

The Nigerian State and Peasants: Antinomies of A Marginalized Social Category

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[0150] Abstract

This paper explores the way and manner the Nigerian state responds to the changing demands of peasants and how successive policies and programmes tends to undermine, marginalize and destroy the peasant way of life. Despite enormous state pressure and control, the peasantry has continued to resist change and adaptation not necessarily because of their strength as a group but largely due to failure of state policies and programmes to integrate and subdue them. Using the class theory, the study explores the conflicting and often contradictory relationship between the state and peasants in Nigeria. It concludes that the peasantry, despite years of repressive state policies, remains a strong potent social force and that we need more theoretical and methodological search for us to come to terms with the complexities of peasant mode of behavior.

Keywords; class theory, dependent state, Peasants, peasantry, political economy,

Introduction

Background of the Study The study of African peasantry and their mode of interaction with the state has been generally problematic. While a lot of scholarly effort has been made by western and African scholars, to explore peasant behavior, we are still a long way from understanding the complex totality of peasant mode of production and sociology. However, mainstream scholars appear to be more dedicated in terms of wanting to understand and explain the sociology of peasant behavior. The reasons for this has to do with their fascination with social and economic anthropology of rural African society. Another group of western scholars writing from the Marxist tradition sought to interpret rural African and Latin American society by adopting variants of Marxist framework of analysis especially political economy and dependency perspectives. Some of these scholars include Hilgaard (2013, 2016), Brian (2012, 2013), Woodward (2016), Hyden (1990, 1993) Rey (2014).

Among scholars of African origin, the general trend has been to highlight the problems of the peasants in a bid to curb rural-urban migration. By so-doing, they frame the problem of peasants as an endemic problem of rural underdevelopment and backwardness. For example, Akinwale (2015) emphasized the need to improve and expand rural infrastructure as a basis for redressing rural poverty. He emphasized that one of the major factors why rural peasants are poor is that they find it very difficult to move their products due to poor infrastructure. Furthermore, there are no storage facilities in most rural parts of the continent. This explains why agricultural products routinely go to waste. Bamidele (2016) insisted that the problem of the peasantry across Sub-Saharan region is that most policies and programmes initiated on their behalf are often hijacked by

wealthy capitalist farmers who collude with politicians to take undue advantage of subsidies and loans that are on offer. He concludes that this problem helped to frustrate most agricultural programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution. The perspective taken by Masumbe (2015) is that the African state hardly consider the peasantry as a critical factor in agricultural and rural development. This disregard compels the state to pursue arbitrary policies that distort and undermine the peasant way of life and thus impede Agricultural development.

In Nigeria, it is clear from the foregoing that rural and Agricultural development policy is in a serious crisis. There are many unanswered questions which cannot be easily resolved by state and bureaucratic power unassailed by practical experience. Since independence, enormous amount of data have been assembled but we still remain ignorant about the changing features and complex dynamics of peasant behavior. When careful studies have been conducted, they have been brought into question many taken for granted assumption. For instance, Akanni (2017), holds that very little effort has been made to carefully understand peasant attitudes and values. He questioned why their activities are treated with contempt. To him, the peasant farmers are not treated as a source of knowledge and wisdom to be learnt from, argued with and respected. This top-down approach has had disastrous effect on agricultural development in Nigeria and other African countries.

Theoretical and Empirical Overview

This study relied a great deal on Marxist class theory as a basis for explicating the complex dynamics of peasant made of interaction with the state. Marxist class theory sees all capitalist society as essentially, a class-based society. These classes differ in terms of their access to power and economic resources. According to Toyo (1999), class theory emphasized production relations by examining how contending social classes struggle for state resources and the consequences of that struggle. Brian (2014) argues that any society where capitalist relations prevail is necessarily a class society. By looking at the class structure of the society we are in a better position to discern how classes relate and the implications of that relationship.

Ake (1981, 1983, 1996), Nwoye (2016), and Bernard (2000), Ade, (2012) have emphasized the importance of social classes as a basis for understanding the complex interplay of social forces especially in developing political systems. Ake was particularly keen to posit that colonialism and its made of incorporation of African Political Economy clearly exacerbated the formation of social classes. These classes continued to evolve after independence as the Nationalists became the dominant political class that took over from the colonial master. Rather than attune their class interest to the needs of the society, what ensued was an intense intra class struggle to control the spoils of postcolonial state, resulting in military intervention and a particularly bloody civil war that ended in 1970. Therefore, Nigeria is a class-based society to the extent that class relations forms the basis through which producers are exploited and marginalized. Politics in Nigeria thus has two related dimensions, the competitive pursuit of class interests, and the determination of public policy. But the nature of both private and public interests is defined by class relations. Classes are groups which arise out of the division of labour in society. They are defined by their place in the process of production, their access to markets for commodities, including labour power, and the relation of the state. Where producers have

access to their own means of production, surplus expropriation takes place through control of market and prebendal relations. Class relations link together different groups within societies, and between societies. In Nigeria, classes have been stabilized into accepted relations of domination and subordination, or organized into relations of patronage and clientage. Class relations have also been contested, both in their particular forms, and in general. However, stabilization and contestation require reference to values to justify claims and inspire actions. Thus, politics come to be a contest over values, and not simply over interests.

Orthodox Marxists, such as Rey (2014), Aminu (1995), Shivji (1985), and Neo Marxists such as Usman (2015). Ake (1983) and Onimode (1983, 1987) have all argued that the social relations which define class relations are generally contradictory and therefore generate inherently opposing interests. Hence, for example, the interest of the dominant ruling class is different from that of the working class or proletariat. In this regard, it is in the interest of the ruling class to exploit the proletariat and in the interest of the proletariat to overthrow the ruling class. Note that this definition of interests is in-built to the definition of class. This is because classes have clearly defined objective interests which they struggle to protect at all times.

Therefore, class structure is seen as a terrain of social relations that determine objective material interests of actors, while class struggle is understood as the forms of social practices which attempt to foster these interests. Ahmed (2015) posited that class consciousness is the subjective processes that shape intentional choices with respect to those interests and struggles and it is a key to any social class. He noted that in the transition from a class in itself (a category of people having a common relation to the means of production) to a "class by itself" (a stratum organized in active pursuit of its own interests); the tendency in Marxist analysis has been on how to develop the revolutionary potentials of the working class. This has not been easy particularly in Africa due to a number of reasons. The first has to do with long years of military rule that entrenched authoritarian and personalized rule. Secondly, there is the problem of limited commodity production in the sense that pre-capitalist relations are still common across the continent. The third factor is that the African state remains highly exclusive and therefore caters to a narrow range of interests.

To Williams (1978), class interest is meaningless unless it is guided and informed by class consciousness at all times. Most conceptions of proletarian class consciousness envisage its development as an explosion of mass consciousness often culminating in spontaneous violent action. However, in an interesting attempt to introduce rational choice theory into Marxist analysis, Elster (1982) Davidoff (2017) and Badden (2015) have all made interesting observations that a class-conscious class is one which has solved the free-rider problem. In varying ways, they observed that class consciousness is not individualistic and spontaneous since it involves the capacity of class organizations to pursue class objective by systematically controlling sectional struggles or intra-class Squabbles. In short, Cohen and Bront (2016:29) insisted that class consciousness is essentially an attribute of class organization rather than individual awareness. In this sense, it is the capacity of a class to transcend individualistic tendencies and behave as a collective whole. From this perspective, what is at issue is therefore the ability of class organizations (such as labour unions) to effectively mobilize members behind a common objective on behalf of the class rather than particular interests and once mobilized, to hold in check groups or individuals who would 'free role' or pursue sectional gains at the collective expense.

Zomba and Odinga (2017) observed that the common perception about the ignorance of African peasants is often misplaced in the sense that very little has been done to actually understand in detail their way of life. As a marginalized and exploited social class, peasants are acutely aware that they are being exploited by the state. However, they lack the revolutionary potential and capacity as a class to act on their own. The same view is shared by Nwoye (2019) when he argued that the way and manner the Nigerian state is structured disadvantages the working class and the peasantry. This is due to elitist and winner-take-all character of politics in the country. In short, he argued that the problem of workers and peasants in Nigeria are compounded by the fact that the very processes by which they participate reinforces their disempowerment and exploitation.

Overall, class theory provides a refreshing insight through which we can discern why and how the state has failed to serve the workers and peasants well. This is because of the narrow class interest which the state represents. By disregarding the peasants and nomads, the state is paying an unusually heavy price as evidenced by the Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen/farmers crisis currently ravaging the country. It is also reflected in the structural dependence of the country on food importation and chemicals, as well as the steady collapse of the agricultural sector.

Conceptualizing the Nigerian Dependent State and the Peasantry

In recent years, the importance of studying the state as the key to discerning socio-economic formations has increasingly become so central to scholars in the third world countries particularly Africa. This is quite understandable in view of the enormous confusion and problems associated with the state building project in less developed countries. Unless we are sufficiently mindful of the nuances and the analytic difficulties associated with the nature and dynamics of the state, it will be extremely difficult to grasp the specificities of the state in Africa let alone understanding it. Even if we do, there is every likelihood that it will be so full of vagueness, ambiguities and distortions to be of much analytic value. In this regard, Claude Ake (1981) Provided an excellent clarification when he conceptualized the state as a specific modality of class domination, one in which class domination is mediated by commodity exchange so that the system of institutional mechanism of domination is differentiated and dissociated from the ruling class and even the society and appears as an objective force standing alongside society.

He went further to argue quite correctly that the state form of domination represents the modality in which the system of mechanisms of class domination is autotomized. What this suggests is that the institutional apparatus of class domination is largely independent of social classes, including the dominant social class Ake (1981)

What we learn also from the perspective provided by Ake is that the state form of domination can best be seen as a product of western capitalism. It may also exist in some other modes of production provided there is the development of commodity production and exchange. Bearing in mind that autonomisation of domination through the mediation of commodity exchange is the unique feature of the state as a modality of domination; it becomes even more complicated to say whether we can genuinely talk of the state in the real sense of the word in postcolonial Africa. This is not to suggest that government or some form of coercive apparatus for the domination of social groups by others does not exist. Indeed, it is quite tempting to see postcolonial Africa as states-in-information but even this might be misleading in view of the enormous complexities and contradictions which

persistently undermine the state-building project in sub-Saharan Africa and other third world countries.

In any case, the point to note is that the state is an integral part of the capitalist mode of production, as a form of that mode, the state exists at every stage of the development of capitalism. In fact, to posit capital in any of its forms, at any of its stages, is essentially to posit the state. Within the capital relation, the state begins to acquire determinacy at the level of exchange relations. Thus, it is not something which comes into existence at a particular stage in the development of capitalism. Rooted in the capitalist mode of production, the state inevitably becomes the relation of social forces in a specific conjuncture and the articulation in political form of the balance of social forces of the capital relation. Being a relation of forces, it is dynamic and ever-changing.

What emerges from the above point is that the Nigerian state may be regarded as very weak and rudimentary in view of its limited autonomisation which in turn reflects the poor state of the development of productive forces and indeed capitalism. It is also indicative of the scant development of commodity production and exchange in much of the country and indeed sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. One clear implication is that capitalist development is more or less enclave and singularly crude in nature, making it extremely difficult for the institutionalization of operative norms of capitalism such as individualism, competition, freedom, equality and the rule of law.

Viewed within the context of long years of military rule, it becomes quite easy to appreciate why the state in Africa is not only dysfunctional but also predatory in nature especially in relation to effective governance and the emerging democratic process. If anything, the evolution of the African state, just like the colonial state before it, is bedeviled by severe contradictions that often renders it generally incoherent, crisis-ridden and formless, thereby unable to fulfill its basic functions and statutory responsibilities.

The Peasantry: A Complex Social Category

No other concept captures the nature of rural farmers and their complex political sociology than the idea of peasantry. Africans always know whether or not a person is a peasant, even though they may be referring to rich smallholders, *share-croppers, or landless labourers, in a vast range of historical and cultural contexts. Social scientists, on the other hand, have devoted a good deal of time and passion to arguing over the exact definition. There have been attempts to define peasant economies, particularly in Marxist theory, in such a way as to link social groups as diverse as feudal tenants, independent farmers, and rural day-labourers. These have variously stressed the importance of the peasant family as a unit of both production and consumption, the relationship of capitalist to non-capitalist agriculture, the use of family labour in a rural setting, and the exploitation of poor, or relatively poor, agricultural producers. There have been attempts to define a peasant *mode of production, through the notion of the family-labour farm, as well as assertions that the peasantry is a class. The latter is related to debates about the revolutionary potential of the peasantry-again particularly among Marxist theorists.

Among social anthropologists, peasants have been defined by their cultural habits and norms, by narrowness of vision, and clinging to *tradition". These attempts to characterize peasants as a generic human type have been littered with typologies that try to agglomerate all the different social and economic forms that are variously called peasant. However, as with Marxist economics, no precise or useful definition has been produced, and the term is best regarded as an imprecise socio-economic category of

descriptive rather than heuristic usefulness. There are extensive literatures on the social structure of peasant societies and on peasant movements and rebellions. such as Rey (1985), Azaria (1990, 1994) Williams (1981, 1987, 1990) Beckman (1979, 1980, 1986) Usman (1981, 1982, 1984).

The Post-Colonial State, Peasants and Distortion of Domestic Food Production:

It is appropriate to argue that the period 1970-1990 was marked by the twin push of (a) the ruling class in Nigeria accumulating wealth through importing foreign food products, - machinery, fertilizer and other chemicals, and agricultural equipment; and (b) foreign firms wanting to sell cereals (particularly wheat and rice), fertilizers, equipment and machinery and livestock feeds in Nigeria. This was done through the importation of rice, wheat beef, and powdered milk, by governments through middlemen in order to make huge profits in the imports, the transport and the sales, which are made below the marked price of the domestic foodstuff. In recent years since 1999, the various civilian regimes have not reach changed the import – dependent structure of the economy in a very fundamental way. That is the key reason why the naira continues to depreciate against the dollar in recent times.

We now illustrate the recurrent crisis facing the agricultural sector by using two case studies of state intervention in agricultural production and the damaging consequences it has had on the peasantry and rural sociology of the country. We start with the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) which was very popular in the 1980s and 90's.

a. The Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs)

No other programme has engaged the resources of Federal and State Governments whether under the military and subsequent civilian administrations than the idea of agricultural development projects (ADPs). This programme became extremely popular largely due to the involvement of world bank funding. Hundreds of billions of naira have been spent by the Federal and State Governments in addition to millions of dollar loan obtained from the World Bank and the food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). These two agencies have played critical role in shaping agricultural development in Africa and the results have not been really fantastic for two reasons. The first is that they work in partnership with the state and federal government to the disadvantage of peasants who are the real farmers. Second, their activities became riddled with corruption and politicization largely because of government involvement. In short, since 1970, the World Bank has constituted itself as the main source of external agricultural finance in Nigeria. Prior to 1975 most of the World Bank lending was in non-agricultural sectors.

Between 1970 and 1980 the Bank granted loans totaling N500 million for non-agricultural projects including railways, roads and port construction out of which, only N200 million was given for agriculture. But since the establishment of the ADPs in 1975/76 most of the World Bank lending has been in the area of agriculture (World Bank, 1980).

The main philosophy of the ADP strategy is supposed to be based on the needs of the small-scale farmer, but actual experience and the research work that has been done on the area covered by ADPs has confirmed, beyond reasonable doubt, that the projects have benefited large-scale "progressive" farmers, rather than the majority of the peasantry. This is largely because it is these categories of farmers who have the political contacts, and the financial and other resources, to take advantage of the services and facilities offered by the projects. Donor agencies played crucial role in the funding as most states obtained external loans worth hundreds of billions either to introduce the ADP in the state, or to expand

existing ones. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the ADP expenditure has very high foreign-exchange component which is used to pay for the import of fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals, and machinery, from Western agribusiness corporations, as well as the services of foreign 'experts' whose huge salaries, fringe-benefits and allowances are paid for in foreign exchange. This foreign-exchange component in some cases reaches up to over 40% of the total investment of some of the ADPs. This constitutes a significant drain of foreign exchange reserves, and discourages the development of domestic industries for the production of these basic agricultural inputs.

Another interesting feature of the ADP approach to agricultural development is its package approach, which has strong built-in capitalist assumption that all farmers are the same. Technological innovations hence come in a package to be applied religiously, irrespective of the nature, and structure of the farming population and agricultural production processes. Thus, only farmers whose scale of operations, and resources, enable them to adopt the whole package, benefit. Small-scale peasant farmers, on the other hand, are only able to adopt certain aspects of the packages which is cumbersome and complicated. After three decades, there is ample evidence to suggest that the ADPs have not really achieved the desired results of transforming agriculture in Nigeria Williams (1978).

b. The River Basin Development Strategy

Another direction in which massive funds were spent under the "Operational Feed The Nation" and "Green Revolution" programmes was in the area of large scale irrigation project, it was estimated that the irrigated area of the country under these schemes jumped from 13,000 hectares in 1970, to an estimated 274,000 hectares by 1991 at the cost of N4.2 billion, at 1977 prices when most of them were established.

The River Basin Development Authorities (REDAs) are large-scale, costly and capital intensive projects, designed to create areas of year-round cultivation of crops, such as wheat, rice, maize and vegetables, which will provide food and the raw material base for the establishment of agro-based industries. The cornerstone of the schemes are huge, and expensive dams, massive irrigation infrastructure and land-clearing equipment, all built and supplied by agribusiness corporations; some of whom are also under contract to manufactured manage the projects. This heavy foreign exchange component, we believe, is the real attraction, for Nigerian planners, policy-makers and their foreign associates of this RBDA strategy Williams (1978).

In the Bakalori irrigation project, for example, whose contracts were given to Impresit and Bonifica, and other subsidiaries of the Italian multinational, FIATt, the contract cost had risen from N159s.0 million in 1975, to N500.00 million in January 1980; and 57% of this was to be paid in foreign exchange. Part of this went into the building of lavish and expensive mansions and chalets, in a specially built new town, for the, largely Italian, expatriate staff on the project Abass (1980), Weekly flights from Italy brought food, wines and other household goods for them, to enable them to live a life of luxury in the middle of arid Sahelian countryside, with its impoverished peasantry rendered landless by the project Abass (1980).

According to FAOC 2020, dam construction, in tropical semi-arid environment, is not the best way of developing river basins, because these areas, apart from having a very high rate of evapo-transpiration, needs constant flow of surface water to enable greater land area and populations to be adequately served-by the water systems. As it is now, the

Bakalori and Goronyo dams, have severely affected the Lower Rima Basin, extending from Sokoto in the north, to Argungu, Birnin Kebbi, Bunza, and Jega, down to the confluence of the Rima and the Niger Water Aid (2018). A whole economic and cultural system, built around farming and fishing in the flood plains of the Lower Two Rima, sustaining over two million people, has been cut off from, the flow of the river water necessary for its survival, and as a result, the very lives of these people is being seriously threatened (Water Aid 2018). To date, no effort has been made to either rehabilitate them, or provide them with alternative river water supply (Water Aid 2018). These areas, with very extensive *fadama* plains used to be the major source of rice and other products, such as sugar cane, onions, and fish to the whole Sokoto region and beyond. Thus, the supposed benefits of the dams are limited only to the project areas, and in the process they have deprived a far larger population of the level of water supply necessary for their survival and caused, the whole Lower Rima Region, ecological degradation, social and economic disruption, and the conditions for a large-scale famine FAO (2017). This situation is true also of the Hadejia-Jama' are River Basin where large population, in areas of the river systems downstream, up to Gashua, are finding life increasingly difficult due to the enclave nature of the River basin development strategy FAO (2020).

For most peasants in the project areas the benefits of the schemes are at best, questionable. This is because land allocations normally goes to project officials and rich absentee farmers, with the bulk of the land worked by the project itself, in a form of inefficient estate farming. From our discussion of the ADP's and RBDA's, it is obvious that successive Nigerian governments appears to favour. Large scale and costly agricultural development programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the preceding pages, we could see that the only difference between what was happening in the sixties and early seventies, to what is happening today, is the changing nature of dependency relationship. In the earlier era, agricultural development was based on dependency relationships created around exports of agricultural commodities. Today agriculture is still underdeveloped with dependency relationships now based on imports of food, agricultural raw materials and agricultural inputs, ranging from seeds, fertilizers, day old chicks, to heavy tractors and earth moving equipment. For agriculture to develop, therefore, there is clear need to break out of this relationship of dependency by placing the peasants at the centre of agricultural production at all levels.

To do this requires the courage to recognize that our agricultural problems are caused neither by lack of appropriate technology, nor by resource scarcity. The problems of Nigerian agriculture revolve around the way, nature and manner in which production is socially organized, and the structural inequalities between peasants and the state which this organization entails and reproduces.

From our discussion of the strategies so far adopted such as the ADPs and the RBDA's, it is obvious that successive governments appear to favour large scale and capital intensive approach to agriculture for many reasons. The first is the erroneous thinking that the capitalist approach to Agricultural production provides a basis for food self-sufficiency and sustainability. Second, this approach clearly guarantees to a large extent, steady inflow of donor multilateral assistance whether in funds and or other needed material support. Third, this approach allows endemic corruption to filter in by yearly budgetary allocations that are pocketed by those in power. Finally, the capitalist approach ties properly with the

expectations of western governments and their agencies who are keen to see commercial large scale agricultural production grow as fast as possible Aminu (1997).

However, more than four decades of this approach has not yielded the desired result. Sub-Saharan region and Nigeria in particular still remain extremely vulnerable to serious food insecurity. According to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) 2017, Sub-Saharan region as a whole will continue to be severely vulnerable to prolonged food shortages due to a host of factors ranging from prolonged drought, crippling desertification and social conflicts. More fundamentally, poor governance stemming from endemic corruption and wanton mismanagement continues to pose serious challenges to this key sector FAO (2020). By disrupting the communal mode of production on which the Nigerian peasantry depends on, the Nigerian state has only succeeded in complicating the very foundation on which the rural economy thrives Ake (1997). The state has also succeeded in destroying the rural structure of agricultural production by steadily expropriating the fertile land which has sustained the peasants before and after colonial incursion (Onimode, 1997). For example, the military, using the land use decree, made sure that the peasants access to land is circumscribed and that his power to challenge the state remains very minimal. From independence till now, the dilemma of how to make the peasants more responsive or at any rate, amenable to state policies still remains very difficult simply because the economic and social structures of the peasant mode have not been fully transformed by post-colonial capitalism Hyden (1993).

On the whole, the vital point to be made here is that the persistent articulation of the peasant mode will likely continue to be a key challenge to the Nigerian state as long as its structural and communal roots are still active. As long as the peasantry find the means to secure their own reproduction, they will certainly continue to resist total domination and marginalization by the state. As Hyden (1993) rightly observed, the overall consequence of capitalists expansion in Africa is largely to create barriers for its own expansion. Lipton (2021), also posited that capitalism really does not completely destroy or replace the relics of an already displaced feudal and communal modes of production. On the contrary, it reinforces this system in very complex and contradictory ways as it did in Nigeria.

The key implication of all these is that post-colonial capitalist-commercial agriculture has clearly failed to completely subordinate the pre-capitalist forces of peasant society to its demands, despite years of exploitation and marginalization Usman, (1988). This is because they have steadily frustrated state policies by creating alternative channels of need satisfaction provided by the communal mode of production on which their very survival depends.

What is to be Done?

The most important, and urgent, action that needs to be taken to revitalize Nigerian agriculture is emancipating the peasant farmers, and other rural producers, by giving them control over their productive resources-basically land-which should be controlled by those who live and work on it. Taking account of the preceding discussion and key argument raised in this work, certain necessary steps are crucial if we are serious about transforming agriculture and the lives of peasants that depends on them. The first is for the government to realize that every development strategy is for the people who will drive the entire process. This should be accompanied by a nation-wide mass literacy programme to make every adult literate and numerate on a long term basis. A farmer, for example, who was able to survive on his farm earnings in 1970 can hardly do so today due to high inflation,

high interest rates, high cost of transportation and unstable prices of agricultural products. This is largely because of the presence, and predatory positions, of middlemen in all transaction entered into by the peasant farmer. Therefore, middle-men of all shades should be eliminated from agricultural production and distribution.

It is important to note that it is the government administrative structures in the rural areas that have consistently been working against agriculture and the morale and productivity of the peasant farmers. To this end, relevant democratic structures must be set up to integrate the peasants into a new system that has their interests as its primary objectives. To this end, and in the short term, we recommend that each community should have an agricultural committees made up of heads of peasant household, whatever their tenure status, as well as representatives of primary school teacher's and village youth associations. The committees should be charged with organizing agriculture activities as well as the distribution of agricultural inputs and credit. Community cooperatives should also be established at the village level so that famers could deal directly with the industries, or concerns, wishing to purchase agricultural products from them.

The River Basin Development Authorities should be dismantled and their assets hand over to the agencies to be known as State Agricultural Production Agencies Construction of new dams should be suspended immediately until a detailed hydrological map of the country is available to help us to make more viable decisions regarding alternative irrigation and water management. Investments into agriculture should henceforth be through the newly created State Agricultural Production Agencies. These agencies should he controlled by largescale-intensive capitalist agriculture that clearly disadvantages peasants. According to Zubaine (2020), these programmes have caused enormous disruption and distortion to the peasant mode of production by not only forcing them off their land but also disrupting their local way of life.

In a study done by World Bank (2022) recently, the ADP's and the River basin authorities have not worked as planned due to three factors. The first is large scale corruption that runs through the various chain of implementation at local, state and federal levels. The second has to do with mismanagement funds at the state and federal levels, and thirdly, the intense politicization of the entire Agricultural Development Projects and River Basin authorities.

Taken together, there is no denying the fact that the country will still face serious food insecurity and the survival of ordinary Nigerians are now being threatened. However, Nigeria cannot pursue food self-sufficiency alone. It must focus on achieving sustainable food self-sufficiency through vastly expanded domestic food production (not food security that can be met temporarily through food imports and food Aid). Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world that has yet to generate sustainable Agricultural revolution. The simple reason has to do with the top-down approach to agricultural development that neglects the Nigerian peasants as critical factor in agricultural and rural development for so long.

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