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Original Research Article

Empirical Assessment of Agricultural Development and Growth of the Nigerian Economy

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Abstract: The paper examined the impact of agricultural development on the growth of Nigerian economy. Extant literature on agricultural development and its impact on the economic growth and development of Nigeria were reviewed. Extant literature showed that several agricultural development programmes by successive administrations in Nigeria have not achieved its desired goal and the challenges were numerous ranging from corruption, inadequate funding, the overdependence on oil, etc. Data for the study were the gross domestic product (dependent variable) and aggregate agricultural contribution (independent variable) for 2000 to 2018 obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and National Bureau of Statistics (2020). A Bivariate regression analysis of the variables was carried out to determine the relationship between the variables. The analysis and findings of the study showed that there is a positive linear relationship between the variables and that the contribution of agriculture sector leads to commensurate increase in the GDP of the country. Recommendations were that the linkages between agriculture and other sectors be strengthened to increase the effect of agriculture growth on the economy. This can be achieved through increased productivity and the development of agriculture value chain, improved sensitization of the populace, reduction in corruption and providence of necessary financial assistance to the agricultural industry.

Keywords: Agriculture, Development, Economic growth, Gross domestic product.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A country that adequately develops its agricultural sector is believed to have settled one of the major challenges bedeviling it. When we talk of agriculture, food comes to mind which is one of the basic necessities of life. To a layman, agriculture generally refers to food production but it goes far beyond that. The healthiness and stability of a country can be best seen in the agricultural contribution to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Nigeria is a third world country situated in Sub-Saharan Africa with huge agricultural potentials; with land area of about 98 million hectares, 72.4 per cent of which is arable while only 27.6 per cent non-arable (Nwankpa, 2017). Agriculture in the past was the main occupation of most Nigerians but that is no longer the case because of the dependence on revenue from oil and gas resources (Adebayo & Olagunju, 2015). Majority of the Nigerian labour force (70-80 percent) are peasants practicing subsistence farming (Odetola & Etumnu, 2013; Adebayo & Olagunju, 2015). After independence, agriculture was the major income-earner for Nigeria, bringing in about 63.49 per cent to gross national product, which was used in funding the country's National Development Plan between 1962 and 1968 (CBN, 1980).

The importance of this paper stems from the role of agriculture in Nigerian economy based on its size, potential and prospects. Agriculture could provide employment to a greater per cent of Nigeria's fast growing population if the sector were well developed. Furthermore, Nwaknpa (2017) argued that the importance of agriculture to the Nigerian economy is evident in the nation's natural endowments in production factors – extensive arable land, water, human resources, and capital. Apart from employment generation, agriculture can provide raw materials for the industrial sector which by implication means that

Nigeria can fast track economic growth by focusing more attention on this sector. Thus, this paper examines the impact of agricultural development on the growth of the Nigerian economy; looking at the contributions of the agricultural sector to the overall GDP of Nigeria from 2000 to 2018. The paper examines whether the contribution of the agricultural sector has a positive impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Agriculture has been relegated to the background in Nigeria after the first oil well was discovered at Oloibiri Town in the present Bayelsa State and the subsequent production of oil in commercial; quantities with the associated revenue it generated for the nation's economy (NISER, 2015). Within a decade up to 1981 however, agricultural output in Nigeria declined and Nigeria began to import major staple foods such as rice, wheat, sugar, and fish to argument local supplies. Since then, Nigeria has been spending substantial amount of its foreign reserves on importation of staple foods. It spent over 1.3 trillion naira in 2010 alone on imports of wheat, rice, sugar and fish (Adesina, 2012).

Nigerian's overdependence on oil as the main source of her national income is almost bringing the country to her knees because of the falling price of oil at the international market and the development of alternative sources of energy by the advanced economies as well as the 2019 corona virus pandemic have resulted to country's dwindling foreign reserves and the present high foreign exchange rate. As the largest oil exporting country in Africa with a rapidly growing economy, crude oil accounts for a high percentage contribution to Nigeria's GDP. Comparing data from 2000 to 2018, the mean contribution of the Agricultural sector to the GDP is 25%. The country registered highest contribution of agriculture to the GDP in 2002 with 38% and as at 2018, the contribution has dropped to 21% (CBN, 2020). It is believed that with the border closure policy of the current administration which starts late 2019, the contribution of the Agricultural sector to the GDP will increase drastically.

The boom of oil and gas brought about significant changes in the lifestyle of Nigerians and the revenue base of the economy in general. The 'affluence' associated with the oil boom of the 1970s was used to develop social and economic infrastructures in urban areas while the rural areas were neglected. This resulted to mass exodus of young people from rural to urban areas with its attached decline in agricultural production. Consequently, prices of staple food increased. Massive importation of food stuff also imported inflation into the country following rising world food prices. This increased hunger for both the urban and rural area (Nwankpa, 2017).

Several agricultural development programmes and policies have been established in order to unbridle the potentials of Nigerian agriculture to feed its nation and become a leading exporter of food, supplier of industrial inputs and employer of labour such as the Directorate of food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Green Revolution (GR), National Food Acceleration Production Programme (NFAPP), and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), to mention a few. These programmes failed due to policy inconsistencies, (lack of continuity), with each administration establishing NEW POLICY instead of building on or modifying already existing policy. Corruption also contributed to the failure of these programmes (Ifeanacho, Nte & Nwagwu, 2009).

Former president Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the cassava project as a prominent agricultural programme in 2004-2005; President Yar Adua' 7-point agenda also places emphasis on food security, and President Goodlucks' initiated agricultural transformation programme. Despite all these, agriculture has failed to keep pace with Nigeria's rapid population growth. Over 53 million (about 30 percent) of Nigerians remain undernourished and majority of Nigerians (65 percent) remain food insecure (Dada, 2011). Likewise, the poverty statistics show that about 72 percent of Nigerians (118.2 million people) are poor (Nwankpa, 2015). Nigeria experience economic recession coupled with hyperinflation in 2015 to late 2017 hunger became so rampant in the country as such the need for the Muhammadu Buhari administration to devise a means of bringing the people out of the scourge of hunger. Part of the policies were the injection of billions of Naira into the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and of recent the border closure in order to reduce importation of foreign agricultural products and to help develop the nascent economy.

In spite of the huge earnings from oil, many Nigerians remained poor. This implies that only a few percentages of the Nigerian population benefit from the oil revenue (Demachi, 2012). Worse still, the volatility of the international oil market has adversely affected government revenue and the nations' foreign reserves since late 2014. Hence, the government has been clamouring for the diversification of the economy in which recent steps taken by the government shows that.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The primary intent of this study is to check the impact of Agricultural Development on the Nigerian Economy.

Streamlining the above objective, the following are the particular objective.

i. To determine if the agricultural sector of Nigeria have impact on the Nigerian economy

ii. To determine what nature of relationship exist between the agricultural sector and Nigerian economy.
iii. To tell the extent or level of correlation that is in between the agricultural sector and the Nigerian economy.

1.4 Research Questions

Taking Nigeria, a less developed country; does the agricultural sector positively impact the economic growth and development of the country? Providing answers to this question requires a critical examination of extensive theoretical and contemporary empirical literature.

i. Does the agricultural sector have any notable impact on the economic growth of Nigeria?
ii. What is the nature of relationship that exist between the agricultural sector and the Nigerian economy?
iii. To what level does the agricultural sector influence economic growth in Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The following is the hypothesis of the study.

H_0: The agricultural sector has no notable impact on the economic growth of Nigeria

H_0: There is no relationship between the agricultural sector and the Nigerian economy

H_0: There is no level of influence from the agricultural sector on the economic growth in Nigeria

1.6 Significance of the Study

The real effects, importance of this study is imbedded on its ability to change the former approach towards the agricultural sector. To the Nigerian economy, as experienced before the oil boom, the agricultural sector fed the nation, and ensured trade surplus. If the findings of this study are implemented. The findings of this study would also be useful to individuals with practical minds that seeks to explore the relevance of agriculture and related activities.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The impact of the Agricultural Development on the Growth of Nigeria's Economy is the focus of this Study. Data for the study were gotten from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics from 2000 to 2018. The following were encountered in the course of this work; data constraint, the nature of the Data also posed to be a limitation, since limited information since secondary data used were not directly gotten. The type of research work, financial constraint was also part of the limitations.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Adopting the Classical View of Adam Smith, "Economy explains the Nature and cause of Wealth of Nations". Hence, a nation's Economy Defines how Earnings is made and what the Earnings is being utilized to affect the life of its citizens.

Simon Kuznet (1973) defined economic growth as a long term rise in the capacity to supply increasingly diverse economic goods to its population. This means Continuous growth in the GDP which is a manifestation of economic growth.

Economic growth has been defined as "The increased productive capabilities of an economy" (Arnold, 2005: 40). Elsewhere, McEachern (2006 p.6) defined it as "An expansion in an economy's production possibilities". Simply put by Ikenwa *et al*., (2017), when per capita income and GDP increases in developing/less developed countries, economic growth is said to occur or to be occurring. Similarly, when per capita income and GDP increase in developed countries, such increase is described with the concept of economic development. However, in the latter, fundamental positive and incremental modifications, transformation, and change are made, while in the structure of the economy and society an increase follows in per capita income.

Ogwuma (2009) defines agriculture as production of field crops, forestry, fishing and livestock, research and training of extension workers. It is clear that Agriculture includes farm work and every related activity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Agriculture's role in economic growth and development globally cannot be overemphasized. It has been proven that the increase life expectancy of a country is majorly defined by the quality of agricultural products consumed. Taking Nigeria, a less developed country; does the agricultural sector positively impact the economic growth and development of the country? Providing answers to this question requires a critical examination of extensive theoretical and contemporary empirical literature.

Economic growth has been defined as "The increased productive capabilities of an economy" (Arnold, 2005: 40). Elsewhere, McEachern (2006 p.6) defined it as "An expansion in an economy's production possibilities". Simply put by Ikenwa *et al*., (2017), when per capita income and GDP increases in developing/less developed countries, economic growth is said to occur or to be occurring. Similarly, when per capita income and GDP increase in developed countries, such increase is described with the concept of economic development. However, in the latter, fundamental positive and incremental modifications, transformation, and change are made, while in the structure of the economy and society an increase follows in per capita income.

Harbinson and Myers (1959) identified four stages of economic development, which, according to them, represent the universal and inevitable process through which various human societies progress in a linear direction. This direction is from an agrarian to a traditional society onward to an industrialized society and finally to a democratic society. While the assumption of linear progress has been the major criticism of their theory, their proposition that all societies commence from the agrarian stage of development is not lacking in merit.

Rostow (1960) proposed a theory, highlighting five stages of economic growth, namely:

1. The traditional society,
2. The pre-conditions for take-off,
3. The takeoff,
4. The drive to maturity, and
5. The age of high mass consumption.

Particular importance in his treatise is the first stage, that is the traditional society, which Rostow (1960) defined as "One whose structure is developed within limited production functions based on pre-Newtonian science and technology and as pre-Newtonian attitudes towards the physical world" (as cited in Jhingan, 2005 p.123). According to Raj, Murherjee, Murkherjee, Ghose, and Nag (2007 p. 65), the traditional society is characterized by a large agricultural sector and hierarchical social structure, and its defined essence is that "it possesses a low ceiling of attainable output per head because of the backward nature of its technology". Still, on the traditional society, Jhinghan (2005 p. 123) strongly commented that "Political power was concentrated in the regions, in the hands of landed aristocracy supported by a large retinue of soldiers and civil servants. More than 75 per cent of the working population is engaged in agriculture". These descriptions are characteristic to a large extent of the present-day Nigeria, even though it may be argued that some advancement in industrialization has been made in the country. Thus, with respect to the models of Harbinson and Myers (1959) and Rostow (1960), the underlying thread in both models is that economic growth and consequently development is founded upon agrarian beginnings.

Reynold (1975), for example, is of the strong view that agricultural development can promote economic development of underdeveloped countries in the following distinct ways: (1) by witnessing the supply of food available for domestic consumption and referring the labor needed for industrial development, (2) by enlarging the site of domestic market for the manufacturing sector, (3) by increasing the supply of domestic savings, and (4) by providing the foreign exchange earned by agricultural exports (as cited in Umaru & Zubairu, 2012). Jhingan (2005) identified that agriculture can contribute to economic growth in the following areas: (1) provision of food and food security for the nation; (2) increased demand for industrial goods and services as well provision of industrial inputs and thus necessitating the expansion of the secondary and tertiary sectors, (3) providing additional foreign exchange earnings for the import of capital goods for development through increased agricultural exports, (4) increasing rural income to be mobilized by the state, (5) providing productive employment, and (6) improving the welfare of the rural people. Johnson (1966), on the other hand, provided a set of primary criteria for appraising the contributions of agriculture to a nation's economy. These are: (1) the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, (2) the share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product, (3) the proportion of the nation's responses devoted or employed in agricultural production, and (4) the contribution of the agricultural sector to foreign trade (as cited in Umaru & Zubairu, 2012).

Considering all the items and elements so far discussed, points alluded to in a section before this one on agricultural development in Nigeria, and which highlighted the past, and present roles that agriculture had and continues to play in Nigeria's economic growth and development are justified. Ogen (2003) maintains that the Nigerian economy could be described as an agrarian economy during the first decade after her independence from Britain and even before independence simply because agriculture served as the engine growth of the overall economy. Ogen (2003) further reckoned that "During this period, Nigeria was the largest producer of cocoa, largest exporter of kernel, and largest producer and exporter of palm oil" (as cited in Itodo, Apeh, and Adesina, 2012: 7). Ekerete (2000) considered this period as one in which the country was virtually selfsufficient in the production of food crops to feed the populace and to provide raw materials for industries and cash crops for export. Abayomi (1997) supports these viewpoints, stressing that the economic contributions of agriculture overshadowed all other economic sectors within this period, that is the fi rst postcolonial decade.

Similarly, Itodo, Apeh and Adeshina (2012) argued that the agricultural sector was the leading contributor to GDP in the early 1960s accounting for about 70% of Nigeria's GDP". Lawal (1997) commenting on the same period stated that "Despite the reliance of Nigerian peasant farmers on traditional tools and indigenous farming methods, these farmers produced 70% of Nigerian exports and 96% of its food needs" (as cited in Itodo et al., 2012). And even up till the present dispensation the agricultural sector is said to employ close to two-thirds of the Nigerian population in both formal and informal (i.e. organized and unorganized) networks of the sector (Oloyede, 2014). While there is a noticeable decline in agriculture's share of Nigeria's GDP since the 1970s and down to the 1980s, Ekpo and Umoh (2003) stressed that the decline in agricultural sector's contribution to GDP is as a result of the neglect the sector suffered from the managers of the economy (Umaru & Zubairu, 2012).

Ikenwa *et al*., (2017) examined that the economic trajectory that justified the claim of agriculture as a predictor of economic growth and development is supported by postulations made by Mody (1981) and Kuznet (1961) which was supported by Obansa and Maduekwe (2013). Mody (1981) was of the view that agricultural surplus is important for structural transformation accompanying economic growth. A pattern which is premised on the view credited to Kuznet (1961), who maintained that the agricultural sector should transfer to the nonagricultural sector the "surpluses of investible resources" generated in agriculture (as cited in Obansa and Maduekwe, 2013). Omole (1985) in a study using data from two countries in a case study corroborated the pattern premised by Kuznet 1961. According to Omole (1985 p.118), "The United Kingdom took over a century of agricultural and industrial revolution to develop itself into an industrial power by the nineteenth century, while the United States rapidly moved from the ravages of a civil war through an agricultural and industrial revolution within about three decades of the nineteenth century". While citing other countries, such as Brazil and South Korea, who have followed this pattern, Omole (1985) advocated that the challenges of economic planning, implementation and development in Africa is tied to the suppression of the agricultural sector and lack of foresight to fashion out home-grown industrial revolution.

Obansa and Maduekwe (2013) argued that developing countries must revolutionize the agricultural sector for a successful industrial development. Hence, Obansa and Maduekwe (2013 p.173) posit that "Agriculture financing not only removes financial constraints but also promotes investment and adoption of technology necessary to spur desired economic growth".

These arguments can go on and on as there are several literatures that highlights the importance of agriculture on economic growth and development. having looked at the importance and impact of agricultural development on the growth and development of the Nigerian economy, it brings to light that several challenges are and have been bedeviling the sector which is discussed in the following heading.

Challenges of Nigerian Agricultural Development

Nwankpa (2017) blamed the poor performance of the agricultural sector in Nigeria on the existence of several challenges that have hindered progress in the sector. The major challenge to agricultural development since independent has been the neglect agriculture suffered as Nigeria discovered oil in commercial quantities in the late 1960s and the oil boom of the 1970s (Dim & Ezenekwe, 2013). The poor performance of the sector has therefore resulted to the importation of food and other agricultural inputs with the attendant unemployment debacle. Unfortunately, food imports contributed negligibly to food security in Nigeria as Akpan (2009) found out that 85 percent of Nigeria's food security would be reversed through an increase in domestic food production. Moreover, the distribution of infrastructure and employment opportunities in favour of urban areas using the 'affluence' of the oil revenue led to the exodus of young people from the rural areas – ignoring agriculture and creating more impoverished urban dwellers.

Another factor that has impeded development of agriculture in Nigeria according to Nwankpa (2017) is low investment in agriculture and absence of market institutions. [4] Poor transport system creates mobility problems in Nigerian rural areas and deny farmers better market access. [5] Moreover, the absence of functional marketing institutions has confined to expose the small holder farmers to unpleasant market conditions; lacking the resources and motivation needed to achieve increase in agricultural outputs. Access to credit facility, improved seedlings, research and extension education, is limited to the farmers. Worse of all, the government's subsidized agricultural inputs such as fertilizer do not target genuine farmers due to high level of corruption that has eaten up the fabrics of the whole sectors of Nigerian economy. This has greatly reduced outputs in the sector. Traditional land ownership and land tenue systems as well as the lack of modern farming technology are further impediments to the development of the agricultural sector in Nigeria. Small holders constituting over 90 percent of farmers rely on simple crude rudimentary tools and cultural practices depending absolutely on nature to produce water and fertilizers for feeding the crops or animals. This results in decline yields of output and aggravates hunger in the land. Other constraints include among others: weak agro business linkages, political instability, and rapid population growth (Nwankpa, 2017).

From the literatures discussed so far, it shows that the agricultural sector in Nigeria has not yet grown to the extent of self-sufficiency as despite the border closure policy of the federal government, some agricultural goods are still imported and the scourge of hunger and malnutrition is still felt. The efforts of the government by confiscating smuggled agricultural products into the country has been yielding the needed result but still more needs to be done by the government; it therefore behooves on the government to provide the necessary facilities for advanced production of goods and services. Thus, this paper examines the impact of agricultural development on the growth of the Nigerian economy.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section briefly describes the study area - Nigeria, and the methodology employed in the analysis of data.

Study Area: Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa between latitude 4^0-14^0N and longitude 3^0-15^0E; and has boundaries with the Republic of Cameron, Niger Republic, Gulf of Guinea and the Republic of Benin in the East, North, South and West respectively. Nigeria comprises of 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria; the major ones being Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba who predominantly live in the northern, eastern and western parts of the country, respectively. These regions were amalgamated as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914. In 1960, Nigeria got its independence from Britain.

The country has a land surface area of 923,768sq km with 13,000sq km of water surface, a border length and coastline of 4,047km and 853km respectively. The highest point in Nigeria is Chappal Waddi at 2,419m (7,936ft) and the lowest is the Atlantic Ocean (0m). The main rivers in Nigeria, River Niger and River Benue, converge in Lokoja (Kogi State) and empty into the Niger Delta, the location of a large area of Central African mangroves. Nigeria's vegetation ranges from southern tropical, savanna in the middle belt and arid in the north; with two main climatic conditions – rainy and dry seasons.

Nigeria is said to have the highest population in Africa, with huge reserves of crude oil, natural gas and other natural resources in abundance. Oil export accounts for about 95 percent of foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent of budgetary revenues in the country. However, recent growth in the domestic economy was driven by the agricultural sector which contributed 41 percent of Nigeria's GDP in 2011 but suddenly declines to 21% in 2018 (CBN Statistical Bulletin, 2020) and it has an average of 25% contribution to the GDP of Nigeria. Agriculture employs over 60 percent of the workforce and is a major means of livelihood for most of the rural dwellers (50 percent of the population).

The study undertakes A Descriptive statistic of Bivariate Linear Regression between the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Aggregate Agricultural Sector's contribution to the GDP. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the study examines the linear relationship between the GDP of the Country (Dependent variable) and Agricultural Sector (Independent variable). Data for the study were gotten from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics from 2000 to 2018. These are presented in the table below:

4. RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: GDP and Aggregate agricultural contribution

Years	GDP (₦' Billion)	Aggregate Agricultural Contribution (₦' Billion)	% Contribution
2000	6,897.48	1,508.41	22
2001	8,134.14	2,015.42	25
2002	11,332.25	4,251.52	38
2003	13,301.56	4,585.93	34
2004	17,321.30	4,935.26	28
2005	22,269.98	6,032.33	27
2006	28,662.47	7,513.30	26
2007	32,995.38	8,551.98	26
2008	39,157.88	10,100.33	26
2009	44,285.56	11,625.44	26
2010	54,612.26	13,048.89	24
2011	62,980.40	14,037.83	22
2012	71,713.94	15,816.00	22
2013	80,092.56	16,816.55	21
2014	89,043.62	18,018.61	20
2015	94,144.96	19,636.97	21
2016	101,489.49	21,523.51	21
2017	113,711.63	23,952.55	21
2018	127,762.55	27,371.30	21

Source: CBN Statistical Bulletins & National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2020)

Table 1 shows the GDP and aggregate agricultural contribution to the Nigeria's Economy. The mean shows that over the past 19 years, agriculture contributed 25% to the GDP and the same rate in 2015 to 2018.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GDP (N' Billion)	53679.44	38531.503	19
Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)	12175.90	7648.076	19

The result in the table shows the mean and standard deviation of the total cases that were analyzed using SPSS. There were 19 cases analyzed and the mean scores are as stated in the table above.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

Correlations			
		GDP (N' Billion)	Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)
Pearson Correlation	GDP (N' Billion)	1.000	.996
	Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)	.996	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	GDP (N' Billion)	.	.000
	Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)	.000	.
N	GDP (N' Billion)	19	19
	Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)	19	19

The table above shows the Pearson correlation between the two variables GDP – Independent and Agricultural Contribution – Independent variable. It shows that the two variables are significantly different (99.6%). As the r2 is < .05, (i.e. .000) it shows that variables are statistically significant.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.996[a]	.991	.991	3685.441
a. Predictors: (Constant), Agric. Investment (N' Billion)				

The Model summary shows 99.1% of variation in GDP can be explained by Agricultural contribution to the GDP. It determines how much GDP explains Agricultural contribution at 99.6%.

Table 5: Coefficient of Variables

Coefficients[a]								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-7397.955	1620.920		-4.564	.000	-10817.796	-3978.114
	Agric. Contr. (N' Billion)	5.016	.114	.996	44.165	.000	4.777	5.256
a. Dependent Variable: GDP (N' Billion)								

It gives the independent variable union the b = 5.016. It shows that a 5 unit increase in the % of Agricultural contribution leads to an increase in the GDP by 5.07%. And this is statistically significant as the sig. <.05 level of significance and it is statistically significant at 99.6%. Therefore, the Agricultural contribution's impact on GDP is statistically significant at 99% level.

Findings

Summarily, from the analysis in the table above, it shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables (GDP and Agricultural Contribution). As sig. <05, it therefore shows that the variables are statistically significant at 99%. Thus, it can be said that agricultural sector contribution to the GDP of Nigeria has had a positive impact on GDP growth.

The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between GDP and agricultural contribution to the GDP and it is statistically significant.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Recently, there has been increasing effort by the federal government to diversify the economy; a deviation from the overdependence on the oil sector to the agricultural sector. This can be seen by the recent border closure on more agricultural products being brought into the country. The importance of agriculture development in ensuring poverty reduction and the economic growth hinges on the fact that 70% of the population is employed in the agriculture sector. The sector's role of food production, provision of resources for other sectors, creation of viable market and domestic savings gives credence to its importance in economic growth. Also, Nigeria's natural endowments in agricultural production factors – extensive arable land, water, human resources, and capital highlight the potential of agriculture in economic transformation.

This study provides evidence that agriculture contributes significantly to GDP growth in Nigeria. The trend of contributions observed also highlights the responsive nature, the buffer role and the resilient nature of agriculture; we consider these as nature of agriculture that could be leveraged upon.

It is therefore reaffirmed that agriculture is an engine of economic growth in Nigeria and efforts should be made to add value to the sector through increased investment. Based on the evidence from this study, it is recommended that the linkages between agriculture and other sectors be strengthened to increase the effect of agriculture growth on the economy. This can be achieved through increased productivity and the development of agriculture value chain, improved sensitization of the populace, reduction in corruption and providence of necessary financial assistance to the agricultural industry.

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