

STRATEGIC AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AS A PATHWAY TO ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Since the discovery of petroleum, Nigeria has undergone a rapid transition from a food self-sufficient nation to a major food importer. The government's overreliance on petroleum revenues and the strategic neglect of agriculture as a driver of sustainable development have significantly weakened domestic food production systems. This shift has deepened socioeconomic inequalities: while a small elite benefited from oil wealth, the majority of Nigerians faced worsening food insecurity as rising prices of imported staples placed adequate nutrition beyond their reach. Despite this, agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for a large segment of the population, though predominantly at a subsistence level. This study argues that strategic agricultural transformation anchored on policy realignment, investment prioritization, and inclusive value-chain development is critical to reversing Nigeria's food insecurity crisis. It examines the historical policy choices that shaped the current food system, evaluates existing agricultural development frameworks, and explores the adaptive coping strategies employed by vulnerable communities. By situating agricultural revitalization within a strategic development agenda, the paper highlights actionable pathways to reposition Nigeria's food system for resilience, equity, and long-term food security. Keywords: strategic agricultural transformation, petroleum dependence, agricultural neglect, policy realignment, investment prioritization