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Agricultural Employment in Rivers State, Nigeria: A Case of National Programme for Food Security.

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ABSTRACT
This study assessed the impact of National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) on self-employment in rural areas in Rivers State. Multi-stage proportionate stratified random sampling and cluster sampling techniques were adopted to obtain 90 and 30 samples from participating and non-participating farmers respectively. A well-structured questionnaire, in-depth interview and direct field observations were employed to elicit responses on socio-economic characteristics and other relevant variables from 120 subjects. Descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentages and mean were used to present the socio-demographic variables and answer the research questions. Z-statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 per cent level of significance. The results show that non-participating farmers were more self-reliant than participating farmers; therefore, government NPFS programme did not impact significantly on self-employment. Low participation of farmers was responsible for the failure of NPFS programme. The study recommended constant review of agricultural programmes, reformed input supply system and periodic training and retraining of farmers.
Key words: Agriculture, National Programme, Self-employment, Food Security.

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, the issue of unemployment has continued to be a challenge to both federal and state government. Of greater importance is the facts that well over two-third of the world's poorest people is located in the rural areas and are engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture. Traditionally, agriculture has been assumed to play a passive and supportive role in rural development. Its primary purpose was to provide rural employment, income and sufficient low-priced food. To a large extent, apart from playing an indispensible part in any overall strategy of sustaining rural households, agriculture has come to be regarded by economists as essential condition for economic growth and development. Be it as it may, one of the objectives for which both federal and state government initiated several agricultural programmes apart from boosting agricultural production and income was to enhance capacity building through self-employment. Apart from pro-rural development approaches introduced by federal government in pursuance of reduction in unemployment following the projection made by the World Bank that poverty in Nigeria will increase by two-third, with the possibility of 60 per cent of Nigerians living below poverty line in ten years, Rivers State government has been on the match to solving unemployment challenges using agriculture. This becomes oblivious since the regions where agriculture is their main source of livelihoods and supposed to create self-employment have higher incidence of poverty.

Statement of the Problem

The National Programme for Food Securities was established to train and educate farmers on effective utilization of available land, water and other resources and facilities to produce food and create employment on sustainable basis, create job for young school leavers, increase household incomes among other objectives (ADP Report, 2008, p.4).

In recent time, objectives of this noble programme have failed. This however, has been attributed to land acquisition problems, lack of technological know-how and government inconsistency in managing the project. Again, insecurity issues arising from communal clashes have been predominantly replaced by ethnic militancy in the Niger Delta. Landlord employment marginalization in oil companies, reflecting growing feelings of alienation and grassroots discontent arising largely from the impact of poor economy aggravated issues. It is against this backdrop this study was set out to examine the contributions of National Programme for Food Securities to self-employment in Rivers State.

Objectives of the study

General objective of the study was to examine the impact of National Programme for Food Security on self-employment in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

(i) Describe the mean socio-economic characteristics of the Participating and non-participating farmers in NPFS in Rivers State;
(ii) Identify the challenges to government NPFS agricultural programme.

(iii) Identify the extent of rural self-employment of participating farmers of the programme compared to their non-participating counterparts.

Research Questions

Within the forgoing context, the following questions are fundamental

(i) What are the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers?
(ii) What are the extents of challenges encountered by farmers to National Programme for Food Securities?
(iii) To what extent has NPFS programme contributed to increase in rural self-employment generation in Rivers State?

Hypothesis of the Study

The working hypothesis is that there is no significant difference in rural self-employment generation between participating farmers (PFM) and non-participating farmers (NPF) of NPFS programme in Rivers State.

2. Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature

Understanding the relationship between agriculture and self-employment is worth giving consideration as it leads to better understanding of the challenges faced by famers for the country to achieve economic growth and development. This study is predicated on the Dual Sector Model propounded Lewis, (1964). It is a theory of development in which surplus labour from traditional agricultural sector is transferred from a low productivity and subsistence rural sector to the modern industrial sector employment whose growth overtime absorbs the surplus labour, promotes industrialization and stimulates development. In the model, the traditional agricultural sector is typically characterized by low wages, and abundance of labour, and low productivity through a labour intensive production process. In contrast, the modern manufacturing sector is defined by higher wage rates than the agricultural sector, higher marginal productivity, and a demand for more workers initially. Also, the manufacturing sector is assumed to use a production process that is capital intensive, so investment and capital formation in the manufacturing sector are possible over time as capitalists' profits are reinvested in the capital stock. Improvement in the marginal productivity of labour in the agricultural sector is assumed to be a low priority as the hypothetical developing nation's investment is going towards the physical capital stock in the manufacturing sector.

Since the agricultural sector has a limited amount of land to cultivate, the marginal product of an additional farmer is assumed to be zero as the law of diminishing marginal returns has run its course due to the fixed input, land. As a result, the agricultural sector has a quantity of farm workers that are not contributing to agricultural output since their marginal productivities are zero. This group of farmers that are not producing any output is termed surplus labour since this cohort could be moved to another sector with no effect on agricultural output (Olayide et al, 1975 p.303) Therefore, due to the wage differential between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, workers will tend to transition from the agricultural to the manufacturing sector over time to reap the reward of higher wages. If quantity of workers moving from the agricultural to the manufacturing sector equals the quantity of surplus labour in the agricultural sector, regardless of who actually transfers, general welfare and productivity will improve.

Agriculture as a veritable tool for combating poverty and achieving economic growth has continued to impact positively by ameliorating the sufferings of rural and urban dwellers through self-employment generation, food sustainability and rural income generation. The strategies to reduce poverty by increasing productive rural employment opportunities in rural areas are compelling. In the rural areas, the challenges are enormous due to the subsistence level of farming in the rural areas. This is worsened by low income and wide spread under-employment. With a total of about one billion people employed in the sector, agriculture is the second largest employable sector worldwide and absorbs the greatest portion of the rural workforce (Riggs, 2006).) In the presence of rural employment in agriculture, increased per capita agricultural output and value added tend to have a disproportionately positive impact on the incomes of the poor, making agriculture and rural development key to pro-poor growth. Strong agricultural growth has been the feature of countries that have successfully reduced poverty. In Asia agriculture played an important role in combating poverty. In contrast, in most of African countries, per capita income and food production have largely stagnated, slowing overall growth, impeding structural transformation and increasing hunger and poverty, (Gina and Curry, 2008).

A broad body of evidence suggests that rapid poverty reduction in developing countries can be achieved through agriculture. Agriculture cannot play this dynamic, wealth-creating role without an enabling policy environment, adequate institutions, and sufficient, well-targeted public and private investment. The experience of recent decades has been disappointing in this regard in a number of countries, particularly the Less Developed Countries (LCDs), where investment has declined, rural poverty remains widespread and a very large share of

the labour force is engaged in low-return agricultural employment (Davis et al, 2008). In Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, Europe and Central Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia, agriculture has significantly contributed to employment and GDP growth, used the rural sector to develop other sectors of the economy and reduced poverty gap (World Bank 2008). Study showed that wine grape, Kiwi and cheese orchards in Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arizona and Southern Carolina contributed in reducing trends to declining employment and income in non-metropolitan areas, (Barkley and Wilson, 1995). Further study revealed that about 80 per cent families in Libreville (Gabo), 68 per cent in six Tanzanian cities, 45 per cent in Lusaka (Zambia), 37 per cent in Maputo (Mozambique), 36 per cent in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and 35 percent in Yaoundé (Cameroon) are employed in rural agriculture (Smith et al, 1996). The United Nations World Food Conference of 2005 and 2006 felt that need for eradication of persistent food insecurity, hunger malnutrition in coming years and need assessment was conducted the developing countries. The result revealed that standard of living were very low in these nations especially Nigeria. As the cost of living in the country rises, the problem of malnutrition becomes severe. It is apparent that the minimum of 65gm of protein per day recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) is yet to be attained in Nigeria. Rather, the per capita consumption per day has been found to be about 6.5gm which is only 10% of the WHO recommended level (Adeniyi, 1998 cited in Oruche et al, (2012). Growing need to meet the demand fast enough to population's market demand has remained unattainable. The inability to cope with the human population worsened with diseases and parasites, the heat and humidity of the climate, low genetic potentials of the indigenous animals, poor feeding and management, lack of training and experience of the local people in animal husbandry and of the infrastructure necessary to supply the needed inputs for production and distribution Oruche et al, (2012). Study by Oruch et al, (2012) on Impact of the National Special Programme for Food Security on Livestock Farmers in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria", using frequency distribution tables, percentages, means and ranges showed that NPFS contributed to high income, increase in livestock, and better standard of living as against the non-participant farmers.

3. History of National Programme for Food Securities (NPFS)

Food security entails producing food that will go round every citizen both in quantity and quality all round the year. To achieve this, agriculture production needs to be enhanced with adequate knowledge of the environment, climatic condition, the market and its operation, types of insecticides and pesticides, crop treatment (Oriola, 2009). National Programme for Food Securities is a counterpart funded programme which has its origin from a follow up of earlier request by Federal Government of Nigeria to Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) for assistance under the FAO's Special Programme for Food Security to alleviate the problems of food insecurity and poverty amongst the rural households in Nigeria. At its inception, it was formally called Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS). National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) is the expanded phase of the erstwhile Special Programme for Food Security which was implemented between 2002 and 2006 in all the states of the Federation.

In Nigeria, the NPFS was selected as one of the three priority projects following the preparation of the National Medium–Term Investment Programme (NMTIP) for Nigeria in support of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The project was designed to cue into:

(1.) Sustainable Development and Management of Land and Water Resources.
(2.) Improvement of Rural Infrastructure and Market Access
(3.) Improvement of Household Food Security and Income
(4.) Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and
(5.) Livestock Development (World Bank Report, 2009).

However, the NPFS programme took-off in Nigeria in 2002, following the end of Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development in Abuja at the apex management committee, whilst the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) authorities in the states of the federation constituted implementation agencies for the programmes at the state level. After the first pilot phase, the second phase took off in 2007 with the sites increased to nine and the word "Special" removed from the name of the programme.

In Rivers State, the programme had one site in each of the three senatorial districts in Rivers State. National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) is established to accomplish the following specific objectives:

(i) Assist farmers increase agricultural output of major crops and livestock.

(ii) Increase productivity, profitability and household incomes.
(iii) train and educate farmers in effective utilization of available land, water and other resources and facilities to produce food and create employment on sustainable basis (ADP Report, 2008, p.4).

The goals are:

a) to strengthen the effectiveness of research and extension services by bringing technology and new farming practices developed by research institutes to farmers.
b) to assist farmers in achieving their potential in increasing output and productivity and consequently their incomes on sustainable basis.
c) to provide high quality certified seed/seedlings and planting materials of high yielding, disease – resistance crop varieties as well as fertilizers and other relevant inputs.

The pilot phase of the programme had empirical credence from Rivers State experience. The programme was expected to last for five years from 2008 - 2013 (RSMA, 2008). The stipulated eligibility criteria for NPFS activities arising from availability of land is showcased at the following locations across Rivers State: Atali/Elingbu/Eneka (Obio/Akpor L.G.A), Idoka/Ihuaba (Ahoada West L. G. A., Opiro (Etche L.G.A.), Oyorokoto (Adoni L.G.A.), Rumu-Ada (Emohua L.G.A.), Akabuka (Onelga L.G.A), Umuagbai (Oyigbo L.G.A.) and Okoboh (Ahoada West L.G.A).(RSMA, 2008).

4. Methodology

This study was conducted in Rivers State, Nigeria, with the state capital at Port Harcourt. It has a total land mass of 11,077 Sqkm and is located on latitudes 40 32' and 50 53' North and longitudes 70 25' and 80 25' east of the equator. It is bounded on the South by the Atlantic Ocean, to the North by Imo and Abia States, to the East by Akwa Ibom State and to the West by Bayelsa and Delta and states. The inland part of Rivers state consists of tropical rainforest; towards the coast the typical Niger Delta environment features many mangrove swamps. Temperature range is between 23-31ºC and vegetation found in the State includes the saline water swamp, Mangrove swamp and the rain forest. Major seasons are the dry (November-February) and wet seasons (October – March). The climatic and soil condition of the study area favour the extensive production of various food crops such as yam, cassava, maize, vegetables plantains and cocoyam. (RSADP, 2009).Rivers state was part of the Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 till 1893, when it became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate. In 1900 the region was merged with the chartered territories of the Royal Niger Company to form the colony of Southern Nigeria. The state was formed in 1967 with the split of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

Out of the three senatorial zones of Rivers State: - (Rivers South-West, Rivers South-East and Rivers Central). From each zone, Multistage sampling technique was used to select two Local Government Areas. Three districts were selected from each of the selected Local Government Areas, and from each of the districts selected, three villages were chosen and from each of the villages selected. A sample population of ninety (90) participating farmers was selected from six (6) farmers' cooperatives while thirty (30) non-registered farmers were selected from the Local Government Area, making a sample size of the study to constitute one hundred and twenty (120) from both registered and non-registered farmers. Questionnaire, in-depth interviews and direct personal field observations were used to elicit information from the respondents. The secondary data for the study was restricted to the official documents of the State agricultural project and the coordinating office of the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), text books, journals, proceedings, and internet.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and mean (criterion mean cut off of 2.5) were used to present the socio-demographic variables and answer the research questions of the study while Z-statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 per cent level of significance. The formula of z-statistics for computing two means of independent samples is given below.

$$Z = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1 - 1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2 - 1}}}$$

Where;
X_1 = mean parameters of NPFS farmers

X_2 = mean parameters of non-NPFS farmers
S^2_1 = Variance of parameters of NPFS farmers
S^2_2 = Variance of parameters of non-NPFS farmers
n_1= number of selected NPFS farmers
n_2= number of selected non-NPFS farmers

Hypothesis Tested
H_{01}: There is no significant difference in rural self-employment generation between participating farmers (PFM) and non-participating farmers (NPF) of government NPFS in Rivers State.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Socio-economic characteristic of the respondents

Educational Level – In terms of personal characteristics of the respondents as presented in table 1 showed that the participating farmers with primary education had 22.2%. Respondents who had 46.6% were those with secondary certificate, 17.7% had tertiary education while 13.3% of the respondents were none educated. For non-participating farmers, majority of the respondents (13.3%) had secondary education, 46.6% were with primary certificate, and 23.3% had tertiary education while 16.6% were those that had no educational background. Greater percentage of the farmers for both participating and non-participating farmers came from those that had acquired secondary education. The implication is that the programme did not place much priority on providing assistance to all cadres of participants especially in terms of provision of soft revolving loan. This was a serious disincentive to achieving the programme objective perhaps as the programme was aptly targeted at young school leavers.

Sex – Result for sex of the respondents revealed that 62.2% of the participating farmers were male while 37.7% were female. Non-participating farmers had 63.3% male while 36.6% were female. Female in both participating and non-participating groups were less in number. This explains age long tradition which shows that men as breadwinners of their households are head of their families. As the heads of the families, they were bound to accept government programmes such as this as they perhaps have no other source of livelihood or as a result of greater awareness created by government.

Occupation – Result showed that 11.1% of the participating farmers were traders. Respondents in civil service who also took to farming in the programme were 10.0% and those in full time farming had 57.7% while 21.1% were respondents who undertake hair dressing as occupation. For non-participating farmers, 13.3% were undertaking trading as their occupation, 26.6% were respondents who are in civil service and also took farming as occupation. Respondents who are fulltime farmers as their occupation had 40.0% while 20.0% were respondents into fulltime hair dressing as occupation. The large number of fulltime farmers in the programme explains wider publicity created by the government on programme. Besides, the programme was an approach by government geared towards developing the rural areas.

Family size – Finding showed that 15.5% of the respondents had family size of 0 - 4 persons, respondents with 5-9 persons (30.1%) while those that had 53.3% were respondents with 10 persons and above for participating farmers. For non-participating farmers, 23.3% of the respondents were people with 0 - 4 persons, 53.3% were those with 5-9 persons while 23.3% were respondents with 10 persons and above. The result showed more participation of people with large families by both participating and non-participating farmers. This is evident that people still believe in generating more labour from their households to reduce cost of labour.

Age - For participating farmers, 10.0% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 - 29 years of age. This was followed by 44.4% of the respondents who were between 30-39 years of age. 36.6% of the respondents fell within 40 - 49 years of age while only 8.8% of the respondents were above 50 years age. Respondents for non-participating farmers revealed that 26.6% were those within 20 - 29 years of age, 33.3% were those between 30 - 39 years of age, 40.0% was for those between 40 - 49 years of age while those 16.6% were farmers that fell within 50 years of age and above. The implication of the result with respect to personal characteristic on age implies that greater number of participating farmers were within the middle age which were the workforce, strong to undertake strenuous farming activities especially in the presence of lack of modern farming equipment.

Table 1: Distribution Based on Respondents Demographic Characteristics

	Participating Farmers (PFM)		Non-Participating Farmers (NPF)	
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	20	22.2	4	13.3
Secondary School	42	46.6	14	46.6
Tertiary	16	17.7	7	23.3
None	12	13.3	5	16.6
Total	**90**	**100**	**30**	**100**
Sex				
Male	56	62.2	19	63.3
Female	34	37.7	11	36.6
Total	**90**	**100**	**30**	**100**
Occupation				
Trading	10	11.1	4	13.3
Civil service & farming	9	10.0	8	26.6
Farming	52	57.7	12	40.0
Hair dressing	19	21.1	6	20.0
Total	**90**	**100**	**30**	**100**
Family Size				
0 – 4	14	15.5	8	26.6
5 – 9	28	31.1	11	33.3
10 and above	48	53.3	12	40.0
Total	**90**	**100**	**30**	**100**
Age (years)				
20 – 29 years	9	10.0	3	10.0
30 – 39 years	40	44.4	12	40.0
40 – 49 years	33	36.6	10	33.3
50 and above	8	8.8	5	16.6
Total	**90**	**100**	**30**	**100**

Source: Computed from Field Data, 2012.

Results (Research question on Farmers' Challenges): Table 2: from the table below, results of the analysis of the extents of challenges encountered by farmers to NPFS Agricultural Programme, show that both participating and non-participating farmers agreed to a "Low Extent" (LE) on the mean rating of all the items 1-6 reflected in all the challenges. None of the issues listed as challenges was rated 2.5 which is "High Extent" (HE). Lack of modern farming tools- Lack of soft loan/credit facilities- Poor inputs: fertilizer and high yielding Seedling- Poor feeder roads- Deforestation.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to the Mean Rating on Challenges faced by Participating Farmers to National Programme for Food Securities Programme (n=120).

Mean responses ($\bar{X}$)				
	NPFS			
	PFM	NPF	Overall Mean	Decision Rue
S/N. Farmers' Challenges	N=90	N=30		
1. Modern Farming Tools	2.01	2.07	2.04	LE
2. Credit Facilities/Soft Loans	2.10	2.32	2.21	LE
3. Good Feeder Roads	2.09	2.22	2.16	LE
4. High Yielding Seedlings	2.21	2.25	2.23	LE
5. Deforestation	2.30	2.27	2.29	LE
6. Retraining of Farmers	2.41	2.38	2.40	LE
Grand Mean	**2.18**	**2.25**		
Overall Decision Rule	**LE**	**LE**		

(**NOTE** - Criterion mean cut off of 2.5), **PFM=** Participating Farmer, **NPF=**Non-Participating Farmer. **NPFS=** National Programme for Food Securities.
Source: Computed from field data. 2012.

Results (Research question on self-employment): Table 3 shows grand mean rating of items on self-employment generation ranged from 2.38 to 2.56. The high extent ratings indicate that the farmers agree to the existence level of the items of self-employment generation by government agricultural projects in Rivers State. This is clearly indicated in their respective mean rating which is above criterion mean fixed at 2.5 and above. Only three items listed (items 1, 2 & 5) had mean rating below criterion mean and are indicated to a low extent (LE).The result further explains that both participating and non-participating
Farmers could only afford clothing and food (items 3 and 4) to their families, but could not afford shelter or rent an accommodation, train their children in schools and could not avoid borrowing to sustain themselves.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to the Mean Rating on Self-employment Generation by National Programme for Food Securities Agricultural Programme (n=120).

Mean responses ($\bar{X}$)				
	NPFS			
	PFM	NPF	Overall Mean	Decision Rule
S/N. Self-Employment	N=90	N=30		
1. Children Education	2.23	2.34	2.28	LE
2. Shelter (Rent)	2.24	2.41	2.32	LE
3. Clothing	2.52	2.75	2.63	HE
4. Food	2.58	2.96	2.77	HE
5. Self-reliance	2.32	2.35	2.33	LE
Grand Mean	**2.38**	**2.56**		
Overall Decision Rule	**LE**	**LE**		

(**NOTE** - Criterion mean cut off of 2.5), **PFM=** Participating Farmer, **NPF=**Non-Participating Farmer. **NPFS=** National Programme for Food Securities.
Source: Computed from field data. 2012.

Results of tested hypothesis - (self-employment)

Table 4 shows that there is significant difference in the overall mean rating on rural self-employment generation between the participating farmers and non-participating farmers of government NPFS agricultural projects in Rivers state ($z_{118, 0.025}$ = -2.166, p>.05). No significant difference of (1.03) in the mean rating on rural self-employment generation between the Participating famers and Non-Participating farmers was revealed. It explains show that registered/participating farmers (NPF) performed better than non-participating farmers (PFM). This result also showed that these government agricultural projects have failed to generate self-employment to the participating farmers (PFM). Where a participating farmer goes borrowing and cannot sustain his faming, it means that any business he/she is engaged is not viable and calls for resignation. This is contrary to a study conducted by Prince, (1989) which revealed that crop production increased by 26 per cent while the number of employed young farmers increased by 13 per cent between 1987 and1988. Similarly, it is contrary to a survey research conducted by Barkley and Wilson, (1995), which revealed that government establishment of wine grape, Kiwi and cheese orchards in Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arizona and Southern Carolina reduced trends to declining employment and income in non-metropolitan areas. Furthermore, such result is also contrary to a study conducted by Hossian, (2010) in Bangladesh which found that agriculture absorbed young unemployed, shot the GDP to 21.77 per cent, and increased overall employment to 52 per cent between 2002 and 2008. Self-employment in agriculture will enhance measure of the welfare of agricultural households through agricultural output and income.

Table 4: Results of z-test on the difference in the mean rating between the PFM and NPF over rural self-employment generation by the programme.

Project	Farmer	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision at p>.05
NPFS	PFM	90	12.93	1.51	118	-2.166	1.960	p=0.033 **S**, p<.05
	NPF	30	13.96	2.80				

Decision rule: From our probability value, if p<.05 reject H_0, else retain H_0.
S= Significant, p<.05. **NS**= Not Significant p>.05
Source: Computed from field data, 2012.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that the programme was not supportive in retraining of beneficiary farmers, providing modern farming equipment, credit facilities and good feeder roads. It was also not self-sustaining since beneficiaries could not afford education of their children or better accommodation but borrow to support their families. Non-beneficiaries had mean rating of 1.03 more than their counterpart. In all, the programme did not perform better. Sustainable development requires proactive responses in dealing with the challenges of agricultural productivity. With increasing levels of low productivity, food scarcity, increased food prices, starvation, poverty; and social problems of unemployment in the offing, agriculture needs to be given more priority. It is recommended that;

(i) farmers should be allowed to participate in the implementation of important government policies on agriculture.

(i) Vocational training on agriculture should be introduced in schools to enable people diversify or venture into farming as their major occupation.

(ii) Funding of ADP by State Government should be a must for the provision of basic logistics for supervision and field staff activities.

(iv) There should be constant review of agricultural programmes and farmers should be periodically retrained to embrace the introduction of new agricultural practices.

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