

## Strategies for The Exploration of Agribusiness Policies and Initiation for Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

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### Info Articles

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### Abstract

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History Article:  
Received 2 June 2018  
Accepted 1 December 2018  
Published 29 January 2019

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Keywords :

*Agribusiness, Policies, Poverty  
Reduction, Initiatives, Strategies,  
Bauchi State*

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Agribusiness innovation has contributed to the economic development and industrial capabilities of many countries thereby reducing poverty. However, the potentiality of agriculture in Nigeria has yielded little output due to political and institutional challenges. The cardinal objective of this study is to explore the agribusiness policies and initiatives as a strategy to mitigate poverty in the Nigerian context. Hence, the study employed qualitative research design and collected data from fifteen informants on the strategies to reduce poverty in the study area. Accordingly, findings from the survey indicated that the National, state, Non-governmental organizations, private firms were the main activities applied in pushing agribusiness. Conversely, poor political will, financial constraints, scarcity of agro-allied industries, marketing difficulties, low awareness and enlightenment among the farmers were observed as the major challenges of agribusiness initiatives in Bauchi state. Yet, the results revealed that agricultural revenue, food security, employment opportunities, the involvement of public, private and the NGOs in agribusiness shall accelerate the production of animals and crops. Therefore, the study proposed for steady political commitment from the government through expansion of capital resources in addition to public and private collaboration in agribusiness. The improvement of infrastructural facilities in the state, establishment of marketing boards, and mechanized farming.

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## Introduction

Agriculture used to be the main sources of revenue to the government of federal republic of Nigeria before the exploration of petroleum in commercial scale. However, the neglect of agriculture led to apparent economic predicaments prominent among include massive unemployment, inadequate access to basic needs, food scarcity and drastic increase in poverty level. Hence, immediately after the independence various policies and programs mainly to boost agriculture production, economic growth and marketing of the outputs, but these policies appeared to be interventions projects and involving other financial institutions respectively. Categorically, some of the main objectives of these strategies include resource allocation, redistribution of income and promote growth as well as development, amid the application of fiscal and other monetary instruments. These policies specify the framework and government's action plan to increase food production, raw materials, export crop production, creation of employment opportunities and modernization of the agricultural sector for attainment of better living.

Agricultural policies as contained in the National agricultural policies 1960-1985, includes Research policy, agricultural marketing and pricing policy, agricultural extension services policy, agricultural finance and credit policy, water resource development policy, agricultural rural development policy and capacity building and manpower development policy respectively. Thus, studies have revealed that agribusiness activities in the areas land cultivation, poultry, livestock, dairy and fisheries contributed to poverty reduction, food security and Gross Domestic Product in many countries such as the United States of America, Brazil, China, Canada, Holland, China and Germany among others. Literature juxtaposed that preceding programs in agribusiness yielded insignificant results in Nigeria; hence, other attributes such as post harvesting activities mainly processing, packaging, storage in addition to distribution and transportation were neglected.

Categorically, poor market and derail support for local industries, storage facilities, inadequate infrastructure, unsteady input and product prices. The peasant nature of farming, low productivity and poor technological adoption bedevilled agribusiness in Bauchi state and the country at large (Haruna, Sani, Danwanka, & Adejo, 2012; Olukunle, 2013). The vice president of Nigeria declared that over 110 million Nigerians are poor (Nwabughogu, 2015). A survey on food poverty indicated 50.23 percent and vulnerability to food poverty stipulated 61.68 percent in the federal republic of Nigeria. The study recommended for policies and programs that will drastically mitigate food poverty in the country (Ozughalu, 2016). Similarly, reports on multidimensional poverty indicators across health, education and living standard proved that the Bauchi state has 89.5 percent indicators (Alkire, Roche, Seth & Sumner, 2015). Again, the selection of the study area was based on the report by the Oxford Department of International Development which further proclaimed that Bauchi State is the poorest among ten identified states in Nigeria (OHDI, 2014; Suleiman & Karim, 2015; Musa, Abdullah & Wahid, 2016). It is based on this background that this study infers to explore agribusiness strategies to mitigate poverty in the study area. The study is premised by two research questions; (i) What are the agribusiness policies and initiatives to alleviates poverty? (ii) How effective are these policies and initiatives on poverty reduction. Furthermore, the stated objectives include (i) to explore the agribusiness potentials in the study area. (ii) To examine the effectiveness of agribusiness for poverty reduction. The paper encompasses an introduction, research questions and objectives. A qualitative research approach and thematic technique of data analysis. Thus, related literature was reviewed, and innovation theoretical framework was adopted. The results were discussed based on the findings of prior researches, the recommendations and conclusion as well as references was presented respectively.

## Methodology

This study utilized the qualitative research method; non-probability sampling design and semi-structured interview. We collected the data from the fifteen informants via purposive sampling from the Ministries of cooperatives, agriculture, social welfare and Bauchi state commission for women, youth rehabilitation and development. While some selected farmers were equally interviewed via snowballing sampling technique. The population of this study comprises of the policy makers, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Bauchi state agricultural scheme, empowerment and poverty alleviation programs. During the interview session, the informants were given 15-20 minutes on each question captured on the interview protocols (see the interview protocols, below). The data were recorded meticulously while field notes. A transcription for better organization of the data. Consequently, a thematic analysis was applied in which the research questions were answered based on the themes and facilitated the achievement of the stated objectives.

### Interview Protocols

What are the agribusiness policies in the state?

List the impediments to agribusiness policies.

How are these programs implemented.

What are the achievements of these policies?

Can you suggest the strategies to expand agribusiness in the state.

### Literature Review

This section of the study discussed types of agribusiness, development and other studies carried out on the phenomenon under study. Agribusiness scheme, first appeared in the works Golberg and Davis in 1957, it implies joint business activities that took effect from farming to the sale of products. In other words, agribusiness is the collection of enterprises which includes diverse farming activities such as Agri-chemicals, production and breeding of seeds, crops, supply of farm machineries, processing, distribution as well as retail services and marketing of the products (Goldberg & Davis, 1957). In other words, it is a composition of supply of agricultural inputs the farm implements, products and modification of agricultural outputs and distribution to the final consumers. Based on these notions, agribusiness appeared to a foremost sources of employment and income generation across the globe. It is often characterized as businesses that covers marketing of farm output, the wholesalers, processors, retailers and other middlemen operators. Agribusiness is also typified by production, distribution, retailing, franchising while professional and financial services are carried out respectively (Hagblade et al, 2015).

Basically, agribusiness is characterized by three major substructures the farm productions, distribution and marketing of the products (Tersoo, 2014). Studies have indicated that most of the products and raw materials being processed are perishable; fragile and can be better managed by people with distinctive business abilities. The governments, at various level the central, states and regional authorities; or local governments have put strict regulations to ensure consumer safety and environmental protection measures. To these effects, divergent stakeholders such as producers, wholesalers, transporters and retailers across different gender are involved in agribusiness activities and in order eliminate hunger and poverty. Agribusiness organizations are categorized into sole proprietorship, partnership, cooperative society, joint stock company, both private/public and state-owned enterprises respectively.

The development of agricultural policies in Nigeria took progression of stages aimed at boosting food security, income generation and general agricultural infrastructure. The programs include those within regions, states and national projects. For instance, the Farm Settlement Scheme (FSS); was introduced in the then Western region in 1960, Eastern region in 1962, Midwestern region in 1964 respectively. The national outlook started in 1972, with the introduction of the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP); Operation Feed the Nation (OFR); 1976, River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA); 1976, Green Revolution (GR); 1980, Agricultural Development Projects (ADP); was later launched in 1975 across some states. The Directorate for Food Road Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); took effect in 1986, the National Fadama Development Project was later inaugurated in 1990 in twelve states of Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe, Niger, Lagos, Oyo and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. In the year 1999, the National Economic Empowerment and Development strategies (NEEDS); was launched, National, Specialized Program on Food Security, 2002 and other states project respectively (Ani, 2013; Ekpo and Olaniyi, 1995; Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012). Literature indicated that these programs were bedeviled with inadequate collaboration between the public and private stakeholders, weak strategies, narrow focus, targets and specific objectives. Embezzlement, poor monitoring, evaluation and political interference (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

Nwibo and Okorie (2013) conducted a survey on the constraints to entrepreneurship and investment decision by agribusiness stakeholders in the south-eastern, Nigeria using mixed method research design. The results reveal that social, economic and institutional barriers such as inadequate capital and low access to formal loan schemes, poor market information, poor infrastructure and multiple taxation are major constraints to the agribusiness. The survey recommended for an increased access to credit facilities to the agribusiness entrepreneurs and market research initiatives respectively. Pawa and Tersoo 2013, discovered that agribusiness initiatives are capable of generating employment, revenue and poverty reduction. But poor policy articulation, inadequate capital, derailed infrastructure upset agribusiness in Nigeria.

Singh, Nain and Sharma, (2016) conducted a survey on the development of Agri- entrepreneurship for sustainable farming income and discovered that food processing and value addition are an integral part of agriculture, thus, contributed to the socioeconomic development of India, but huge potential has been underutilized. This led to neglect of large opportunities that will develop the sector. The study suggested for improvement of strategies for the processing equipment, provision of infrastructure, capacity building,

business interventions and effective marketing linkages to the consumers to tackle poverty and rural unemployment concurrently.

Studies have acknowledged that agribusiness initiative is a leading instrument for the development of economic and mainspring for poverty reduction (Ezeokeke, Anyanwu, & Okoro, 2012). For instance, the results of survey carried out on agribusiness in New Zealand indicated a significant output in the production of dairy from 59000 as at 1994; 155000 by 2002 and 266000 in 2010 respectively. The results further proof that land use contributed to 204, among farmers. The findings contributed to the development of high farm harvest and increased raw materials for agro-allied industries. These further influences agribusiness and later translated into poverty reduction to the farmers. (Copland & Stevens, 2012).

Ogidi, 2016 studied agribusiness for economic development in Nigeria and discovered that before the exploration of petroleum in commercial quantities, agricultural products such as groundnut, cocoa, cotton and cassava were the major sources of revenue and export in the country. These products were processed into different by products. However, political, legal constraints, poor collaboration and economic factor such as interest rates, exchange rates, and unemployment crippled these developments. Hence the product faces market difficulties in the international business.

A study conducted on the cooperative agribusiness in Greece indicated that market orientation, brand orientation is the crucial approaches required in the development of the sector. Many cooperatives have experienced organizational and strategic changes which lead to the expansion of markets. Therefore, cooperative agribusiness yielded positive results and higher output in the country (Benos, Kalogeras, Verhees, Sergaki, & Pennings, 2016).

In a study on agribusiness innovation between Thailand and Nigeria; Ademola, Adenle, Louise and Hossein, (2016) compares the cassava potentials of the two countries and established that agribusiness potentials are under-exploited in Africa and Nigeria based on the apparent challenges related to political instability, lack of reliable financial system, poor economic infrastructure, inadequate technological readiness, land tenure practice, weak institutional infrastructure, lack of access to essential inputs for food testing, packaging and processing. Findings indicated that Asian and Thailand agribusiness recorded success as results of innovative business in Agro-industrial policy of 1958, strategic marketing, vertical integration, technical, human resource and managerial. The country invested in capacity building for cassava production. The study recommended for promotion of institutional support, Agro-industrial policy, infrastructure development and establishment of strategic marketing. Based on these gaps established in the literature, this study was carried in the state of Bauchi, federal republic of Nigeria to explore agribusiness policies and potentials.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Innovation theory is used in the context of this study in order to explore agribusiness and the precious need to revolutionize, modernized and transform agricultural products into competitive and business oriented as well as novelty so as to reduce poverty in the study area. Innovation theory first appeared in the works of Joseph A Schumpeter in 1934. The theory stated that innovation is the crucial dimension related to economic transformation. He postulated that economic change spin around innovation and entrepreneurial accomplishments in addition to market power. Innovation-originated market driven activities provides improved and better results. These will further lead to product characterization, marketing research, skills and development; financial capability and internationalization of products (Binnui, & Cowling, 2016). Innovation theory was previously applied in management, information and communication technology (Misuraca and Viscusi, 2015); law (Boyle, 1992); agriculture (Sumberg, 2005); entrepreneurship (Goldsmith, 1991); economics (Hall, 1994; Stiglitz, 2015); public procurement (Edquist and Hommen, 2000) and other related disciplines. In the context of this study, innovation entails improvement, modernization, revolution, novelty, advancement and transformation of agribusiness potentials in the study area for competitiveness, desirability of various products for consumption and tackle the under utilization of the agricultural resources respectively. Furthermore, in order to push and achieve the objectives of this study; innovation theory is employed to among other things ensure increased production of agricultural produce, processing of fruits and vegetables into cans, process maize for flour, starch and other feeds. Processing and changing of livestock, birds; diary products and many other farm produce to mitigate poverty. An improvement of infrastructure shall accelerates the preservation, storage and warehousing, transport services, Agri-clinics and other service centers. These developments will equally enhanced trading in the aspect of retailing, farming contracts, supply chain management. Other aspects of capacity building and human resource development in agribusiness. Consequently, the creation of new products, market, sources

of raw materials and general organization of small and micro scale enterprises besides the employment opportunities (Acharya, 2007; Haggblade et al, 2015).

## Results

The results of this study were analysed based on the structured interview protocols on the existing policies on agribusiness, challenges of the programs, achievements and strategies to expand agribusiness in the study area. These were later discussed and corroborated by previous studies and answered the research questions and accomplished the stated objectives.

### The Agribusiness Policies in the State

The informants attested that agribusiness policies in the state are commonly categorized into National, state, NGOs and private operators.

*National policies: include all programs initiated by the federal government of Nigeria on the development of agribusiness in the state recently, such as Fadama Development Projects which collaborated with the state government projects in boosting modern and irrigation farming, processing and marketing of the products like rice, wheat and other perishable products (Informant four).*

Informant three, maintained:

*That the federal government of Nigeria had established many programs such Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Directorate Food Road and Rural Infrastructure, National Fadama Development Project Phase I, II and III. These programs were established to guarantee improved farming inputs both raining and dry season using modern techniques, irrigation and ensure food security across the thirty-six states of Nigeria (Informant six).*

*State policies: These are the programs which cover all aspects of agriculture and agribusiness activities carried out by the state government through the Ministries, Agencies and Local Governments. The ministry of agriculture and water resources, facilitated these projects through the delivery of modern farming techniques; training and capacity building across the twenty local governments in the state (Informant five).*

*The Bauchi State Agricultural Development Programs (BSADP); have offices in the three senatorial zones and the local governments. The project is designed to smoothen the process of all aspects of farming activities, information dissemination, supply of farm implements and equipment. It also coordinates all agricultural schemes in the state. (Informant ten).*

“The Bauchi state government has established fertilizer blending company and sale to the farmers. The Bauchi meat factory is a state government owned company which processed meat and distributed to the market for sale”

*NGOs and private individuals: The Non-governmental organizations such as farmers’ cooperative societies and associations accessed loans from the bank of industry, bank of agriculture in the state. The private individual farmers and businessmen partake in other activities, namely, the processing and product management, typically among include groundnut, rice and soybeans, beans, sesame in addition to the improvement of various products. Other activities of the private operators include assorted milk drinks and locally processed meat et cetera (Informant seven).*

### The Impediments to Agribusiness in Bauchi State

For the purposes of this study, the challenges of agribusiness are classified into political, financial, shortage of agro-allied industries, marketing difficulties and low awareness and enlightenment for the farmers.

*Political impediments, these include poor laudable policies on agribusiness, inadequacy of modern farm equipment and implements for mechanized and commercial farming. Other farm inputs like improved breeds of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides are grossly insufficient for the farmers in the state. Most of our farmers are in rural areas and faces difficulty due to deplorable infrastructures such as roads, electricity, water for irrigation and veterinary centers. These circumstances led to the lost farm products (Informant eleven).*

“I discovered that there is inadequate involvement of the local farmers during the commencement and the implementation of the projects. Farmers are ordinarily expected to be part of the decision makers on programs that affect them”

*Financial difficulty, most farmers in the state are subsistence and therefore find it very difficult to access soft loans from the banks of industry, agriculture and other financial institutions. The farmers had feeble resources to acquire farm machineries. These affected high farm production as well as distribution of these products. Sometimes the farmers mismanaged and misapplied the resources meant for agribusiness (Informant twelve).*

*Pitiable agro-allied industries: There are shortages of agro-allied industries in the state, which led to the damages and under-utilization most of the products such as tomatoes, fruits, groundnut, soybeans. The only existing meat factory owned by the state government is incapacitated to cater for numbers of beef products in the state (Informant thirteen).*

*Marketing hitch: Even though, farm produce is currently on sale, the local products have low market, due to poor processing methods. Perishable got spoiled as results of low patronage and these affected future productions. For instance, tomatoes, pepper and other unprocessed products blemished. There are scanty marketing boards not only in the state, but the country at large (Informant fourteen).*

“Stumpy awareness and enlightenment: farmers and agro-allied businessmen in the state have insufficient technical skills, initiatives and modern agribusiness creativity as well as knowledge. Hence, they had little information on the modern techniques”

### **Implementation of the Programs**

Implementation refers to the process of executing projects related to agribusiness through the various implementation mechanisms such as National programs, state ministries, agencies, companies and NGOs respectively. Informant One, said that:

*The state hosted national agricultural programs such as Fadama farming project, phase I, II and III respectively. The Bank of industry, Bank of agriculture gives some financial package in the form of soft loans to farmers and entrepreneurs alike. The Fadama projects trained farmers on irrigation and the processing of farm products such as rice, wheat, groundnut and other vegetables. Locally processed products were on sale in their shops in Bauchi, the state capital and other locations across the state (Informant six).*

*The ministries, agencies and state owned companies: The ministry of finance makes the disbursement of funds while agricultural ministry supply via its departments such as Bauchi State Agricultural Development Program (BSADP); the established farming zones across the three senatorial zones and the twenty local governments; farmers were given farm implements through the tractors hiring units, animals, local implements, insecticides and pesticides. The state Agricultural Supply Company supplies improved seeds, farm implements ready for sale to the farmers. The fertilizer blending company and meat factory executed projects related to processing of meat and manufacturing of fertilizers (Informant five).*

*The role of extension workers and media stations. The media houses in the state, Bauchi Radio Corporation and television station enlightens the farmers via the programs (AKOMA GONA); meaning people should embrace farming in terms of plantation; cattle rearing and birds. While extension workers give practical training on the modern agricultural skills (Informant two).*

*Non-governmental organizations and private companies: Agriculture research projects such as (SASAKAWA farming projects), equally assisted farmers with technical skills and capacity building to improve agribusiness activities in the state. Similarly, Private companies such as Sankache farms, Vital Feeds, Animal care and other NGOs sometimes do collaborate with the government on the development of agribusiness via the supply of products, processing as well as distribution in the state (informant fifteen).*

### **Achievements of the Programs in the State**

Despite the challenges of agribusiness strategies in the state, the informants uphold that the venture yielded some remarkable success, such as creation of job opportunities, the unemployed have secured employment via the public projects, the NGOs and other private practitioners. Nearly 70 percent of the people are employed in the farming, processing, distribution and marketing of agricultural products in the state.

*Utilization of the agricultural potentials in the state: The involvement of public, private and the NGOs in agribusiness has accelerated the production of animals and crops. Irrigation alone had exposed most farmers on the need to harness our abundant resources such as rice, sesame, maize, cotton, beans, soybeans, guinea corn, millet, groundnut, wheat and vegetables. The processing firms have explored production, processing and distribution of products to the market (Informant five).*

*Increased food security and production: The state is harvesting crops during the dry and raining season, thereby making the products available for sale. For instance, Fadama phase I, II and III had boosted the production, processing in addition to marketing of rice, wheat along with other farm products in the state (Informant eight).*

*Accelerated revenue to the government, NGOs and farmers: Due to the bumper harvest, especially this year, many farmers had earned more income and as well the state revenue had increased. This generated income to the people via sales in various markets in the villages and other parts of the state (Informant one).*

*Decline of crime rate, most of the misconducts and felonies in the study area among the youth have direct links with unemployment, therefore, an expansion of agribusiness novelty led to a drastic reduction in offenses in both the urban and rural areas in our state (Informant three).*

### **Strategies for the Expansion Agribusiness in the State**

The informants proposed for vibrant political will on agribusiness, expansion of capital resources, public and private collaboration on the business, improvement of infrastructures in the state, establishment of marketing boards, and mechanization of agriculture.

“Vibrant political will on agribusiness: It is therefore imperative for the government to allocate enough financial resource, capacity building and all the services required to make agriculture wholesome hence the potentialities shall be adequately explored”

“Expansion of financial support for farmers: The needs for expansion of capital resources through the bank of agriculture, industry and micro-finance banks shall augment the existing programs and accelerate agribusiness resourcefulness and innovation in the study area”

Farm credit facilities, the government, commercial and micro-credit schemes institutions should provide capital resources to specific aspects of farming so as to increase production and marketing. For instance, beans, soybeans, sesame, groundnut, cocoa, cotton and palm kernel”

*Public and private collaboration on the business: partnership between the government and private operators will influence food production, poverty reduction and employment generation as the sector could accommodate wide areas such cattle rearing, crops and above all processing them for marketing (Informant seven).*

“The establishment of marketing boards: The roles of marketing boards in terms of prices regulations and distribution will help the local farmers avoid the risk of seasonal fluctuations and loss of their products”

“Mechanization of agriculture: The process of large scale farming and commercial production requires modern equipment, implements and technical skills. Therefore, I suggested for investment in the modern farming to enable our products have comparative advantage”

*Improvement of infrastructures in the state: The need for good road network, electricity supply, construction of dams and storage facilities shall ease difficulties faced by the professional farmers especially in the rural areas. This will also attract many people into agribusiness (Informant two).*

“Improvement of the farm and land infrastructures, these include allocation of farm lands, farm machines, technical skills, farm security and up to date farming techniques”

*Establishment of state owned agricultural institutions and training centers. The need to set up capacity building and agribusiness institutions shall have influenced farmers' technical skills, innovations and expansion of the business to be result oriented. The institutions shall also influence research and development; the students, farmers will be trained, their expertise and competence will be developed.*

## Discussions

The study employed a thematic analysis method in the articulation of results and achieved the stated objectives. The first research question supposed: what are the agribusiness policies and initiatives that alleviate poverty? Agribusiness policies are designed plans of actions of the governments in the study area to accelerate agricultural development, employment generation and poverty reduction. The informants stipulated that such programs of actions include; the previous and current National Programs such as Operation Feed the Nation, OFN; National Fadama Development Projects Phases I, II and III. These projects collaborated with the state ministries, agencies; NGOs and individual farmers in boosting agricultural activities in the state. Literature attested that Fadama III project had influenced the production capacity, employment generation, income and living standard of the benefiting farmers in Niger, Akwa Ibom, Enugu, Kogi, Oyo and Taraba states of Nigeria (Idris & Yusof, 2016). The results of this study further indicated that projects such as the Bauchi State Agricultural Development Programs (BSADP); have been established to provide intervention in all aspects of agriculture. Alongside the state agricultural supply company, the meat factory, fertilizer blending corporation were ventures, designed to push agribusiness activities in the state.

NGOs and private individuals, the informants testified that Non-governmental organizations and individual farmers, the cooperative societies and associations accessed loans from the bank of industry, bank of agriculture in the state. The private individual farmers and businessmen partake in the production and processing in addition to management of farm activities typically groundnut, rice, soybeans, beans and sesame. Previous studies in Rivers state indicated that six NGOs had accelerated facilitated agricultural programs, community development, industrial growth and commercial programs in the state (Enyioko, 2012).

Despite the national, state, NGOs and private individual projects as well as interventions; the informants substantiated some peril challenges affecting agribusiness in the study area such as the inadequate political will, financial constraints, scarcity of agro-allied industries, marketing difficulties and low awareness and enlightenment among the farmers. Previous researches indicated that inadequate capital, poor managerial training, declining market for local products, unsatisfactory agro-based industries, infrastructures and multiple taxes are some of factors confronting agribusiness in the federal republic of Nigeria (Nwibo & Okorie, 2013; Igbokwuwe, Essien & Agunna, 2015). A study in Malaysia corroborated that weak political will, scanty research, inadequate capital, limited market and low level of skills and knowledge sluggish straw agribusiness in the country (Zainol, Davies, Rose, Jabil, Mazdi, Wan Toren & Rosmawati, 2015).

The interview session enables us to examine the implementation strategies of the agribusiness schemes, the results showcases that Bauchi state accommodated the National Fadama Development project, phases I, II, III and other National projects respectively. The Bank of industry, the Bank of agriculture which facilitated the disbursement of capital and capacity building. The Fadama projects trained farmers on irrigation and the processing of farm products such as rice, wheat, groundnut and other vegetables. The Nigerian Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS); had increased funding of agriculture by sixty percent in the country (Okorie, 1988). A study in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria confirmed the results of this study that farmers accessed formal and informal financial interventions. The formal institutions include agricultural credit schemes (Alabi, Lawal & Chiogor, 2016). Findings from this exploration justified that the state ministries, agencies and companies make the disbursement of funds as well as farm inputs via the Bauchi State Agricultural Development Program (BSADP). The state Agricultural Supply Company supplies improved seeds, farm implements ready for sale to the farmers. The fertilizer blending company along with meat factory executed projects related to supply of fertilizer and meat processing. Literature, align that regional clusters accelerated the economy of Poland in which agricultural and food processing enhances regional business, profits and comparative advantage (Bojar, Bojar & Bojar, 2016). A survey on lean approach to food processing SMEs highlighted training and resourcefulness guarantee food safety and hygiene (Dora & Gellynck, 2015).

Furthermore, the extension workers and media stations such as the Bauchi Radio Corporation and television stations enlightens the farmers via the programs (*AKOMA GONA and NOMA TUSHEN ARZIKI*); meaning people should embrace farming for empowerment. At the same time extension workers give practical training on the modern agricultural proficiency. Ejiogu-Okereke, Chikaire, Ogueri and Chikezie, 2016; concurred that radio, television, mobile phones and other information and communication technology played crucial roles on information exchange, market, knowledge sharing and monitoring illegal fish farming in Rivers state, Nigeria. The media exhibit essential roles in agricultural development through

effective communication, promoting extension services, marketing of farm products, educating farmers on modern techniques and mobilization of the people in Zimbabwe (Mugwisi, 2015). Non-governmental organizations and private companies: Agriculture research projects such as (*SASAKAWA* farming projects), equally assisted farmers with technical skills and capacity building to improve agribusiness activities in the state. Similarly, Private companies such as Sankache farms, Vital Feeds, Animal care and other NGOs sometimes do collaborate with the government on the development of agribusiness via the supply of products, processing as well as distribution in the state. The link between civil society organizations, development NGOs and grassroots associations in promoting agriculture development in India indicated a remarkable achievement via the government, donor agencies, activist networks, rural elites and poor (Brown, 2016). An empirical study in Malaysia and Indonesia juxtaposed that palm oil industries had contributed to the economic development and push agricultural services; thereby increasing the processing of the products with over seventy percent export in the two countries (Jaafar, Salleh, & Manaf, 2015).

Answering the second research question which explored the effectiveness of agribusiness policies and initiatives to reduce poverty. Literature, supposed that agribusiness policies in Brazil contributed to higher foreign exchange, balance of trade and national employment. The results thus, confirmed in concrete terms the strong linkage between agricultural, livestock, services, industry and other sectors of the economy. These advancements imply its significance to the Brazilian economic development policies (Rodrigues Moreira, Kureski, & Pereira da Veiga, 2016). The results of this study supported and uphold solidly that agribusiness led to the creation of jobs via the public projects; the NGOs and other private practitioners. Nearly seventy percent of the people are employed in the farming, processing, distribution and marketing of agricultural products in the state. The informants firmly expressed that agribusiness policies had improved the utilization of agricultural potentials in the study area through the processing of farm products; cattle, distribution and marketing. The venture concurrently boosted food security, processing as well as production of variety of packaged pastries. We realized accelerated revenue to the government, NGOs and individual practitioners alike. A reduction of crimes and wrongdoings was also witnessed in Bauchi state.

The literature suggested that Agro-entrepreneurship had played key roles in the socioeconomic development of India via the creation of employment, increased national income, control rural urban migration and supported Agro-allied industrial development. The study uncovered farm level production, services, inputs producers, processing and marketing (Uplaonkar & Biradar, 2015).

In order to achieve the stated objectives, we examined the strategies required to boost agribusiness in the study area. The informants proposed for vivacious political will, increased capital resources, public and private collaboration on the business, expansion of infrastructures in the state, establishment of marketing boards, and mechanized agriculture. Studies in Latin America indicated the involvement of the government and private sector in developing strategic instruments and programs at the micro level. The public sector initiated plans for industrial development, innovation, investment, education, science and technology. Industrial policies were applied and transform the economy, which further enhances sustainable growth. The Chez republic for instance, introduces economic policy, human resources development, public administration and public services, thereby revitalizing the state (Fernández-Arias, Sabel, Stein & Trejos, 2016). A study in Manipur state of India ascertained that financial capital rendered a significant role in influencing entrepreneurial action and strategic decisions of rural women in the country. It also indicated the interrelationship between human, institutional and social capital for their development and poverty reduction (Kungwansupaphan, Kungwansupaphan Leihaothabam & Leihaothabam, 2016). Capital resource is the backbone of agribusiness and meaningful economic development, therefore disbursement of funds shall accelerate the production as well as expansion of the sector.

A study in Canada, further attested that financing businesses should be the focal interest of policy makers, academics, business owners and practitioners. Availability of capital buttress entrepreneurial capability, practicability, commercial innovations and wealth creation, thereby mitigating paucity of resources (Orse, Riding & Manley, 2006). The expansion of infrastructures in the state, establishment of marketing boards, and mechanized agriculture. Previous study in Burma, indicated that infrastructure, the road, rail, electricity, telecommunications and other utilities have direct connections to effectiveness of governance, societal cohesion, employment and economic growth (Walsh & Amponstira, 2013). A study in South Korea indicated that agricultural infrastructure such as farm roads, water development, farmland improvement, irrigation and drainage systems in Yeongsan project led to an increase in agricultural productivity, environmental friendly farmland, regional income growth, transportation systems and cash crop production (Im, Lee, Lee & Kim, 2016). Prior researches have associated that the British Empire marketing Board established in 1926; proved that trade stimulations, satisfaction of the colonial agricultural and industrial products. Thus, promoted free trade, isolationism and preferences (Kothari, 2014). A study

on the comparative advantage of the marketing board of cocoa in Ghana and Nigeria reveals significant impact on production during the marketing board era in the two countries devoid of exploitative tendencies (Ayinde, 2014). Agricultural mechanization in Brazil, Canada and United States has significantly sharpen crops and animal production for a longer time. The innovation of mechanized farming such as tractors, zero tillage technology, rice, citrus, vegetable, cotton, sugarcane, potatoes mechanizations and milking equipments had improved farming size and agricultural productivity (Spera, Mustard & Vanwey, 2014; Schmitz & Moss, 2016).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study explored agribusiness policies as strategies for poverty reduction in Bauchi state, Nigeria. A qualitative methodological paradigm was applied using semi-structured interview and the results were thematically analyzed. The main objectives of this study are to discover the agribusiness potentials in the study area as well as to examine the effectiveness and initiatives to mitigate poverty. Findings divulge in concrete terms that agribusiness policies in the state are usually categorized into National, state, NGOs and private operators, activities for instance; the National policies include all projects initiated by the federal government and implemented the various states such as The Operation Feed the Nation, Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructure and National Fadama Development Projects Phases I, II and III respectively. The state policies covered all agribusiness schemes executed by the ministries, agencies; local governments in the study area and the state-owned companies such as the Bauchi State Agricultural Development Programs (BSADP); fertilizer blending corporation, the meat processing factory and agricultural supply company. I realized the contributions of NGOs, and private firms and individuals in accessing financial resources and agribusiness exercises in the study area. The results as well, stipulated that agribusiness is impeded by frail political will, inadequate financial resources, poor Agro-allied industries, marketing hitch, unsatisfactory extension services and denial of the local farmers' views and suggestions in relations to decisions.

Findings from the study shows that the implementation mechanisms of these projects were carried out by the federal establishments, state ministries, companies, agencies, the NGOs, the media houses and other stakeholders respectively. However, we discovered the utilization of agribusiness potentials in the areas of employment generation, improved food security and production in the state. Part of the success story of this study is the growth of revenue and income by the government and farmers. This implies other socioeconomic benefit related to felonies and crimes had depreciated, meaning if the venture is well explored much shall be achieved.

The informant boldly advised and indicated the need for policy makers to accord priority to agribusiness through the mechanization of agriculture to attend high production, expansion of capital resources, improvement of infrastructure, and establishment of reliable marketing boards. A specific credit facilities and outright commercialization of some export products such as cotton, cocoa, sesame as well as groundnut. The need for strong collaboration and memorandum of understanding between the public and private sector were articulated as the practical strategies for the expansion agribusiness in the study area. Mechanized agriculture is the modern innovation and it yielded remarkable success in the United States, Canada and Holland. Other fascinating line of action, the establishment of state owned agricultural institutions and training centers. Agricultural projects required training and capacity building so as to harness the diverse fields, seed supply, crop production, animals breeding, farming machinery, Agri-chemicals, processing, distribution and marketing of the products. The study has paved a way for adequate utilization of agribusiness facility and added credence to the body of literature in policy studies. I, therefore, recommended for the provision of adequate capital resources through agricultural multi-channels credit schemes, establishment of farm centers across the twenty local areas in the state and agro-allied industries in each of the three senatorial zones.

The need to revisit agricultural shows to exhibit farmer's talents, appreciate their efforts and reward those with outstanding products shall be imperative. Provision of infrastructure such as electricity, good road network, water facilities such as dams, borehole for irrigation deserves urgent attention. The introduction of agricultural insurance policy to cover and carry the risk that may occur in the process of production, processing, distribution and marketing of the commodities. This study is limited within its scope, hence poverty indices and agribusiness potentials of other states in the country differs and generalization shall be limited within the study area. We use non-probability sampling design which is inadequate to cover the entire state, thus future research should apply a quantitative design to obtain wider coverage.

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