



A HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF LOCAL RICE PRODUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE AGRO-ECONOMIC SECTOR OF EKITI STATE 1945-2015

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ABSTRACT: *The study examines the historical development of local rice production and its economic important to the people of Ekiti State between the period of 1945-2015. Local rice was introduced in Ekiti land during the colonial years by the Christian missionaries but started gaining ground in the post independent years. Ekiti people are well-known as the major producers of local rice. Its production in Ekiti started long before 1945 but the year 1945 has been chosen as a remarkable date due to the activities of a well-known Igbemo farmer who specialized in the production of local rice and yam, where local rice industry is said to have started in Ekiti state. The introduction and adoption of local rice into the agricultural sector of Ekiti land marked a significant epoch in the agro-economic sector of Ekiti people. On this note, this paper aim at making an assessment of the production of local rice and its overall implication on the economic growth and development of Ekiti people. The methodology adopted for this paper is historical approach; hence, the study is based on primary and secondary sources. The primary source comprises of oral interview, newspapers, government gazette while relevant books were considered as useful secondary sources. The study concludes that the introduction and production of local rice has transformed the agro-economic sector of Ekiti state.*

KEYWORDS: Local Rice, Ekiti State, Production, Trade, Government, Research, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Ekiti state is one of the major producers of local rice in southwestern Nigeria. It is generally believed that the production opened Ekiti region to western world. The state with an estimated total area of 4596 Km² available for agricultural production is undoubtedly blessed with abundant land for rice production as well as production of other food crops for consumption and commercial purposes¹. This explains why rice production and trade have thrived in Ekiti State over the years. Local rice is an important agricultural produce and a major arable crop grown in Ekiti-State, especially in communities like Igbemo, Ire, Okemesi, Esure, Ijero, Igbe-Ekiti, Ode-Ekiti, Ijan-Ekiti, Igede, etc. where supply is still considered insufficient to meet the people's demand thereby making Ekiti State one of the leading

¹ p.126Aremu)



producers of local rice in the country, and was leading in the first republic². Other notable parts of Nigeria known for local rice production are Abakaliki, Bida, Abeokuta, Markurdi, Mokwa, Sokoto, Odubra, Nasarawa, Taraba, Benue and Kaduna.

Geographically³, Ekiti is underlain by metamorphic rock of the basement complex, with an upland area of over 250 meter above sea level. Ekiti land was separated from the former Ondo state in the year 1996, which itself came out of the old western region created in 1967. It is currently made up of Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, Ekiti South and Ekiti West division⁴ making a total of 16 Local Government Areas. Ekiti land is also well endowed with abundant land resources with less than seven percent (7%) of the land space occupied by urban areas, gullies and rocks, out crops and agricultural related business.

History of Local Rice Production in Ekiti State

Historically, rice production started in Nigeria around 1500BC with the low-yielding indigenous red grain, but became more common in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria.⁵ Ekiti local rice is special within the Nigerian context. It was produced primarily for consumption at first, then, later for commercial purpose. Local rice cultivation was introduced during the colonial period, but became more prominent in most towns and villages in Ekiti State after the colonial period. The exact date its production started in Ekiti State has not been established, but it is believed that local rice was introduced as early as 1985 by a remarkable missionary called Phillips during his crop experimentation in Ogun, Ondo, Ikale and environs⁶. where local rice came to be called after Ofada, the first and one of the most prosperous rice communities in Ogun State at the time.

The first place of cultivation was in Ofada Egba zone, Ogun State, under the former western region. Ofada is a small rural community in Obafemi Owode local government area in Ogun State. The name Ofada originated from Mowe Ofada in Ogun State,⁷ an ancient town situated between Apapa Alanto/Sagamu area where the major occupation of the people is local rice production⁸. Ofada rice was introduced in the 1870s from where it spread to other areas after the second world war, from where the western part of Nigeria played an important role in the introduction of Asian rice in Nigeria.⁹ During this period down to the post war years, a good number of Ekiti farmers that were servants or lived in Abeokuta/Ondo brought rice with them and planted very little because it was not appreciated by many yet¹⁰.

² [Blog.com/2017/03 https://www.vanguard.ng.com/2014/04](https://www.vanguard.ng.com/2014/04)

³ W. Adetoyin, Ekiti State Pocket Fact Finder, A Publication of Ekiti Book Club, p.3.

⁴ *ibid.*p3

⁵ pg 172 aremuakinwamide)

⁶ O. Olatunji, Yoruba Women Cash Crop Production around the Colonial State, (1920-1957), York University, Toronto, 2001, p.3.

⁷ Oral interview with Mr. Efuntade A. Olusegun, 43 years old, consumer, Ogun State.

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ O.O. Adekoyeni, et al "Ofada Rice Identity, Physical Qualities and Processing Technology Options for Upgrading" *Annual Research and Review in Biop.*3

¹⁰ Oral interview with Mama Ayegbusi, Itapaji, Pensioner/Rice Trader, 73 years.



Growth and Development of Local Rice Production and Trade in Ekiti State

Rice (eyin aka)¹¹ as the people then called it in Ekiti land, started gaining root in the post war years. First the 1919 epidemic caused the death of many farmers and brought hunger, sicknesses, resulting from food shortage and made people turn to grain crops like rice and maize from outside Ekiti State, in order to survive the famine. Again, the aftermath of the Second World War led to a period in Ekiti State known as ‘foworemi’, a time of acute famine and scarcity of salt. The people of Ekiti land had to increasingly accept food crops that were not traditionally indigenous to them like cassava, rice and maize.¹²

Local rice gradually became a household staple food in Ekiti land because of a number of reasons. Of noteworthy, is the activities of a popular Igbemo farmer Pa Ariyo, a native of Ayedun Ekiti who settled at Orun Igbemo in the early 1940s, where he started to grow local rice. He became a big-time rice farmer, from where a good number of farmers and labourers under him started to cultivate rice, and from where it spread to other communities in Ekiti¹³. Where he brought it from is unknown area because there was no rice in Ayedun where he migrated from. Nevertheless, it is certain that he came in contact with rice cultivation from the spread of local rice cultivation in western region at that period, and decided to look for where he could obtain enough suitable land to cultivate the crop. This led to development the first local rice production industry in Igbemo Ekiti which spread to most parts of Ekiti lad. Information from Pa, David from Esure corroborated this fact by narrating how some Esure rice farmers came from Igbemo and started planting rice, after which many others joined them¹⁴. This means that migration played a very important role in the propagation of local rice production to Ekiti State.

In Ekiti State, Local rice/Ofada/Igbemo rice production prosper because it has the resources to produce it in several communities, with comparative advantage over some communities outside Ekiti. The scale of rice cultivation has also varied, from one community to another. This makes Ekiti State one of the prosperous rice producing States where local rice is cultivated in Nigeria, with Igbemo-Ekiti as the most popular rice producing community, hence people named the local rice produced in Ekiti as ‘Igbemo rice’ irrespective of the community where the rice is from.

Almost all the towns and villages in Ekiti land cultivated local rice in the period under study. Some of the farmers planted it for consumption, along-side other crops, while most farmers planted it basically for commercial purpose. This was true around the period when rice importation was banned. Local rice trade started to grow from the production of excess by the farmers. More demand for this item led to the appreciation of the item by the Ekiti indigenes themselves. This in turn led to an increase in the demand for local rice from Ekiti state, which brought about the commercialization of local rice, and introduced Igbemo rice outside Ekiti state.¹⁵

¹¹ Oral interview with the Adameji Brothers, Oye Ekiti, 3/2/2018.

¹² Oral interview with Baale Ogunniyi, Oye Ekiti, Pensioner/Farmer, 86 years old, 31/1/2018

¹³ A. Bolarinwa, “The Rise and fall of indigenous Rice Industry in Igbemo (1945-2000)” Unpublished M.A. Thesis of the Department of History and International Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun, 2015, p.8.

¹⁴ Oral interview with Pa David, 62yrs old, farmer, on the 4th of May, 2018, at Esure –Ekiti

¹⁵ Oral interview with Baale Ogunniyi, Oye Ekiti, Pensioner/Farmer, 86 years old, 31/1/2018



Local rice production and trade after independence experienced a gradual improvement as its production become more popular among many farmers in Ekiti State, before it got to its peak around the 1990s.¹⁶ Growth in local rice production output oscillated in the 1960s with no clear-cut pattern. During this period, the cost of rice per 200 kilogramme was one pound, ten shillings. This persisted till 1966 when the cultivation of local rice in Ekiti State picked up. Nigeria first experienced a boom in 1967 when output stood at 385 thousand tons. 1968 to 1970 saw the introduction of new rice called ‘Agric rice’. This new variety of local rice yielded very well, and led to increase in production which brought about what is today referred to as the FARO₁ (B G79) FARO₂ (D144) and FARO₃ (Agbede) for upland ecology environment like Ekiti land¹⁷.

Before 1970, Ekiti had become an important local rice producing settlement in the Southwest with an intensive cultivation attracting significant processing and marketing activities. Rice milling machines brought about a revolution to rice processing, during this period, a good number of rice farmers owned private milling machine that could run non-stop overnight.¹⁸ Ekiti State farmers were also able to form Rice Farmers Organisations like the Rice Growers’ Association Farmer congress basically to enable them secure loans under the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.¹⁹

The early 1980s marked the evolution of dwarf plant types of local rice, with higher grain yield and suitability to irrigated and shallow grain fed ecologies in Asia, spear headed by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Philippines. FARO₁₄ to FARO₁₇ and FARO₂₅ to FARO₃₀ were materials developed internationally through hybridization of exotic parent materials selection from segregating population of such crosses²⁰. Ekiti local rice farmers were more comfortable with FARO₃ (Agbede) which became very popular among them for a very long time.²¹ By the year 2000, more improved quality rice had entered the market, which were tastier, and germinated faster. This was possible as a number of International research programs on rice were embarked upon. A good example is the Global Rice Science Partnership (GRISP), a research program on rice that brought together hundreds of scientists to embark on the most comprehensive attempt ever to harness the power of science to solve the pressing development challenges of the 21st century.

The informal seed system was very instrumental in distributing the seeds to farmers. This is a system where seeds are distributed from farmer to farmer without an agricultural extension agent telling the farmer that such seed is good and should be planted by him/her.²² The new focus is however to shift emphasis to improving African rice species especially *O.glaberrima*. With the advent of New Rice for Africa (NERICA) which has low level of genes from

¹⁶ A. Bolarinwa, “The Rise and fall of indigenous Rice Industry in Igbemo (1945-2000)” unpublished M.A. Thesis of the Department of History and International Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun, 2015, p.12.

¹⁷ O.O. Adekoyeni, et al “Ofada Rice Identity, Physical Qualities and Processing Technology Options for Upgrading” *Annual Research and Review in Bio*

¹⁸ Oral interview with Pa Michael Oke, 81 years old, Retired Civil Servant/Farmer, 28/2/2018.

¹⁹ Blog.com/2017/03 <https://www.vanguard.ngr.com/2014/04>

²⁰ S. Longtau, “Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria”, Jos Plateau State-Nigeria.p.4

²¹ S. Longtau, “Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria”, Jos Plateau State-Nigeria.p.4

²² I. Olomola, “Ekitiparapo Aspirations since 1890s” Andkolad Ventures, 56 Ibadan, Nigeria Limited, 2005, p.98



O. glaberrima (about 13%) the new approach is towards having over 30% genes from African rice species in addition to the background cytoplasmic genes. This was achieved by crossing the African rice species directly with interspecifics²³. NERICA dissemination projects which was also sponsored by the Federal government and African Development Bank was aimed at introducing NERICA in Nigeria. The project was within three years in 6 states of Nassarawa, Kaduna, Ogun, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti land²⁴.

NERICA symbolizes hope for many local rice farmers in Nigeria because it adapts well to the harsh growing environment, where small holder farmers struggle in the rural and urban communities, spending most of their meager income on rice production activities. It has advantages over imported rice widely because it has early maturity rate of 50-70 days, resistant to local stress and its of high quality²⁵

Several institutions in Nigeria have contributed to local rice production, processing, marketing and trade in Ekiti and Nigeria at large. They include the Government Organizations, Multinational Co-operations like the world Bank, seed companies, research institutions like WARDA, IRRI, NCRI etc. The development, production and distribution of quality seeds are also critical to successful cultivation of local rice in Ekiti land, where activities are done formally and informally. The formal system is in the hands of Government organizations, International Research Institutes (IRRS), Multilateral Agencies (MA). NARS and a good number of seed companies. The informal system on the other hand is carried out by farmer to farmer and the local market force, owing to the fact that the seed system in Nigeria is full of problems.²⁶

GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL RICE PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN EKITI STATE

It is an important fact that there was, and has always been a considerable political interest in improving local rice production and trade in Nigeria. Government policies on agriculture has helped to boost local rice production and trade in most local rice producing communities in Nigeria, including Ekiti state. To attain modest stride in local rice production, steps were taken by the Federal Government among which included the formulation of public acts and agricultural policies that have evolved since independence in year in Nigeria. The Federal Government launched agricultural policies with the objectives of ensuring food security for the country and improve the production of cereals among which rice was a major target. The policy was also aimed at improving producer's efficiency, raising local rice output and reversing rice importation²⁷.

²³ D. Nehemiah et al, "Rice in Nigeria, Traditional Recipe and Research Needs" National Cereals Research Institute (NSRI) Badeggi, p.4.

²⁴ I. Olomola, "Ekitiparapo Aspirations since 1890s" Andkolad Ventures, 56 Ibadan, Nigeria Limited, 2005, p.98

²⁵ p1 adoption trust

²⁶ S. Longtau, "Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria", Jos Plateau State-Nigeria.p.25

²⁷ C.K Samuel, 'Evaluating the impact of Policies on Production Efficiency of Nigeria Rice Economy' Walden, Walden Dissertations and Doctorial Studies collection,2016,Walden University.p.22



The formulated acts and agricultural policies can be discussed under three periods (Akande 2012), they are as follows:

Pre-Ban Period, (1971-1985):

This period can further be classified into the pre- crisis period (1971-1980), and the crisis period (1981-1985). The pre-crisis period was largely characterized by liberal policies for Agricultural goods which corresponded to the launching of various Programmes and projects aimed at improving local rice production. During the crisis period, more stringent policies like input supply, distribution policy, agricultural input subsidy policy, water resources, irrigation policy, agricultural cooperative policy were put in place to increase the production of rice the instrument used was imposition of heavy import duty.

The year 1976 saw the establishment of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) policy, meant for self-sufficiency in domestic food supply. Federal government of Nigeria expanded its responsibility by taking over the procurement, production, marketing, and distribution of fertilizer to farmers²⁸. These impacted rice production in Ekiti with its agriculturally based incentives such as the introduction of subsidy on land clearing, seed and credit facilities, but unfortunately, the programme was poorly executed.

The import substitution policy of the military administration of General Mohammed Murtala and Olusegun Obasanjo in 1975-1979 was to make sure that Nigeria was self -sufficient in wheat, maize and rice. In 1979 the democratic regime liberalized the importation of rice and encouraged local production of rice at the same time through the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) under the Green Revolution (GRP). However, before the RBDAs, there were rice schemes under irrigation or rain floodplains. This policy led to clearing of plenty of virgin land for local rice production. Sequel to this, in 1979 import quota and quantitative restrictions became the major instrument. Consequently, the implementation of these tools came with the introduction of rice importation license policy. In the 1980's during the Shagari's administration, huge Fadamas were further cleared in many states to open more land for local rice cultivation²⁹

Ban Period, (1986-1995)

The second period is the ban period on rice import in 1986, after a change in government in 1984, which was enforced by the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) In 1986, under SAP, various trade policies (tariff, import restrictions and outright ban on rice import as various times) were put in place. These measures put in place made it illegal for free importation of rice into the country.

The Post Ban Period, (1995- till date)

During this period, restrictions on rice importation were lifted and more liberal trade policy put in place. The 1986 ban placed on rice importation enforced by the Structural Adjustment Programme resulted in mass cultivation of local rice in Ekiti and Nigeria in general, Federal government imposed an outright ban on rice importation, which lasted till December, 1994.

²⁸ C.K Samuel, 'Evaluating the impact of Policies on Production Efficiency of Nigeria Rice Economy' Walden, Walden Dissertations and Doctorial Studies collection,2016,Walden University.p.73

²⁹ A. Godwin et al, 'Nigerian Rice Policy and Development: A Review' West African Rice Development Association, (WARDA) Abidjan Cote d'ivoire,2003,p.15



The tariffs ranged from 50% in 1996-2000³⁰, but unfortunately did not last long as a result of the early discovery of crude oil which shifted the attention of government from agrarian sector to the crude oil economy.

Federal Government of Nigeria established a number of institutions and organizations with a specified mandate, in its effort to promote local rice production and trade in communities involved, among which includes the following:

1. Federal Rice Research [FRRS], created in 1970 with the mandate to develop improved varieties of grain.
2. National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), created in 1972 with the mandate to design, test and transfer technological package for production of local rice, maize, among other grains³¹.
3. National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI), established in 1974, with the mandate to research higher yielding rice varieties for farmers, seed multiplication and training of extension staff. In 1975, thousand hectares of rice was cultivated using cheap tractors. NCRI was first established in 1899 by the British colonial administration. It became the Federal Department of Agricultural Research (FDAR) in 1963, and finally National Cereal Research Institute (NCRI) in 1975 with its headquarters at Moor plantation Ibadan, which moved to Badeggi in 1984³². The mandate for research on rice by NCRI is not only large, but funding to the institute has been very limited, therefore research works on local rice is suffering badly.
4. National Agricultural Extension Research Institute (NAERI) is the principal agency for agricultural extension research which is a formal organization. It collects information on new technology from research institutes, package them and then, hand them over to the ADPs for dissemination to the farmers.
5. In 1988, the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) were established and mandated with special credit schemes to boost rice production.
6. 1987 saw the establishment of Agricultural Development Project (ADP), mandated with the responsibility of implementing the policies on local rice production. This agency was saddled with the responsibility of improved technology, and the means to get it to farmers as the major channel through which Government policies on rice production can be implemented. ADPs are present in all states with officers using the same designation to oversee the activities of the village extension agents.
7. There was also the activities of West Africa Development Association (WARDA) now called African Rice Center (African rice) with the National Research Institution, (NARI) leading to the formation of taskforces in different areas of local rice research,

³⁰ C.K Samuel, 'Evaluating the impact of Policies on Production Efficiency of Nigeria Rice Economy' Walden, Walden Dissertations and Doctorial Studies collection,2016,Walden University.p.72

³¹ A.S Agala and A. Gana 'Review Article: Analysis of challenges facing Rice processing in Nigeria'. Ladoke University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Nigeria.p.3

³² S. Longtau, "Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria' ,Jos Plateau State-Nigeria.p.12



from breeding to natural resources management and economic study groups, which later developed into ROCARIZ.

Seed technology was disseminated through National Cereal Research Institution (NCRI), National Seed Service (NSS) and ADPs. The foundation seeds were given to Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) to multiply through the out growers programmes or community seed programmes at the end of each season. NSS buys up all the certified seeds from the farmers for processing and packaging. At the beginning of each cropping season, NSS releases the seeds to ADP for redistribution to the farmers³³.

Other projects and policies that Federal Government of Nigeria embarked upon at different times in order to boost local rice production and trade in the communities include:

- i. The National Fadama Programme (NFP) which was executed in 12 states between 1992 and 2001, under the world Bank loan.
- ii. The 1999 presidential rice initiative establishment, which was mandated to address the growing difference in demand and supply, and also attain self-sufficiency in local rice production³⁴
- iii. Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) was executed in 2001, with major interest in rice production.
- iv. Presidential Initiative on increased rice production (2002-2007) was aimed specifically at reversing the importation bill, meeting domestic demand by 2006, and reaching export capacity by 2007. The main targets include: increase production, improve milling quality, promote marketing and ultimately reduce national rice importation by increasing production, inputs and crop protection, enhance irrigation and land development schemes, improve processing, marketing and storage, enhance farmers' groups and seed protection, mainly NERICA and *Oriza sativa*.³⁵
- v. There was the Fadama II Programme between 2003-2009, but the interest for local rice production improvement was centred more in the north.
- vi. The Recapitalization of the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank, (NACRDB) 2004 was put in place to assist farmers financially, especially in the area of inputs.
- vii. Multinational NERICA Rice Dissemination Project (MNRDP) in Ekiti 2005 The Agricultural Policy in 2005.
- viii. Nigerian National Rice Development Strategy (NNRDS) (2009-2018) was aimed to increase rice production, targeting at post- harvest processing and treatments, irrigation development and input availability mainly focusing on seeds, fertilizer and farming equipment³⁶

³³ S. Longtau, "Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria", Jos Plateau State-Nigeria. p.28

³⁴ Ajala & Gana pg 3

³⁵ pg 18 monitoring africa

³⁶ pg 18 inc/)



- ix. Presidential Transformation Agenda(PTA)(2011) defined agriculture as a business to promote the private sector, marketing organizations, and promote the agenda to reduce the importation bill to make Nigeria self- reliant within a 5 year frame .It was designed to achieve a hunger-free Nigeria through an agricultural sector that drives income growth , accelerates achievement of food and nutrition security, generate employment and transform Nigeria into a leading player in global food market to grow wealth for millions of farmers³⁷
- x. The Federal Market Stabilization Programme (FMSP) which also covered Ekiti state in 2012³⁸ was aimed at stabilizing the cost of local rice by regulating price for the benefit of the traders and farmers.

Another important step the Government took to improve Agriculture is the establishment of Government Reserve for farming of different crops, including rice in the year 1991 in Ekiti state. This was encouraged under the supervision of the agricultural development projects, NARIL, among other agricultural agencies. The Forestry Department, under the Ministry of Agriculture distributed Government land to interested individuals after registration with just a token fee for a piece of land to farm. These applicants were also expected to plant sticks/tress side by side of what they intended to plant³⁹. This was basically to avoid deforestation in the reserves. Where one reserve was exhausted and the tress had grown, the farmers were immediately relocated into new reserves. This was very typical of Gboyin-Ekiti local Government Area, where areas like Ode, Ijan and Ise Ekiti participated in local rice production effectively. Crops like maize and yams lasted in the reserves as the sticks became very useful during the germination period.

The purpose of the establishment of all these organizations, policies, and research institutions was to stem major problems that faced food production. The Nigerian Government has already interfered in the Nigerian rice economy over the last thirty years as a result of the strategic nature of the commodity. However, policy interventions have been largely inconsistent and to some degree, ineffective as a number of the targeted farmers testified to the fact that they were not aware of most of the steps taken by government to sustain local rice production in Ekiti state. Policy on rice has oscillated between import tariffs and importation restrictions including outright ban. Despite the rice importation ban during the 1980's and early 1990's, a considerable amount of the rice imported still gained entrance into the domestic market⁴⁰. However, importation of milled rice was used to bridge the gap between the domestic demand and supply.

There are only a handful of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that are directly involved in the dissemination of rice technologies. Church based NGOs have been more concerned about market driven intervention programme. They facilitate initiatives for production of quality local rice in sufficient quantity, which should be able to compete with imported rice. It was also aimed at benefitting the poor stakeholders. Shell petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in 2000 resumed an experiment base for the distribution of improved varieties of rice to farmers. In the same year, the multinational New Rice for Africa

³⁷ .(p 35 perceived contribution kareem)

³⁸ .(Analysis of Incentives pg 5)

³⁹ Oral interview with Pa Aladeokin,58yrsold,Civil servant/farmer,12th May, 2018, Ijan-Ekiti

⁴⁰ A. Godwin et al, 'Nigerian Rice Policy and Development: A Review' West African Rice Development Association, (WARDA) Abidjan Cote d'ivoire,2003,p.1



(NERICA) Rice Dissemination Project (RDP) was established for technology transfer, product support, capacity building and project coordination⁴¹.

It has been discovered that Multi- Agency partnerships (M-APs) are practiced solution in revitalizing extension, research, input delivery and adoption of technology. However, there is the need for constant consultation and communication between Government Organizations, food organizations and NGOs for the M-APs to succeed. M-APS are conceptual model that seeks to promote rapid responses to farmers needs by both extension and research. It aims to bring together all major stakeholders in the local rice business for face to face interaction. It is all about cooperation and collaboration. A local rice network between government organization, NGOs and Research institutes, but the network is still low-keyed.

IMPACT OF LOCAL RICE PRODUCTION TO THE PEOPLE OF EKITI

Local rice production and trade over the years have a great impact on the socio-economic aspect of the people of Ekiti state, in the past and present, directly or indirectly and has a very high potential of benefits in the future in immeasurable ways to Ekiti state in different ways. The following are some of the impact of local rice to the people of Ekiti:

Food Security

Ekiti state is a food basket in South/ West Nigeria for the production of major staple crops like rice. The status of rice in the average diet has been transformed from being a luxury food item to that of staple, taking the place of cassava and yam.⁴² Local rice have been accepted as one of the staple diet in Ekiti state due to its ability to provide food when food was very scares in the past. It is important to note that these indigenous food products are usually planted and harvested at about the same season, therefore, making local rice a very important substitute for the gap season. Many respondents testified that it has helped to reduce famine. The main reason it was accepted in the first instance was due to the role it played in the famine period suffered after the war years which was intense after the second war.

It has now come to be preferred to other alternative rice (polished rice), because of its unique taste, which is delicious with a rich and some -what nutty flavor, and has continued to boost food security in Ekiti state, by improving the stability in domestic food supply, as local rice is usually cheaper, whatever come what may. Local rice is not just food, but good food with important nutrients that nourishes the body which is lacking in most imported rice and other food items. For instance, the local rice produced in Ekiti state has been found to be rich in nutrients that are of great importance to health benefits, which are as follows:

- i. It is an important source of protein, providing substantial amount of the recommended nutrient uptake of zinc and niacin.
- ii. It reduces the severity of asthma.
- iii. It controls blood sugar and diabetes by the presence of soluble fiber.

⁴¹ I.A Emodi, and M.C. Nachukwe, 'A review of polices, Acts and initiatives in Rice innovation system in Nigeria', Department of Agriculture Extension University of Nigeria, Nsukka. 2008.p.80

⁴² .(p18monitorngafrica)



- iv. It is highly rich in magnesium and selenium which helps to prevent Arteriosclerosis, reduce risk of colon cancer,⁴³ heart attack, stroke and the frequency of migraine headaches.
- v. It helps to keep our bone healthy and strong.⁴⁴
- vi. It heals candida yeast infections due to its high fiber.
- vii. It prevents constipation.
- viii. It is good for those aspiring to lose some weight by lowering the level of bad cholesterol
- ix. Due to its rich mineral content, it is also good for hair, teeth and nails.⁴⁵
- x. Brown rice provides an excellent source of whole grain for people with gluten allergy and can be substitute for numerous whole grain food.⁴⁶

Apart from the provision of food for the growing population of Ekiti land, local rice production and its trade in Ekiti land have greatly been effective in boosting food security to the extent of exporting excess to neighboring states.

Important Item of Trade and Exchange

The introduction of rice into the Ekiti Agricultural sector has far reaching consequences on the economy of Ekiti land, which has over the years contributed to the indigenous economy at different levels. Rice is both a food and cash crop for farmers, contributing to small holders' revenues in the main producing area⁴⁷. This have become very noticeable as local rice is grown in almost all the 16 local Government Areas of Ekiti land, on both subsistence and commercial level, where some communities have specialized in its cultivation as an important item of trade.

Local rice marketing in Ekiti state has occurred at four stages. They include harvesting, processing, milling and trade in the final product by either whole sale or retail. However, the traders always had upper hands because they fix the price.⁴⁸ Oral interview with Mr. kolawole, a farmer from Awo-Igede Ekiti corroborated this fact by explaining how big time rice traders usually came around to site the rice on the farm before harvest, and sometimes render support in different ways, which he used to look forward for the best bargain. But in most cases, the farmer is better off not selling paddy rice because its price is usually low. More so, milled rice attracts better prices both in the rural and urban centres like Ado Ekiti. Never the less, the trade of local rice has been described as a game of luck. This is because one can enjoy a straight four years of good trade on a stretch, only to suffer sudden low patronage during harvest, trade and distribution.⁴⁹

⁴³ R.A. Abolioma et al, "Mychological Analysis of Rice from Stores in Igbemo Rice Producing Area of Ekiti State Nigeria" Net Journals, Vol.4(4), 2016, p.64.

⁴⁴ J. Ukwu, 18 Health Benefits of Ofada rice Weight loss Nigeria.com, p.1

⁴⁵ R.A. Abolioma et al, "Mychological Analysis of Rice from Stores in Igbemo Rice Producing Area of Ekiti State Nigeria" Net Journals, Vol.4(4), 2016, p.64.

⁴⁶ J.Ukwu, 18 health benefits of Ofada rice Weight loss Nigeria.com, p.1

⁴⁷ .(p.6 Incentives and Disincentives)

⁴⁸ Mr. kolawole

⁴⁹ Oral interview with Pa Oke,81yrs old farmer, 31st, January,2018, Ire-Ekiti.



The petty local rice traders in the market place most times have permanent places/spots, from where they gradually formed small groups to help each other. They formed contribution teams and went on occasional harvest hustle together, which they added to the rice they intend to sell in the market to increase profit.⁵⁰ The market traders served as important source of information on the availability of local rice for sale, and potential buyers. A good number of old time local rice traders described areas like Iroko, as close to the rice mill, Ido and Ayegunle as very busy communities in the trade in those days because they were along the high way leading to other towns outside Ekiti State, which made it very easy for them to be spotted by travelers and other interested buyers.⁵¹

Bigger traders specialized in buying processed rice year-round, per garawa (Bushel). Sometimes, they bought from farmers that brought small quantities of local rice to the market. These traders continued to buy until they have a good number of bags. Again, most processors double as traders. It is through this group that ambulant traders functioned. Ambulant traders are diverse group of individuals from the local traders in Ekiti State that buy local rice from Ekiti land and export the product outside to other traders coming to buy from Ekiti. The traders also buy and re-sell other farm produce like oil, yams, and coconut, but rice is the major item of trade. These traders operate at known locations where farmers and processors can access them. On most occasions, they fix the cost of the local rice they buy, to the extent of predicting the price of the product in advance. Where a buyer wants larger quantity than what is physically available, they often go to these locations⁵².

Larger external traders were a group of local rice buyers that usually come in two or three in big markets, from where they are taken to the farm or processors house. They usually, jointly organize transportation to reduce cost. They also ask around the market for where they could get rice to buy. After buying as many bags of rice as they can get from both large and small collections, the product is then transported outside Ekiti for onward sale to bigger markets in Osun, Ibadan down to Lagos state⁵³. The important feature of these larger external trader is that they often operate in groups, making the networks of local market, through the smaller traders to quietly divulgate information on the availability of local rice, buyers and sellers⁵⁴.

New types of institutional arrangements are emerging on the production and trade of local rice which involves the private sector to a large extent, especially multi-national corporations. They enter into various forms of contractual arrangements with farmers and processors to ensure production of high-quality paddy and white rice that will boost trade of local rice.

Source of Employment

The continual growth and developments in the production and trade of local rice in Ekiti state in turn increased the opportunities of employment for a good member of people. This is due to the fact that the production of local rice before it gets to the stage of consumption involves a whole lot of efforts from people in different specializations. The process over the years

⁵⁰ Aya Oguniyi, Temidire OyeEkiti, 31st January, 2018

⁵¹ Oral interview with Mama Racheal, 67yrs old, processor/trader, March, 2018 Okemesi-Ekiti.

⁵² Oral interview with Baba Daorige Senior, 62 yrs old, old farmer, 31st March, Ire-Ekiti

⁵³ Oral interview with Reverend Adeleye, 65 yrs, Clergy, 17th July, 2018, Ife-Osun

⁵⁴ W. Beekman and S. Nellema, 'Rice farmers, local market and –ie trade. A case study of local market dynamism in mozambique and its implications for cooperative Model', No 15 Development cooperation Ministry of foreign Affairs. November, 2011. P.11



have been made easier due to the improvements in most of the stages or steps in production. Therefore, employment opportunities have been made readily available in farming, harvesting, processing, value adding marketing/trading, transportation, food vendors, research, and a number of other people in different professions.

Poverty Reduction to Farmers

In addition to provision of employment to the people of Ekiti state, local rice production and trade have contributed to the direct increase in income and livelihood of the rural poor farmers, processors, millers, traders and all involved in local rice production and trade. This is connected to the value adding results from research, which can be related to the acceptance of improved rice seedlings like NERICA which has led to significant increase in productivity, post-harvest activities and milling business associated with local rice chain, which can be viewed as an advantage in terms of cost because the paddy is immediately transformed into a product with a higher value, before being further marketed⁵⁵. This increased Income have also reduced the level of income inequality in rural areas, as it accounts for a large income after cassava.

Opportunity for Private Investors

Despite the fact that it is a trade of luck, before an investor runs out of luck, he or she must have made a lot of money, thereby putting aside the fear of loss for the investors' money on the long run. The income investors generate in local rice production and trade cannot be overlooked. They include traders who supplied farmers and millers' capital during production with a set agreement on how to recoup their money, and at the same time creating wealth for them. Sometimes, they have ready markets for the goods.⁵⁶ Mr. Jemilehin Goke, from Ilupeju Ekiti narrated how his younger brother from Lagos sends home weekly to collect local rice from Ire-Ekiti, where agreements have been reached for his eatery back in Lagos. This is because the market for the local rice is guaranteed within and outside Ekiti State. The differences are that the price of local rice in times of excess is usually low, and the profit less. It has been observed repeatedly that there is a higher incentive for traders than for farmers in the rice sector

Source of Raw Material

Rice has been a major source of starch for domestic and industrial uses. Ashogbon and Akintayo (2013:72-74) reports that it is usually isolated from rice flour by using the alkaline deproteination method.⁵⁷ Rice grains and its by-products are equally useful in the manufacturing of alcoholic beverages, livestock feed in the form of bran and hey. Milled rice when ground into powder is used in the preparation of infant weaning food because of its high digestibility, especially when mixed with milk⁵⁸ However, it has been observed in most of the rice mills visited in the selected areas had the basic feature of the bran and shaft of local rice lying in waste and have become a heap of dust. Moreover, palm wine is preferred and well known unlike brewed rice alcohol, as many of the younger labours and farmers stated that they had never tested it before. In addition, corn paste (eko) is widely accepted as

⁵⁵ Oral Interview with Iya-Bola, 52 yrs old, trader, June, 2018, Oja Oba-Ado, Ekiti

⁵⁶ (MrJemilehinGoke, IlupejuEkiti 62 yrs old may 23rd, 2019)

⁵⁷ (aremu p.129)

⁵⁸ (aremu and akin, p129)



baby food. It may therefore be correct to state that the use of local rice apart from the parboiled rice as food is not a common practice in Ekiti state, unlike other communities that depend on grains for the production of other food items.

Valuable Topic of Science Discuss to Researches

Ekiti state is currently well known nation-wide and beyond for a number of reasons among which its production of rice is also gaining ground, therefore sponsorship for further research in rice production have continually involved Ekiti state over the years. For instance the Federal Government community seed and special Rice Programme (SRP) which is a small programme involving the cultivation of 50ha.⁵⁹state annually .A continued collaboration between the state government and the non-government organization in local rice production has certainly made seeds and other allied input readily accessible to improve production, as a strategy for enhancing local rice growth and development in the state, which continue to make Ekiti state relevant in local rice production and trade in Nigeria.

Encouraged Infrastructural Development

The production of rice gave way to the eventual improvements to a number of infrastructural facilities and equipment, especially in areas where production and trade activities is high. The roads linking to a number of popular local rice communities and the market were non-existent before this time. In order to promote trade in this agricultural produce, a number of roads were opened up, especially during the 1980s. For instance, local rice production and trade during the period of study enjoyed investors contribution of different types and at different levels.

CONCLUSION

The local rice produced in Ekiti state is not just a staple food, but a very healthy food that is nutritious to the body, and also a cash crop. Various factors are responsible for the consumption pattern and consumer preference for local rice in Ekiti state. Most importantly the physical and Organoleptic characteristics of local rice is the first determining factor because it influences the consumer's decision. Other factors are taste, price, colour and stickiness after cooking. This explains why research has been undertaken by different organizations for the improvement of the quality of local rice.

In addition to enhancing physio-chemical characteristics of local rice in Ekiti State, policies, programme and research for the development of local rice should include value reorientation and sensitization activities on the nutritional values of local rice. Cleanliness of local rice is the first quality of local rice that will make it attractive to consumers, after which every other feature follow

The Economic aspect canoe be over emphasized as a good number of the Ekiti people have been gainfully employed, incomes and livelihood have been improved, especially the poor farmers. Again rural dwellers prefer local rice because it is cheaper than imported rice .for instance, local rice was sold for an average cost of N30 for a tin cup in the year 2013, as

⁵⁹ S. Longtau, "Multi Agency Partnerships in West African Agriculture; A review and description of Rice Production System in Nigeria", Jos Plateau State-Nigeria. page 3



compared to imported rice that sold for N50 that same year. (Mrs. Ajibola, local rice seller, Ado, oct 19, 2019)

As a way of improving the local rice market in Ekiti land, the local and periodic sales that characterize the rice market warrants attention. This situation calls for the establishment of an efficient local rice marketing centre by the SDDC, as a designated storehouse for receiving the/91 milled rice and discharging it to an organized market cooperative, who will eventually pass it on to regional markets for the urban and rural markets in the sub-regions.

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