

Assessment of Agricultural Marketing and the Militating Effect of Corruption on the Economic Growth in Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the importance of agricultural marketing in stimulating economic growth in Nigeria. Agricultural marketing represents agent of stimulation and growth. However, corruption is seen as the militating factor toward realizing the desired growth. This study has generated several important results that broadly indicate what needs to be done to improve the status of agricultural marketing. First, the result shows that marketing is the bread winner of all other activities. If there is no exchange of commodity and services, there would be no generation of profit and accumulation of capital for further production and expansion. To realize the objective of the paper, a collective effort of both the leaders and the populace is required to eradicate and taboo corruption. Corruption is so bad that it challenges God. It tends to steal away the capital meant for mass production. Mass production makes possible competition needed by marketing. The study recommended that government should takes seriously the issue of solid road network especially in the rural area to ease the transportation of agricultural commodities thereby reducing marketing cost; ensure constant power supply to prevents rots of agricultural commodities which reduces capital for further production. Government and policy makers to re-orientate the mind of the people to correct the wrong impression about marketing and encourage entrepreneurship in agriculture since agricultural sector mirrors the image of the entire economy.

Keywords

Agricultural Marketing, Growth Stimulation, Capital Accumulation, Corruption, Marketing Cost

1. Background Information

Marketing performs the major role of stimulating the required level of demand which is necessary for sustained production. The use of marketing tools to stimulate demand has significantly reinforced production and productivity. Marketing through research and information gathering, can gather data on consumer needs and the most efficient and effective way of satisfying those needs. The type of information so collected is usually very useful for a developing country, such as Nigeria, in its economic development plans [1].

Marketing also contributes to general material progress through its stimulation of the accumulation of capital such as

needed for industrialization and infrastructural facilities development. Marketing provides a breeding ground for the core traders and merchants who often metamorphose into managers and captains of industries [1].

In view of the developmental role of marketing as described above, it is safe and pertinent to assert that agricultural marketing plays a vital role in economic growth and development in Nigeria. The reason is not farfetched. According to Anyanwu *et al.* [9], about 78 percent of the population of Nigeria is engaged in farming. Comparing this with figure for advanced countries like United State of America (8 percent) and Britain (5 percent).

It is, therefore, imperative that a society such as Nigeria interested in improving the welfare of its citizenry must improve and encourage agricultural marketing in particular

and agricultural production in general.

National Commission on Agriculture in India defined agricultural marketing as a process which starts with a decision to produce a saleable farm commodity and it involves all aspects of market structure of system, both functional and institutional, based on technical and economic considerations and includes pre and post- harvest operations, assembling, grading, storage, transportation and distribution [2].

As plausible as the role of agricultural marketing seems in Nigeria, its functions in promoting economic growth are being disrupted by corruption endemic in the nation. According to Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), it is a notorious fact that one of the ills which have plagued and are still plaguing the Nigeria Nation is corruption in all facets of our national life. It is an incontrovertible fact that the present economic quagmire in which the country finds itself is largely attributable to the notorious virus which is known as corruption [18, 19].

This study is, therefore, designed to assess the importance of agricultural marketing, as well as evaluate corruption as its militating factor toward the economic growth in Nigeria. This would contribute to the design of appropriate policies that might result in according agricultural marketing its proper position and boosting an enabling environment for its role in stimulating growth in Nigerian society

1.1. Problem Statement

Agricultural marketing in particular and marketing in general have not been given a fair chance, recognition and an enabling environment to perform its role of stimulating economic growth in Nigeria. The reason is because corruption which has become endemic in the country has done away with investment capital that could have been used to provide the enabling environment needed for agricultural marketing to perform.

Obasanjo, one of the past Nigeria leaders, has explained that much of the foreign debt incurred by Nigeria was caused by corruption, mismanagement and waste among others. The implication is that the noble objectives of Nigeria budget are not realized [20]. According to Adiribigbe (2005), "It is estimated that Nigerians have over \$170 billion illegally kept away in foreign banks [20].

If corruption is largely responsible for the foreign debt that has been incurred by Nigeria over the years, is it little wonder why the enabling environment like good access road to transport produce to where the consumers are at an affordable price to the consumer and reasonable return to the producer cannot be realized?. Is it also little wonder why a constant power generation to store commodities to such a time when the consumers will need them cannot be achieved? This is supposed to prevent spoilage of commodities capable of resulting to colossal losses to the producer.

When producer could not maximize profit, it becomes too difficult to generate capital use for further production. The result is scarcity of commodities. It is, therefore, pertinent to note that scarcity demotes marketing. For marketing to reign and consumers to become "king" in the marketplace, there

must be mass or abundant products to bring about competition among operators. There can be no competition where commodities are scarce. Marketing, therefore, must be given an enabling environment to play its role of stimulating economic growth in Nigeria. This study, therefore, addressed the questions:

- i. Why is agricultural marketing the instrument of economic growth in Nigeria?
- ii. How does agricultural marketing stimulate economic growth in Nigerian?
- iii. How does corruption interfere with the role of agricultural marketing in stimulating economic growth in Nigeria?

The answers to these questions give the basis of suggesting where policy can be rightly applied to tackle undesirable issues and enhance growth in the agricultural sector in particular and the economy in general.

1.2. Justification

Even though business firms cannot achieve their objective of profit maximization and growth until marketing function, (planning, pricing, promotion, distribution of goods and services) are performed, marketing has continued to enjoy low status in Nigeria economy. Yet agricultural marketing in particular and marketing in general is a major contributor to economic growth in the country. This is through its role in stimulating the required level of demand which is necessary for sustained production [1]. There is also a greater misunderstanding of what agricultural marketing is all about. This has brought about relatively low status the subject has enjoyed over the years. Some of the reasons for the low status are as follows.

The eclectic nature of the subject matter has made it possible for agricultural marketing to be regarded as a discipline borrowed from other subjects like, psychology, mathematics, economics etc. Secondly, government policies of protecting infant industries and the problem of corruption have made scarcity of commodity to be a reality [1]. Marketing thrives in competition of dealers and stakeholder, but scarcity poses a challenge. Moreover, there is this erroneous perception of marketing as mere buying and selling protocols.

It becomes imperative that a study on assessing the true worth of agricultural marketing be carried out to provide suggestions on where policies can rightly respond to issues with the existing resources. Examining the militating effects of corruption on the role of agricultural marketing become imperative. The outcome would therefore assist in gaining better understanding about evil activities of corruption and provide useful information for more useful and appropriate public policy.

Recent empirical literature on the importance of agricultural marketing as an instrument of economic growth stimulator in Nigerian economy is minimal and almost non-existent. This study therefore not only contributes to the literature on importance of agricultural marketing toward economic growth and development, but with its focus on

Nigeria, it further contributes to the current tendency to redefines Nigeria for better tomorrow.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Study Area

This study was done in Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria is in Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon. She has a total land boundary of 923,768 square kilometers [8]. Mega cities and major cities are more concentrated towards the coastal areas while towns are more dispersed and tends towards randomization across the country [6]. The current population of Nigeria is 214,028,302 (July 2020 est.). Composed of more than 250 ethnic groups, the major ones are Hausa 30%, Yoruba 15.5%, Igbo (Ibo) 15.2%, Fulani 6%, Tiv 2.4%, Kanuri/Beriberi 2.4%, Ibibio 1.8%, Ijaw/Izon 1.8%, other 24.7% (2018 est.). Languages comprise of English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani and over 500 additional indigenous languages [8].

2.2. Sources of Data

The study relies wholly on secondary data and source information from books, journal articles, bulletins, U.S. bureau of statistics, internet etc.

2.3. Method of Analysis

The important role which agricultural marketing plays could be illustrated by examining the concept of investment-multiplier. We have already defined agricultural marketing and identify that it is a stimulator of economic growth. It is now our duty to investigate how the marketing functions could fuel the economy in the direction of growth.

The multiplier is a concept used to define the change in equilibrium output and income caused by a change in autonomous expenditure [4]. The principle of investment multiplier holds that an increase in net investment (₦1) will increase income by an amount greater than the increase in investment itself. This represents an amplified situation. So, the multiplier refers to numerical coefficient or value which shows that an increase in income results from an increase in net investment [17].

The size of the multiplier depends very much on the marginal propensity to consume (MPC). The higher the MPC, the higher the multiplier effect. For example, if we assume that Federal Government allocated 20 billion naira to Palm tree farmers and same amount to groundnut farmers. If Palm tree farmers spend 16 billion naira while groundnut farmers spend 2 million naira, the MPC of palm oil farmers will give a higher multiplier effect than that of the groundnut farmers. Hence, a higher increase in net income resulting from Palm oil farmers than groundnut farmers [17].

Let us also assume that the Federal government invests 50 million naira in road construction and 50 million naira in power generation. Once this investment is made the process of marketing has begun. There will be an increase in income. This money will be paid out to workers in exchange for their

services in road construction and maintenance. Those working in the nation's power generation will also receive their share of remuneration. This will increase their income as a result of the investment. This people will spend these incomes on other goods and services and, in this way, create an increase in income for those people.

So, if the marginal propensity to consume is 80 percent or .80 (and for simplicity sake we combine both investments to become 100 million naira and assume the same marginal propensity to consume), this means that they will consume or spend 80 percent or 4/5 of the 100 million naira initially invested. If 80 percent of the amount is spent, it means 20 percent is saved. The contractors, field worker, engineers, sales personnel, financial personnel etc. who received and consumed the amount will in turn spend this income in other ways, spending 80 percent of the eighty million or $(4/5)^2$ of 100 million naira invested.

This becomes income to those who received it. This people will in turn spend 80 percent of the income they received or $(4/5)^3$ of 100 million. This continues until savings and investments are equal. The procedure could be represented functionally:

$$C.I. 1(I + r + r^2 + r^3 + r^4 + r^n)$$

where

C.I. = Cumulative increase

I = Initial Investment

R. = Marginal propensity to consume (MPC)

N = Round of spending where $Y = C + I$ or $S = I$

If the marginal propensity to consume (MPC) is 80 percent as indicated above, then the cumulative increase will be thus:

$$= 100(1 + (4/5) + (4/5)^2 + (4/5)^3 + (4/5)^n$$

$$\text{This tends to be } 100(1)/(1-r) = 100(1)/(1-4/5) = 100(1/.2) \\ 100(5) = 500 \text{ million naira.}$$

3. Results

The cumulative increase in income would be 500 million naira. Thus, the multiplier is 5 times the initial investment which is 100 million naira. From the foregoing we have establish that the initial investment of 100 million naira on both road construction and power generation resulted or multiplied to 500 million naira in the economy all thing being equal. How does agricultural marketing relate to the investment on these two infrastructural facilities to stimulate economic growth and how does corruption war against the noble role of marketing to stimulate growth.

4. Discussions

When federal government invest in road construction and power generation, she inadvertently promotes agricultural marketing and provide her with the needed enabling environment to perform the role of stimulating economic growth all things being equal. Let's illustrate this by

examining two of the utilities offered by marketing to bring about efficiency. Time and place utilities offered by marketing enable consumers to get their goods and services when and where they want it respectively. This would ensure satisfaction for the customer and profit to the producer.

Now, without constant power generation, marketing will not be able to fill this role of offering time utility. Agriculture being a perishable commodity will rot even before consumers will lay hand on them. When producer cannot give the consumers their goods and services when they want it due to lack or inadequate power supply, producers will be at a disadvantage position to generate capital for further production leading to failure of market economy. This is because the commodities will have no storage system for preservation until the consumers would need them. The result is loss in revenue to the farmer.

The same process goes when government furnishes the society with good access road. Good access road affords marketing the opportunity to offer place utility of delivering the commodities to the consumers where they are. Absence of good access road will result to high marketing cost or margin. This is because inaccessible road or bad one gives transporters of these commodities a reason to hike their transportation fare. This increase will be passed on to consumers in form of price increase. If consumers cannot afford the price, the producer will be at a loss because of pile up inventory that will soon become obsolete. If producers cannot maximize profit due to increased marketing cost, there will be no capital for further production. The resulting scarcity will affect the role of agricultural marketing in stimulating economic growth.

The same process goes for communication infrastructure. This is used to provide the consumer with information about new affordable commodity in existence. It will also assist producers to conduct market survey and researches to find out new and better ways of satisfying the consumer so as not to produce out of consumer's preference and risk losing revenue for lack of patronage. All these functions of marketing are what make it unique and able to stimulate demand for profit and capital generation to the farm firm. When capital is generated, investment will be made possible. As the circle continues, the multiplier effect leads to economic growth.

4.1. Agricultural Marketing: A Stimulating Factor Toward Growth and Development

Endowed with huge expanse of arable land, beneficial climate, abundant streams, lakes, forest and grassland, as well as large, active population that can sustain a highly productive agriculture, Nigeria has a great potential to become the food basket of the West African Sub-region [14, 3].

It has been shown that agricultural growth is maximized through trade (export). Yamaguchi *et al.* [10], investigated the impact of Structural Adjustment Program on food imports and agricultural exports in the case of Sri Lanka and found that agricultural exports were positively related to the agriculture sector GDP.

The importance of agricultural export which is a subset of agricultural marketing cannot therefore be overemphasized. Nigeria was previously the largest exporter of palm oil and palm kernel, ranked second to Ghana in cocoa and occupied a third position in groundnut [5].

From the description above, Nigerian economy is agrarian in nature. It, therefore, implies that marketing functions in the agricultural sector mirror the image of the entire economy. What makes agricultural marketing unique in its role of activating economic growth is its ability to stimulate demand leading to exchange transactions and subsequently profit maximization. The unused profit converts to capital for further investment and expansion. The circles of investments continue to generate further avenues for exchanges and other marketing functions to operate, multiplying wealth and growth.

Agricultural marketing role in use of marketing tools (price, promotion and distribution) to stimulate demand has significantly reinforced production and productivities. Through resource and information gathering, marketing can gather data on consumer needs and the most efficient way of satisfying these needs. The information so collected is usually useful for a developing nation like Nigeria in her economic development plans. Marketing also contributes to general material progress by stimulating accumulation of capital such as needed for industrialization and infrastructural facilities development [1].

In investigating the role of agriculture as a development tool for a regional economy, Loizou, Efstratios *et al* found out that agriculture is an important driver of growth throughout the region, contributing to the increase of the local gross output by approximately €300mil [16].

The point to note here is that agricultural marketing acting on an agrarian nation like Nigeria can bring about multiplier effect in the economy through its transactional activities. When profit is accumulated, through exchange of commodities and services, into capital, the said capital is reinvested for further efficient production. The resulting multiplier effect stimulates economic growth all things being equal. All things would be equal if corruption endemic in the nation gives way. Agricultural marketing needs to be conducted within a supportive policy, legal, institutional, macro-economic, infrastructural and bureaucratic environment [13]. Another of those supportive environments is corrupt free one.

4.2. Militating Effect of Corruption on the Role of Agricultural Marketing

"In spite of the frequent arrests and arraignment of public official by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) for corruption, the culture of impunity remains a big problem"[21].

One of the major impediments to the stimulating role of agricultural marketing to economic growth is corruption. Corruption has so much eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria society that even influential people are talking about it. While signing the Independence Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) Act, the President said: With corruption, there can be

no suitable development or political stability. By breeding and feeding on inefficiency, corruption invariably strangles the system of social organization. In-fact, corruption is literally the antitheses of development and progress [18].

Honourable Justice Ayoola, who is the Chairman of ICPC also stated that Nigeria has huge potentials and resources to afford its estimated 120 million a decent and qualitative life. She has potentials to make it and be counted as one of the richest and developed nation in the world. Corruption brought gains to a few people over a short time but impacted negatively on most Nigerians who have been reduced to living deaths and beggars [7]. The poor implementation of government budget and the associated "dirty deals" are blamed for why our roads are not fixed, nation's electricity supply remaining comatose for decades, jobs not created, and agriculture abandoned. The list goes on [7].

Corruption poses a challenge to agricultural marketing efforts to stimulate economic growth because agricultural marketing thrives in competition of operators. Competition on the other hand thrives on massive or abundant of commodities/products and services through efficient production. When products are in abundant, scarcity disappears, and consumers assume their rightful position of being the "king" in the marketplace. The question is: how does corruption contribute to scarcity?

The question is best answered using production function approach. The use of this approach can therefore be justified for its wider use and ability to test hypothesis. Production function tests the growth process and helps understand the sources of growth, quantifying the contribution of each source to the measured rate of growth [11]. The neo-classical production function can therefore be formulated as

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n)$$

Where

Y is the output and X_i are the inputs.

As stated previously, mass or abundant production is the prerequisite for marketing to thrive because producers strive to be efficient if there are lot of competitors. In fact, operators are put in a tight corner to please and satisfy their customer or risk losing them to their competitors. So, all the inputs are supposed to be optimally or judiciously utilized in order to maximize profit and contain with competitors.

Let us assume that the first X is land, the second one is labour while the third one is capital. Capital includes money for funding project, acquiring machineries, furniture and fittings, paying salaries etc. When the said capital is carted away by those who are supposed to be custodian of it in using it to produce and better the lots of the masses, there will be little or nothing to produce with. When there is no production as a result of corruptly looting away the capital for production, the result is scarcity.

Usually, countries that cannot allocate their resource optimally as a result of corruption risk not having economic growth. Moreover, it will be difficult for agricultural marketing to play its role of stimulating demand that leads to accumulation of capital for investment and further

investment if scarcity exists. Corruption must therefore be dealt with if agricultural marketing and marketing in general must perform. Every measure should be in place to make corruption a taboo in Nigeria.

Finally, in addition to any strategy employed in fighting the "hydra-headed monster" called corruption, Nigeria should borrow a leaf from the virtues of honesty, integrity, dedication to duty, and patriotic zeal of her past heroes like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Michael I. Okpara. Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, among others. Nigeria should also follow the footstep of other celebrated African leaders like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Dr. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nelson Mandela of South Africa etc. [7].

Nigeria should also remember that God's judgement day will come. We should remember what Solomon said in the Holy Bible (Ecclesiastics 8: 9-10) [22] where he described the world and by implication, the accumulation of wealth as vanity. We should work as servant-leaders, with the fear of God. Good name is better than gold. We should say no to corruption for it is an evil that destroys individuals, families and nations. This is the only way we can ensure progress, growth, and development in Nigeria; and promote peace, happiness and justice [7]. This will give agricultural marketing the conducive environment to play its role of growing the economy.

5. Summary of Findings

This study assesses the importance of agricultural marketing in stimulating economic growth in Nigeria. The concept of investment multiplier was used to explain the role which agricultural marketing plays to bring about economic development. Corruption was identifying as the hydra headed monster that must be dealt with if marketing must play its role of stimulation the economy towards a sustained growth and development.

The study recommended that government should pursue the issue of providing solid road network especially in the rural area to ease the transportation of agricultural commodities thereby reducing marketing cost. Government should also be serious about the issue of constant power supply to prevents rots of agricultural commodities which reduces capital for further production.

Government and policy makers are advised to re-orientate the mind of the people, through formal and informal education, to correct the wrong impression about marketing since the subject is vital to development. Encouragement of entrepreneurship in agriculture since agricultural sector mirrors the image of the entire economy is also advocated.

5.1. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to assess the importance of agricultural marketing in stimulating economic growth in Nigeria, and to evaluate corruption as its militating factor. Understanding the role which the subject plays is a necessary condition in the design and implementation of policies to

reposition it to its proper place for a sustainable growth. Growth in this sector is not only crucial for poverty alleviation but also for the performance of the overall economy.

The underlying fact is that despite the crucial role of agricultural marketing in stimulating demand and subsequent generation of capital for continuous investment, the subject has been treated with levity. This has implications on its performance since enabling environment has been denied her through corruption and misconceptions.

The results for this study have shown that if agricultural marketing is given the enabling environment such as efficient production and productivity that result to abundant output, constant supply of electricity, good access road, corrupt free environment, it will perform its role of stimulating demand which leads to maximum profit for the producer which in turn generate capital for further production. The multiplier effect that result from all the marketing activities, therefore, would ginger economic growth.

This study has generated several important results that broadly indicate what needs to be done to improve the status of agricultural marketing. First, the result shows that marketing is the bread winner of all other activities. If there is no exchange of commodity and services, there would be no generation of profit and accumulation of capital for further production and expansion. Any policy of the government to encourage construction of good access road, constant power generation, communication infrastructure and eradication of corruption, would facilitate the role of agricultural marketing towards stimulating economic growth.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. After 50 years of independence and self-rule, it is time for Nigeria to graduate from being a potential to an actual economic powerhouse. If government takes seriously the issue of solid road network especially in the rural area, it will address the issue of marketing inefficiency and ease the transportation of agricultural commodities thereby reducing marketing cost.
2. The role of constant power supply in provision of enabling environment for a successful agricultural marketing cannot be over emphasized. This prevents rots of agricultural commodities and enables agricultural marketing to offer time utility to consumers.
3. In view of the importance of agricultural marketing in stimulating growth as the study shows, policy makers owe it as a debt to ensure adequate education for the masses. This is to educate and sensitize them about the low status and misconception against marketing. Education is not only tied to classroom. Extension workers can increase their role by ensuring adequate training time for farmers who did not attain formal education. It is from training and education that ideas and innovation come. Reorientation of the mind is necessary to correct the wrong impression.

4. Eradication of corruption is very essential if Nigeria must provide the enabling environment for agricultural marketing to perform its role of growing the economy. Corruption is so bad that it challenges God. It tends to eat up or steal away the capital meant for massive or abundant production. Massive production makes possible competition needed by marketing. There is a need to taboo corruption. The job of eradicating corruption is not for government alone.
5. Government to encourage entrepreneurship in agriculture. Since agricultural sector mirrors the image of the entire economy, having massive operators in the business will provide a level playing ground for agricultural marketing to steer the economy towards growth.

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