



EXAMINATION OF THE NIGERIAN LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the existing legal and regulatory frameworks and their effectiveness on agriculture education in crafting standard pathways for agricultural development in Nigeria. There is no question or doubt that the agricultural terrain in Nigeria carries a lot of attraction for players within the space and even investors, especially now when the country is making efforts to look away from oil and diversify the economy. Despite these efforts, little progress is achieved in making agriculture the driver and major source of foreign exchange earnings in the country. While several factors have been attributed to the poor development of agriculture in Nigeria, little is known about the roles of legal frameworks, and regulatory bodies in agricultural education on the development of the Nigerian economy. The study adopted a doctrinal method to extensively review the legal frameworks, regulatory bodies and their functions to create agricultural education and training in Agricultural development. The integrated review has shown that a legal framework will strengthen the operational effectiveness of the regulatory bodies, thereby boosting agricultural production in the country. The article suggests a comprehensive review of most of the Nigerian legislation related to agriculture.

Keywords: Agricultural Development, Agricultural Education and Training, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Introduction

Agriculture is one of the most vital sectors of the Nigerian economy apart from oil and keeps on playing a vital role in development, particularly, in low-income States where the sector is vast both in terms of accumulated or gross income and total workforce. Agriculture, according to Akinpelu

and Davies (2012) means “the cultivation of fields and the production of livestock.” Akinola (2015) also defines agriculture as “both a science and art or rather a technology for the exploitation of the primary, secondary and tertiary products of photosynthesis.” Therefore agriculture is an important component of the moment, technique of farming and also an industry of managing the growth of plants and animals for human utilization and satisfaction (Erhun, 2019). Agricultural education is the teaching of

agriculture, natural resources and land management. It mainly goes about preparing, educating, and providing fundamental skills and knowledge, jobs and development (Doris, 2022). Thus, agriculture is a source of life on earth and the foundation of the economic development of every society. It provides both income growth and lessen the level of poverty in the country –by creating income and job opportunities in rural areas and providing food at a favourable cost in urban areas (Ernest, N. (25th November 2021). Agricultural development, on the other hand, is a multi-sectional Activity that supports and promotes positive changes in rural and urban areas. The main objectives of agricultural development are the improvement of the material and social welfare of the people and a nation's development is examined by assessing any increase in its gross national product (Jean-Jacques, D, And Alexandra, E. (2011). Therefore, agricultural development is attained through investing in human capital and the productive capacities of societies. Agricultural development is a part of rural development; rural areas cannot develop without agriculture being developed because about 90% of the rural dwellers are engaged in agricultural practices as their major source of income (Jean-Jacques, D, And Alexandra, E. (2011). However, in the context of this study, agricultural development simply refers to multi-sectional Activities that support and promote societies to achieve food security. Most of the world's population in rural areas relies directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. Moreover, as the world's population increases and migration to towns and cities intensifies, so the number of people not producing food will rise. Hence, for a country to industrialize, agricultural output will

be said to have acquired growth if agriculture can supply enough materials to Agro-allied industries (Mathews, 2021-2022). Agricultural Activities provide a source of livelihood for many Nigerians; over 70 per cent of the total populations of Nigerians partake in Agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Nigeria as a country seeks to become a leading economy in Africa and a major player in the world's economic and political affairs of which the 20-20-20 plan is the guideline. To become a developed nation, Nigeria needs to speed up its economic growth by focusing on vital economic sectors like education, energy, agriculture, and manufacturing. At this, in Nigeria's development, the best approach is to focus on the agricultural sector (Phillips, D., Abubakar, B. Y. & Chikwendu, and D. O. (2010a). By focusing on the agricultural sector, agricultural education and training are the essential tools in achieving agricultural development in Nigeria.

This paper is aimed at identifying some legal and regulatory frameworks and their contributions to agricultural education and training on the development of Nigeria through the quickness of agricultural economics. In Nigeria, agricultural legislations create the regulatory bodies with their powers and functions aimed at increasing agricultural education for rapid agricultural development. This is done by providing adequate land and funds to farmers, creating and organizing training on agricultural technology. Thus, for a country to achieve food security policy and sufficiency, increase its exports to other countries and create job opportunities for rural settlers and farmers for better agricultural growth, legislative framework and

implementation scheme are very essential and need to be on top –priority.

Identifying the Legal Frameworks Governing Agricultural Production in Nigeria

Legal frameworks comprise set of domestic or international laws that apply in a particular country, give structure to the relationship between the State and the population and define the parameters for legal conduct. In Nigeria, several legislations were enacted to boost the Agricultural economy and preserve the Agricultural sector. These enactments are meant to develop the agricultural economy.

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999

The fundamental objectives and directive principle of State policy on food under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended are enshrined under section 16 (2) (d) of the Constitution which States that: The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring “that suitable and adequate food” which is given to all citizens subject to the availability of resources. Section 33(1) of the Constitution provides that “every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his right”. This right to life can only be safeguarded with a sustainable agricultural sector. Also, Section 16 (4) (b) States that “economic Activities include production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services”. Therefore, the agricultural economy helps much in the country, by bringing an end to hunger and starvation as well as improving food security and nutrition. It also promotes adequate agricultural services to ensure and guarantee the right to life. This paper studies that to achieve the above Constitutional provisions;

Government should educate Farmers on opportunities to learn basic farming skills through training and retraining. The farmers also are expected to know the new agricultural techniques that will tremendously help to have adequate and available food in the Country.

Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria Act, (as amended) 2021

This Act was enacted to establish the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria as a body that organizes the Activities of National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) to raise agricultural productivity for economic development in Nigeria through training and Extension Activities. The Act mandates the Council to create a master plan and advises the Federal government on the financial requirement for the execution of such plans. The council plays a vital role in organizing research efforts in the agricultural sector towards accomplishing food sufficiency and security in the country. Research Institutes aim at enhancing and analyzing the problems of agricultural research on the improvement of the agricultural sector in Nigeria (Ekpenyong, G.D. (2001). In boosting crop production, the council creates awareness programmes for farmers on agricultural technologies in the country to achieve national self-reliance in food production and industrial raw materials. To this end, Nigeria has quite a several agricultural institutions situated all over the country such as the Institute of Agricultural Research & Extension Services, ABU, Zaria, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria, Ibadan, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, The National Root Crop Research Institute. This article observes that agricultural research Institutes play a vital role in making investment

more attractive in Nigeria and offer a lower – cost of production and reduction of poverty.

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) Act, 1992

This Act was enacted to establish National Agricultural Land Development Authority with the objectives to provide strategic public support for land development and promote maximum utilization of the nation's rural land resources. The Authority creates gainful job opportunities for rural dwellers, increases their incomes and improves their general standard of living. The Authority was also established to contribute immensely towards achieving national food security, self-reliance, self-effectiveness and improving the agricultural Activities in the country.²¹ NALDA operates at both the State and local Government levels. In 2021, the Authority to improve food security and sufficiency, addressed unemployment to boost the economy and engaged over two hundred young farmers under the "Grow your Vegetable Programme" where they received vegetable seeds. Also, in 2022 the Authority increased Nigeria's level of Wheat exportation up-scale wheat production by 2.5 million metric tons. NALDA in its bid to improve food security under "Aggressive Food Production" programme, cultivated two hundred hectares of maize farm in Shendam Local Government of Plateau State

Sea Fisheries Act, 1992

The preamble of this Act States that the Act is enacted to provide for the administration and supervision of fisheries in Nigeria. It also preserves and protects fishes and their habitat and prevents pollution. The enactment allows fishes to freely pass and restricts the deposition

of harmful substances into waters dropped in by human beings. The Act empowers the regulation, control, and protection of sea fisheries in the territorial waters of Nigeria. The responsibility for the registration of vessels for fishing or shrimping purposes is on the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. Also, National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research (NIFFR) was established by the Federal Government with the mission of promoting scientific management by conducting research and development to enrich the livelihood of fishing communities and it is also improve the utilization and preservation of fisheries and other oceanic resources in the inland water bodies of Nigeria. The Institute has a mandate for the Genetic Improvement of freshwater fishes and other aquatic resources in rivers and lakes (natural and man Made), abundance and distribution of freshwater fishes and other aquatic resources and hydrological behaviour of natural and man-made lakes. The aforementioned mandate is achieved only through conducting research operations in biotechnology and agriculture as well as educating fish farmers on fisheries engineering, product development and natural resources management.

Nigeria is the largest fish consumer in Africa and amongst the largest fish consumers in the world with about 3.2 million metric tons of fish consumed annually. With a coastline of 853km and over 14 million hectares of inland waters, total fish production per year is close to 1 million metric tons (313,231 metric tons from aquaculture and 759,828 metric tons from fisheries). Fishing is an essential livelihood for the poor as well as an important protein source at the household level in Nigeria.

River Basins Development Authorities Act, 1987

The purpose of this Act is to establish eleven river basin authorities to operate within the areas Stated in the first schedule. The authorities were saddled with powers to take general control of surface and underground water resources for irrigation and to build, operate and maintain dams, dykes, polders, as well as the drainage system. The Act also restrict the authorities from obtaining land, leasing any land or taking over any ongoing project without the express consent of the State Government within their area of operation. The creation of the authorities will tremendously increase farmers' source of income and improve their standard of living in agriculture and play gigantic roles in improving agriculture in the country which is the major stay of the country's economy.

Challenges Facing the Regulatory Bodies

These regulatory bodies on agricultural education and research play significant role in economic development of the country. The research being conducted helps to enhance agricultural production and farmers' earning which at the end improves their quality of life in general notwithstanding these regulatory bodies is facing challenges like any other sector of the Nigerian economy. The challenges are:

(a) Lack of sufficient funding

The regulatory bodies in Nigeria are confronted with numerous funding challenges, which made research to be difficult. The funding restriction makes it difficult for researchers to be responsive to the need of the

regulatory bodies' clientele to conduct proper research and training. The study suggested that the government should improve the funding of the regulatory bodies, especially the research Institutes and place emphasis on competitive financing of agricultural research to continue to promote innovative research. Special attention should be given to the specific needs of the agricultural sector

(b) Lack of Modern farming Equipment

Poor technology and innovation are the greatest challenges restricting farmers' productivity in Nigeria. The use of old farming tools such as hoes, cutlasses and in some cases –tool mounting animals is responsible for inadequate agric-output in the country, thus, making agriculture difficult and laborious, thereby by giving farmers meager yields.

(c) Poor working Relationship among the bodies.

Linkages explain the kind of relationship between two or more bodies pursuing the same shared objectives to have regular communication to boost productivity. The connections are established mainly through communication, feedback mechanism and good working relationship within the organizations.

Conclusion

The importance of Legal and Regulatory frameworks on agricultural education goes beyond providing basic agricultural education and knowledge to farmers. It requires a developed agricultural competency, by engaging farmers in production agriculture. The regulatory bodies have improved agricultural investment which solely depends

on research quality mechanism by which the farmers would be encouraged in the production sector.

Recommendations

In the appraisal of the role of legal and regulatory frame work in Agricultural education and training for rapid economic development, the paper recommends as follows

2. This article recommended that Government at all levels should create an environment that is conducive for farm machinery manufacturers, to establish assembly plants and develop for local manufacture of agricultural machineries.

3. This paper recommended that to develop and expand agricultural technologies which could work to meet the needs of end users, researchers, extension workers farmers and other industry actors.

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