

A white map of Kwara State is centered on a green background. The map shows the state's irregular borders and internal divisions.

'Kwara State: A Geographical Perspective'



Tunde

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Edited by
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CHAPTER FOUR

Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry in Kwara State

A.M. Tunde (Ph.D.)

Introduction

Nigeria is presently experiencing serious economic hardship as a result of many reasons. One of the reasons for the economic hardship has been associated with over population and poor agricultural production. In the 60s, agriculture played crucial and fundamental roles in the economic development of the country. It contributed over 50% to the GDP and engages about 80% of the population. The advent of crude oil in the early 70s made agriculture to suffer a serious decline because attention was drawn from agriculture to petroleum. The continued growth of population has compelled the country to refocus its attention on agriculture.

According to Odife (2002), agriculture provides between 80-90% of food and livestock needs in Nigeria. It therefore has many aspects which include farming, fisheries, animal husbandry among others. The FAO (1991) recommended that an individual takes 35g of animal protein per day for sustainable growth and development. Despite this recommendation, an individual still consumes less than 8gramme of animal protein per person per day (Ekine, Albert and Peregba, 2012)). Akegbejo-Samsons (1997) reported that while human population growth was rising at a rate of about 4 - 5%, livestock production was rising at a rate of 2 -3%. This indicates an existence of a wide gap between demand and supply of animal protein in Nigeria including Kwara State. Furthermore, a cross examination of agriculture in Kwara State revealed that most people in agricultural production are more involved in fisheries, animal husbandry and farming. According to Ajayi (2001), there has been a great increase in the awareness of the need for adequate protein in the human diet in many developing countries including Nigeria. Fish and animals have been identified as a major source of dietary protein for humans. Hence, this chapter focuses on the assessment of agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry in Kwara State, Nigeria. It is specifically divided into four sections. The first section deals with the introductory aspect, the second examines the concepts of agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry, the third discusses the Kwara State agricultural development initiative, while the fourth deals with the concluding aspect.

Concept of Agriculture

Agriculture is the production of food, feed, fibre and other goods by systematic growing and harvesting of plants and animals. Roy (1990) regards agriculture as a key

sector in most developing countries. Akinboyo (2008) defines agriculture as the science of making use of the land to raise plants and animals. It is the simplification of nature's food webs and the re-channelling of energy for human planting and animal consumption. Nigeria is endowed with very good natural resources and wide range of climatic differences for enhanced agricultural production.

FAO (2001) observed that a narrow definition of agriculture includes cultivation of crops and animal husbandry as well as forestry, fisheries, and the development of land and water resources. A broader definition of agriculture includes addition of agro-industries, manufacturing of agricultural inputs and machinery, regional and rural development. Agriculture has been described as the profession of majority of humans (Ikala 2010). The United Nations Organization (2008) estimated that, over 50% of the world population is engaged in agriculture or dependent on it for a living. It can further be said to include farming, fishing, animal husbandry and forestry. Invariably it is large sector that encompasses some other sub-sectors. Hence, Oji-Okoro (2011) is of the opinion that agricultural sector is the largest sector in the Nigerian economy with its dominant share of the GDP, employment of more than 70% of the active labour force and the generation of about 88% of non-oil foreign exchange earnings. Its share of the GDP increased from an annual average of 38% from 1992 to 1996, further to 40% during 1977-2001 compared to crude oil the GDP from which declined from an annual average of 13% in 1992-1996 to 12% during 1997-2001.

Development economists have focused on how agriculture can best contribute to overall economic growth and modernization. Physiocracy (an economic theory) believed that the wealth of nations was derived solely from the value of land agriculture. Meaning economic development depends more on the growth of the agricultural sector.

Agriculture played crucial roles in the first three stages (Traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off and take-off stages) of economic development as put forward by Rostow (1960). Tombofa (2004) reported that the state of agriculture is very crucial to any nation's development process. The agricultural sector is known to employ over 75 percent of the labour force in developing countries and provide the purchasing power over industrial goods.

Concept of Fisheries

Fish and fisheries constitute an integral part of most societies and contribute meaningfully to economic, social health and well-being in many societies. Fisheries and aquaculture have been of great importance to any nation's economy in the areas of fish production, raw materials to industries, employments, household and other purposes. Estimate put it that approximately 12.5 million people are employed in fishery-related activities; some constructed and own their fish ponds (Plate 4.1). Cochrane (2001) noted that the global production of fish is approximately between 85 and 90 million tonnes. Fish accounts for about one fifth of world total supply of animal protein and this has risen five folds over the last forty years from 20 million metric tons to 98million metric

tons in 1993 and projected to exceed 150 million metric tons by the year 2010 (Cochrane, 2001).



Plate 4.1: A constructed Natural Fish Pond

The value of fish traded internationally has been approximated to be US\$40 billion per year. The products from fisheries are used in a wide variety of ways, ranging from subsistence use to international trade as highly sought-after and highly-valued items. In Nigeria, fishery contributed 12% share of Agricultural GDP between 2000 and 2004 (FAO, 2007, Akinwumi, 2014). The Central Bank of Nigeria (2005) reported that fisheries occupy an important position in the agricultural sector of Nigeria economy. As a sub-sector, it contributed N162.61 billion in 2005 yet, Nwankwo (2005) reported that The Federal Government of Nigeria imports over 50 billion of fish annually in order to meet the demand for fish in the country. In spite of its contributions to the economic development of Nigeria and other developing countries it is still not seen as a priority sector by policy makers or donor agencies.

According to Ejiola and Yinka (2012) the least exploited sub-sector in Nigeria with the vast brackish water fishing grounds almost unexploited is fish sub sector. There are different species of fish ranging from catfish (See plate 4.2) examples: *Clarias* sp and *Heterobranchus* sp; Common carp and the Tilapias (Achionye- Nzeh and Ajayi 2003) hence, the prospects of fish farming include: creation of employment, generation of income and provision of animal protein.



Plate 4.2: Catfish

While trying to estimate the factors influencing cat fish farmers' interest in fish production in Ilorin, Kwara state, Jatto *et al* (2013) reported that participation in cooperative society is the major factor influencing the interest of cat fish farmers in fish production. Olaoye *et al* (2013) assessed the socio-economic analysis of fish farming in Oyo State, Nigeria and concluded that fish farming is a profitable business. In spite of this, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (2006) observed that Nigeria is a protein-deficient country. The protein deficiency in the diet can be primarily remedied through the consumption of either protein-rich plant or animal food stuffs.

Challenges Facing Fishery Industry in Nigeria

These are some challenges facing the fishery industry in Nigeria. These include;

1. Inadequate funds by indigenous fishermen to purchase fishing equipment.
2. Lack of adequate knowledge and data on benefits of aquaculture as an industry
3. Inadequate supply of fishing inputs such as boats, engines, nets etc
4. Lack of sufficient fishing terminals and other infrastructural facilities.
5. Inadequate data on production and management techniques of fishery
6. Lack of rational aquaculture development planning
7. Poor communication and transportation network in the producing area affecting fish distribution, marketing and extension work.
8. Inadequate fisherman's cooperatives to benefit from government financial assistance schemes.
9. Lack of adequate trained personnel

Concept of Animal Husbandry

Husbandry is a form of agriculture that can simply be defined as farming that involves livestock keeping or animal husbandry. In the broader context, husbandry however includes general productive process for economic purposes. The Free dictionary, (2016) defined animal husbandry as a branch of agriculture concerned with the care and breeding of domestic animals such as cattle, goats, pigs, hogs, sheep and horses. Mark (2010) observed that domestication of animals began in the Neolithic age. Domestication of animals led to dramatic change in the way people lived. The current trends in husbandry require animal segregation in groups according to age (Economou and Gousia' 2015). The practice of animal husbandry has been on for thousands of years since the first domestication of animals. Animal husbandry can be regarded as the process of controlling, care and production of farm animals or livestock for profit in which genetic qualities and behaviour, considered to be advantageous to humans, are further developed. It can further be referred to as the practice of selectively breeding and raising livestock to promote desirable traits in animals for use such as food, sport, pleasure, or research.

According to Choudhury and Jansen (1999), there are three categories of animal husbandry in farming. These include nomadic, transhumant and sedentary husbandry.

1. Nomadic husbandry: This is a form of fundamentally intermixed husbandry with the way of life of the groups that practice it. Nomadic husbandry is an important activity of a group of people, organized in part on the basis of access to water resources. The movement is principally based on availability of water and pasture.
2. Transhumant husbandry: This is a Latin word derived from humus (soil) and it is generally a periodic, seasonal migration of livestock to use seasonal pastures. It is similar to nomadic because it also involves intermittent movement of stock for seasonal scarcity of resources.
3. Sedentary husbandry: This is a form of husbandry found in areas of abundant natural resources all year round. This form of husbandry includes the management and use of livestock, where the movements take place within the same area of farmland. It is practiced in association with or is complimentary to working the land. There can also be a system of agro-pastoralism surrounding the villages.

Kwara State Agricultural Development Initiative

Kwara State occupies an area of 36,825 Km² of land and annual rainfall of 1,500mm. The State has very rich agricultural land and climate which have been found suitable for almost all kinds of crops. However, over the years, the State's agricultural potential has remained untapped as a result of factors such as lack of infrastructure, funds and poor linkages between agriculture and industrial development. The administration of Dr. Bukola Saraki later launched the Back to Farm programme with an Agricultural Land Development Scheme at Shonga and the integrated Youth Farm Settlement at Malete. The aim was to provide gainful employment to unemployed youths in the State. The present policy on fisheries by Kwara State is to increase fish production and improve the quality of fish food produce for local consumption and export. Fish production increased from 30,000 metric tons per annum in 2003 to about 120,000 metric tons in 2011 (MANR, 2015). The present administration of Alhaji Abdulfatai Ahmed has mandated the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources to work out programmes for the achievement of policy of the State on fisheries production to accommodate youth participation. The Press Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the State listed the policies on fisheries in Kwara State Government to include:

1. Increase production and improve quality of fish produce for local consumption and for export. This is to ensure increase in protein intakes by the people of the State
2. Provision of modern techniques to fishermen and fish farmers in the state so as to increase production.

3. Ensure rational and effective exploitation of fisheries resources. This is in order to increase per capital income as well as the socioeconomic status of fishermen and fish farmers.
4. Ensure the use of modern technologies to enhance fish processing preservation and marketing.
5. To ensure that the above policies mentioned are achieved, the Ministry has put in place numbers of programme which include:
 - i. Improving the skills through training of the fishermen and fish farmers on improved techniques in fisheries production, fish pond construction and management.
 - ii. Provision of annual training and empowerment of unemployed youths in all aspects of fish farming at the government fish farm complex, Ilorin.
 - iii. Capture fisheries unit ensuring proper training of fishermen in the area of fishing in water bodies
 - iv. Fish processing unit trains women fish processors to improve fish processing methods so as to ensure increase shelf life of processed fish at fish processing centre, Jebba.

Some of the achievements recorded by the Ministry so far include

1. Training/teaching of over 400 youths in all aspects of fish farming throughout the State
2. Empowerment of the trained/skilled youth through the provision of soft loans from the commercial banks FGN/CBN to establish their individual fish farm.
3. The multiplier effect of the programme is that the trained youths replicate the experience acquired to other unemployed youths in their domain
4. Training and re-training of the fish farmers and fishermen in the state to make them familiar with modern and improved techniques in fishery production.
5. To improve/raise fish farming in the state, the Federal government has constructed a fish processing centre at Jebba, Moro Local government area at the cost of N23.5 Million for fish processing and smoking.
6. Provision of extension services by the Ministry to farmers on their farm to help them to solve the challenges encountered on their farm management
7. The Federal government in partnership with State government has constructed ultra modern fish markets in Ilorin West, East, Asa and Moro at the total cost of N13.7 Million.
8. In the government input subsidy scheme, Kwara State government purchased fish input such as nets, fibre glass canoes, outboard engines, fishing boats, fish hooks, twines, fish feeds, water pump/tanks. Pelletizing machine, smoking kilns and many others for distribution to fish farmers and fishermen at subsidized rate of 50% on annual basis in the next 7 years.

Generally, in Kwara State, the proportion of people who are engaged in fish farming and animal husbandry is increasing and quite rapidly. This can be attributed to the contributions of fishery and animal husbandry to the economic development of the State

in terms of food security, employment generation as well as income generation. The areas of fish production in Kwara State where fishermen are found include Jebba Lake, Pategi, Edu, Moro and Asa local government areas. Furthermore, fish farmers and animal farmers are found in virtually every area in the State.

Conclusion

This chapter has been able to establish the fact that fisheries and animal husbandry are both forms of agriculture and each with its own peculiarities. For sustainable development and increase in the growth of the two sub-sectors, it is imperative for the people and government of the State to encourage and shift attention to these sub-sectors of agriculture. To achieve this, requires that the three tiers of government should devote a significant proportion of their budgetary allocation to fisheries and animal husbandry. This will not only solve the problems of youth unemployment, but it will in addition ensure food security.

Credit facilities at concessionary low interest rates if available to fish farmers will no doubt encourage increased participation and improved production. More extension services should be provided for the practitioners. NGOs should aid fishermen as well as fish farmers through awareness campaigns so as to complement government efforts towards improving people's involvement in agricultural production

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