% respectively.<sup>89</sup> In any case, declining per capita income of Nigerians increased the percentage of household expenditure on food from 30% to 55% in 1983-84 rising above 70% from 1985-1991.<sup>90</sup>

- The average daily intake of food in Anambra was 2,062 kilocalories (kcal) and 45 grams of protein (gms) in the urban areas and 1,976 kcal and 34 gms in the rural areas.<sup>91</sup> This was similar to other Southern states such as Ogun State, which recorded 1,855 kcal and 39 gms (urban) and 1,753 kcal and 38 gms (rural).<sup>92</sup> These fell below Northern states such as Sokoto with 2,517 kcal and 63 gms (urban) and 2,313 kcal and 60 gms (rural) and Gongola: 2,285 kcal and 69 gms (urban) and 2,083 kcal and 59 gms (rural).<sup>93</sup> Economic downturn reduced the daily per capita energy and protein intake of Anambrarians like other Nigerians from 2,450 kcal and 51.0 gms between 1960-64 to 2,071 kcal and 51.0 in 1991 falling below the 2,250 threshold of FAO, the 2,400 kilocalories standard set by the Nigerian Government and far below 3,200 attained in the OECD countries.<sup>94</sup>

Even at that, 93.6% of the diet was plant based lacking lipids and protein with animal component at 6-8gms.<sup>95</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

This study uses the Anambra-Mamu River Basin located in the southeastern part of Nigeria to analyze the ineffectiveness of the plethora of policies and intervention programmes inaugurated by successive tiers of governments in Nigeria as well as external aid from donor agencies and contributions of other non-state actors towards achieving food security in the period between 1960 and 1991. It is located in what is today Anambra and Enugu states plus seven local government areas of Ebonyi State. Going by the definition and indicators of food security, Anambra-Mamu River Basin like the rest of Nigeria, was food deficit relying to a large extent on overseas and other ecological regions of Nigeria for a large percentage of the food eaten by her citizens. The imports were paid for by returns on investment from trading and other sectors of the economy and from remittances made home by migrants in other parts of the country and overseas. Unfortunately, majority of the people composed of peasant farmers, petty traders, junior civil servants, service providers and other low-income earners as well as the unemployed, the vulnerable and marginal categories were unable to establish enough entitlement to the available food and so they became 'food poor' and suffered from hidden hunger. The study demonstrates that the basin – a microcosm of Nigeria, was a post-colonial proto capitalist state with all the weaknesses of such states. With engine of growth located externally and government's inability to muster the required political will to address the fundamental issues and curb the dependency syndrome, most of the programmes however well intentioned, remained only lip services. Their jingles

evaporated soon after their launching. They consequently failed in their reforms to encourage investments in home food production and save overseas earnings. The effect was that food import resorted to on supplemental basis in the 1960s almost turned into substitution for local production. Consequently, over 70 percent of the populations were mired in differing levels of unemployment and poverty. Of these, 50% subsisted in the absolute poverty bracket and so were unable to establish entitlement to sufficient food.

The study demonstrates that the interventionist programmes failed because official policy, lopsided distribution of the national wealth and extravagance on the part of the affluent members of the society encouraged high rate of dependence on imported food. This tendency, which was aggravated by dramatic structural shift in the economy in the early 1970s, brought about by petro-chemicals, discouraged aggregate local production. The result was that in the face of poor economic performance, about 70 per cent of the populations were mired in poverty and un-or-underemployment such that they could not establish entitlement to the available food in the required quality and quantity to lead healthy, fruitful life even when these foods were readily and plentifully available. The study demonstrates in very clear terms, what Nigeria policy makers must do to take the nation away from the woods of hunger. It will be able to devise proper strategies of programme implementation to salvage the ugly situation.

## RECCOMENDATIONS

The research recommends as follows:

- Government at all levels should encourage indigenous initiatives in the production of local foodstuffs by paying more attention to the operations of small holder farmers and correcting abuses in the granting of agricultural loans.
- Private sector involvement and integrated rural development are sine qua non to achieving food security. Government role should be limited to formulation of policies and subsidies.
- Traditional community self-help philosophy and community-government collaboration in projects formulation and execution should be revived and widened.
- There is need for commercial revitalization of some cherished traditional crops of nutritious and medicinal values that are going the way of extinction. Examples include edible mushroom species, the bulbil yam, breadfruit, oil bean plant. etc. These have proved to be capable of preventing cancer, hepatitis, Alzheimer's disease and high cholesterol.
- Areas of comparative economic advantages exist in large scale fruit tree engineering, pastured small ruminants and cattle kraals. The threat of trypanosomiasis is no longer of consequence. Available land exists in every town

where human settlement pattern usually left large tracks of uninhabited land in all the directions at the frontiers.

- The spectre of poverty, protein deficiencies, postharvest losses and food wastages could be arrested through modern biotechnology and by mass fabrication of simple gender friendly juice extractors, complemented by cheap but efficient solar powered food dryers.
- Investment into the traditional areas of young farmers clubs, farmers' unions, cooperative societies, indigenous fruit tree engineering projects, livestock hybridization schemes, government-community self-help projects, local agricultural trade exhibitions etc should all continue.
- Areas of comparative economic advantages exist in large-scale fruit tree engineering, pastured small ruminants and cattle kraals. The threat of trypanosomiasis is no longer of consequence. In areas where tsetse flies still exists, suitable organo-chlorine insecticides such as endosulfan and DDT Miscible should be used to eradicate them. Use of commensals such as cattle egret adequately serves the purpose. It is important to emphasise that much of the area had turned to derived Savannah incapable of serving breeding ground for the vectors. Available land also exists in every town at the outskirts where prudent grazing of cattle, goats, sheep and domestication of antelopes, duikers and grass cutters, rabbits etc could profitable be organised. It is necessary to point out that spatial human settlement in the entire Igbo nation usually concentrated populations in the mainstream villages and peri-urban centres while large empty

tracks of relatively uninhabited and underutilized land exist found in the peripheries. This usually gave room to population exertion complicating the carrying capacity. Utilization of these frontiers for food production is highly recommended.

- In similar way, large-scale crop destroying pests like locusts, termites, weaverbirds etc as well as stubborn weeds could be combated with potent chemicals like Atrranex, Alazine, Alanex, Diurex, Triflurex, Thionex, Ravyon, Nuvacrom and Diazol.
- Comprehensive insurance packages for crops and livestock should be devised for farmers. The services of only renowned insurance companies should be engaged. Women form an appreciable percentage of agricultural labour force and so liberalized and adequately controlled loan packages should be disbursed to them. This will free them from the shackles of patriarchy, which act as limitation to their operations.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE**

- The work established the strategies by which the flood plains of Anambra, Niger and Mamu could develop into impressive food baskets, at the same time it revealed how the trypanosomes disease that kept the up-land areas from enjoying the benefits of the animal complex could be resolved.
- The study provided a general framework and criteria for the assessment of the food security objectives which can be of immense assistance in the planning of policies and programmes for enhancement of efficient resource allocations to them.



- The study showed that the Anambra-Mamu River Basin could develop into great potential for rapid development of the food industry through mass production of simple solar food driers and development of modern bio-tech equipment to arrest the enormous post harvest food wastages.
- The study advanced the historical model as alternative literature in the evaluation and management of the interventionist programmes.
- Replication of the revolutionary initiatives, philosophical underpinnings, well articulated and coordinated policies set by the Eastern Nigeria Government in the First Development Plan provides an understanding of the complexities in the contradictions, failures and modest achievements recorded by successive administrations since the 1970s. However, political convulsions and conflagrations such as civil wars could destroy such worthy ventures.

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Mr. Christopher Nnadozie, 68, retired Agricultural Extension Officer, Umueze village, Ihiala, Anambra State, 27 December, 2012.

Mr. Patrick Njom, 58, Executive Director, Food Security Unit, Enugu State Ministry of Agriculture, Okpara Avenue, Enugu, 19/3/14 and 28/3/16.

Mr. Livinus Akor, M.A. Candidate at the Post Graduate School, Room B. 108, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos Akoka, Lagos 9/8/13.

Mr. John Eze, 56 Onitsha based business man. Interviewed at his shop, 36 Muodebelu Ave Onitsha August 19, 2012.

Chief Leonard Orji (late) 68, Insurance Broker, 46 Simbiat Abiola Way Ikéja, 20/6/2007

Mr. Pantheleon Okeke, 50 Businessman, 46 Itire Rd by Obele/Ogunlana Bus Stop, Lawanson Surulere, Lagos 17/9/12.

Mr. Lawrence Odo, 38, a taxi driver, Taxi Park Obele Unit, Lawanson, Surulere Lagos, 17/9/12.

Sir Josiah Onouju, 57, 57 Araromi Street Idumota Lagos Island 16/7/12.

Sir Valentine Nwaenyi, 60, Polytechnic Lecturer at his home 56 Oraifite Street, Awada Obosi via Onitsha Anambra State, 16th February 2014.

Mrs. Theresa Onyeka nee Adinuba, (late) 83. Retired Seamstress at her home, Umuadobihe Quarters, Eziani Ihiala, 12/6/10.



Mr. Innocent Nwankwo, 57, Public Relations Consultant, 57, 85 Itire Road, Lawanson Surulere Lagos. 10/5/11

Mrs. Amaka Anthonia Adinuba, 38, Vice Principal Peace Promise International School 8 Onadeko Street, Lawanson Surulere Lagos. 17/1/13

Mr. James Ukandu, 52, Business man 19 Okoh Close Obele Lawanson Surulere Lagos. 19/6/10; 15/7/13

Mrs. Agnes Ukandu, 83, Retired Farmer 19 Okoh Close Obele Lawanson Surulere Lagos 19/6/10; 15/7/13

Chief Johnson Obi, 81, retired farmer at his home Odekpe Ogbaru L.G.A. of Anambra State 26/6/12.

Mr. Samuel Chukwube, (late) 68, Retired Mathematics teacher and local organizing politician, at his home, Umuohachom quarters Umuezeawala Ihiala, 27/12/12.

Barrister Chuma Okafor 82, Retired Legal Practitioner, at his home 52, Nwaziki Avenue, Awada Obosi, near Onitsha, 22nd September, 2012.

Chief George Elusiahu, 50, Business man at Ihiala House, 28 Odofin Park Lane, Amuwo Odofin by Ijesha Tedo Bus stop, Oshodi-Apapa Expressway Lagos, 26th July 2012.

Mrs. Philo Ezeani, 45, teacher/businesswoman Adani, Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State, 27 August, 2012.

Nze Hyacinth Chukwube, 85, retired School Inspector and Administrator, at his home, Umuohachom, Umuezeawala Ihiala, Anambra State. 27/12/12.

Chief Boniface Afugbom, (late) 82, retired Director General, Anambra State Government, at his compound Umumeri Uzoakwa, 29 December 2013.

Mr. Francis Nwadiolor, 51, Business man Onitsha Main Market August 19, 2012.

Mr. Ted Eze, 52, business man/politician, at his office 7 Iweka road Onitsha, 18 January 2013.

Mrs. Beatrice Eze, 49, crafts designer and animal husbandry farmer, at her shop Nkwogbe Market Ihiala, 14 January, 2013.

Mr. Bartholomew Eze, 58, Polytechnic Lecturer, Institute of Management and Technology Enugu, 18 February 2014

Mr. Chinedu Adinuba, 62, retired Head Master at his home Umuota Oba Anambra State, 12 January 2013.

Mr. Kennedy Bosah, business man, formerly ASTRACT farmer-contractor at his home, 12 Ugwunabamkpa st, Upland Town Onitsha, 23 January 2013.

Mr. Paddy Ijere, business man, formerly ASTRACT farmer-contractor at his office 12 Adarice Rd. Adani, 26 August 2012.

Mr. Robert Ubozor, 49, Port Harcourt based business man at his natal home, Umuabanike village Ihiala, 3 January 2013

Mr. Anthony Nwabineli, 73, business man and politician, at his country home, Umuezeawala Ihiala, 10 January 2013.

Mr. Mathew Mba, 67, a Lagos based trader and former Biafran Land Army Personnel, Lagos-Owerri bound trip of Peace Mass Transit Company, March, 20, 2013.

Sir Joe. Ugwumadu (Alias Ugonwanne), 65, retired District Manager, British-American Insurance Co. at his home Umuezeawala Ihiala, 26 December 2013.

Mrs. Eunice Okafor 61, Foodstuff Dealer, Enugu-Ukwu Main Market, 14 August 2012.

Lady Margaret Emembolu, (late) retired Chief Catering Officer, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) and Director of Depesto Bakery, Uwani Enugu 10/12/97.

Mr. Joseph Uzochukwu, retired geography teacher and alumnus of the University of Nigeria, 22 Orameji Street Ilupeju Lagos, 22 July 2012.

Mrs. Evelyn Ejiogu, 63, food trader 20 Wilmar Road, Ajegunle, Lagos State, 14 November, 2012.

Augustine Ikueze, 63, business man and port clearing agent at his office near Longroom, Tin-Can Island Lagos, 14 July 2012.

Ms. Nkiruka Ezeobi. 17 Obodoukwu Rd, Okpoko Onitsha, 6 January 2012.

Dr. Chuka Chukwube, 51, Senior Lecturer Modern European Languages University of Lagos at his office, 16 November 2012.

Mrs. Ijeoma Ejiogu-Smart, 44, Airline Staff, Airlington USA, at her country home, Ejiogu compound Ubahuekwem Ihiala Anambra State, 27 December 2006.

Dr. Maxi Ike, (late) 62, pediatrician, at his clinic, 15 Muodebe St. Onitsha, 23 January 2013.

Ms. Rosemary Okam 43, Midwife General Hospital Nnewi Anambra State, 16 August 2013.

Dr. Emeka Mgbenwelu, 53, Medical Practitioner, Nka Memorial Hospital Aguluzigbo, Anambra State at his clinic, 18 August 2013.

Mrs. Evan Obiesie, 66, retired civil servant at her home, 3 Adelabu Street Uwani 17 February 2014.

Lolo Nkiru Ifeanyi, 73, retired school principal at her home, 19 Chime Avenue New Haven Enugu, 17 February 2014.

Mr. Sylvester Adigwe, 58, Businessman formerly Manager of Social Centre Farms at Umuduru Village, Ihiala, 27, August 2012.

Rev. Fr. Benjamin Dara 72, Priest and formerly Managing Director, Holy Ghost Fathers Farms, Isieke Okija at Fathers' House, St. Martins Catholic Mission, Ihiala, 28 August, 2012.

Mrs. Monica Egwuagu, (56, Trader) 29 July, 2012 at her home, Umuohachom, Umuezeawala Ihiala, Anambra State.

Sir James Obieke, (68, Businessman) at his office, 69 Port Harcourt Rd, Fegge, Onitsha, 6 July, 2012.

Chief Benson Okonkwo, 80, Retired Civil Service, in his house Otuleze Village, Agulu-Uzoigbo, Aniocha LGA, Anambra State, 28 December, 2013.

Oluchukwu Nnadozie, 51, formerly ADARICE Farmer, Parboiler and later ADARICE transporters in discussion at his house, 21 ADARICE Rd, Adani, Enugu State, 22 September 2011.

Lady Mary Rose Nwaenyi, (56, Headmistress and Community Leader). Discussion with researcher at her home, 52, Oraifite Street, Awada Layout, Obosi, Anambra State, 26, February 2014.

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