

## Rural Infrastructures and the Challenge of Food Insecurity in Nigeria: Are Good Intentions of Policymakers Enough?

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### ABSTRACT

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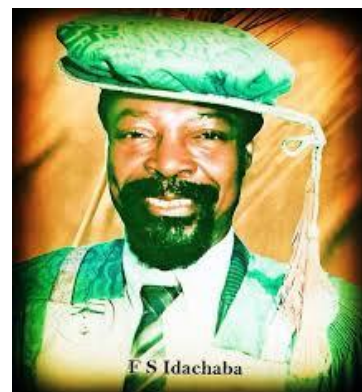
The paper is based on a memorial public lecture presented in honour of the late, eminent and foremost professor of Agricultural Economics in Nigeria, Late Prof. Francis S. Idachaba (1943-2014) by the author, an erudite scholar too, mentored by the Late Prof. Idachaba himself. The paper made bold attempt at narrating the contributions of Prof. Idachaba's key contributions to Nigerian agriculture and rural development through dogged policy activism and advocacy based on scientific evidence. The purpose of the lecture thus, was not to cast aspersion on policy authorities in the same vociferous manner that Francis Idachaba used to do in and out of office; and yet remained best of friends with them till he passed but rather, as Idachaba strived to achieve in his numerous writings on the subject of this lecture, to strengthen policy makers and stakeholders' collective faith in the policy process for attaining food security in Nigeria and to ascertain the critical role of rural infrastructures in doing that. The lecture is structured into four main sections; namely: a brief background to provide a conceptual framework for interrogating the issues involved; a policy perspective of the challenge posed to attain food security; highlights of implementation strategies for meeting the challenge of food insecurity; and, the role of rural infrastructures in addressing that challenge. The lecture ends with conclusions and policy recommendations. This posthumous lecture was delivered at the 1st Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Memorial Agricultural Policy Lecture; organized by the Idachaba Foundation for Research and Scholarship (IFRES) in collaboration with Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan; held at First Bank Building, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan on 15th August 2019.

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### Introduction

Hunger is an abomination, a disgrace as much to manhood or womanhood as also to nationhood at large. The purpose of this lecture is not to castigate policy authorities in the same vociferous manner that Francis Idachaba used to do in and out of office; and yet they remained the best of friends till he passed. It is rather, as Idachaba strived to achieve in his numerous writings on the subject of this lecture, to strengthen our collective faith in the policy process for attaining food security in Nigeria and to ascertain the critical role of rural infrastructures in doing that.



Prof. Francis Suleimanu Idachaba  
(1943-2014)



The lecture is structured into four main sections; namely: a brief background to provide a conceptual framework for interrogating the issues involved; a policy perspective of the challenge posed to attainment of food security; the highlight of implementation strategies for meeting the challenge of food insecurity; and, the role of rural infrastructures in addressing that challenge. The lecture ends with conclusions and policy recommendations.

The lecture is broached in terms of three postulations of mine, and one other that Idachaba and I espoused together for a long time; all of which he not only had his finger on them in perfect agreement, but also within which contexts my recommendations for addressing the challenge of food insecurity will eventually emerge.

First is the postulate of a social utility of agriculture. This states that agriculture has a traditional social utility function to perform, before it acquired a contemporary business function. This postulate makes the argument about whether agriculture is a business or development arena technically sterile; which argument was popularized during the days of Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) as a strategy of agricultural policy in Nigeria. My take on this argument is that it is not an 'either/or question' but a 'both' question; that is agriculture is both a business and also a development sector of the economy. Indeed agriculture is first a culture before becoming a business, otherwise, we will not be gathered here today to discuss the critical role infrastructure will play in meeting the challenge of food security, given that infrastructure is largely a public good, not private good in most cases. The authority on this subject is Wendell Berry, who made a famous statement in his book *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*, as follows:

*"The word agriculture, after all, does not mean 'agriscience', much less agribusiness." It means 'cultivation of land.' And cultivation is at the root of the sense both of culture and of cult. And these words all come from an Indo-European root meaning both 'to resolve' and 'to dwell.' To live, to survive on the earth, to care for the soil, and to worship, all are bound at the root to the idea of a cycle. It is only by understanding the cultural complexity and largeness of the concept of agriculture that we can see the threatening diminishment implied by the term 'agribusiness'.*

Accordingly, therefore, I have no problem with the term agribusiness, which is an offshoot of agriculture but it is most intellectually offensive to me the slogan that rented the air a while ago in Nigeria, suggesting that agriculture is only a business but not a development arena anymore; which slogan will warrant us to rewrite many books we have read on agricultural development in theory and practice!

Second is my dual-economy postulate as a policy theory for exploring the agriculture and industry interrelationships for the purpose of policy intervention. This states that, as agriculture and industry are constantly entwined in terms of their reciprocal inability to make necessary inputs for developing each other in terms of thrusts and feedbacks to keep the food system running properly, both sectors inadvertently engage each other in a theoretical 'embrace' relationship. This leads to a gradual slowdown of both sectors, and at the limit a 'deathly embrace' situation ensues, whereby the system stagnates altogether. My seminar paper on this was presented to faculty and published as a monograph (Ayoola 1997) by the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) USA. When Idachaba read the paper he quickly acknowledged the intuitive reasoning behind the postulate in perfect concurrence, and made a preliminary remark that identified specific infrastructures as policy instruments, thereby extending the postulate to a "multiple embrace" regime, saying:

*"...It is not only ill-health in agriculture that holds down industry and vice versa but that ill-health in transportation sector, social services, education sector and others lead to more ill-health of the agricultural sector."*

Third is my postulate of food as a human right, not a mere human need. This idea follows directly from the notion of 'development as freedom' sponsored by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (Sen 1999), which by my own extension implies a derivative notion of 'agricultural development as freedom from hunger (Ayoola 2016)'. Of course, freedoms beget rights as recognized by United Nations Organization from outset in the Economic Social and Cultural Rights in its many conventions and protocols. Accordingly I came up with a stylized definition of Right to Food different from FAO's, upon which to anchor FIF's National Campaign on Right to Food:

*"The right to food is the irreducible minimum degree of freedom from hunger and malnutrition for a person to live a dignified, productive and healthy live" (NAD various issues)."*



Idachaba was perfectly in agreement with me on the human right approach to food security in complementarity to his traditional basic need approach anchored on rural infrastructures, recognizing that both approaches are not mutually exclusive, but are complimentary to each other to reinforce the policy process towards food security of Nigeria.

Fourth and last is the postulate of a constitutional federal-state relationship in agricultural development. The present 1999 constitution as amended, which provides for agriculture on the concurrent legislative list, includes a division of labour between federal and state in their joint responsibility for agriculture. According to Section 17(b-d) of the Second Schedule, the federal government is assigned the responsibility for “conducting studies” (i.e. research), promotion and financing, on the one hand; while on the other hand the State has jurisdiction in all conceivable aspects of agriculture including implementation of projects on the ground. However, this aspect of the constitutional provision is observed only in breach but not in compliance, thereby featuring frequent overreach by federal government and complacency of states in agriculture. This is where Idachaba and I has picked tent through our joint effort in policy analysis, advocacy and influencing work to correct the situation.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is against the background of the foregoing three postulates (plus one) and Idachaba’s concurrence about them before he died, that our attention is now drawn to the critical role rural infrastructures would play in the policy process for national food security; which role we are now set to highlight, with the view to setting the stage for a critical illumination of the infrastructure approach in general, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end towards addressing the challenge of food insecurity.

Meanwhile we need to first preview this challenge in its policy perspective.

### **A Policy Perspective of the Challenge of Food Insecurity**

By policy (i.e. public policy) is meant a statement of WHAT the government intentions are, to intervene in the economy; in order to produce a different course of action from that, which would otherwise have not been the case without government intervention. That is, policy intervention by government prevents the economy from running autopilot and to cruise on its own, as in an unregulated world of Adam Smith. Even

though such intentions are always good to change the life of the people, at least in the eye of government itself, they are not good enough until the goals of intervention are fulfilled during or after implementation.

The need for government to intervene in the market economy for agricultural inputs and outputs remains sacrosanct, as justified following:

- (i) Government is called to provide facilities that require lumpy expenditures, which are generally beyond the reach of ordinary individuals;
- (ii) Government is called to provide facilities having substantial free-rider problem, which thereby discourages private individuals;
- (iii) Government should provide facilities, which represent durable stocks of capital and also require regular maintenance costs, and hence have life-long inter-generational consequences;
- (iv) Government should provide facilities requiring diversified inputs from different ministries and disciplines, which it only controls.

The challenge of food insecurity is like the proverbial elephant, which the appearance to someone depends on the observation point and the analytical spectacle that one wears. Here we shall focus the policy perspective of the challenge, much in line with the constitution, which makes provision for agriculture as a concurrent legislative item (in Schedule 2, Section 17); and also establish a division of labour between the federal government and state government. Going by this section, the federal government shall make policies and laws in three areas namely: research, financing and promotion of agricultural projects, while the states are equally empowered to make laws in all aspects including these (Schedule 2 Section 18). I quote (underline mine):

“The National Assembly may make laws for the Federation or any part thereof with respect to –

(c) the establishment of research centres for agricultural studies; and

(d) the establishment of institutions and bodies for the promotion or financing of industrial, commercial or agricultural



projects.”

That is, the national policy on agriculture and food security should be normally articulated based on these as pillars of constitutional responsibility. This not being the case has posed a major challenge to food security, whereby the constitutional division of labour is observed in breach not in compliance by both federal and state. This creates opportunity for role overlaps, role confusion and ultimately role failure in the policy space for food security of the country.

Added to this general challenge are other specific challenges to be explored from individual pillars of policy intervention, agricultural research, agricultural financing and agricultural promotion.

Meanwhile we justify the need for policy intervention in the market economy, based on the nature of the agricultural economy with respect to food security, which necessitates systematic policy intervention, owing to the failure of the market system to be perfect as desired. Thus maximum allocative efficiency cannot be achieved through the market system only, because of several limitations of the agricultural economy, including the following:

- The inability of market forces to create social projects such as rural roads and bridges;
- The adjustment time between the equilibrium positions, which can be too long for agriculture in particular;
- The fact that market forces can be very wasteful from extensive market competition, implying low return to agricultural inputs;
- The presence of several market failures which the market fails to correct on its own, e.g. (a) insufficient capital market for long-term (agricultural) investments, (b) unreliability of market forces to provide marketing facilities such as storage, grading, transportation, etc., and (c) the domination of developing economies by multinationals whose interests do not necessarily coincide with our developmental needs and aspirations
- The presence of externalities implying divergences between private objectives and social objectives, which

discourages private investments in agricultural infrastructures;

- The need to bring about economic equality, i.e. equal opportunities among classes and people, with particular reference to vulnerable people and the bottom poor;
- The need to forestall dehumanizing of the employees by the employers, thereby ensuring that citizens live with minimum decency, dignity coupled with high productivity and good health.

Table 1 shows the list of policy statements to intervene in the agricultural market in Nigeria ever since. We can safely assume that policy makers harbour good intentions in each statement. At this initial stage of the policy process (i.e. articulation stage), policymakers tend to do what appears good enough in their own eyes; and we have no justifiable basis to think otherwise ex-ante. Thus, whether or not their intentions in these statements are actually good enough to meet the challenges of food insecurity in Nigeria is simply a matter of conjecture the outcomes of their implementation are considered in the next section of this lecture. At this stage it will suffice to examine the three pillars of policy actions of the federal government as assigned in the constitution.

**Table 1. Selected Agricultural Policies in Nigeria, 1900-2014**

Official Title	Brief Description
<b>Forest policy 1937</b>	Based on proposal of Chief Conservator of Forests after a "Forest Conference". The problem of depreciating forest capital as a result of unregulated exploitation was addressed.
<b>Forest policy 1945</b>	Revision of 1937 policy; it incorporated the new position of government that (a) agriculture must take priority over forestry, (b) the satisfaction of the need of people at the lowest rates (prices) must take precedence over revenue, and (c) maximization of revenue must be compatible with sustained yield.
<b>Agricultural policy 1946</b>	First all-embracing policy statement in respect of agriculture; Nigeria was demarcated into five agricultural areas: (i) Northern Provinces Pastoral or Livestock Production Area, (ii) Northern Provinces Export Crop (Groundnut and Cotton) Production Area, (iii) Middle-belt Food Production area, (iv) Southern Provinces Export Crop (Palm Oil and Kernels) Production Area and, (v) South West

	Food Export (Cocoa and Palm (kernels) Area.
<b>Policy for the Marketing Cotton, 1948</b>	Commodity-specific policy, directed of Oils, Oil Seeds and toward stabilizing post-second world war prices in Britain
<b>Forest policy for Western Region 1952</b>	Territorial policy declared during the trial of the regionalization concept; focused on forest matters.
<b>Agricultural policy 1952</b>	Territorial policy - focused on agricultural matters for the Western Region.
<b>Policy for Natural resources</b>	Territorial; Eastern Region Resources of forest/agricultural matters. Eastern Nigeria.
<b>Western Nigeria policy Natural Resources 1959.</b>	The farm settlement scheme was of Agricultural and the critical element.
<b>Agricultural policy for Nigeria 1988</b>	A comprehensive; based on detailed analysis of quantitative targets; aims at self-sufficiency in food and agricultural raw materials latest 1002 <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Agricultural Policy 2001</b>	This ushered in the current democratic agricultural economy, following return to civilian government in 1999 after a long period of military rule. The policy direction entails specification of roles for federal, state and local governments.
<b>Agricultural Transformation Agenda policy (ATA)</b>	This is characterized by development of agricultural value chains and technology-enabled delivery of farm input subsidy.
<b>Agricultural Promotion Policy 2014</b>	Otherwise know as “The Green Alternative” intended to reinforce the achievements of ATA with emphasis on the promotion of agricultural projects and the recognition of food as a human right.

activities of agricultural production, transportation, processing, and storage should be considered together.

- Effective agricultural technology must be based on creation through virile national agricultural research system, transfer through active agricultural extensions system, and perpetuation through the developmental technological intellect.
- Effective agricultural technology must be appropriate on grounds of ecological and socio-cultural considerations, simplicity relative availabilities of capital and labour, divisibility and riskiness.
- Effective agricultural technology must be sustained by government through the endurance of agricultural and macroeconomic policies, stabilization of the agricultural administration, and disciplined funding commitment.

To the extent that agricultural technologies have not delivered on these grounds of effectiveness, to that extent technology policy has posed severe challenge to food security in the country. Perhaps the most significant explanatory variable of the volume of output is steady technological progress. In Nigeria, agriculture technological progress has been seriously hampered by the lack of a completely integrated approach, laggard research performance, and ineffective extension system to disseminate research results, which all these combined may have weakened the capacity of policy authorities to confront the challenge of food insecurity in the country.

#### *Agricultural finance policy*

The constitutional responsibility of federal government to provide policy support in agricultural finance is two-fold. First, government is called upon to provide ensure provision of credit and loans to farm and nonfarm enterprises, which need financial assistance to embark on agricultural enterprises. And given the low competitive competence of agricultural ventures, such financial facilities need to be provided to them at lower interest rates, thereby segmenting the financial market supposedly in favour of agriculture. The intent of government to do this, which is good of course, have been articulated at different times; notably through the Central Bank of Nigeria as manager of the longstanding Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme fund (ACGSF), which indemnifies the borrower from

#### *Agricultural research policy*

At FIF we have a dictum, which states that, “technology matters but policy matters the more”. Agricultural research borders on technology generation, for deployment to enterprises in the agricultural value chain – farmers, processors, marketers and other value chain actors. The imperatives for effective agricultural technology as follows:

- Effective agricultural technology must be all embracing and completed. The components that must be included are mechanical, electrical, electronic, management, and socio-cultural aspects. In addition, all the



commercial banks against default to the tune of 70% recovery; the establishment of Microfinance Banks, which focus their services on rural communities; as well as para-financial institutions such as the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation, which indemnifies the borrower on terms applicable to different policies bought and sold; and lately the Nigeria Incentive-based Risk Sharing for Agricultural Lending, incorporated by CBN to further incentivize financial institutions based on shared risks; and the Anchor Borrowers Programme and other direct provision of financial support to specific value chain enterprises particularly rice.

Second, government is called upon to allocate funds in the budget to finance agricultural projects, in manners that do not overreach the states, which have coordinate responsibility to do the same. Such allocations are subject to approval of the national assembly, which passes the budgets as appropriation bills to be signed into law by the president. The budget cycle for this purpose begins with the agencies in agriculture submitting their budget proposals for aggregation by government, screened by relevant committees of national assembly prior to public hearing and legislative debates on the budget proposals.

The budget process is critical, which policymakers faithfully embark upon on annual basis. However, the budget document, even when it has been approved and legislated by law as a compact between the legislative and executive arms of government, it remains a type of agreement with no perfect obligation, in the words of Professor Nwabueze (when he was at loggerheads with Academic Staff Union of Universities over the ASUU-Federal Government agreement). That is, with all the good intentions of policymakers and law makers behind the annual budget, in practical terms it is not binding on government to fulfill the content in toto; and if government willfully or inadvertently refuse to meet its commitments in the budget, it is not justiciable in any law court. Therefore it is not just a matter of good or bad intention, but also a matter of faith, that the policymakers will act in good faith to implement the provisions made to agriculture in the budget as is, or as close to it as possible.

Nonetheless these policy efforts can only confirm the good intentions of government behind agricultural finance policy. Whether such intensions are good enough or not depends on the assessment of the implementation strategies. Table 2 and Table 3 obviously reveal some outcomes of policy efforts in this direction. The largest volume of agricultural loans

was provided by commercial banks, followed by microfinance banks and least by Bank of Agriculture; while the microfinance bank loans were the most variable of the years. Likewise, it was observed that budget allocations relative to total allocations, which was lowest in 1999 and it had peaked since 2001 at 6.38%.

*Table 2: Provision of Formal Credit to Agriculture from 1992 to 2012 (# 000)*

Year	Bank of Agriculture	Microfinance Banks	Commercial Banks
1992	3234.2	29.5	9104.9
1993	4715.5	123.2	80969
1994	5947.4	155.4	32183.8
1995	414.2	98.6	44314.7
1996	410.4	229.4	33489.6
1997	-	367.4	27939.7
1998	-	962.7	27180.7
1999	-	1007.2	364600.8
2000	-	656.6	507954.9
2001	-	77.6	929401.6
2002	-	390.5	1279207
2003	-	625	242185.7
2004	-	483.31	261558.6
2005	-	69.9	3308744
2006	-	956.1	4312450
2007	-	2245.2	149570
2008	-	3534.3	6827425
2009	-	5957.8	8485209
2010	-	5102.9	1774884
2011	-	4679.22	10193847

2012	-	4511.68	9905881
Total	14721.7	32263.51	48800000
Mean	701.0333	1536.358	2323719
Standard Deviation	1704.217	1950.139	3485746
Co-efficient of Variation	2.431	1.269	1.500
Minimum	3234.2	29.5	9104.9
Maximum	5947.4	5957.8	10193847

Source: Computed from CBN data and Statistics  
(<http://www.cbn.gov.ng/documents/data.asp>) 2012

**Table 3: Budgetary Allocations to Agriculture (# Billion), 1990-2002**

Year	Total Budget	Allocation to Agriculture	% of Total Budget
1990	39.76	1.96	4.95
1991	38.66	0.67	1.74
1992	52.03	0.92	1.78
1993	112.10	2.83	2.53
1994	110.20	3.71	3.37
1995	153.49	6.92	4.51
1996	337.21	5.71	1.69
1997	428.21	8.66	2.02
1998	487.11	9.04	1.86
1999	947.69	12.15	1.28
2000	701.05	13.60	1.94
2001	1,018.02	64.94	6.38
2002	1,018.15	44.80	4.40
Total	4425.66	175.91	38.45
Mean	368.81	13.53	2.96
Standard Deviation	354.51	19.24	1.61
Co-efficient of Variation	0.96	1.42	0.54
Minimum	38.66	0.67	1.28
Maximum	1018.15	64.94	6.38

Sources: CBN Statistical Bulletin and Annual Report (Various Issues).

#### *Agricultural promotion policy*

Promotion here is to be understood against the backdrop of the division of labor established in the constitution. By promotion is meant actions of the federal government to raise the profile of agriculture in

support of the states. It is not to be understood as a repository of policy instruments for federal government to do anything it likes on the ground in the states. The truth is that federal government does not own the land in the state; neither does it own the water bodies; not the least the farmers and people dwelling in the states. Therefore all intervention policies of federal government are only promotional; meaning to backstop what the state is doing at best. Suffice it to say that it cannot be the intendment of the makers of the constitution for federal government to overreach the state in their areas of agricultural jurisdictions under disguise of pursuing a (constitutionally assigned) promotion policy.

On this matter, I was present at a dinner lecture organized by policy makers in honour of Prof Idachaba at Abuja when he retired. I was practical bemused when Idachaba began to castigate the senior ministry officials them for constantly overreaching the states, blaming them by names for constituting a bottleneck to resolving the challenge of food insecurity of the country by overreaching the State at will; thereby spoiling their dinner so they began to leave the hall one by one and only a few of us with no where to go remained till the end of Idachaba's lecture.

Many instances abound to illustrate policy overreach on the part of the federal government:

- Deployment of federal officers or its contractors to distribute fertilizers and other farm inputs in the states; this creates room for a) substantial leakages whereby farm subsidy benefits illicitly flow to unintended channels within and outside the economy; b) the subsidy programme facing frequent exploitation to serve the selfish motives of civil servants, politicians, and other elite groups, to the detriment of the ordinary farmer; c) a dependency mentality among farmers on government subsidy, thereby making it a permanent obligation of government and



subsequently a huge fiscal burden;

- Deploying extension officers to undertake visits to render services to farmers; this leads to poor extension effectiveness all over the country as the capacity of federal government is too limited to meet the need of farmers for constant and in-depth extension information about new farm technologies.
- Establishing irrigation schemes and managing the same as federal projects here and there; which has led to permanent friction between the federal government and host communities that the irrigation services are supposed to benefit, and widespread failure of irrigation projects to make desired effects.
- Sourcing and implementing development projects from bilateral and multilateral agencies with minimum participation of state governments; this leads to stop-go policies and abandonment of infrastructures that federal government create through such projects but which it cannot carry through or sustainably maintain.
- Venturing to create grazing reserves and to establish “*Ruga*”(colonies of livestock owners) in the states; this creates avoidable disaffection and overheated polity that presently threatens the security of the nation.
- Etc.

### **Implementation Strategies**

In this section we attempt to proffer the answer to the question posed, i.e. whether the good intentions of policymakers as highlighted foregoing is good or not good enough; this by examining the strategies put in place to achieve the objectives of the many policies on ground, and also by determining the outcomes of their implementation.

A strategy is a statement of HOW government would mobilize available resources, (human, financial and

material resources) to intervene in the economy, in order to implement its intentions contained in the policy. Unfortunately it is at the implementation stage that unexpected things happen and things go bad for projects, which may change the course of action from what was originally envisaged in the policy statement to another course of action not originally envisaged, good or bad. Thus, the motive behind one of

Idachaba’s last professional books – *Good Intentions Are Not Enough* (Idachaba 2013) was not an enquiry into policy statements but a verdict of his own about implementations strategies. Indeed, Idachaba in that book was merely expressing his longstanding frustrations about the problematic stage of policy implementation.

Table 4 shows the series of implementation strategies the country had deployed in a long time, comprising the efforts at development planning and implementation of programmes and projects, with necessary annotations about the results or outcomes obtained from their successive implementations. It is obvious that the good intentions of policymakers have not been good enough all along. As soon as the originally good intentions are written in well-articulated policy and strategy documents, policy mistakes begin to occur one after the other. One wonders, as Idachaba did, if these policy mistakes are those of the head or of the mind, and why policymakers have continued in their ways to behave as if they are not capable of learning from past implementation mistakes.

That the good intentions of policymakers are not enough may be attributable to several factors that usually come into play during implementation. The critical one is governance factor (Ayoola 2016), which borders on pronounced instability of the political environment in which the strategies are often implemented. Sometimes the terms, policy instability, policy consistency and policy summersault are used interchangeably, but they mean different things to the policy analyst. In technical terms, policy instability is when certain policy changes take place in the policy or political environment during implementation that affects the implementation of policies and strategies. Policy inconsistency is when the implementation of a policy is at variance with implementation of another in the same or a different policy institution. Policy summersault is when a new policy is instantly reversed before implementation starts or soon after commencement of implementation.



**Table 4: Typology of Policy Implementation Strategies for Food Security in Nigeria, 1960–1989**

Key Strategies	Relevant Details	Annotation
Farm Settlement Scheme	Initiated in old Western Region; aimed at solving unemployment problem among primary school leavers. Policy instruments include agricultural extension, cooperative societies, and credit facilities.	FAO (1965): The philosophical motivation of young school leavers to run profitable farms under government assistance in training, credit and infrastructure was an impracticable proposition “to turn physically and mentally immature youths into serious-minded, hard-working farmers”: this is because “young men can only be expected to settle down and devote themselves to productive work after they have passed the age of 20 and have married and thereby assumed responsibility for maintenance of other persons than themselves.”
National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP)	The project has its roots in the Accelerated Cereal Production programme earlier identified by a team of experts who surveyed the Nigerian food condition ‘with a view to recommending means of implementing an integrated extension and research programme which could stimulate the masses of Nigerian farmers to dramatically increase food production’ (FDA 1974). The initial concentration of the project was on rice, maize, sorghum, millet, wheat, and cassava.	In general, the impact of agricultural extension on the farmers’ lives is seriously limited by the inadequate number and poor training of extension agents, lack of adequate transport facilities to penetrate the rural areas, inadequate backup facilities such as credit and inputs, among others.
Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)	A mass mobilization and mass awareness programme. Policy instruments include mass media, centralized input procurement, massive fertilizer subsidy, and imports.	The Campaign simply fizzled out.
River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs)	The River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) were established (Decree 25, 1976) with the aim to develop the economic potential of the massive water bodies in the country. In particular, they had specific mandates in irrigation services and fishery while hydroelectric power generation and domestic water supply are secondary functions.	Subsequently, the operation showed strong tendencies towards role confusion by performing non-statutory functions, particularly direct agricultural production. Many of them grew out of proportion while the operations of others suffered from intense political interference.
Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs)	To enhance the technical and economic efficiency of small farmers in general. Policy instruments include rural infrastructure development (feeder road network, dams, etc.), revamped input delivery system and revitalized agricultural extension system, autonomous project management, and domestic-cum-international capital.	There were several reports of incessant political and other interferences, which create remarkable deviation from the designed paths in different aspects ranging from leadership posts, use of project facilities, location of a headquarters, to initial scale of project. Despite the presence of built-in monitoring and evaluation, a number of projects failed to make desired impact. There was a strong tendency towards low funding commitments among the sponsors of the ADPs.
Green Revolution Programme	To accelerate the achievement of the agricultural sector objectives. Policy instruments include food production plan, input supply and subsidy, special commodity development programme, review of Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, increased resource allocation to RBDAs, etc.	Associated with massive rice imports and cases of corruption
Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure	Established to facilitate programmes in food production, particularly through the provision of rural infrastructure	The body was criticized for its lack of proper role focus and programme accountability because of initial high attention it paid to low-priority projects as well as the failure of its organs to match their actions with the huge expenditure outlays
National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)	The agency addresses the land availability issue along with land capacity enhancement support and input supply, all directed at a limited area with particular attention on the special ecological specialization and other sources of comparative advantage of the area.	Many of their enclave projects (one per state so far) recorded low participation and deviation from recommended packages. Preliminary evaluation had shown that the agency failed to provide the support services in the degrees desired to guarantee efficiency of production under the universal 4-ha.-per-farmer land-allocation model.
Agriculture Transformation Agenda (ATA)	ATA was launched in 2012; intervention instruments include: Revitalize the private sector fertilizer and seed industry; Government withdraws from fertilizer and seed procurement and distribution; Private sector to commercialize seeds and fertilizers to reach farmers directly; Growth Enhancement Support (fertilizer subsidy through telephone)	Widespread impersonation to divert the subsidy on farm inputs; Reports of fake inputs (fertilizer and seed).



Hereafter I venture to substantiate the governance factor as an important factor to consider in tackling the challenge of food insecurity. The following episodes in political and policy changes in the past will suffice here. Beginning with political changes since independence: from colonial to civilian (Tafawa Balewa, 1960); from civilian to military (Aguyi Ironsi 1966); from military to military (Yakubu Gowon 1966); from military to military the second time (Murtala Mohammed/Olusegun Obasanjo 1975); from military to civilian the first time (Sheu Shagari, 1979); from civilian to military the second time (Mohamadu Buhari, 1984); from military to military the third time (Ibrahim Babangida, 1985); from military to civilian the second time, but without election (Ernest Shonekan, 1994); from civilian to military the third time (Sani Abacha, 1995); from military to military the fourth time (Abdulsalami Abubakar, 1998); from military to civilian the third time through an election (Olusegun Obasanjo recycled, 1999); from civilian to civilian, same political parties involved (Umaru Yar'Adua/Goodluck Jonathan, 2007); and, the latest, from civilian to civilian, different political parties (Mohamadu Buhari recycled, 2015).

This series of political changes correlates nearly perfectly with policy changes in agriculture, in terms of dominant programmes implemented by successive Heads of State or Presidents, as follows: Nationally Coordinated Food Production Programme (NAFPP, 1972, Gowon); Operation Feed the Nation (OFN, 1976, Obasanjo); Green Revolution Programme (GRP, 1980, Shagari); Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI, 1986, Babangida); National Agricultural Land Authority (NALDA, 1990, Babangida); National Programme on Food Security (NPFSS, 2000 Obasanjo); National Food Security Programme (NFSP, 2003 Yar'Adua); National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA, 2004, Yar'Adua); and, the just concluded Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA, 2011, Jonathan).

### **Role of Rural Infrastructure**

The general notion underlying the rural infrastructure strategy is that it is difficult for the rural sector to contribute significantly to economic progress in the absence of basic facilities that also enhance their living standards. The case for infrastructural support is particularly strong on the basis that, unlike subsidy policy, the problem of unintended beneficiaries will be minimized; this because once installed, the farmers possess absolute, although not necessarily exclusive,

right of access to the infrastructure.

Indeed, the stock and flows of rural infrastructure represents the backbone of agriculture, thereby holding the key to successfully addressing the food insecurity challenge facing the country; as they facilitate agricultural processes directly, albeit not exclusively. Their provision is essentially a public obligation owing to five reasons: First, the lumpiness of expenditure required is generally beyond the reach of ordinary individuals; second, there is the presence of free-rider problem which discourages private individuals; third, infrastructural facilities are durable stocks of capital which require regular maintenance costs and hence life-long intergenerational consequences; finally, the provision of infrastructure cuts across different ministries and disciplines which are under the control of government.

The implementation of Rural Infrastructure Survey project is the flagship research endeavor of Idachaba, which represented a defining moment for him in professional life. The project team originally comprised Professor Idachaba as Coordinator and a number of civil servants seconded from Ministry - Chris Umebese, Ayo Adeniyi, Oladeinde Akingbade, Biodun Yusuf and Kema Idefoh. The team had successfully completed the benchmark survey in 1982 before I joined as a career staff in 1984 at the instance of Professor Idachaba, who invited me based on my good performance in his econometrics and policy causes I took. Later I became the Project Officer and fortuitously, I am presently the last man standing till date.

A three-pronged classification of rural infrastructures was adopted, as follows:

- Rural physical infrastructures –
  - Rural roads cause accelerated delivery of farm inputs, reduce transportation costs and enhance special agricultural production and distribution efficiency.
  - Storage facilities help to preserve foods in the forms that consumers need them and to the time they need them; on-farm storage also helps to stabilize inter-seasonal supplies.
  - Irrigation facilities ensure farm water supply and stabilize food production by protecting the farm production system against uncontrollable and undesirable fluctuations in domestic food production.



- Rural social infrastructures –
  - Clean water, decent housing, environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and adequate nutrition help to improve the quality of rural life.
  - Formal and informal education promote rural productivity by making the producers able to decode agronomic and other information, and carry out other desirable modern production practices; basic education also promotes feeding quality, dignity, self-respect and sense of belonging as well as political integration of rural people.
- Rural institutional infrastructures –
  - Rural groups and cooperative facilitate economies of scale and profitability of rural enterprise.
  - Agricultural extension improves the technology status of the farm business.

We have since reviewed this classification at FIF and considered a value chain approach more applicable at the moment; hence we now have the following classification codes to better define the infrastructure approach to food security, viz: Production infrastructure; Processing infrastructure; Marketing infrastructure; Transportation infrastructure; Storage infrastructure; Communication infrastructure; etc. In recent times, we have embarked on the digitalization of the database and published the same on the website as Infrastructure Statistics (INFRASTAT), which not only permits greater public access to the baseline and updates data sets but also offers flexibility for users to extract information on a spreadsheet for research and other public use (visit [www.fifnig.org](http://www.fifnig.org)). At FIF also efforts are underway to produce infrastructure mapping on with key agricultural enterprises in selected states on a pilot basis.

What originally informed the Rural Infrastructure Survey project was the chronic dearth of data for infrastructure planning at that time, which was to be addressed in order to ward off the castigation of “planning without facts”. Truly the benchmark study and successive updates were found useful for the planning of a number of projects that had the Agriculture Ministry at the centre of action, notably the successive generations of World Bank-assisted Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) and the defunct Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural

Infrastructures (DFRRI). By mid 1990s, the fire of ADPs had since quenched and they exist in the states till date merely in theory but not in practice anymore. Sadly, therefore, at the moment there is no flagship project or programme in place for the systematic provision of agricultural infrastructures, which further undermines the goal to meet the

challenge of food security. The Staple Crop Processing Zone (SCPZ) was introduced as an enclave-type composite infrastructure scheme targeted at certain commodities, but this remains in the pipeline for over five years now, after a false start in a number of states. Thus till date, the ADP model represents the most resilient versatile and systematic model of rural infrastructure provision in the country till date. Table 5 is a snapshot of their activities in the 1980s.

## Conclusions

The challenge of food insecurity in Nigeria was situated in the contexts of four postulates, wherein established as follows: that, agriculture has both development and business functions to perform; that, agriculture is intricately entangled in a deathly embrace with infrastructure and other sectors of the dual economy structure; that, food is a fundamental human right not a mere human need; and, that the constitutionality of agriculture is very paramount.

In this lecture, the issues involved in addressing the challenge of food insecurity in Nigeria were interrogated against the backdrop of these templates, and also the enquiry about whether or not the good intentions of policymakers often contained in several policy and strategy documents would be enough to overcome the challenge of food insecurity. Furthermore, the role of rural infrastructure was circumscribed as a special policy instrument for not only uplifting the living standards of and other rural dwellers but also to target other policy instruments to meet the challenge of food insecurity on a sustained basis.

We hereby conclude, the same way Idachaba did, that the good intentions of policymakers which they harbor in policy their initial statements are simply not enough to address the challenge of food insecurity perpetually facing Nigeria. Therefore until such intentions are carried through the implementation stage, they remain they remain so in perpetuity. Therefore the following recommendations emerge for the attention of policymakers, if the challenge of food insecurity



would be overcome in Nigeria:

1. That both the social function and business functions of agriculture should be balanced at policy articulation and implementation stages.
2. That the relationships between agriculture, infrastructure and other sectors of the economy should be de-embraced with appropriate policy instruments.
3. That, policy authorities should change their mindset about food, from the traditional notion of food as a human right to the contemporary notion of food as a human right.
4. That the sanctity of constitutional division of labour between the federal and state governments should be faithfully observed in designing, formulating and implementing policies to confront food insecurity in the country.

**Physical achievement of the World Bank assisted Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) in rural Infrastructural Development as at December 1986**

Name of ADP	Period existence	Rural Roads (km)					Actual as percentage of target				
		Constructed	Maintained	Rehabilitated	Bridges and culverts	Dams	Boreholes	Wells tube or open	Farm Service centres	Training Hall/Workshop	
<b>Recent Project</b>											
1. Anambra State ADP	1986	14.5	0	0	-	-	-	-	52.3	33.3	
2. Bendel State ADP	1986	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	
3. Benue State ADP	1986	-	9.1	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	
4. Cross River State ADP	1986	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5. Imo State ADP	1986	14.7	47.8	73	50	-	-	-	33.3	58.3	
1. Plateau State ADP	1986	30.6	5.3	-	0.1	0	66.7	14	-	-	
7. Ogun State ADP	1986	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	100	-	
7. Ogun State ADP	1981-86	69.6	114.6	329.7	-	-	-	100	-	89.3	
7. Ogun State ADP	1983-86	23.7	-	-	51.5	-	100	-	126.5	140	
7. Ogun State ADP	1983-86	70.8	-	-	-	-	-	163.8	-	40	
7. Ogun State ADP	1983-86	22.6	-	-	31.3	-	-	-	41.7	40	
8. Bida ADP	1981-86	26.7	91.3	-	-	-	400	-	33.3	75	
9. Borno State ADP	1983-86	80.6	-	48.4	21.9	25.7	-	83.5	-	-	
9. Borno State ADP	1985-86	34.3	25	-	-	-	-	-	33.3	2.4	
10. Sokoto State ADP	1983-86	55.7	58.3	40	-	-	100	81.6	-	-	
10. Sokoto State ADP	1983-86	73.9	41.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
11. Gongola State ADP											
12. Ilorin ADP											
13. Oyo North ADP											
14. Kaduna State ADP											
15. Kano State ADP											
16. Ekiti Akoko ADP											
Average	-	43.2	35.7	67.3	25.8	12.9	133.3	88.6	60.1	59.8	



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## APPENDIX

### LIFE AND TIME OF PROF F. S. IDACHABA

(PhD. OFR)

The Former Vice Chancellor of the Kogi state University, Anyigba, Prof Francis S. Idachaba (OFR) is the Founding President of the F. S. Idachaba Foundation for Research and Scholarship (IFRES). He obtained his B.Sc. from the University of Ibadan and subsequently MA. from the University of Chicago and PhD from the Michigan State University. He is an Agricultural Economist, with several publications to his credit. He served as the Pioneer Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Recently he was asked to assist in repositioning the Kogi State University as the Vice Chancellor of the University. He has since completed his tenure. He holds a D.Sc. (*Honoris Causa*) from the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. RIP Prof!

#### Early life

Francis Sulemanu Idachaba was born on 4 December 1943, at Idah, a city in Kogi State, north-central Nigeria. He attended Qua Iboe Mission Primary School in Idah before he was admitted in 1956 to Provincial Secondary School, Okene, where he obtained the West African School Certificate in 1961. He proceeded to the University of Ibadan, where he received a bachelor's degree in economics. He later attended the University of Chicago, where in 1969 he received a master's degree in economics. In 1972 he received a doctorate degree in agricultural economics from Michigan State University. In 1981, he became a Fulbright professor

of agricultural economics at the University of Ibadan.

#### Career



He started his academic career as an Assistant Professor in Michigan State University in 1972. As a scholar, Professor Idachaba ranked among Nigeria's most eminent men of letters. He obtained a B.Sc. in Economics from the University of Ibadan in 1967 and an M.Sc. in the same discipline from the University of Chicago in 1969. After obtaining his doctoral degree in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University in 1972, he commenced a most exciting and productive career as a lecturer, researcher and consultant in universities and research centres in Nigeria, the United States, Canada, the Hague, the Netherlands and several African countries. The agronomist rose to become a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Ibadan in 1981. His output as an intellectual included six published books and over 72 academic papers on diverse issues of agricultural development. Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, from 1988 to 1995 and served as Vice Chancellor of Kogi State University between 2005 and 2008. He advocated that government should declare agriculture an infant industry and that triangular alliances be formed between government, industry and universities to solve national problems. He was the founder of the Igala Education Foundation in 2001 and F. S. Idachaba Foundation for Research and Scholarship in 2003

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