

AGRIBUSINESS: POTENTIALS FOR CRIME PREVENTION

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Abstract

Agribusiness is one of the major sources of livelihood to many people around the world. There is a common parlance that prevention is better than cure. It is cheaper and safer to prevent crime than controlling, treating, and curing it. The general objective of the paper is to interrogate the nexus between agribusiness and crime prevention. Specific objectives include: to examine the challenges facing agribusiness, to identify the importance of agribusiness, to ascertain the myths associated with agribusiness in Nigeria and to examine the various strategies of crime prevention. The paper used secondary source of data and Frustration/Aggression theory as the theoretical framework. The study found that there are various strategies and types of crime prevention. How does agribusiness constitute a strategy for crime prevention? The answer is not farfetched. Of all strategies of crime prevention, it is crime prevention through social development and corrective crime prevention that make agribusiness a strategy for crime prevention. These two strategies of crime prevention advocated for the alleviation of causes of crime as the only sure way of preventing crime. They identified poverty and unemployment as major causes of crime, and that the only way to prevent crime is to put up measures to reduce poverty and unemployment. These are some of the major opportunities that agribusiness provides as demonstrated in the study. The paper recommends that, agribusiness should be prioritized in order to prevent or reduce crime. Other recommendations include: sound policies on agribusiness, public enlightenment on the myths associated with agribusiness, and public education on the importance of agribusiness to national economy of the nation.

Keywords: Agribusiness, Crime Prevention, Victim.

Introduction

Agriculture was the mainstay of Nigerian economy before the development of oil industry. During this period, there was food security in Nigeria, and the surplus was exported for foreign earnings. For instance, in Hausa traditional society, grains, root crops and a variety of vegetables were produced while part of the processed cotton and peanuts were exported. Among the traditional Igbo people, subsistence farming characterizes agriculture. The main agricultural products include yams, cassava, and taro while palm products are the main cash crops which were also principal exports. In the same token, the traditional Yoruba people grew cocoa and yams as cash crops (Okafor, in Jegede *et al* 2012:).

Nigeria, according to Obiadi (1978), produces a variety of agricultural products ranging from arable, pastoral, poultry, to fish farming. During the colonial period, government, as posited by Ukwu, 1983, in Ihimodu (2012) was interested mainly in

the development of export crops for the British economy, which allowed indigenous agriculture to develop only under the stimulus of market forces. In order to promote European interests, they provided access routes by water, rail and road, and a modest provision of research and extension services for export production. This development was not Nigerian interest-friendly as food production was relegated to the background.

Agriculture was neglected with the discovery and the development of oil with its far-reaching consequences for the economy. Agribusiness is the business of agricultural production. If these products are meant for commercial purpose, the idea of agribusiness comes into play.

The nexus between agribusiness and sustainable rural development is established in integrated rural development. The focus on rural life is justified by the fact that about 75% of Africa's population live in the rural areas, and also by the fact that agriculture is the mainstay of Africa's economy. Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas.

The need to transform rural society in Nigeria through agriculture was conceived and experimented with the initiative of the World Bank, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Strategy, which is jointly financed by the Federal Government, the State Government and the World Bank. In 1970, as observed by Alanana (2006)

The World Bank gave support by financing three pilot projects in Funtua, Gombe and Gusau. Government's initial contribution to these pilot projects was N40 million in the second national development plan. Government also extended the programmes to Lafia and Anyigba, and established others in Kwara and Oyo States. Government also planned to make the programme nationwide. By January 1982, the World Bank had committed N277 million into eleven (11) ADP projects in Nigeria.

The aim of ADP is to improve the standard of the low income earner resident in the rural areas, by providing them farm inputs such as fertilizer, pesticide, fungicide, high yield variety seeds, land clearing services, extension services, and feeder roads (Alanana, 2006). The need to raise the living standard of a significant proportion of the country's labour force, about 70%, who reside in rural areas and engage in agriculture and allied industries cannot be overstressed. In another development, the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to among other things, provides finance and credit facilities to agricultural and agro-allied industries, loans to farmers, agricultural institutions, organization and cooperative societies (Bureau of Public Enterprise, 2018).

As an agrarian society, Nigeria can hardly attain economic development without agricultural development. In the past, when agriculture was emphasized, Nigeria

hardly had the kind of economic crises we face today. The sector is all-embracing as it plays the roles of food provider, income generator, employment generator, raw material generator and business driver. For the nation, it is foreign exchange earnings generator; for individuals, it is a source of livelihood. Lack of interest for agriculture has made our economy a pauper, which can neither ensure food security nor provide raw materials for our local industries. The resultant effect is evidenced in the importation of food for the populace and raw materials for our industries. This is well captured by Ihimodu (2012).

Thus, initially, agricultural production in Nigeria was at subsistence level. Currently, government efforts are geared towards ensuring self-sufficiency in food production and food security. But the population factor is there to contend with. Nigeria has her population increasing at a faster rate than the rate of food production. Food production has an estimated annual growth rate of about 3 percent. The demand for food is believed to be increasing at an annual rate of 4 to 5 percent (Ihimodu, 2012)

The lack of concentration on agricultural activities as a result of too much emphasis on oil has caused different economic-related problems such as lack of rural development, rural-urban migration, unemployment, hunger, inflation, and crime, among others. The inability of our agricultural sector to perform its traditional functions as mentioned earlier due to the mono-cultural nature of economy with bias in oil, account for our economic backwardness or woes. Despite government efforts at initiating different development policies and programmes at different points, which include the Agricultural Development programme, the Green Revolution (GR), the River Basin and Rural Development Programme, Import Substitution Industrialisation Strategy for Agriculture (ISI), Nigeria's agricultural sector is yet to meet the food, raw material, income, employment and foreign exchange earnings needs of the country.

Many studies have been conducted in rural development policies and programmes, perspectives on agriculture and rural development in Nigeria, integrated rural development, agricultural resources in Nigeria, rural women performance in agriculture, rural agriculture and sustainable employment generation in Nigeria (for example, Ihimodu, 2012; Alanana, 2006). This chapter is an addition to the existing body of knowledge in agribusiness and other related issues in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Frustration Aggression theory. The theory propounded by John Dollard, and reviewed by Berkowitz and Aubrey, seems to have a very sound explanatory relevance to crime prevention strategy in Nigeria. According to the theory, when an individual or a group is deprived or blocked from attaining a particular goal, there is every tendency of becoming frustrated which could lead to aggression. Consequently, the aggression can be expressed in a criminal way in form of transfer of aggression (crime). Remarking from the frustration-aggression point of view, Akor and Audu (2016) explained that frustration causes aggression but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto

an innocent target. According to Ugwuoke (2015), the activities of criminals can be explained as the outpouring of accumulated frustration and grievances motivated by unemployment, poverty and illiteracy. To prevent crime, it is pertinent to initiate policies that can adequately address the issue of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. If sound policies are made and implemented on agribusiness, it can reduce the problems of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy which are three of the potential causes of crime in Nigeria. Agribusiness as a strategy for crime prevention is incubated in the bowels of crime prevention through social development and corrective crime prevention as we shall see later in this piece. According to Dambazau (2007), crime can be avoided if the condition under which crime is thought to flourish is alleviated.

Methodology

The paper, as a theoretical study, made use of secondary source of data collection. Relevant data were extracted from reports, textbooks, academic journals, magazines, and from other secondary sources such as the internet and library. The data collected were content analysed.

Challenges Facing Agribusiness in Nigeria

Small agribusinesses have the potential of growing into large enterprises if some measures are put in place to tackle the challenges affecting its growth. It is no longer news to posit that agribusinesses are vulnerable to shocks emanating from government policies, market fluctuations and climate change. According to Iloani (2015), a survey conducted on quality of life in Nigeria by Philips Consulting Limited published in April 2017 indicated that 55% of Nigerians are still dissatisfied with the level of food security in Nigeria, due to the shocks confronting small agribusinesses in Nigeria.

About 56% of Nigerians who participated in the survey showed that low income contributed to food insecurity while 50% blamed poor use of technological advancements to boost crop production for the menace. Other issues identified as confronting agribusiness in Nigeria include: wrong policies coupled with policy somersault, post-harvest losses, as well as lack of willingness to give loan to small agribusiness operators or participants.

The Importance of Agribusiness in Nigeria

The term, 'agribusiness', is an aspect of agriculture comprising of production, manufacturing and distribution of farm inputs, equipment and supplies at one hand and the processing, storage and distribution of farm commodities on the other hand.

The role of agribusiness in the development of an economy cannot be over-emphasised. This is in tandem with the study conducted by Igbukwue, *et al* (2015), which found that agribusiness plays a crucial role in jump-economic transformation through development and growth of agro-based industries, successful agribusiness investment stimulates agricultural growth by providing new markets and developing a vibrant input supply system to all sectors. The survey further revealed that agribusiness as an aspect of agriculture serves as raw material providers to industries, food provider to citizens as well as employment generators to individuals. Itoandon's study (2011) revealed that agribusiness facilitates commercial opportunities,

improves efficiency of market operation, formation of marketing cooperative, training and capacity building.

Myths Associated with Agribusiness in Nigeria

Agribusiness in Nigeria is the current upward trend in the economy of our great country. The positive movement in this sector has cemented the importance of agribusiness in Nigeria. Anti-agribusiness notions and mentality include: seeing agribusiness as a poor man activity, seeing farming as a dirty man job and seeing agriculture as a feature of rural dwellers. Poverty, ignorance, the belief that agribusiness is for illiterates, over-reliance on the government to provide job opportunities for the people, the use of old technology, lack of government support and laziness, among others, are some of the factors bedeviling the growth of agribusiness in Nigeria. The aforementioned have slowed down the growth of agribusiness in Nigeria, which has equally contributed to food insecurity in the country.

Agribusiness as a Potential Crime Prevention Strategy

Crime prevention are efforts made by individuals, groups, government and other agencies in order to reduce or avoid criminal events from taking place. It is an attempt at using different means to make criminal behavior unattractive and law-abiding behavior attractive. It is an attempt at negatively sanctioning violators of the criminal law, removal or reduction of factors that can push people into crime, as well as making the environment hostile or allergic to crime. Dambazau (2007) defined crime prevention as a pattern of attitudes and behaviors directed both at reducing the threat of crime and enhancing the sense of safety and security to positively influence the quality of life and to develop environments where crime cannot flourish. He went further to define it as the anticipation, recognition, and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some actions to remove or reduce it. According to Ugwuoke (2015), crime prevention is cheaper, more beneficial to society and indeed more desirable than crime fighting. Ugwuoke (2015) has identified three strategies of crime prevention which include: crime prevention through social development, crime prevention through environmental design, and crime prevention through the role of victims.

Crime prevention through social development. This is a relatively new approach to crime prevention, pioneered by Sociologists and Victimologists. This approach relies on the premise that there is a well-established body of research that can identify factors contributory to crime. It is the effects of these contributing factors that crime prevention through social development strives to alleviate. Ugwuoke (2015), highlighted the efforts to this approach to include initiatives to reduce poverty, and to increase the availability of proper housing, employment, education and adequate recreational facilities. Proponents of this approach are of the opinion that the less privileged and vulnerable groups are disadvantaged in the scheme of things. Reactionary to the social injustice experienced by the disadvantaged, they resort to crime in order to correct societal imbalances. It is believed that like virus or bacteria, when the crime parasites in the social system is eliminated or alleviated, crime can be prevented or reduced. It is against this backdrop that Ugwuoke (2015) inferred that

the only measure that can reasonably prevent or reduce the volume of crime in Nigeria is to initiate and enforce flawless social policies that would address the problems of; lack of educational opportunities, unemployment, social injustice, poverty and social inequality.

Crime prevention through environmental design. The second strategy of crime prevention is crime prevention through environmental design. This involves the manipulation of the physical environment in order to deter crime. This approach comprises of territorial behavior strategy, surveillance, electronic monitoring, lightning, landscaping, and scare tactics. It is believed that when an environment is fortified or protected by any or a combination of these sub-types of crime prevention through environmental design, criminals will keep their distance and crime will either be reduced or prevented.

Crime prevention through the role of the victim. The third strategy is crime prevention through the role of the victim. Some notable criminologists such as Mendelsohn, one of the founding fathers of victimology, have contended that a large proportion of criminal deed is necessitated by the behavior of victims themselves. According to Ugwuoke (2015), the emphasis is on the role of victims in increasing the probability of being victimized. From this viewpoint, it is believed that the avoidance of crime-inviting behaviors like; indecent dressing, careless talk, display of wealth in public places, revelation of secrets and polite insults, among others, can help in preventing or reducing crime victimization.

Similarly, Dambazau (2007) has identified four types of crime prevention. These types of crime prevention which are briefly summarized below include;

Punitive crime prevention. This is an attempt by law enforcement agency to forestall crime through the threat of apprehension and punishment. Enactment of tougher laws and full enforcement of same can deter potential criminals from going into crime. It is believed that the fear of punishment can prevent people from committing crime.

Corrective crime prevention. The basic premise of corrective crime prevention is that criminal behavior is caused by various conditions such as poor housing, poverty, lack of education, family problems, and drug or alcohol addiction. From this point of view, crime can be avoided if the conditions under which crime is thought to flourish are alleviated. For instance, if unemployment and inequality are identified as the causes of crime, it then follows that provision of jobs and reduction of inequality is capable of preventing crime in the society concerned.

Mechanical crime prevention. This involves the need for law enforcement, other government agencies, and the community, to initiate an organized process for reducing or removing the opportunity for crime through data collection and analysis; the accurate identification of problems by a number of factors; development of crime control objectives and strategies; and implementation of the strategies (Dambazau, 2007). This is public/private partnership strategy of crime prevention and control.

The nexus between agribusiness and crime prevention is captured in the strategies and typologies of crime prevention at the levels of social development and corrective crime prevention put forward by Agbola (cited in Ugwuoke, 2015) and Dambazau (2007) respectively. There is congruence of ideas on the fact that crime can be prevented or reduced if the perceived causes of crime are alleviated. This is possible through the initiation of appropriate and workable policies and programmes that are capable of eliminating, preventing or reducing the causative agents of crime in our society.

Moreso, poverty, unemployment are among other causes of crime identified in both in crime prevention through social development and corrective crime prevention. As stated before now, agribusiness, if sound policies are made and implemented, can provide employment and reduce poverty. These have been captured in the importance of agribusiness in previous section. A brief discussion of how agribusiness can reduce poverty and unemployment in Nigeria will go a long way to convincing our readers.

Agribusiness and Employment Generation

It is no longer news to state that agribusiness has been one of the sources of livelihood in Nigeria. Accordingly, International Labour Organisation, ILO (2010) has asserted that in Sub-Saharan Africa, growth in agricultural employment accounted for half of all employment growth between 1999 and 2009. In South Asia, nearly 33 percent of all employment growth since 1999 was agriculture. In another submission, the World Bank (2017) has described agricultural sector as a life-line. About 65% of poor working adults relied on agriculture for their livelihoods in 2016. It also represents an opportunity for job creation and shared prosperity.

Agribusiness and Poverty Reduction

Agribusiness as self-employment opportunities can make participants meet their basic necessities of life, thereby reducing poverty in society. For instance, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO, 2020), has described agriculture as the backbone of economic activity, employment and livelihood in developing countries which is capable of reducing poverty in a sustainable manner. Accordingly, Messiah (2018)'s analysis of annual data over the period of 1981 to 2014 sourced from World Bank Development Indicators and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin shows that a shock on crop production, livestock, forestry and fishing have significant and lasting impact on poverty reduction long into the future.

Summary and Conclusion

The paper has succeeded in examining the nexus between agribusiness and crime prevention. The nexus was established at the levels of social development and corrective strategies of crime prevention, which identified unemployment and poverty as two of the major causes of crime in society. These major causes of crime are what agribusiness is capable of solving as demonstrated hitherto. Other issues examined in this work include: importance of agribusiness, myths associated with agribusiness, and challenges facing agribusiness.

Recommendations

Based on the summary and conclusion, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The paper recommended prioritizing of agribusiness as a strategy of crime prevention in society.
2. Public enlightenment on the myths associated with agribusiness can go a long way to changing some of the negative notions of people on agribusiness.
3. Public education on the importance of agribusiness to government, groups and individuals is germane to the growth and development of the country.
4. Governments at all levels should make and implement sound agribusiness-friendly policies in order to make agribusiness contribute to the economic development of the country.

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