THE POLITICS OF FERTILISER PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA, 1999-2020

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A Thesis in the Department of Political Science,
Submitted to the Faculty of the Social Sciences
in partial fulfilment of the Requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN.

January, 2022

CERTIFICATION

I certify that Iveren Adoo UGANDEN of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, carried out this study under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the fond memory of my father, Pa. Tsegba Kpamor Uganden, for inspiring and keeping alive in me the love for learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is the product of extensive years of work and it has received immense spiritual, scholarly, moral, and material support at various stages. Its firm foundation is YAHWEH, THE ALMIGHTY GOD, in Him I live, move and have my being. I especially appreciate my thesis supervisor and former Head of Department, Professor Victor Adefemi Isumonah who worked tirelessly to give form and quality to the work. His acceptance of my candidature and commitment to supervision constituted the most important factor for the successful preparation of this thesis and I am deeply grateful. The Head of Department, Professor Emmanuel Remi Aiyede not only made highly valued intellectual contributions during the writing of the thesis; but as Head of Department, I benefited from his readiness to administratively facilitate and ensure the progress of his students. His student-friendly disposition is invaluable and sincerely appreciated.

My appreciation also goes to all my lecturers in the Department of Political science, University of Ibadan who were very supportive academically and always showed interest in the progress of my work. I do acknowledge the role of Dr. Olubukola S. Adesina, Professor Irene Pogoson, Professor D.A. Yagboyaju, Dr. O.O. Akanji, Dr. Jeremiah Arowesegbe, Dr. David Enweremadu, Professor A.A.B. Agbaje, Dr. I.A. Johnson, Dr. S. Lafenwa, Dr. E.U. Idachaba and B.O. Oyekanmi in the success of this programme. I particularly appreciate O.B.C Nwolise, Professor and a former Head of Department who always attended and made useful contributions at my seminars and presentations despite his very busy schedule. The non-teaching staff of the department is also appreciated for their assistance at different stages of the work.

I deeply acknowledge my employer, the Benue State University for facilitating the writing of this thesis with the grant of study leave with pay and other forms of financial support. I am grateful to my former Head of Department and current Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Professor Terkura Tarnande for staying committed to the course of my intellectual development. I acknowledge the role of Professor Akase Paul Sorkaa who brought me into the academic profession and the academic guidance of Professor Oga Ajene, Professor D.A. Utume, Professor Adagba Okpaga, Late Professor Tony Edoh, and Dr. Terver Akpar.

I acknowledge the convivial ambience created by my colleagues in the Department of Political Science, Benue State University which has cushioned the strains of academic endeavour. I appreciate my Head of Department Dr. Timbee Akuul, Professor Member George-Genyi, Professor Tabitha Agishi, Dr. James Apam, Dr. Franc Ter Abagen, Dr. John Tor Tsuwa, Dr. Fa-eren Mercy Agaigbe, Dr. Pauline Akpa and several others for creating a toxic-free working environment. I have enjoyed academic, professional, and moral support from colleagues within and outside my department too numerous to mention and I ask them to accept my profound gratitude. All my students past and present are recognized as invaluable sources of motivation for constant improvement.

The painstaking work of my research assistants: Donald China, Emmanuel Ngusha Amough, Matthew Ufana, Joshua Agboko, Aondoakura Wachin, Torkwase Adepeju Uganden, Fidelis Zever and Terfa Achioko in the collection of primary data is deeply appreciated. Their willingness to directly administer the questionnaire resulted in a very high return rate and provided very useful data for the study. I also appreciate the cooperation of the staff of the state Ministry of Agriculture and Natural resources for participating in the survey.

The contributions of my family are in all areas and quite difficult to list and I am eternally grateful. My dear husband, Dr. Dominic Tyozenda Achioko supported my decision to pursue a PhD at the University of Ibadan which is a great distance from home and has also supported the programme financially, morally, and spiritually. My children, Lubem, Chianor, Nguher and Myom who were quite young at the inception of this programme demonstrated an understanding uncommon for their age. My dear mother, Mama Mbakeren Rachel Uganden (nee Ortese) has remained steadfast in sacrificial nurturing and constant prayers for the success of the programme. She is indeed a sweet mother to my siblings and me. Also, I acknowledge the support received from my second mother, Mrs. Doonengen Omobola Uganden (nee Awofeso). I acknowledge the support from my Uncles, Inspector Tyoakaa Uganden (Rtd) and Pastor Aondoakaa Gabriel Uganden who took the fatherly positions for us after the departure of their brother.

All my siblings have created for me, a big, joyful love world; they have also never hesitated in offering any required support for the success of this programme. They are Mrs

Dooshima Charity Aondona, Mrs. Kadoon Agbidye, Mrs. Sewuese Olayinka Iorbume, Wandoo Arinola Uganden, Mnguzamber Olushola Uganden, Mr. Bemsen Edward Uganden, Mr. Aondohemba Omowale Uganden, Torkwase Adepeju Uganden, Mr. Zahemen Armstrong Uganden, Wanyima Getrude Uganden, Tidoo Uganden, Doowuese Uganden and Fa-Aondo Uganden. My brother-in-law Mr. Timothy Terlumun Agbidye ran the statistical analysis of this work without charge and I am deeply grateful.

I am grateful to Dr. Joyce Mcivir Terwase for assisting me in many ways and for the hospitality of Dr. And Mrs. Godwin Atser who graciously accommodated me in their home in Ibadan during my studies. My appreciation to Daniel Godwin for the constant sharing of ideas and support I received from him while we were both on the programme. I am indeed that child that belongs to the whole village and I want to sincerely acknowledge and appreciate all men and women of goodwill especially of the Benue State University community who have never ceased to wish me well and to constantly inquire after the progress of my work.

ABSTRACT

Fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State has become synonymous with politics due to the prolonged involvement of government in the sector. While previous studies acknowledge the political elements of fertiliser policies, the effects of official intervention on fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State have not been sufficiently examined. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the effects of official intervention, the determinants of the choice of fertiliser policies and the social relations between the political elite and smallholder farmers on fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State, Nigeria.

The political economy theories of Structural Violence and Primitive Accumulation provided the framework while the descriptive survey design was employed. Purposive sampling technique was used to select nine Local Government Areas (LGAs) with the largest farming populations. A sample size of 400 participants comprising farmers, traders, artisans, farm labourers and wage/salary earners was determined from the nine LGAs using the Taro Yamane formula. This sample was proportionally drawn from each LGA and administered with structured questionnaire: Katsina-ala (64), Ukum (63), Vandeikya (51), Gboko (68), Gwer-East (44), Gwer-West (30), Agatu (18), Oju (32) and Otukpo (30). Structured questionnaire was also administered to 34 staff of the Agricultural Department of the state Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In-depth interviews were conducted with two past commissioners of agriculture and one fertiliser dealer. The quantitative data were analysed with descriptive statistics, t-test, Pearson Correlation Coefficient and ANOVA at 0.05 level of probability while content analysis was utilized for qualitative data.

From the data, 243 respondents (64.5%) were farmers, 197 (56%) earned below ₦200, 000 yearly, 257 (68.2) were aged 40 and below, 372 (98.7%) cultivated between 1-4 hectares, and 375 (99.47) used simple tools in cultivation. Official intervention in the form of universal subsidy (1999-2011) was characterised by direct participation of government in procurement and distribution. Under the targeted subsidy (2012-2015), government withdrew from procurement and distribution of fertilisers but retained subsidies. For the zero-subsidy method (2016 to 2020), government participation and subsidies were eliminated and private fertiliser markets were expanded. There was no significant difference in the effectiveness of forms of intervention (t-0.398), a positive correlation was found between quantity of fertilisers distributed and quantity obtained by farmers (r-0.834), a significant difference in the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and quantity obtained by farmers (t-12.59). ANOVA showed a significant difference in access to fertilisers between associated and non-associated farmers. The objective determinants of fertiliser policies such as market failures and the need to increase fertiliser consumption produced policies with inherent potentials for efficient distribution of the product. However, subjective factors such as political and pecuniary aims of securing and legitimising elective office, rent-seeking and arbitrage circumscribed the efficiency of fertiliser distribution.

The involvement of government in the fertiliser sector created networks for rent-seeking and arbitrage which led to uneven distribution of fertilisers. Efficiency in the distribution of fertiliser could increase with the government keeping to its policy defined role of regulation and a further expansion of private fertiliser markets.

Keywords: Fertiliser distribution in Benue State, Political elite, Smallholder farmers

Word count: 498

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APB	Anchor Borrower Programme
APP	Agricultural Promotion Policy
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agenda
AU	African Union
BNARDA	Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
GES	Growth Enhancement Support scheme
FEPSAN	Fertiliser Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria
FFD	Federal Fertiliser Department
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMARD	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
FMSP	Fertiliser Market Stabilization Programme
FPDD	Fertiliser Procurement and Distribution Division
FSFC	Federal Superphosphate Fertilizer Company
ICJ	International Court of Justice
MANR	Ministry of Agricultural and Natural Resources
NAFCON	National Fertiliser Company
NAIC	NSIA Agricultural Investment Company
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment Programme
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPK	Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium
NSIA	Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority
OCP	Office Chérifien des Phosphates SA
PFI	Presidential Fertiliser Initiative
POLISARIO	Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia el-Hamra y Rio de Oro
PR	Phosphate Rock
SADR	Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Inorganic fertilisers are indispensable for agricultural productivity and food security in Nigeria due to the poor quality of most soils (Chude et al., 2012; Sommer et al., 2013). However, smallholder farmers who require this input have consistently been unable to convert their need into an effective demand (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Eboh et al., 2006; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Idachaba, 2011). Official and academic reports have identified market failure as the central factor for the low consumption of fertilisers in Nigeria (Datta-Chaudruri, 1990; FMARD, 2011; Idachaba, 2011; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). These market failures necessitated official intervention at the federal and state levels within the framework of various fertiliser regimes. In general, there is a highly visible presence of government in Nigeria's agriculture. The key driver of this visible participation is the need to stimulate productivity and guarantee the viability of the sector.

In the fertiliser sub-sector of agriculture, the government has participated in the procurement and distribution of the commodity for over four decades beginning from the mid-seventies. Due to the involvement of the government in the fertiliser business, the private sector has only been able to play a very marginal role. Ammani (2011:164) stated that government participated in the fertiliser business because it viewed fertiliser as a vital commodity that should not be left to the private sector. This participation of government inadvertently shifted the procurement and distribution of inorganic fertilisers from the realm of economics to that of politics. In Benue state and indeed Nigeria, fertiliser business is politics. This assertion is backed by the assumption that a distribution system managed by public institutions would function more as a system of authoritative allocations than one controlled by the market mechanism.

As a system of authoritative allocations, a lot of changes have occurred in the enactment and the execution of fertiliser policy in Nigeria with a common aim of facilitating "... farmers' timely access to adequate quantity and quality of fertilisers at competitive but affordable prices ..." (FMARD, 2006:3). Within the broad provisions of policies, different measures have been adopted at various periods to promote the use of fertilisers. Notable features identifiable with most of these policies are the use of subsidies (universal subsidy at source and targeted subsidies) and direct participation of government in procurement and distribution of fertilisers (Ayoola, 2001; FMARD, 2006; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). These measures represent a desire by the government to guarantee the consumption of fertilisers by smallholder and resource-poor farmers. It also constitutes an acknowledgement of failures in agricultural input markets in Nigeria and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa (Eboh et al., 2006; Druihle and Barriero- Hurle, ̀2012; Wanzala- Mlobela, et al., 2013; Jerven, 2014).

At the national level, fertiliser policies and programmes have included the establishment of a Federal Ministry of Agriculture in 1967, the Fertiliser Procurement Distribution Division (FPDD) in 1976; the Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company (FSFC) 1973 (1976), the National Fertiliser Company (NAFCON) 1981 (1988) and the Federal Fertiliser Department in 2001. Others are the Fertiliser Market Stabilization Programme (FMSP) 1999, the Growth Enhancement and Support (GES) scheme 2011, the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI) 2016 and the Anchor Borrower Programme (ABP) 2016. Although different in their specific mandates and functions, these institutions and programmes were designed to promote and sustain fertiliser supply and demand due to the acknowledged importance of fertilisers for food security and income generation. However, the existing statistics on fertiliser that includes data on the importation, local production and the amount of fertiliser used per hectare indicate that the rate of consumption is low (Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). The Federal Government and the African Union have identified the low consumption of fertiliser as the main obstacle to high agricultural productivity in Nigeria (African Union, 2006; FMARD, 2011).

Empirical researches (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Eboh et al., 2006; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Idachaba, 2011; Druihle and Barriero- Hurle, ̀2012; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013;

Jerven, 2014), have assessed the management of fertiliser in Sub-Saharan Africa and have located explanations for the low consumption of fertiliser in the design and execution of fertiliser policies. These explanations include frequent changes in fertiliser policy, inconsistency between official pronouncements and practice, insufficiency of government backed agricultural credit, and arbitrage caused by the existence of dual fertiliser markets (subsidized and unsubsidized). Arbitrage was a major feature of the universal subsidy at source system that was operated between 1999 and 2011. Due to the prevalence of arbitrage, the Federal Government's fertiliser distribution system was inefficient because it excluded the intended beneficiaries. The government's self-assessment of the fertiliser regime that was in operation from 1999-2011 stated that only 11per cent of subsidized fertilisers got to the intended beneficiaries (FMARD, 2011).

In 2012, the Federal Government introduced a new system in which its responsibility for procuring and distributing fertiliser was eliminated. This was an attempt to eliminate the imbalances and challenges embedded in the subsidy at source policy, improve the rate of fertiliser consumption by smallholder farmers and encourage the growth of private input markets. The innovation was an input voucher system that targeted smallholder farmers as beneficiaries of the fertilisers that were distributed by the government. The new system was a component of the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme established in 2011 and implemented in 2012 in which targeted farmers were reached through an electronic wallet. Here, pre-registered farmers received their allocation of fertiliser and other farm inputs via a mobile phone alert and redeemed such by paying a percentage of the cost from specified agro-dealers also registered on the scheme (FMARD, 2011; Fertiliser Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN) 2012). This reform accomplished modest progress by increasing the amount of subsidized fertiliser consumed by smallholder farmers.

A (FEPSAN, 2012) report indicated that the modest achievements of the GES scheme were circumvented by the inefficient distribution of e-wallet, inability to activate numbers, late arrival of fertilisers, high cost of fertilisers, long-distance to collection centres, cumbersome process of redeeming fertilisers, insufficient fertiliser allocation and distribution of wrong fertiliser. The administration that came into office in 2015 acknowledged gaps between real fertiliser needs and existing effective demand as

obtained under the GES and introduced a new programme known as the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI). Under the PFI, subsidy as the enduring component of fertiliser policy was eliminated.

Beyond national initiatives, the African Union has also exerted efforts at increasing fertiliser consumption on the continent. To underscore the importance of fertilisers to what it termed an African Green Revolution, the continental body through the Abuja Declaration of 2006, committed each member to work to increase fertiliser consumption from 8kg/ha average for the continent to 50kg/ha by 2015 and to specifically target small scale farmers especially women. The African Union Commission and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were mandated to monitor the implementation of the resolutions (African Union, 2006).

In the case of Benue state, fertilisers are politically and economically salient due to the dominance of agriculture in the face of declining soil fertility. The interaction of political and economic factors have given direction to the process of distributing fertilisers in the state and determined the efficiency of the process. This study has examined this process with emphasis on the impact of political factors.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several studies have examined fertiliser procurement and distribution from different disciplinary backgrounds that define the central questions, methods, findings and conclusions. Agricultural economists (Ayoola, 2001; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Banful, 2010; Idachaba, 2011; Ugwuja et al., 2011) relied on analyses of forces of demand and supply as well as agronomic questions in explaining inefficiencies in fertiliser distribution and consumption. According to these authors, the factors that affect fertiliser procurement and distribution include lack of income, lack of farm credit, fertilisers not being available when needed and insufficient knowledge on the proper use of fertilisers. Other factors are poor targeting of beneficiaries of subsidy programmes, rent-seeking, arbitrage and wholesale diversion of fertilisers to ‘unofficial’ locations. Beyond these concerns, it is also important to try to understand how particular policies win the never-ending competition of issues demanding attention in the public space and the factors behind the preferred courses of action by managers of the public business. For instance, why are agricultural subsidies

preferred to agricultural credit as a means of facilitating access of poor farmers to fertilisers?

Other studies have examined the design characteristics, implementation modalities and performance of fertiliser regimes and programmes (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Eboh et al., 2006; Druilhe and Barreiro-Hurle, 2012; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). To Nagy and Edun (2002) the operational dilemmas of fertiliser policy include policy inconsistency, excessive budgetary pressure for federal, state and local governments, poor targeting of needy farmers, and the negative effects of arbitrage occasioned by the concurrent existence of subsidized and non-subsidized fertilisers. This group of studies have furnished the literature with the high rate statistical and systematic evaluation of fertiliser regimes and policies without emphasising political pressures on the design and implementation of these policies. The study by Ammani (2011), acknowledged the place of politics by attributing the existence of dual markets for fertiliser to lack of political will by the federal government to push through with full liberalization of the fertiliser sector in 1997.

According to studies with leanings to political economy (Ake, 1981; Nnoli, 1981; Morgan and Solarz, 1994; Manyong et al., 2005; Berendsen and Veen, 2013; Henley and van Donge, 2013), agricultural policies perform poorly due to official neglect of agriculture and the industrial bias of development policy. The official neglect of agriculture is seen in persistent decline in budgetary allocation to agriculture. While this view is not refutable and is indeed highly tenable, this study's concern with politics as the main explanatory variable requires a search for explanations beyond comparing budgetary statistics with the performance of policies. It seeks to explore and categorize the dynamics of interests in the fertiliser sector which give it shape and character. It contemplates the manipulation of political power for arbitrage, rent-seeking and elite proclivity for accumulation. The intent is to locate forces that act on the process of fertiliser procurement and distribution that lie outside the sole control of the invisible hand of the market acting through the forces of demand and supply. Relocating explanation and analysis from pure economics to the discipline of political economy which is capable of incorporating extra market causality necessitates a prima facie conception of politics as the allocation of scarce resources within society (Valtonen, 2000). While economics

provides sufficient explanations for cause and effect in perfect market systems, such neat systems are not characteristic of reality. By incorporating and balancing political and economic considerations, political economy offers appropriate tools for understanding the allocation of resources across space and time. For instance, how do varying socioeconomic circumstances such as access to political power or lack of same, access to state patronage or lack of same, high and low political consciousness and elite policy choices determine the distribution of fertilisers in Benue state?

The study proceeds to answer these questions by identifying factors that determine the design and execution of fertiliser policies and programmes and by analysing the role of politics in determining how fertilisers are distributed in Benue state. Premium is placed first on ascertaining the complex network of interactions and coincidence of interests in fertiliser amongst the political elite, dominant market actors, capitalist agriculture and smallholder farmers. Others are extra-state political forces such as the clergy and traditional political institutions. For this last category, it is important to understand their political gate-keeping function in the service of the state and how this affects the distribution of fertilisers. Next is examining the import of these complex networks for promoting or constraining the adoption of specific policies and programmes and for facilitating or constraining distribution. To this end, it is necessary to probe the political characteristics of the key stakeholders who are active in the fertiliser sector. Such political characteristics include the extent to which important stakeholders are politically conscious and whether they are sufficiently mobilized for active engagement with the state. The aim is to determine a connection between the levels of political consciousness, the possession and exercise of political power on the one hand and the ability or inability to sway policy, benefit from programme, influence how fertilisers are distributed and who has access to the agricultural input. This is preceded by a prior identification of structures of power in Benue's agricultural sector, the nature of competition and cooperation amongst them and the impact of all these on fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state.

In summary, the problem of the study is to understand the qualitative character and constituents of official intervention in the fertiliser sector and its practical consequences for procurement and distribution in Benue state. Official intervention in fertiliser which is

primarily an economic sector has invariably introduced extra-economic political dimensions which have subsequently defined the form and functioning of the sector.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the nature of official intervention in the fertiliser sector in Benue state and to interrogate the effects of the intervention on procurement and distribution. The specific objectives are to;

i. examine the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State;
ii. evaluate the effectiveness of forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State;
iii. identify the factors that determine choices and preferences in fertiliser procurement and distribution; and
iv. examine the social categories and structures of power in the fertiliser sector in Benue state.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What are the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State?
ii. How effective are the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State?
iii. What are the factors that determine choices and preferences in fertiliser procurement and distribution?
iv. Who are the social categories and structures of power in the fertiliser sector in Benue State?

1.5 Hypotheses for the Study

H_{o1} There is no significant difference in effectiveness among forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State.

H_{o2} There is no significant relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state.

H_{o3} There is no significant difference between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue state.

H_{04} There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution by the membership of a farming organization.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that by focusing on Benue state, it provides an opportunity for an in-depth study of transactions and happenings in the Nigerian fertiliser sector from a structural perspective. Leaning on the structural epistemology of critical realism, it presents a view of fertiliser policies from the angle of the interests and undercurrents of interactions amongst the structures that dominate the business of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state. To understand the performance of public policies in general, it is important to be familiar with the context of their design and execution. This political economy approach offers a take on the subject that goes beyond listing and assessment of the provisions of fertiliser policies and instead focuses on the facilitators and constraints to choices and actions in the distribution of fertiliser. It, therefore, provides answers to not just the 'what' and 'how' of fertiliser policies but also the critical 'why'. It identifies the political, economic and social contexts within which official action in the fertiliser sector in Benue state is carried out and contributes to scholarly efforts at ascertaining explanations for the history and current state of fertiliser distribution in Benue.

Also, the study is important as a reference for academics, policymakers, the private sector and civil society by guiding their thinking to understand that the context of public policies is important for their success and indispensable in scholarly discourse.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The politics of fertiliser policy in Nigeria is traceable to 1976 when the Federal Government moved to design a central fertiliser policy for the country and coordinate its operation. The study covers 1999 to 2020, a period of 21 years within which empirical data has been obtained to support the discourse on the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state. The existence of the fertiliser sector in Benue state goes

beyond the temporal delineation of the study but political considerations have become more salient with the return of civilian rule from 1999 hence the time specification.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Besides fertilisers, the agricultural input sector includes mechanization equipment such as tractors and other inputs (herbicides, pesticides and seedlings) which are not included in this study. The study focused on fertiliser because of its economic importance to small and large scale crop producers and its political relevance in Benue state.

In carrying out the research, a total of 400 farmers were sampled to participate in the survey. While this sample size provided verifiable information for the subject under study, it is to some extent limited in its capacity to generalize for the experiences of every smallholder farmer in Benue state.

1.9 Conceptualizations

Concepts that feature prominently in the study require explicit understanding; these are the concepts of politics, politics of policy, arbitrage and rent-seeking.

1.9.1 Politics

Definitions of politics reflect the social dimensions envisaged and captured in each definition. For some, politics is universal and present at every level of human interaction while others restrict politics to formal actions of the state. The Eastonian conception of politics as the "authoritative allocation of values" is essentially statist and alludes to the formal exercise of power over material and immaterial values of society by socially determined institutions. Authoritative allocation suggests the existence of consensus where citizens widely accept and consider political decisions as binding. Suggesting consensus as an attribute of politics links to Arendt's (1958:162) definition of politics as "acting in concert" which presupposes that the core of politics is conflict resolution or problem-solving. While authoritative allocations can and do take place at sub-state levels, the implied agency here is that of the state. Easton's system analysis with the mechanism for authoritative allocation at the centre confirms his fixation on the state as the fulcrum of political activity.

Politics as who gets what, when and how is associated with Lasswell (1936). This conception of politics simultaneously mainstreams the formal role of the state and accommodates none-state actors. The 'who' in the definition connotes both agency and

subject referring to participants in the political process within and outside the state. Human agency in the political process includes that which is readily visible and the not so visible in terms of the loci of power. The 'what' (outcomes, policies) of politics can only be contextually comprehended and explained with a prior identification of the critical 'who' of politics and a proper delineation of roles, power and responsibility. The notion of 'who' equally encapsulates the subject of the 'what' implies the end or net gainers or losers of politically determined decisions and actions. Williams' (1980) emphasis on politics as a competition between differing interests over the allocation of public resources aptly surmises the relationship of agency and subject in the political process. While it is not difficult to identify agency and subject of political activity, some level of scientific probing of politics and policy ('what') tends to produce more questions than definite answers. This attribute of politics relates to the idea of "none decisions"; the existence of significant influence on the 'what' of politics besides formally existing roles. Here, power becomes the critical factor in politics. The 'who' and 'what' of politics denotes access to, possession of and exercise of power over societal values.

Two other components of Lasswell's definition are the 'when' and 'how' which refer to operations and actions of political institutions and agents. These are the sum of processes and activities that serve as vehicles for the articulation, enactment and execution of outcomes of the political process. Where it is possible to track the 'when' and 'how' scientifically and objectively it is also possible to identify those who are actors in politics. While the source of political power may not be easy to locate, knowing how and when outcomes are produced reduces the perplexity.

If politics is understood from the perspectives of Lasswell (1936), Easton (1981) and Williams (1980) it means it is a process for the determination of access to material and immaterial values of society. According to Williams (1980:68), any study of politics must examine the allocation of scarce resources, the determination of public policy and the relations and conflict among classes. Williams views classes as groups created by the division of labour in society, defined by their location in the production process, their access to markets and their relations with the state. Human agency in politics is both individualized and collectivized but in the higher number of cases, the latter is more decisive. Williams in the neo-Marxist tradition identifies the state and classes as the

collectivized participants in political activity. The state constitutes agency while a class could have either agency or subject status or both depending on the context and substance of a particular policy ('what'). To Williams therefore, politics is a two-dimensional process; the competitive pursuit of private interests (by classes) and the determination of public policy (by the state). The state via public policy mediates between competing classes as a neutral party, reconciles conflicting class interests and subordinates the interests of competing classes to the interests of the wider society. Utilizing Williams' (1980) definition, it is easy to see inequality as a logical component of a class system as placement in the process of production, access to markets and relations with the state cannot be the same for all classes. It is precisely these differences that drive the process of competition for private interests and create positions of dominance on one hand and subservience on the other. Groups and classes have different capacities to influence the making of public policies in their favour. Those classes placed in a position of control of the means of production at the same time have access to markets and enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the state and the reverse is the case with classes who do not own the means of production.

Group theorists and pluralists (Bentley, 1908; Truman, 1951; Dahl, 1963) prefer to view politics as a sum of the activities of intersecting and fluid groups perpetually interacting and making demands on each other. These groups crystallize around certain interests that align with or are opposed to other groups with similar or contrasting goals respectively. Unlike classes which are viewed as static forms without cross-cutting membership, groups are viewed as a mass of activity and not a collection of individuals as the same individuals can belong to various groups. The distinctive feature of group interaction is the pursuit of interest and this constitutes the meeting point for both group theorists and those who prefer to engage in class analysis.

Politics is, therefore, the competitive pursuit of private interest and the determination of public policy. It is the process whose outcome allocates scarce societal resources to groups or classes through the instrument of formal state authority.

1.9.2 Rent-Seeking

Rent-seeking is treated as a function of the problems of state management, especially in Africa. While elements of its various forms (corruption, lobbying, and

bribery) characterise almost all public sectors, it is most notably a feature of developing states where it also produces a far-reaching negative impact on economic activity and growth. The most economically devastating effect is the privatization of public assets which creates exclusion and preferential treatment. This limits the options open to excluded groups while placing the preferred in advantaged positions. Usually, the social costs of rent-seeking behaviour are also socially distributed while the benefits go to a privileged and preferred few.

Often, rent-seeking occurs as an offshoot of the creation and existence of artificial monopolies by the state (Khan, 2000) as has been the case with the procurement and distribution of fertilisers in Nigeria as a whole and Benue state in particular. It is an offshoot of neo-patrimonialism due to its dependence on privileged access to public resources and some form of conflict of interest. It amounts to acts of corruption that directly contravene existing laws including soliciting and collecting bribes, diversion of public resources for private use, none- utilization of due process for the award of procurement contracts and so on. According to Khan (2000:1),

> rent-seeking is the expenditure of resources and effort in creating, maintaining, or transferring rents. These expenditures can be legal, as with most forms of lobbying, queuing, or contributions to political parties. But they can also be illegal, as in the case of bribes, illegal political contributions, expenditures on private mafias, and so on. These processes are of high significance because the resources they use up are a social cost, they determine the types of rents that are created and maintained in a particular society.

The rent-seeking theory was one of the first economic instruments developed to model corruption in the public sector (Lambsdorff (2001). It involves profiteering by using social institutions such as the state to redistribute wealth among different groups without creating new wealth. The usage of the term ‘rent’ arises from Adam Smith’s division of income into profit, wage and rent. From this meaning, rent-seeking is defined as the act of obtaining economic rent which is the income paid to a factor of production in excess through the manipulation of the social or political environment in which economic activity occurs rather than through the creation of new wealth. It implies the extraction of value without making any contributions to productivity.

1.9.3 Arbitrage

Arbitrage is the economic consequence of specific market and socio-political conditions. When dual markets exist for a traded value, profit generation motives lead to the purchase or procurement of the product or traded value from the cheaper market for resale in the more costly market. Arbitrage is when financial experts and investors identify mispricing of a stock or commodity and develop strategies to exploit such mispricing (Billingsley, 2001). It is usually risk-free and does not require possession of capital.

The operations of a parallel market for foreign exchange in Nigeria and the happenings therein demonstrate this economic or market phenomenon. Where politicians, traders, the clergy, traditional rulers and the bureaucracy obtain fertilisers at subsidy rates and sell at market price is arbitrage. This is because the variation in price between official and market fertiliser motivates exploitation of the mispricing by those who have access to the lower-priced commodity.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Evaluations of Fertiliser Policies and Programmes in Nigeria

At the state and federal level, governments in Nigeria have been active participants in the procurement and distribution of fertilisers for over four decades beginning from the 1970s. This presence of government in a primarily economic area is viewed as a critical factor in the organisation of economic production (Egwu, 1999). Similar to the Mexican situation documented by Valtonen (2000:10), the Nigerian state has for decades acted as "the principal organizer of conditions, allocator of resources and distributor of benefits' in the agricultural sector". Justifications for such official interventions especially in the form of agricultural subsidies include market failures, mass poverty and deprivation, equity and welfare concerns as well as the need to raise productivity (Datta-Chaudruri, 1990; Idachaba, 2011; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). According to Gregory and Bumb (2006), the initial involvement of government through State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the marketing of agricultural input was actively encouraged by lending bodies like the World Bank in the early 60s. This was due to the absence of a developed private sector to assume effective responsibility for investment in agriculture. This official predisposition to direct participation in agricultural markets transcends regimes and governments with variations occurring merely in appearance but not in essence.

Deriving from their respective findings and persuasions, scholars (Idachaba, 2011; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Henley and van Donge, 2013) recommend several interventionist measures for improving farm yield and raising rural farm incomes including increasing poor rural farmers' access to credit, developing rural markets and infrastructure and subsidising farm inputs in a market-friendly manner. Drawing their argument and conclusion from the study of the economic success of Southeast Asia, Henley and van Donge, particularly, advance a case for state intervention in agriculture.

Their research indicates considerable state involvement in agriculture through fertiliser and credit subsidies, provision for subsidized purchase of crops when market prices fall below guaranteed minimum levels. Similar policies have over the years been executed by succeeding Nigerian administrations with similarities in outcomes.

The design characteristics, implementation modalities and performance of fertiliser policies have been examined extensively in the literature (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Eboh et al., 2006; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Druilhe and Barreiro-Hurle, 2012; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013). The management of fertiliser subsidy in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa has been evaluated with the main conclusions that overall, inefficiency characterises the process (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Eboh et al., 2006; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010; Idachaba, 2011; Druihle and Barriero- Hurle`, 2012; Wanzala-Mlobela et al., 2013; Jerven, 2014). In particular, Wanzala-Mlobela et al., (2013) examined fertiliser subsidy in Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria by comparing less market-friendly programmes with more market-friendly programmes and recommend the expansion of private fertiliser distribution sector due to the problems associated with less market-friendly government centred systems. Fuentes et al. (2012) in Table 2.1 provide a snapshot of statistics that demonstrate problems with government-centric fertiliser distribution networks. These statistics show disparities between figures targeted for the distribution of subsidized fertiliser in Nigeria and the actual figures delivered for a specified number of years. Although the figures cover only a limited number of years, they demonstrate a major problem of fertiliser subsidy administration in Nigeria which is the losses and leakages along the public fertiliser distribution chain.

Table 2.1: Amount of Subsidized Fertiliser (NPK and Urea) Targeted and Delivered by the FGN (2005-2010)

Year	Subsidized quantity targeted by FFD	Subsidized quantity delivered	%
	(mt)	(mt)	
2005	172,000	120,664	70
2006	454,680	226,609	50
2007	498,000	316,120	63
2008	600,000	464,036	77
2009	380,000	365,542	96
2010	870,000	435,000	50
Overall for 2005-2010	2,974, 680	1,927,971	65

Source: Fuentes et al., 2012

Of particular interest for this review is the debate on the desirability and economic rationality of official fertiliser subsidy. Nagy and Edun (2002) utilized interviews with stakeholders in the fertiliser sector to assess Nigerian governments' fertiliser policy and identified certain operational dilemmas of public sector fertiliser distribution networks. These are policy inconsistency, excessive budgetary pressure for federal, state and local governments, poor targeting of needy farmers, and the negative effects of arbitrage of dual fertiliser markets occasioned by the concurrent existence of subsidized and non-subsidized fertilisers. Excessive budgetary pressure for the Federal Government has been amply demonstrated by (Oko, 2011) as shown in Table 2.2. Apart from the brief period of liberalization between 1997 and 1998, the cost of fertiliser subsidy for the years documented in the table frequently tripled or quadrupled figures for the entire agriculture budget. Similarly, Grow Africa (2017), documents that fertiliser supply through the vehicle of universal subsidy at source constituted the single largest expenditure item in the federal capital account from the 1970s. This system remained in place till it was replaced by a targeted subsidy in 2012.

The public fertiliser subsidy policy as practised by Nigeria between 1990 and 1996 where the Federal Government had a monopoly on fertiliser procurement exerted a negative impact on Nigerian agriculture (Ayinde et al., 2009). First, it restricted the amount of fertiliser used by Nigeria's farmers because government procurement was informed not by economic optimum considerations such as existing effective demand, but national budgetary considerations as well as port, transport, warehousing and blending capacity.

Table 2.2: Nigerian National and Agricultural Budgets and Fertiliser Subsidy Costs 1990-2001

Year	Nigerian National Budget	Nigerian Agricultural Budget	Fertiliser subsidy cost	Agric Budget as % of the national budget	Fertiliser subsidy as % of the national budget	Fertiliser subsidy as % of Agric budget
	N billion			%	%	%
1990	164.333	23.022	30.416	14.0	18.5	132
1991	152.992	6.428	25.662	4.2	16.8	399
1992	127.074	6.069	54.294	4.8	42.7	8.95
1993	93.689	9.168	36.371	9.8	38.8	397
1994	106.389	9.609	30.606	9.0	28.8	319
1995	89.023	9.374	28.979	10.5	32.6	309
1996	73.552	5.965	17.711	8.1	24.1	297
1997	162.823	8.793	0	5.4	-	-
1998	245.456	11.754	0	4.8	-	-
1999	179.599	9.064	0.968	5.0	0.5	10.7
2000	348.854	11.269	0	3.2	-	0.0
2001	496.659	10.595	0.890	2.1	0.2	8.4

Source: Oko, 2011

According to Nagy and Edun (2002), the public fertiliser distribution system was not efficient and this cost Nigeria the loss of agricultural production, farm incomes, and higher wages for farm labour and food security. Their findings and recommendations present three fertiliser options from which the government can choose. The market economy approach which is discussed first involves the allocation of resources to the fertiliser delivery system based on the market demand for fertilisers by farmers where competition helps in lowering prices and the role of the government is restricted to the enactment and enforcement of rules and regulations on quality and environmental hazards. The economic efficiency of the market economy approach is that the system delivers good quality fertilisers on time and at competitive market prices. Although market efficiency in allocation is hardly disputable, the authors ignore failures in agricultural input markets in Nigeria and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, which constitutes the major justification for public input subsidies (Jerven, 2014; Wanzala- Mlobela, et al., 2013; Druihle and Barriero- Hurle, 2012). However, they acknowledge the importance of equity considerations which are not part of market rationality but also argue that other public social programmes can handle equity issues. In this regard, Idachaba (2011) views the provision of credit as a better guarantee for input access by the poor rural farmers than a poorly performing subsidy policy.

The second option offered by Nagy and Edun (2002) is the voucher system also discussed extensively by Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010). Under the voucher system, the government intervenes within the general framework of a functional market-driven fertiliser supply system to support specifically identified and targeted resource-poor farmers who receive a voucher for a predetermined quantity of fertiliser carrying their identity. With this voucher, the farmer purchases fertiliser from the market but pays only the amount on the voucher which is less than the market price. The dealer then redeems the remainder of the price by presenting the voucher to a government authorized commercial bank. According to Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010), the voucher system has been employed in Malawi, Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania and Afghanistan amongst others. The authors also review the pilots of the voucher system in Kano and Taraba in 2009. Their assessment demonstrates a significant increase in access and the purchase of fertilisers at prices lower than market prices by participants. However, they note that the

use of the voucher system did not improve the timeliness of delivery or the quality of fertilisers.

The third option is the subsidy at source in which government does not procure fertiliser but pays a subsidy to importers and in-country fertiliser producers who then sell fertiliser at the subsidized price to wholesalers and retailers. For over three decades, this last option has dominated official action in the fertiliser sector in Nigeria with a lot of negative outcomes like corruption. According to Grow Africa (2017), an estimated 776 billion naira ($4.8 billion) has been lost to corruption with an average of 26 billion naira ($162.5 million) lost annually.

Idachaba (2011) engages the fertiliser subsidy debate by examining arguments for and against fertiliser subsidies in African agriculture. In examining the case for fertiliser subsidy, he lists seven arguments. The first is the attainment of desired resource use patterns. This relates to the use of price incentives to induce farmers to use fertilisers to supplement natural soil fertility and raise productivity per unit of land in the face of continuous cultivation caused by population pressures. Second is market promotion which he explains as the use of price incentives to encourage the development of an emerging input market in which the private sector might not yet express any eagerness to invest. Thirdly, fertiliser subsidies according to Idachaba, constitute a veritable form of income transfer to the weaker sections of the society comprising the rural poor, the old, the young and women in the face of existing skewed income distribution in favour of vocal urban elites and workers. The fourth argument in support of fertiliser subsidy is its conception as a form of support for agriculture viewed as an infant industry. Despite several decades of official intervention, African agriculture totters on the brink of collapse, requiring fertiliser subsidies to place it on a path to maturity after which the subsidies could be withdrawn.

The existence of distortions in the agriculture sector deriving from direct and indirect taxation which continue to siphon resources out of agriculture, primitive state of rural infrastructure, and defective rural markets present the fifth case for fertiliser subsidy for African agriculture according to Idachaba. The larger the tax on rural production, the greater the need for compensating fertiliser subsidies to facilitate farmers' maximum access to the much-required farm input. In the face of the successive devaluation of the

domestic currency, the sixth reason for supporting fertiliser subsidy arises. The successive devaluation of the domestic currencies of sub-Saharan African countries has increased the prices of imported fertilisers, imposing hardship on small-scale farmers. Subsidies are therefore meant to assist farmers in the face of macroeconomic instability. The seventh and final case for fertiliser subsidy is the lack of farm credit facilities which hampers the ability for prompt and timely purchase of fertilisers by poor farmers.

Exhausting arguments for fertiliser subsidies, Idachaba pushes the discourse further with an examination of the case against the use of fertiliser subsidies in the agricultural sector. The ability of fertiliser subsidies to cushion farmers from the harsh realities of the market leads to the development of a dependency mentality where farmers come to view subsidies as a right, making it difficult for them to be weaned from it. This constitutes the first case against the use of subsidies. Secondly, generalized subsidies lead to the protection of inefficient farmers and the misallocation of resources. "They encourage the production of food and fibre in certain locations where the grain/fertiliser price ratios would not have conferred comparative advantage were it not for the artificial distortions introduced into relative prices of commodities by fertiliser subsidies"(Idachaba, 2011: 336). Thirdly, preoccupation with subsidies leads to policy neglect in other areas by blunting policymakers' appreciation of the urgency and strategic importance of other policies. For instance, operating a fertiliser subsidy scheme is easier than running an effective and sustainable rural credit scheme, which Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010) argue, is a more effective agriculture intervention than a fertiliser subsidy. Idachaba also supports this position with the argument that with farm credit facilities guaranteeing timely access to fertilisers, subsidies may likely become unnecessary. The high involvement in fertiliser subsidy and its high political visibility relegate the design and implementation of other programmes such as farm mechanization, credible farm credit scheme, and irrigation schemes to the back seat of the policy train.

Fertiliser subsidy also constitutes a fiscal burden on the national agriculture budget crowding out other projects. Finally, another drawback of the fertiliser subsidy is the tendency in Nigeria especially, of linking subsidy with government involvement in fertiliser procurement and distribution. This is usually the source and cause of

inefficiencies and scandals such as diversion of consignments meant for one location to another and use of fertiliser for political patronage thereby denying access to fertiliser for the poor farmers for whom the subsidy is designed.

Aside from aspects and issues in the management of fertiliser policy in Nigeria already discussed in this chapter, there are external or foreign dimensions such as the sourcing of phosphate from the political hotbed of Western Sahara and Morocco. This dimension demands treatment in this discussion. Phosphorus fertilisers as stated by Van Kauwenbergh et al. (2013:18) are made by a "wet process" in which PR is treated with acid (e.g., sulfuric, nitric, or phosphoric) to produce phosphoric acid or triple superphosphate (TSP). Phosphoric acid is used in producing granular and fluid fertilisers. Van Kauwenbergh et al. (2013:18), emphasize that "phosphorus is essential for life, and the input of phosphorus fertiliser is critical to the production of sufficient food, feed, fiber, and fuel to support a growing world population". This assertion applies to Nigeria where the viability of the fertiliser sector and the nation's food security depends on access to adequate tons of phosphorus which is a major component of blended fertilisers. Most of the fertiliser consumed in Nigeria is a blend of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (NPK) with phosphorus constituting up to 21% of the content (FGN, 2017). Although current estimates put global PR reserves at over 65 billion tons (United States Geologic Survey USGS, 2011), it is a finite, non-renewable and critical natural resource on which global food security depends.

A systematic delineation of the economic and political underlining of PR exploration and global supply is fundamental for establishing empirical knowledge on the global drivers of fertiliser and food politics. The politics of phosphate exploration is also important for understanding the continued existence of Africa's last colony which is Western Sahara and the political and economic implications of the fact that Nigeria has also joined the ranks of global consumers of phosphate from Morocco. On December 2, 2016, an agreement was signed between FEPSAN and Office Chérifien des Phosphates SA (OCP), on behalf of Nigeria and Morocco respectively for the supply of discounted Phosphate from Morocco to Nigeria (FGN, 2016). The agreement constitutes a component of the Buhari administration's fertiliser policy known as, the Presidential Fertiliser

Initiative (PFI) which has replaced the Growth Enhancement and Support (GES) Scheme of the previous administration. This development possesses the capability of changing the fertiliser sector in Nigeria by supporting local production of fertiliser in contrast to the hitherto dependence on importation on one hand. On the other hand, questions can be raised on the sensitivity of Nigeria to the history and current dimensions of the conflict between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia el-Hamra y Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) over Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara and the exploration and exportation of phosphate from the region by Morocco.

It is generally established that deposits of Phosphate Rock (PR) exist all over the world as captured in the Chernoff and Orris (2002) compilation. The dominance of Morocco in global exploration and supply of PR is also acknowledged. However, there is a great level of controversy surrounding phosphate from Morocco because of the exploration of phosphate in the occupied Western Sahara. The most contentious issue for right activists is about the provisions of international law. According to these provisions, the citizens of an occupied territory should have power over the exploration and utilization of the natural resources found in such a territory. In the case of Morocco and Western Sahara, this is not the case as Office Chérifien des Phosphates SA (OCP) the Moroccan state-owned corporation controls the main phosphate mine in Western Sahara; the Bou Craa mine with its major client and customer being PotashCorp from Canada and the United States. This contention reflects in Allan (2016:645)

> … natural resources have always been at the centre of the Western Sahara conflict and were a key demand of the anti-Spanish protestors in the early 1970s. Spain exploited Western Sahara's rich phosphate reserves and Morocco continues to profit from the country's natural wealth. The latter is illegal since Morocco is not recognized internationally as holding sovereignty over Western Sahara, and indeed an occupying power cannot legally exploit the natural resources of the occupied country without the consent of the indigenous people of that country.

According to Morocco's official claims, only 1% of its phosphate production comes from Western Sahara. This contrasts with other reports which put it between 7 to 10% (WSRW, 2016; Mumford, 2017). The Chernoff and Orris (2002:209) compilation

place the Bou Craa mine operated by Phousboucraa a subsidiary of OCP under Morocco with a reference to Western Sahara as the state/principal administrative area. This listing connotes an implied acknowledgement of Western Sahara as Moroccan territory. It is tenable to also interpret the listing as part of a broader Western disposition that has inadvertently contributed to a perpetuation of conflict in the region between the government of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. The latter was formally organized in 1973 as a front for resisting Spanish colonization of Western Sahara and has continued the struggle against the occupying Moroccan power.

According to Arieff (2014), Morocco controls 85% of the Western Sahara and considers the whole area as a part of its sovereign territory. Although Morocco' claims of sovereignty over Western Sahara were rejected in an International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s ruling in 1975, King Hassan II ordered the occupation of the area by Moroccans which was carried out in November 1975. Mauritania also occupied Western Sahara upon the departure of Spain but later gave up its part while Morocco continues to administer the region as a part of its territory. The POLISARIO has contested the territory with Morocco since 1975 initially through a war until the United Nations negotiated a cease-fire in 1991 with the promise of organizing a referendum for self-determination. After the cease-fire, the POLISARIO has carried out its struggles with Morocco through mostly diplomatic channels. While the former claims to represent the original inhabitants of the region, the latter claim territorial sovereignty. The POLISARIO declared Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) on February 27, 1976, which though not recognized by the United Nations as a sovereign nation is a signatory to the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act as a member of the continental body. Beyond the AU, the SADR has also been recognized by other countries; in contrast, Morocco's claim of sovereignty over Western Sahara has not been recognized by any nation including the kingdom's traditional allies such as the United States. Algeria supports and hosts the SADR which though seen as the true representative of the Saharawi is a government in exile.

From the perspective of rights activists and the POLISARIO, the Moroccan OCP and PotashCorp contravene international law and have enslaved the inhabitants of Western Sahara. On its part, PotashCorp justifies its importation of phosphate from the region

claiming adherence to international best practices in its operation. It also claims no involvement in what it terms political matters by not questioning Morocco's occupation of the region. The United States itself is accused of complicity in the exploitation of the people of Western Sahara. It is alleged that a large part of Hilary Clinton's campaign funds came from the OCP, the Moroccan corporation in charge of the Bou Craa mine. Despite the loud outcry, PotashCorp has not suspended its importation of phosphate from Western Sahara given the crucial role of phosphate in its production of phosphorus which it sells to fertiliser producing corporations.

As indicated earlier, Nigeria has entered an agreement with Morocco for the supply of discounted phosphate to support the local production of blended fertilisers. A formal announcement of the deal was captured in a speech presented by President Buhari on December 14, 2016. At its inception, the initiative aimed at achieving local production of 1.5 million metric tonnes of blended Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium (NPK) Fertilisers for the 2017 farming season. According to a report by the Federal Government, in 2017, eleven blended plants already existed in the country with a combined blending capacity of 2,143,000 (FGN, 2017). These plants which were grossly functioning below capacity due to emphasis on importation were to benefit from the supply of discounted phosphate. By this arrangement, the discount obtained by FEPSAN in their negotiation with the OCP is transferred to the blending plants and then to the farmers. The Federal Government report referred to above also provides details on the workings of the PFI which is not a subsidy scheme but a revolving investment managed by the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), through a Special Purpose Vehicle known as the NAIC-NPK Limited. NAIC means NSIA Agricultural Investment Company. Apart from eliminating subsidy which was a major feature of almost all the fertiliser regimes preceding it, the new initiative also targets the cost of fertiliser to bring it down to a starting consumer price of ₦5,500 as against previous prices that ranged between N8000 and N9000 per 50kg bag. The elimination of subsidy and the reduction of the consumer price of the commodity is a function of the discount negotiated by FEPSAN with OCP.

It is easy to see then that Nigeria’s decision to source phosphate from Morocco has the potential of revolutionizing the fertiliser industry and making the country self-sufficient in food production. It was not yet evident whether any considerations have been

given to the political dimensions of Moroccan phosphate. From the Federal Government report discussed in the preceding paragraph, the OCP signed the agreement on behalf of the Moroccan government. It is the same Moroccan OCP that owns and mines the Bou Craa mine located in Western Sahara occupied by Morocco. Allan (2016) argues that natural resources are at the centre of the struggle between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front over the control of Western Sahara not only the need for self-determination. Apart from phosphate, Moroccan companies fish in the Western Saharan coast and also explore oil; these are finite resources that might become depleted when independence is finally attained. While fertiliser and food production in Nigeria receive a significant boost from this arrangement, it could, on the other hand, contribute to the emasculation of the real owners of the phosphate.

Ruttan (1977) extensively reviewed several models on agricultural development from the antique past to those still dominating thought on agricultural development at his time of writing. These are the frontier model, the conservation model, urban-industrial impact, diffusion model and the high input pay off model. To him, these models were inadequate in addressing the needs of agriculture. For the agricultural development needs of the late 20th century, Ruttan (1977) emphasized the need to view technical innovation in agriculture as an endogenous as opposed to exogenous process; which he termed induced innovation model for agricultural development.

Induced innovation is then presented as the model on which to base the development of agricultural development strategies. As stated in Clark et al. (2012), the concept of induced innovation was first introduced by Hicks (1932) and refined by Hayami and Ruttan (1971) and others. The Induced Innovation Hypothesis (IIH) has been utilized in analysing and charting the process of technical change in agriculture across different agricultural systems such as the United Kingdom 1953-2000 (Piesse et al., 2011), Canadian agriculture 1958-2006, (Clark et al., 2012). The idea is that "changes in relative prices of factors are expected to induce development and implementation of new technology to save the relatively more expensive inputs" (Liu and Shumway, 2009:p2).

As an agricultural development model, induced innovation resulted from the "efforts to develop a model of agricultural development in which technical change is

treated as endogenous to the development process, rather than as an exogenous factor that operates independently of other development processes" (Ruttan, 1977:202). It was stimulated by the observation that different countries have successfully followed alternative paths of technical change for agricultural development. According to Ruttan (1977:204) "there is clear evidence that technology can be developed to facilitate the substitution of relatively abundant and hence cheap factors for relatively scarce and hence expensive factors of production". The reasoning is that technical innovation in agriculture increases productivity where the inducement arises from the scarcity or relative costs of alternative factor inputs. Where the technical change is endogenous, it is more likely to result from the substitution of factors of production that are cheaper to access with those that are more expensive or difficult to acquire and use. The cited examples are those of Japan and Taiwan on one hand where the constraints created by the inelasticity of land were offset by the development of high yielding crop varieties that enabled the substitution of fertilisers for land. The other cited cases are those of the USA, Canada and Australia where mechanical power substituted labour given the challenge of limited labour supply.

A close examination of Ruttan's article shows that for Nigerian agriculture, the abundant factor that technical change should take advantage of is the abundant labour. This should involve deliberate policy efforts to develop the capacities of individuals engaged in agricultural activities. The contrasting reality is that the intervention of the Nigerian state in fertiliser markets via official subsidy is based more on the high payoff input model than on the induced innovation model. The persuasion is that with fertilisers, the problem of decline in soil fertility is sufficiently addressed enabling farmers to increase yield per hectare.

The foregoing argument does not cancel out the importance of chemical fertilisers for Nigeria's agriculture. The point being made is that the fortunes of Nigerian agriculture can only be significantly improved with the effective combination of different aspects of different models for agricultural production. While working to increase the consumption of fertilisers by smallholder farmers, the development of capacities of the abundant labour force for agriculture is the essential catalyst for the transformation of Nigeria's

agriculture. The input challenge can be significantly offset by the augmentation of human capacity.

2.1.1 Fertiliser Regimes/Eras in Nigeria

Two academic sources provide what could be termed a chronicle of highlights of the fertiliser process in Nigeria beginning in the 1970s. A close examination of the regimes creates the impression that not all decisions and actions relating to fertiliser subsidy differing temporally from other decisions and actions qualify as regimes or eras as much forward and backward movement is identifiable through the chronology. The academic sources from where this chronology is distilled are Cook et al., 2009 and Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010.

1. The Early 70s

The first period documented is the early 1970s. According to Cook et al. (2009), the Federal Government did not give serious attention to agriculture at this time due to the diversion of its attention to oil revenues leaving the states with sufficient leeway for the exercise of discretion in the determination of agricultural policies. As a derivative of these circumstances, states in the period before 1976 procured and distributed fertilisers independently. Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010) add that states utilized sales agents and extension systems in the procurement and distribution of fertilisers. The amount of subsidy paid on fertilisers varied with each state within a range of 25-50%. The main problem identified with this period was the prevalence of inter-state arbitrage due to differences in the rate of subsidy.

2. 1976-1986

In 1976 a significant change occurred when the Federal Government established the Fertiliser Procurement Distribution Division (FPDD) and centralized procurement and distribution. The FPDD procured fertilisers at the seaports from the private sector while the Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company Ltd. (FSFC) established in 1976, paid for transportation and distribution to all the states. The states then distributed fertilisers through extension centres using a depot system at subsidy rates ranging from 75-85% depending on the states. The problems with this stage were excessive storage and transit losses as well as late or non-delivery of fertilisers because of problems of transportation.

3. 1986-1991

The introduction of the structural adjustment programme affected the fertiliser sector with subsidy dropping to 28% causing an increase in input prices as high as 300%. This reduced consumption rates since smallholder farmers depended on input subsidies and by 1990 the government raised subsidies to 80%. Within this period the Federal Government decentralised fertiliser procurement and distribution with the states transporting fertiliser from the ports. The transport cost was however reimbursed by the federal government. The National Fertiliser Company (NAFCON) was established in 1988 leading to an increase in domestic production. The installed capacity of the plant included 1000 tons ammonia per day, 1500 tons per day of urea and 1000 tons per day for NPK. It also had a blending capacity of 586,000 metric tons. In 1991, the FPDD established six depots in Minna, Gombe, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Funtua and Makurdi to enhance efficiency in distribution. Some states could not afford transportation costs and this incurred demurrage for the Federal Government; storage and transit losses also continued within this period. For Benue state, the Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA) was the public institution with the responsibility for the handling of fertiliser matters within the period under discussion. Appendix 2 contains some data on the quantity and types of fertiliser distributed within the period in Benue state.

4. 1992-1996

The depot system was abandoned and the FPDD distributed imported fertiliser while NAFCON distributed locally produced fertiliser. Within the states, fertilisers were distributed by Ministries of Agriculture and Agricultural Development Projects. For the years 1992, 1993 and 1994, subsidy rates were 77%, 65% and 65% respectively; the federal, state and local governments shared responsibility for the subsidy. By 1995 the federal government stopped the importation of fertilisers and transferred the responsibility to the private sector. The states transported fertiliser from the ports and the Federal Government reimbursed their transport costs. Transit and storage losses continued.

5. 1997-1999

In 1997 the Federal Government discontinued subsidies and completely liberalized the fertiliser sector while import tariffs were reduced from ten to five per cent. The policy of liberalization was however not successful because the private sector was ill-prepared to effectively take over the fertiliser market and this drastically reduced consumption rates forcing the government to re-introduce subsidy at 50%, reduced to 25% in 1999. In May 1999, the Federal Government procured 101,000 tons of fertilisers which were distributed by the states and targeted at smallholder farmers in the local government areas.

6. 1999-2010

In August 2000 the Federal Government removed fertiliser subsidies again and also abolished import tariffs. The implementation of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) included a call for the review of the input supply delivery system and the development of an effective private input sector. However, in 2001 the Federal Government again procured and subsidized a portion of fertiliser at 25% and re-introduced import tariffs at 5%. Except for the year 2000, the Federal Government procured fertilisers for sale to states at 25% subsidy under the Fertiliser Market Stabilization Programme (FMSP). Under this arrangement state governments also provided additional subsidies and also procured fertiliser independently outside FMSP for sale to their farmers. Only 30% of subsidized fertilisers reached smallholder farmers at the subsidized price (Banful et al., 2010).

7. 2011 to 2015

The Federal Government in 2010 commenced a process of reforming Nigeria's agriculture to properly position it as a business driven by the private sector and supported by public policy. An agricultural policy blueprint named the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) was designed and launched in 2011. The document comprised a holistic treatment of value chain constraints in all sub-sectors of agriculture.

In the farm input sub-sector, the ATA introduced the Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme under which smallholder farmers were targeted through the innovative electronic wallet. Pre-registered farmers received an allocation of fertiliser and other farm inputs via a mobile phone alert and redeemed such by paying a percentage of the cost from specified agro-dealers also registered on the scheme (FMARD, 2011;

FEPSAN, 2012). This scheme was implemented in 2012 introducing a previously non-existing dichotomy between the federal and state government in respect to fertiliser procurement and distribution. Under this arrangement, while the Federal Government completely withdrew from fertiliser procurement and distribution with an effective transfer of those functions to the private sector, most states continued to operate within the provisions of the 1999-2010 regimes. According to FEPSAN (2014:16), the pre-GES fertiliser procurement and distribution system were "…fraught with fraud, discrepancies and inefficiencies. Governments at the federal and state levels were spending a lot of money on farm inputs (fertiliser and seeds in particular) which were not reaching the intended beneficiaries (smallholder farmers) and thus, had no impact on the national food output or farmers income". The GES was, therefore, a reform measure aimed at a positive transformation of Nigerian agriculture to meet domestic food requirements and increase the contribution of agriculture to the export market.

The objective of GES was the facilitation of collaborative and synergetic action amongst "critical actors" in the fertiliser value chain to increase productivity, incomes, and food security (FEPSAN, 2014:16). The scheme also set out to correct the distortions in fertiliser markets created by government direct involvement in the procurement and distribution of fertilisers. The GES nucleus entailed moving government out of fertiliser procurement and distribution; engaging private-sector participants such as banks, fertiliser producers, importers, distributors and agro-dealers in the ownership of the fertiliser value chain. Within this period, fertilisers were produced locally and imported from external sources. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 provide some statistical details on imported and locally produced fertiliser for some of the years within this period.

Table 2.3: Fertiliser Production in Nigeria (2013-2017)

HS code	Product	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3102100000	Urea	235,000	170,000	281,750	695,000	1,420, 325
3103100000	SSP	15,000	491	611	-	
Total mt		250,000	170,491	282,361	695,000	1,420,325

Source: Africafertiliser.org 2008

8. 2016 to 2020

In 2016, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched a new initiative that explicitly aimed at consolidating the gains of the ATA for Nigerian Agriculture. The new agriculture roadmap is known as the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) which like the ATA preceding proposes a holistic reform aimed at addressing two key concerns in agriculture. The first is reducing the volume of food importation while the second is raising the contribution of agriculture to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The APP identifies ill-timed availability and adulteration of fertilisers as the reason for low farm productivity and related low-income earnings by farmers. With the identification of this value chain constraint, the stated policy intervention objective of the APP is to promote the timely availability of good quality inputs utilizing privately controlled agro-dealer networks. Actionable points in the proposed policy reform include approval of the fertiliser act, development of measures to stimulate domestic production of quality fertilisers and promotion of the penetration of rural markets by agro-dealers.

The APP has also detailed its specific programme prominent amongst which is analysing and addressing constraints in private-sector production and distribution as well as enhancing standards for fertilisers. According to a report by AfricaFertiliser.org (2018), apparent fertiliser consumption in Nigeria grew by 63% in 2017 over the previous year and this increase is due to the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI). Apparent fertiliser consumption is calculated using the formula Apparent consumption = Production + Imports – Exports –non-fertiliser use. The estimation of the yearly consumption of fertiliser for 2013 to 2017 is presented in Table 2.5. The aggregate import figures of 804,093 for 2017 indicate a significant increase over the other years apart from 2013. The high import figures for the year 2013 are attributable to the GES of the ATA under the Jonathan government as a consolidation year after the initial implementation in 2012. Table 2.3 also contains a high figure of 1,420,325 representing local production of fertiliser for the year 2017 and this combines with the import figure to support an apparent consumption of 1,564, 816 for 2017 alone. However, the positive figures do not imply that the PFI under the APP constitutes a final solution to the challenges in Nigeria's fertiliser industry. While the figures indicate overall supply and consumption, they do not disaggregate consumption according to different categories of farmers. Whereas, the

Federal government announced a general reduction in the price of fertiliser to N5500 for a 50kg bag, the actual price at which farmers especially those in the rural areas purchase fertiliser is higher due to logistics costs incurred by dealers.

Table 2.4: Fertiliser Imports in Nigeria (2013-2017)

HS code	Fertiliser name	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3105200000	NPK	294,980	344,879	165,684	380,455	399,949
3104200000	MOP	13,921	13,721	408	3,683	121,846
3105300000	DAP		5,500	5,250	102,770	
3105510000	NP compounds	87,988	68,535	47,986	115,845	96,984
3102210000	Ammonium sulphate	12,301	2,321	10,483	27,450	40,248
3102100000	Urea	598,616	291,966	120,346	21,013	12
Other fertilisers		6,153	20,796	67,569	40,298	42,285
Total (mt)		1,013,959	742,216	417,976	593,994	804,093

Source: Africafertiliser.org. 2018

The APP also identified and proposed policy reforms to remove institutional constraints for the availability of fertilisers. These institutional constraints are: apathy in states for any programme driven by the Federal Government, absence of local governments from policy execution discussions and processes, disturbance of government intervention of market processes and hampering of the development of the private sector and scattered and incompatible or inefficient policy processes and programmes of the various stakeholders at federal and state levels.

Table 2.5: Fertiliser Consumption in Nigeria (2013-2017)

HS code	Fertiliser name	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
3102100000	Urea	765,731	423,966	319,656	386,383	760,734	2,656,470
3105200000	NPK	270,919	344,879	165,684	380,455	399,949	1,561,886
3104200000	MOP	13,921	13,721	408	3,683	121,846	153,579
3105300000	DAP			5,500	5,250	102,770	13,520
3105510000	NP compounds	87,988	68,535	47,986	115,845	96,984	417,338
3102210000	Ammonium sulphate	12,301	2,321	10,483	27,450	40,248	92,803
Other Fertilisers		63,099	20,796	68,180	40,298	42,285	234,658
Total (mt)		1,213,959	874,216	617,897	959,364	1,564, 816	5,230,254

Source: Africafertiliser.org (2018)

As a derivative of the APP, the Federal Government introduced the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI) in 2017 which broadly addresses value chain constraints identified in the APP document. Under the PFI the Federal Government has facilitated an agreement between FEPSAN and a Moroccan phosphate mining company OCP for the supply of discounted phosphate to support domestic production of fertilisers. Several fertiliser blending plants around the country are already producing fertilisers based on this arrangement.

2.2 Constraints to the use of Fertiliser in sub-Saharan Africa

Although the indispensability of chemical fertilisers to agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is acknowledged within official and scholarly circles, fertiliser consumption within the region is significantly lower than world averages (Mwangi, 1996; African Union, 2006; Kelly, 2006; Liverpool- Tasie et al., 2010; FMARD, 2011; Chude et al., 2012; Sommer et al., 2013; Wanzala- Mlobela et al., 2013; Wallace and Knausenberger, 1997). Sommer et al. (2013) note particularly that by 2010 no country in Sub-Saharan Africa had reached the target of 50kg per hectare per year set by the Abuja Fertiliser Summit in 2006 to be reached by 2015. Along with acknowledgement of low consumption rates are attempts aimed at identifying factors behind low fertiliser use in Sub-Saharan Africa. Okoboi and Barungi (2012) identified limited knowledge on the use of fertiliser as well as lack of sufficient market information due to limited fertiliser specific extension services as the most profound constraint to fertiliser consumption in Uganda. Other constraints identified by the authors are low access to credit and constrained access to input and output markets. These constraints identified by Okoboi and Barungi (2012) arguably indicate that agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa is dominated by smallholder farmers.

Sommer et al. (2013) direct attention to policy-related constraints of lack of enabling policies for the private industry and poor infrastructure as explanations for low fertiliser consumption. Wallace and Knausenberger (1997:VI), capture a broad range of constraints to the use of fertiliser in sub-Saharan Africa including those already identified by other authors as,

> Lack of credit, poor marketing capabilities, high transport costs, lack of availability of fertiliser, inadequate demand to stimulate investment in production and distribution, lack of crop markets, devaluation of domestic currencies, and weak extension services constrain fertiliser use …These factors-along with unpredictable rainfall-are often more important than the price of fertiliser.

Apart from Wallace and Knausenberger (1997), a close look at the list of factors constraining fertiliser use omits or de-emphasizes the market price of fertiliser which in contrast is one of the key justifications for fertiliser subsidy in Nigeria. Official fertiliser subsidy as already acknowledged in the work aims at reducing the cost of fertilisers, thereby increasing access for low-income farmers who are perceived as excluded by the price bar. The use of price reduction via subsidy to induce smallholder farmers' use of fertiliser is due to an agricultural strategy that is not sufficiently holistic in identifying barriers to higher consumption of fertiliser in the country.

Kelly (2006) recognizes three leading hypotheses on the basis for low fertiliser demand in sub-Saharan Africa which encapsulates several factors. According to her, weak fertiliser response which relates to output/nutrient ratios constitutes the first hypothesis. This relates to the fact that before making decisions on whether to use chemical fertilisers or not, the key question most likely to be raised by the farmer is whether fertilisers will make any significant positive difference to crop yields. Where this is not strongly and sufficiently answered in the affirmative, the inclination will tilt towards little or no use of fertilisers. The second hypothesis is unfavourable price relationships relating to input/output price ratios. Unfavourable price relationship correlates with the weak market power of smallholder farmers as peasants who dominate agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. For this category of producers, the capacity to determine prices within factor and commodity markets does not exist. The prevailing reality is high factor costs are juxtaposed against low commodity prices. This constitutes an automatic dis-incentive to fertiliser demand for a greater proportion of agricultural producers in Sub-Saharan Africa. The third hypothesis is low net returns relating to value/cost ratios with similar ramifications as the second hypothesis.

Chinua et al. (2012) explore reasons behind poor crop yields by farmers in Africa with several of them bordering on access to and use of fertiliser. These also include factors

constraining the use of fertilisers such as insufficient knowledge in the use of fertilisers, weak fertiliser markets, farmers' lack of access to credit and other farm inputs, low quality of available fertilisers, inappropriate fertiliser packaging sizes and low farmer literacy. Liverpool-Tasie and Salau (2010) attribute low consumption of fertiliser to demand and supply factors identified as low farmer incomes and high input market prices as consequences of limited fertiliser availability. Another factor limiting fertiliser usage is the nature of public policy responses to fertiliser-related issues.

Liverpool-Tasie and Salau (2010:3) provide details on factors behind low use of fertilisers which address issues similar to explanations offered by Kelly (2006).

> These include factors that: (1) influence the agronomic potential for fertiliser use; (2) convert the potential into farmers' effective demand for fertiliser; (3) determine the growth of aggregate fertiliser supply, and (4) develop the fertiliser distribution system.

In the case of Benue state and Nigeria increasing research in soil1mapping by soil scientists (Abagyeh et al., 2016) provide information on the suitability of specific formulations of inorganic fertilisers for specific soil types as well as crops. To a large extent, the agronomic potential for fertiliser use in Nigeria has been established by academic research and trial and error learning by farmers. The dominance of self-learning by farmers is a function of limited or non-existent extension services. Besides, the persisting depletion of soil fertility makes crop production fertiliser dependent. Related to this are factors that are important for the conversion of such agronomic potential for fertiliser use into effective demand for fertiliser. This is where factors such as the market price of inputs play a role.

According to Dangote (2004), the factors that constrain fertiliser producers and dealers also limited farmers' access to fertilisers. Some of these factors are the capital intensive nature of fertiliser importation and distribution business which is compounded by high commercial bank lending rates, frequent fluctuations in exchange rates, and lack of quality control. These factors raise the total operating costs for the private-sector fertiliser and these are transferred to the consumer leading to fertiliser demand-side constraint of lack of affordability.

2.3 Perspectives on Peasant Agriculture

Agriculture in Nigeria and other developing countries is dominated by peasant producers who produce primarily for auto consumption with a limited market share for commodities. Although this economic category constitutes original agricultural producers in Nigeria and has remained the greatest supplier of food and other agro-based commodities, prevailing perspectives on peasant productivity are uncomplimentary. Fundamentally, peasant agriculture is viewed as characterized by low productivity and ill-suited for agricultural commercialization. Manyong, et al. (2005:2) identified constraints to the increased commercialization of agriculture in Nigeria and argued

> From the perspective of sustainable agricultural growth and development in Nigeria, the most fundamental is the peasant nature of the production system with its low productivity, poor response to technology adoption strategies, and poor returns on investments.

Arguably, this line of reasoning relates the un-attained agriculture potentials of Nigeria to peasant domination of agricultural productivity. Nevertheless, the adjectives utilized in the description of peasant production do not necessarily represent the intrinsic and immutable qualities of peasant agriculture. Christensen and Witucki, (1982:890) toe the line of Manyong et al. (2005) by stating that food production in sub-Saharan Africa is poor due partly to the structure of production which is labour intensive. This is because it utilises simple hand tools and is carried out on small farms where the adoption of crop technologies is either impractical or uneconomic. In contrast, the Africa Leadership Forum Farm House Dialogue titled Food and Development Dialogue II held 27-30 July 1989, observed that the small scale farmer is central to and crucial for the important question of food security for Nigeria. The Forum insisted that the reason for limited progress of agricultural research in the country is in part due to repeated failure to observe and learn from the production systems and techniques of the small scale farmer with track records of success against environmental challenges

It is instructive to note the unanimity of literature on Nigeria's pre-colonial economy with evidence on the pivotal role of peasant agriculture in providing the raw materials that fed metropolitan industries as well as the documented mass failures of

official schemes for plantation agricultural production in Nigeria (Forest 1981). The 'peasantization' of indigenous farmers (Imoagene, 1989) achieved through their integration into market conditions produced a vast army of independent smallholder producers whose commodities were appropriated via official mechanisms such as poor pricing using commodity boards. Nwanze (2010) argues that smallholder farmers in Africa have no insurance, no subsidies and no access to credit, infrastructure is poor, productive assets such as land, water and new technologies are insufficient. His submission underscores the central but neglected role of the peasantry in Nigeria's agriculture. Much of the explanations for the poor performance of agricultural policies lies in the insufficient factoring of the interests and needs of smallholder farmers in these policies. Peasant agriculture is limited in its productivity not necessarily due to an inherent congenital attribute but as a child of its circumstances given the negative political environment that restricts access to agricultural technology while simultaneously depriving the peasantry full gains of its productive efforts. It is the typical case of negative profiling that makes it possible to blame the victim for its circumstances, inverted existentialism since the freedom of the peasantry is circumscribed by official rhetoric and action.

Writing on the peasantry and land reforms, Shima (2005), states that between 1975 and 1980, the Nigerian government sought to increase agricultural production to combat food shortages. Principle instrument was land reform through the 1978 Land Use Act that sought to abolish the traditional land tenure system perceived by some as inhibiting large scale agricultural production. His key question is 'what are the socio-economic and political implications of the 1978 land reform act? Using class analysis, he explores the extent to which the reform exacerbated the land problem for the peasants who were being disposed of their most basic means of production and were being turned into semi proletariat. The 1978 land reform abolished communal ownership and established individual tenure under state control. Attempts at large scale capitalist agriculture only succeeded; in displacing peasants and converting them into wage labourers. To Shima, Peasants should be supported to increase productivity as they are more agriculturally productive than the takeover by Kulaks (middle or rich peasants) and capitalist farmers

whose background is bureaucracy and commerce. He also argues correctly that peasant agriculture is also critical for fighting poverty.

Nafziger (2013) edges away from profiling the peasantry and rather looks at the intersection of policy preferences of the local elite and choices of leaders of peasant institutions of self-government as explanations for the direction of changes in agricultural productivity. In this regard, peasant productivity is not just a subjective function of peasant proclivities but an outcome of political mechanisms active in the environment. Prioritising political factors as explanations for the nature of peasant productivity and existence also underlines Jemma's (2004) discourse on rural land allocation and its effects on Ethiopian peasants in the southern territories before the Land Reform of 1975.

In a more profound departure, Bates (1984:234) counters conventional orthodoxy on agrarian economies with the assertion that identifiable features or traits of such societies such as the existence of common land rights, the avoidance of market exchanges, the turning to subsistence production and so on by which they are classified pre-capitalist are arguably products of the encounter of agrarian societies with agents of capitalism. This ties in closely with Imoagene's thesis that the peasantry is a conscious creation of imperialism through the process of 'peasantization'. With this understanding, it is questionable to place the responsibility of low productivity on the shoulders of the peasantry without an adequate capturing of the role of official action whether colonial or post-colonial.

Valtonen (2000) views peasant agricultural productivity as a viable sector capable of transiting from subsistence to market production depending only on the removal of state and market imposed constraints. To him, social scientists, economists and policymakers ought to move away from the expressed or latent notion that peasants are bound to disappear in the long run under the overwhelming power of capitalist expansion. Instead, a constructive approach that permits even if the tentative growth of the peasant sector should be adopted. The persistence of the peasantry alone speaks for the inherent elasticity and susceptibility for the transformation of the peasant sector and reinforces the argument for not accepting its demise as an ultimate inevitability. Also, the survival of peasants (as small scale agricultural producers) and modernization need not be mutually

exclusive processes and the adaptation and transformation of peasants need not result in their elimination. The productive capacities and market opportunities, as well as capabilities of peasants, can be improved without the destruction of the peasant sector. An increase in agricultural productivity does not require the sacrifice of the peasantry on the altar of progress by denial of access to means of production.

Idachaba (2011) advances arguments that insist on the centrality of the peasant or small-scale farmer in Nigeria's agricultural transformation. According to him, small-scale farmers constitute the centrepiece of an optimal agricultural transformation strategy given their proven resilience and some key considerations. These comprise the fact that over 95 per cent of total domestic production and over 90 per cent of total marketed supplies of food and fibre is by small-scale farmers. Aggregated total marketed supplies from farming households is larger than aggregated marketed supplies from large scale farmers who are few in number. Also, small-scale farmers exhibit rational economic behaviour, are highly efficient in the organization of productive resources and are responsive to economic incentives and prices.

2.4 The State and Input Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa

The political economy of agricultural policies has been extensively treated in existing social science literature and can be located within the neo-Marxist discourse on the role of the state in perpetuating class differentiation and exploitation (Williams, 1980; Nnoli, 1981; Imoagene, 1989; Dumoye, 1989; Ake, 1996; Agbaje and Adebanwi 2003). Two main strands of thought are identifiable. First and prominent is the argument that agriculture suffers neglect in Sub-Saharan Africa generally due to an urban bias in economic policy (Ake, 1981; Berendsen and van der Veen, 2013; Henley and van Donge, 2013). Agricultural neglect in Africa is traced to colonial development policy described aptly by Ake (1981) as enclave development which involved a concentration of development in urban centres to the neglect of rural dwellers and their means of livelihood. Post-colonial development policy was unable to move away from this urban bias with a marked emphasis on industrialization believed to hold the key to Africa's development and almost illusionary attempts to catch up with the West (Berendsen and van der Veen, 2013). This development paradigm created a preference for what Nnoli

describes as artefacts of development concentrated in the urban sectors, marginalized agricultural development simultaneously exposing it to foreign capital exploitation and impoverished and froze the rural farmer in the social category of the peasantry (Nnoli, 1981). The dialectical character of development which according to him transforms the environment and man has not been realised through official development policy. Instead, he argues that the peasant is reproduced as a peasant.

Henley and van Donge (2013) argue that state action in rural and agricultural development which led to higher incomes for farmers explains Southeast Asia's success and its absence in Africa is responsible for Africa's failure. Similarly, Fernando (2013) examines the role of elite considerations seen in access to credit facilities, policy implementation and outreach, the role of statutory regulating and marketing agencies, and the politics of ethnicity in a comparative study of Malaysia and Kenya. He concludes that political and economic factors have exerted different influences on the agricultural and economic development of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Statistics demonstrating the different trajectories of agricultural development for Malaysia and Kenya since independence are used to support the argument that "the politics underlying policy often indicate a vital symbiotic relationship with economic performance" (Fernando, 2013: 229). It is indeed impossible to fully understand economic performance where the politics of policy is discounted.

Ake (1996) focuses on the relegation of smallholder farmers by official agriculture policy in preference for large scale capitalist agriculture. According to him, this relegation results from the regard of smallholder agriculture as an obstacle to progress and a regressive form whose disappearance is a necessary condition for growth. While conceding that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with capitalist agriculture particularly when it does not constitute an excessive drain on state resources, he argues that the liquidation or capture of the smallholder farmer advocated by some analysts is counterproductive to the internalization of growth dynamics which is indispensable for sustainable development. Although he acknowledges the constraints of the smallholder approach, he is critical of the refusal of development strategy to accept its validity and build on it as the most important productive unit in Africa. According to Chinsinga

(2012), political attitudes akin to those identified by Ake compromise the success of official intervention in agriculture by limiting motivation to ensure the soundness and technical efficiency of the programme. There is no sense of urgency he argues to employ fertiliser policy as a tool for rural transformation. In contrast to these attitudes, the smallholder farming sector should rather be regarded as a cornerstone of national economic and agricultural development and not as a transitional social safety net along the road to urbanization and factory wage labour (Fami et al., 2009). Attitudinal change towards smallholder farmers can increase their contribution to economic development as "minimizing the constraints on the activities of economic agents is conducive to economic efficiency" (Ruben and Lerman, 2005:32). An acknowledgement of smallholder farmers as critical economic agents especially in the food and agro-industrial sector is important for agricultural and national development.

The second strand of neo-Marxist thought on the state and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa which closely ties with the first is the instrumentation of agricultural needs and interests of peasants. Instrumentation occurs when policies such as fertiliser subsidies are promoted because they facilitate the accumulation of public funds by the political elite (Idachaba, 2011). Jerven (2014) argues that most sub-Saharan African countries initiated and sustained agricultural subsidies because they are politically productive. This explains why certain agricultural policy interventions are preferred over others. He rejects the urban versus rural schism which he views as rather simplistic and inadequate for explaining official tampering with agricultural statistics to legitimize policy preferences. Drawing on data from India's green revolution, Nigeria's structural adjustment and Malaysia's fertiliser subsidy, official tampering of agricultural statistics is succinctly illustrated. Due to the weakness of data on agricultural production in developing economies, it is subject to political pressure particularly when the government is subsidizing agricultural inputs. While the lack of reliable evidence on the agricultural sector is a problem for analysts and scholars, it provides an opportunity for the government to ensure that the aggregate evidence that does exist supports their policies.

According to Dumoye (1989:88), the instrumental role of agricultural policies is seen in the exploitation of the peasant producers facilitated by a state-capitalist alliance.

By this, “the accumulation and production needs of capital which bear on the type of agricultural policies that are pursued by many African states have tended to constitute major drawbacks to agricultural development and rural transformation”. He argues further that capitalist accumulation produces pauperization of peasant producers, exacerbates rural differentiation and breeds landless peasants. Amin (2009:1) argues similarly that “in the peripheries, this pauperizing dispossession manifests itself in the expropriation of the peasantry and the plundering of natural resources of the regions in question”. Circumscribed access to farm inputs contributes substantially to the pauperization of the peasantry.

A categorisation of political and domestic pressures as adapted from Frieden and Lake (2000) summarises the different arguments above as illumination on agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. These are the electoral importance of smallholder farmers given their vast numbers, the economic centrality of agriculture in Sub-Saharan African economies including Nigeria the extent of government concern about the broad ramifications of agricultural policy and the political clout of the peasantry. Concerning America's automobile industry where the authors originally reflected on the consequences of the interplay of these dimensions, a positive correlation could be drawn between the electoral importance of the automobile sector, the centrality of the automobile industry to the American economy, the broad ramifications of automobile sector policy together with the political clout of industry of the automobile industry and the policy choices of the state in the sector. In contrast, the vast numbers of smallholder farmers provide incentives for instrumentation where agricultural policy is employed as a lease on their necks, tugging them in the voting direction desired by the political elite. Also, while food shortages are potentially disruptive to national stability, policymakers tend to exhibit less sensitivity to the ramifications of decisions and actions in the agricultural sector. Smallholder farmers also possess little or no political clout and thereby exert no significant pressure on the decision making and implementation mechanisms and processes.

While these arguments reflect the existing situation, studies that link challenges in the fertiliser sector to government attitude towards agriculture and the peasantry (Morgan

and Solarz, 1994) are few and no study has focused particularly on Benue State in this regard.

2.5 Social Categories and Relations in the Agricultural Input Sector

The use of the term ‘class’ attained prominence in academic discourse owing to the ascendance of Marxist intellectual thought for a greater part of the 20th century which relied substantially on class analysis as the mainframe for understanding the workings of modern human society. Marx and Engels (1998:127) categorically stated that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". By implication, only a prior identification and understanding of the nature of the interaction between the classes what he terms the social relations of production, supports a plausible explanation for any other aspects of existence be it politics, religion or even the arts. By this reasoning and based on his 'objective' study of history, he classified modern-day capitalist society into four main classes: the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the lumpen-proletariat and the peasantry depending on the relationship of each to the means of production. Within the formal industrial complex, two classes- the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, are identified by Marxist analysis as critical, each possessing the factors of production of capital and labour respectively. While acknowledging the existence of other classes, Marxist analysis revolves mainly around class struggles between these two classes given their centrality in the production process under a capitalist system.

Classical Marxist class categories today contend with a wide variety of alternative class and stratification schemes some of which even deny the concept of exploitation as a component of stratification. The difficulty of fitting current social differentiation into the Marxist mould shows sharply in the case of Nigeria where the co-existence of pre-capitalist modes of production with capitalist forms has produced a social configuration different from what obtains within advanced capitalist societies. The predominance of the state in economic management juxtaposed with the low technology and labour intensive primary commodity production has created two dominant stakeholders of the political elite on one hand and the smallholder farmers on the other. Differentiation between these two categories is determined more by political factors and less by the economy. Economic outcomes evident in the interaction between these classes are in reality, consequences of

political decisions and actions driving economic behaviour. In this regard, therefore, social differentiation becomes primarily a function of politics because politics and the economy are fused in the state.

According to Everingham (1997:2), "in developing countries with poor agrarian majorities, political stability and economic security in the countryside hinge on the quality of relations between the state and the diverse interests that make up rural society". This statement largely supports the identification of two dominant categories operating within an agrarian economy as the political elite representing the state in the quotation above and the peasantry as representing the interests that make up rural society. Wright (2002:19) states,

> …the premise behind the idea of social relations is that when people go about their lives in the world, when they make choices and act in various ways, their actions are systematically structured by their relations to other people who are also making choices and acting.

Conceptualizing social categories is a theoretical exercise that is complex given the varieties of their forms under different formations. The peasantry has been viewed as having widely varying natures under different historical epochs and should be understood within the context of specific modes of production or articulation of modes of production (Bryceson, 1980). Similarly, Edelman (2013:6) states that "peasantries nowhere form a homogeneous mass or agglomerate, but are always and everywhere typified themselves by internal differentiation along many lines." The nature and character of the political elite are also largely defined by the socio-economic formation and the role it accords to this economic category ranging from the almost marginal role of an uninvolved regulator as in a fully functional market economy to that of an active participant in centrally planned economies. The absence of a universal understanding of these categories derives also from the multiplicity of scholars and the diversity of orientations from which their definitions and conceptualization spring. Emphasis on the political elite and the peasantry as the main social categories for analysis in this study is not prosaic and rather highlights polarizations typical of Nigeria's agricultural economy. Congregating at one pole are the dominant forces including capitalist farmers, merchant capital, traditional rulers and the political

elite with the last category acting as cement for the pursuit of coinciding interests at the pole. At the other pole is situated the peasants, petty input retailers and other dominated social categories with the peasant constituting the more readily identifiable and consequential group for the analysis of agricultural policies and programmes.

2.5.1 Peasant Existentialism

Edelman (2013:2) identifies four different sources that define the peasantry as, historical definitions, social scientific definitions, activist definitions and normative definitions. A run through the reading of these various definitional orientations throws up a wide berth of thought on the nature of the peasantry bothering on the one extreme on sentiments, on the other, scientific and scholarly understanding. The peasantry comes across to some as a lazy, ignorant, formless, unproductive and even criminal element in society fit only for servitude and subservience and incapable of independent existence and self-management (Edelman, 2013). Marxist's notion of the peasantry is that of a class existing on the fringes of the capitalist system possessing and exerting insignificant impact on the functioning of the mode of production and lacking revolutionary abilities, 'a sack of potatoes' incapable of changing self or society. This conception does not fit peasants across space and time as Southeast Asian peasants have provided the bedrock for the transformation of several countries within the region in a manner describable as revolutionary. Scholarly documentation of the Southeast Asian miracle acknowledges the role of the peasants in such fundamental changes (Fernando, 2013; Henley and van Donge, 2013).

Valtonen (2000:21) views a peasant "as a small-scale direct producer of agricultural commodities but without excluding other means of gaining a livelihood simultaneously, temporary or even permanent..." This view of the peasantry avoids any ideological opinion on the peasantry and rather offers a value-free objective definition that utilizes quantification as criteria for identifying peasants. The appellation of peasants is utilized to depict a specific scale of agricultural production. From his study of Mexican peasants, the average size of farms for the socio-economic category is five hectares and below. According to Valtonen, the peasantry is a category within the capitalist mode of production and it is wrong to view it as a distinct mode of production existing side by side

with the market economy. This argument implies that peasant decisions on what to produce, how much and when are influenced by market forces of demand and supply and not just subsistence necessities.

The peasantry according to Beer (1976:6), "is small… scale agricultural producers, who either own their farms or have rights to the use of land who farm largely with their labour and that of their family who own their implements and who purchase their seeds, fertiliser and so on". Beer also cites Redfield's (1960) categorization of peasants as those for whom agriculture is a way of life, not a business for profit but adds that the distinction is more academic than real.

Utilizing Beer's work as a background, the peasantry is conceived as an economic category linked inextricably with agriculture and possessing specific attributes with the agricultural means of production, notably land, and agricultural machinery. The specification of the attribute is critical because within agriculture in Nigeria, there is the peasantry (smallholder farmers) and the capitalist farmers, each relating to the sector in different ways. The peasantry is an economic group or class existing either in a purely agrarian society or within one that has begun the rudiments of industrialization and capitalist development. Despite all pretensions to the contrary, Nigeria is an agrarian society with agriculture employing up to two-thirds of the total labour force, contributing up to 45% of its GDP and providing a livelihood for up to 90% of the rural population (Obisesan et al., 2013). It demands that political science research and discourse particularly of the political economy category adequately factor in the peasantry to develop a credible, plausible and reliable theory of political action and behaviour in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa.

Ake (1981) identifies peasants as those for whom

1. The family, immediate or extended is the basic unit for the organization of production.
2. The land is the essential means of production
3. Land tends to be communally owned but usually privately ‘exploited’ subject to certain obligations.

4. Commodity exchange among relatively equal petty producers who produce predominantly use-values.
5. Limited production of exchange values and intermittent contact of some petty producers with wage labour.

Ake (1985:110) extends the discourse on the peasantry beyond its economic behaviour. According to him, peasant social relations are still pre-capitalist characterised by little social atomization and individualism with only a rudimentary differentiation of interests. As a politico-legal entity, the peasant has an underdeveloped legal form, has not yet fully emerged as a legal subject and is not a constitutive element of the state but an object of state power. This is a contradiction in terms given the fact that the peasantry is a powerful social force that remains unexercised because it relates to the state in externality. In contrast to its low legal status, Ake states further that the peasant contributes immensely to the material base of the state. While Ake's characterization of the peasantry significantly depicts peasant realities, their social relations which are not cast in stone are gradually shifting towards increasing atomization, individualism and differentiation of interests. What has persisted in the peasantry is the externalization of relations with the state which prevents active state-peasant engagement aimed at the articulation, aggregation and pursuit of group interests.

Ake's features of the peasantry are collaborated by Sithole et al. (2003) and Obisesan et al. (2013) as resource-poor, with limited access to land, farming implements and generally limited opportunities to intensify production. While these authors describe the identifying features of the peasantry, Nnoli (1981) goes beyond description to detail the existentialists of the Nigerian peasantry as a part of the amalgam of the poor. Notable as a feature of this amalgam is official neglect and marginalization occasioned by the colonial created stereotypical perception of the poor as politically apathetic and atavistic.

Ake (1981) argues with supporting evidence that the apparent independence of the peasantry from the bourgeoisie or capital owning class which is deducible from his enumerated attributes does not preclude the absence of exploitation of the former by the latter. To Ake (1981) and Nnoli (1981), the capitalist class and the state collaborate through several mechanisms and instruments to create and perpetuate the subjugation and

exploitation of the peasantry. These instruments include the manipulation of peasant production through laws specifying what should be produced and the required standards of production, imposition of programmes and inputs ostensibly for the benefit of the farmers but designed to facilitate the integration of the peasant into exploitative commodity relations.

Obisesan et al. (2013) state that fertiliser supply is limited and cost-prohibitive to farmers in sub-Saharan Africa because the cost of fertilisers could be five times the global market price. Poor farmers' dependence on an ever scarce and expensive input probably presents a veritable means of control thereby producing favourable motivation for the creation and sustenance of such artificial conditions. The state and the capital owning class also exploit the peasantry through exchange by which value appropriation is achieved. Like their working-class counterparts of Nnoli's amalgam of the poor, the peasantry gets paid just such prices that would support bare existence while ensuring that the middlemen, state agencies and the capitalist reap the greatest profit possible from peasant agriculture.

Everingham (1997:4) compared the processes of agrarian reform, neoliberal adjustment and democracy in Central America and East Africa and stated that: "peasants were denied the right to participate in state construction which perpetuated the complex problems of rural development, including the tenuous citizenship of poor farmers". Peasants cannot contribute to state construction when the deprived nature of their existence forces them to focus on "the urging of their stomachs" (Everingham (1997:4). He argues further that even rural development strategies, pursued by several Latin American countries, paid little attention to the legitimate interests of the peasantry and thus alienated large sectors of the rural society.

According to Sithole et al. (2003), the kind of political and economic experiences of peasants described by Nnoli have produced conditions under which citizens question relations with the state. These are when they: believe the government is using power against them or not helping them, find policies to be inefficient or otherwise problematic, do feel ignored or misunderstood by the government. These perceptions could lead to what the authors termed society-sponsored disengagement from relations with the state, a

situation that probably explains the acclaimed political apathy of the peasantry who through experience have become suspicious of official programmes and interventions in agriculture. For the Nigerian peasantry, state-sponsored agricultural campaigns and programmes might just be a fiction created by the political elite who are not hungry (Sithole et al., 2003). This implies that in the course of state intervention in agriculture, the disconnection between the political elite and peasant's reality tends towards the questioning of government motives instead of acceptance. It can even be stated as a matter of fact, that the peasantry in Nigeria is out rightly suspicious of government officials or any agents acting in the name and capacity of the state. The state of affairs is not lost on the government which sometimes in seeking legitimacy for policies go as far as manufacturing peasants comprising unemployed youths and party supporters (Sithole et al., 2003) claiming to represent the grassroots.

In discussing the challenges of the small-scale farmer in Nigeria, Idachaba (2011b: 133) identified actor variables that arguably permit application of his description of the realities of the small-scale farmer to the peasantry given the similarity. The operational environment of the small-scale farmer according to him contains constraints that have remained unaddressed such as limited access to credit, no capacity for advocacy and poor rural infrastructure among others. He argues further,

> Nigerian small-scale farmers suffer from the low political cost of agricultural and rural neglect by the political leadership, lack of sincere commitment of the political leadership to agriculture and the perennial problem of the benefits of policies meant for small-scale farmers flowing to unintended beneficiaries (Idachaba, 2011b:133).

Idachaba's argument that political leadership in Nigeria bears negligible costs for neglecting peasant interests is tenable due to observable contradictions in peasant political behaviour. Political participation of peasants rarely includes articulation and aggregation of their interests. Rather, what dominates is a narrow conception of political participation in terms of party membership, attendance at party rallies and chanting of political slogans, campaigning for preferred candidates and voting at elections. Another disconcerting element of peasant notion of political participation is party identification and affiliation as a guarantee of access to 'stomach infrastructure' or largesse from public officeholders. The

low political cost of agricultural and rural neglect by the political leadership is a function of peasants' inability to organise as a national class (Egwu, 1999) for the attainment of its peculiar group interests. Various forms of unequal relationships exist between peasants on one hand and the state on the other and peasants have neither access to nor control over the state (Ekekwe, 1985; Egwu, 1999). Peasants lack opportunities for productive work due to the combined effects of ecological degradation, maladministration of land and inadequate supply of inputs.

2.5.2 The political Elite

Higley (2008:3) defines elites as persons who, by their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, can affect political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elaborating further, he depicts elites as consisting not only of prestigious and established leaders such as top politicians, important businessmen, high-level civil servants and senior military officers but also leaders of trade unions and political mass movements. Higley provides a succinct summary of the kernels of the elite theories of Mosca, Pareto and Michels which have bearing on the thought flow in this study. For Mosca as cited by Higley, political classes usually have a certain material, intellectual or even moral superiority over those they govern, implicitly endorsing the almost super-human perception of self-held by the ruling or political elite. The prevailing attitudes of the political elite towards the peasantry in Nigeria exemplifies this conduct even in the design, making and implementation of developmental policies in the penchant for top-bottom approaches borne out of the perspective that the peasants and other non-ruling classes lack the capacity to decide on the kind of policy that best addresses their circumstance.

A contrasting argument is attributed to Pareto to the end that in real human societies, the elite does not comprise the most talented and deserving individuals. Instead, those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion arise and sustain their position as elites. Michels moves beyond the identification of the characteristics of the elite attempting instead to answer the question of why elites emerge in society. According to him, elites arise out of the need of large organizations to operate efficiently. Higley expands this argument by stating that elites derive from the absence of

robust common interest in large collectivities especially in the detailed features of their functioning.

Gilens and Page (2014) empirically tested extant theories of American politics on elites, interest groups and average citizens and found no support for theories of Majoritarian Electoral Democracy or Majoritarian Pluralism. In contrast, there was ample support for theories of Economic Elite Domination and those of Biased Pluralism. The study concludes that whereas Western Liberal Democracy is perceived as the bedrock of American politics articulates open political space where all interests are accommodated, the experience of politics is dominated by the economic elite and other nuanced interests. Related closely, Mills (1956) documents the immensity of the power of the American elite which he says comprises a triangle of corporate chief executives, the warlords and the politicians. This he juxtaposes with the classic democracy's assumption of power resting with the people, exercised through public opinion and forming the basis of national legislation, and describes it as:

> A set of images out of a fairy tale: they are not adequate even as an approximate model of how the American system of power works. The issues that now shape man's fate are neither raised nor decided by the public at large. The idea of the community of publics is not a description of fact, but an assertion of an ideal, an assertion of a legitimisation masquerading- as legitimations are now apt to do- as fact (Mills, 1956:11).

From Mosca to Schumpeter, Lasswell to Sartori, Mills to Gilens and Page, the elite have enjoyed prominence in intellectual discourse spanning economics, sociology and political science disciplines, starting from the 19th century. While each identifies and places emphasis on different kinds of elites depending largely on their disciplinary backgrounds, their consensus is the rejection of pluralism or populism in politics and governance in primitive and modern societies. The political elite dominates and rules the rest of society due to an inner urge for power, possession of qualities necessary for accession to power such as intelligence and moral aptitude, the aptitude to command and to exercise political control (Varma, 1975). Elite theorists are also unanimous in their assertion that the rule of the political elite is for the actualization of its interest as a class. As such, laws formulated while in the interest of the elite are covered in legal and moral

garbs to dupe the masses into subjection, tend towards inefficiency and corruption, and are analogous to the calculative search for profit by an entrepreneur (Varma, 1975). Egwu (1999) states that the ruling class in Nigeria operates on a fragile material base that is not anchored in production and is engaged in a fierce struggle for power-driven by the desire to control distribution rather than production.

It may not be intellectually safe to argue that modern-day democracy provides an almost perfect platform for elite manipulation of the masses who are 'real possessors' of political power. For instance, Anderson (1984) argues that it is rather difficult to handle the proposition that elites rule and determine policy with little influence from the masses. This is because such a proposition requires the successful identification of a controlling group that is less than the majority in size, "a minority of individuals whose preferences regularly prevail in cases of differences of preferences on key political issues" (Anderson, 1984:31). Anderson's contention is acknowledged but while it might be difficult to identify a controlling minority as a specific group of individuals due partly to the circulation of elites, it cannot be denied that the elite constitutes a pivot on which modern-day democracy revolves.

While it is true that several researchers have tested and proved or disproved the arguments of elite' theorists, it is important to note that for Nigeria, the ascendance of democratic governance goes with the implied ascendance of a democratic society with the implicit assumption of citizen sovereignty. Existing to buffer this intellectual assumption is the rise of western liberalism to global dominance with its implied people dominance in the face of less government and more market control. Taken on their face value, these theoretical positions claim that the exercise of political power especially in public policymaking and execution is directed almost exclusively by the preferences and will of the masses on behalf of whom the political elite rule as 'glorified public servants'. On the contrary, from the discourse on the peasantry, it is apparent that the political elite which conceptually includes elected public officials, the top echelons of the bureaucracy and leadership of dominant political parties conceive of the governed as basically a directionless mass that must be ruled in its interests.

2.6 Linking Politics to Economic Outcomes

Discourses within the social sciences and humanities unanimously and consistently associate political phenomena with economic phenomena. According to Frieden and Lake (2003), the current disciplinary dichotomy between politics and economics was unthinkable before 1900 as virtually all thinkers who were concerned about understanding human society wrote about political economy. The direction of causation has however remained a contentious matter and this has produced polarities that could be termed deterministic. As a perspective for understanding social and political outcomes, Marxism is placed close to the pole of economic determinism. It is the theoretical contention of Marxism that the economy constitutes the base of society, providing the infrastructure on which other societal structures are built. To understand the distribution of political power, it is important to first understand the distribution of economic power as the possession of economic power automatically also confers political power.

At the other end of the pole is political determinism by which political power is critical for societal outcomes including those of an economic nature. Acemoglu and Robinson, (2013) are quite categorical in their submission that the configuration of political power and the manner it is used is decisive for the economic wellbeing of members of human societies. Utilising data obtained across the globe, the authors reject conjectures that link poverty and underdevelopment to variables such as geography and culture, demonstrating the political dimensions of poverty and underdevelopment across space and time. Writing on why some countries are poor the authors are unequivocal that

> Getting it wrong is mostly not about ignorance or culture… To understand this, you have to go beyond economics and expert advice on the best thing to do and, instead, study how decisions get made, who gets to make them, and why those people decide to do what they do. This is the study of politics and political processes. Traditionally economics has ignored politics, but understanding politics is crucial for explaining world inequality. As the economist, Abba Lerner noted in the 1970s, "Economics has gained the title Queen of the social sciences by choosing solved political problems as its domain." (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013:68)

Van de Pijl (2009) argues strongly against de-politicised approaches to understanding and explaining economic outcomes. He rejects such as conscious creations

of the agenda of capital aimed at putting blinders on the deterministic power of political decisions and actions on economic outcomes and preventing critical inquiry into the different structures that support the existing order within society. Similarly, Frieden and lake (2003) contend that an integrated understanding of political and economic affairs creates a richer picture of social processes than the isolated study of politics and economics as separate realms. Attaining such an integrated understanding requires a prior disentangling of economic and political causes from effects.

Baro and Deubel (2006) examine different perspectives on famine and hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa that variously emphasize environmental, demographic, socioeconomic and political causes. They note that theoretical emphasis has shifted from the older environmental and demographic explanations to newer socio-economic and political explanations. Their position is that persistent structural vulnerabilities created by historical and contemporary processes of a political colouration that limit the options of households provide actual explanations for famines and the accompanying mortality in sub-Saharan Africa.

A similar mainstreaming of politics in economic outcomes is evident in Scott (2006:1). Writing on the political economy of capitalism, Scott is explicit in demonstrating that an effective capitalist system functions not just by the guidance of the invisible hand of the pricing mechanism but also by a visible hand managed by the government through a legislature and a bureaucracy. Market forces are not considered sufficient in themselves to provide elucidation on the operations and consequences that spring from capitalism as an economic system. The high cost of development experiences of Newly Industrialising Countries of South Korea and Taiwan, denominated in environmental pollution and high labour unrest as well failures of structural adjustment policies in Africa and Latin America are employed by Broad et al. (2000) to support the argument that markets alone are not sufficient catalysts for development. Critical development strategies advocated by the authors include such that promote broad government, ensure equitable income distribution and are ecologically sound.

According to Frieden and Lake (2003:7), at the heart of the debate on whether to emphasize economics or politics is the critical question of whether policymakers represent

the logic of their own or they reflect domestic socioeconomic interests of groups or classes. The authors present two opposing views on the matter. According to the first view, the state enjoys relative autonomy from the multitude of social, economic and political pressures emanating from society. Notwithstanding the huge number of demands and complaints from these groups, coherent national policy is a product of conscious actions of leaders; the state, in essence, moulds society. To the opposing view, policymakers are only transmitters of underlying societal demands being essential tools in the hands of socioeconomic and political interests. Whichever of these perspectives is preferred, the pivotal role of the state in determining economic outcomes through the instrument of politics is acknowledged. In documenting the politics of Nigeria's amalgamation in 1914 and the resultant consequences for Nigerian statehood, Agbaje and Adebanwi (2003:61), demonstrate the emergence and ingraining of political power as a tool for "cornering resources" within the context of the Nigerian state. For the social scientist generally and for the political scientist, in particular, power exercised as politics constitutes the nerve centre of social interactions and exchanges, discounting it amounts to pseudo-social science.

2.7 Group Consciousness, Political Participation and Fertiliser Distribution

The modern state is expansively extractive and distributive. While it extracts taxes and other kinds of rent, distribution is evident in the provision of a multiplicity of services that constitute the public good. Constituted government operates for the achievement of the goals of extraction and distribution of the state as an agent of the governed. Distributive systems of states are directed by underlining ideologies and philosophies. Market economies give more power of distribution to market forces and centrally controlled economies accord power of distribution to the state. Welfare inclined states can be located somewhere in the middle of the state market continuum, whereas the market is accorded its place, the state intervenes for equity and equality (Lane and Ersson, 1997). By such an arrangement, the interests of different groups within society are more or less accommodated.

In performing its ideologically informed functions, state activity is moderated by the activities of organised groups exerting pressure either for narrow group interests or

more general societal concerns. The validity of this argument depends on where a scholar stands in the divide between those who see a deciding role for actions of political leaders and those who will rather give prominence to socioeconomic groups and classes. It is arguable that given the dominance of democratic ideals, groups logically exert great pressure on state institutions since governance is presumably in the interest of the governed. Scholars have drawn a link between the nature and extent of group consciousness on the political participation of groups and the level to which distributive policies of the state work in their favour (Petterson, 1980; Miller et al., 1981; Salhofer et al., 2000).

According to Miller et al. (1981) participation does not simply reflect conditions experienced by people. The important link between social experience and political participation is how people perceive and evaluate their position. In essence, this is a function of consciousness as they argue further that if the experience is politicized through group consciousness and assessments of social justice, it can motivate political action. What constitutes the critical element in the process, they argue, is the translation of personal experience into collective action mediated by an evaluation of a group's relative position in society. It is the ability to develop a systemic as opposed to a self-directed explanation for one's current status. The process of participation motivated by consciousness is largely dependent on the availability of relevant resources such as higher levels of education, income, occupational status and organizational membership. Where these are available sufficiently, participation in the political arena is enhanced.

Petterson (1980:66) theoretically and empirically linked group mobilization and political participation to the exercise of political power by the ruling elite. He argues theoretically that, "the term low subject mobilization describes a situation in which the absence of unified political action or interest groups permits the relatively unrestricted exercise of authority by a political leader". Where there are few demands on the political system, administrators enjoy greater decision-making latitude and are more likely to focus on pre-existing demands or on furthering their political careers. It is even in the interest of administrators to restrict demand and thus allocate resources based on their instrumental role in their quest for upward mobility. Low mobilization of the smallholder farmers and

the absence of articulate demands on the system in Nigeria explain why the political elite focus on personal and class interests to the neglect of agricultural needs of small farmers even in the face of the reality of their centrality to agriculture in Nigeria. Empirical demonstration of Petterson's theoretical postulations is provided in the case of fishing cooperatives in Mexico where he states that while political representation remains unorganized and involves relatively small numbers of fishermen, the government will not be responsive to the demands of the fishermen. Such responsiveness can only be obtained where different cooperatives coalesce into federations and improve input into government policy. Similarly, Valtonen (2000) following empirical documentation of peasant neglect by state policies in Mexico argues that political mobilisation and revolutionary potentials of the peasantry can only be realised when peasants seek alliances with other grassroots movements. This is because peasant uprising in Mexico in the face of increasing state neglect is prevented by the co-optation or unity of interests of a few locals with capitalist and or state interests.

2.8 Theoretical Perspectives on the State as an Entity

Theoretical perspectives on the state encompass reflections on its origin, justification for its existence and delineation of its sphere relative to the individuals within it. A close correlation exists between ideas on the origins of the state and conceptions of the purpose of its existence. Whereas to some orientations, there exists no separation between the state and the individual (the private realm), to some others, the private and public spheres are distinct and ought to function as such. The broad spectrum of thoughts on state behaviour also reflects either a particularistic or universalistic role for the state, relating to whether its emergence and existence are viewed as being in the interests of the few or the majority respectively. Although a basic consensus exists across varying political philosophers with regards to the indispensability of the state (Plato, 2002; Aristotle, 1999; Bluntschli, 2000), no such agreement exists on the ideal forms and ends of the state. Thus, while Plato viewed a philosopher-King ruled state with a natural division of labour where men's ability determined their social placement as ideal, Aristotle preferred a state-organized in conformity with law as the ideal. Again, Aristotle expounded a rather narrow concept of equality by tying citizenship to birth and ownership of property. On the other hand, Cicero, a Roman philosopher argued that all men are equal

by being subject to the universal eternal law of reason and justice (Sabine and Thorson, 9173).

2.8.1 Universalistic Perspectives on the State

The theorists and theories included in this section do not necessarily derive from the same or similar philosophical orientations. What unites them is the notion that irrespective of the ills of organized government, the state is in its essence, an institution for the realization of man's purpose of existence.

Universalistic perspectives on the state are represented in social contract theories. The idea of a state of nature forms a basic premise in the writings of social contract theorists notably Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. The term ‘social contract’ is used expressly by Thomas Hobbes (1651) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762) to imply a pact between a sovereign and subjects effectively terminating the state of nature. John Locke (1823) is adjudged a contractarian not because of the use of the term, ‘social contract’ but derives from his delineation of the difference between the individual in his natural state and the individual under a contract. Without exception, social contract theorists hypothesize on a primordial state of nature characterized by the absence of organized politics; the absence of a state and the absence of political authority where ethics were personally defined. There is, however, a remarkable difference in the presumed or assumed social consequences of a state of nature for human liberty, freedom, justice and safety. For Hobbes, it was an anarchical state of existence, of a constant state of war of everyman against the other. A condition where there was "no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes,1651:78). Locke depicted a state of freedom and liberty as the natural and divinely created order, which provides the basis for a correct understanding of political power.

> To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of Nature, without

> asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man (Locke, 1823:106).

Rousseau conceived of a state of idyllic happiness in the pre-contract state of human society where war between man and man was impossible because of the absence of property relations. It is however an undesirable state because of the rule of instinct and basic appetites as opposed to the rule of justice (Rousseau, 1762). Each philosopher's conception of the state that emerges from the social contract is conditioned by his construction of the prior existing state of nature. For instance, Hobbes state is the Leviathan, an absolute sovereign placed above society to provide order, security and safety thus effectively terminating anarchy. For Rousseau, the transition from the state of nature to a civil state changes the individual from a "stupid and unimaginative animal" to "an intelligent being and man" (Rousseau, 1762:14). The Lockean state is an enforcer of rights inalienably possessed by man.

The theories of the social contract irrespective of whether they advance the case for absolutism or liberty, envision in their essence a universalistic role for the state as existing for the common good. Even Hobbes Leviathan imbued with absolute power becomes a voluntary creation by man to protect and insure him from the insecurity and uncertainty of anarchical existence in the state of nature. To Locke, the universality of the state is made practical in the guarantee of rights, equality and freedom already possessed in the state of nature.

2.8.2 Particularistic Perspectives on the State

In contrast to a universalistic conception of the state as expressed in the social contract, is the rather pessimistic Marxist notion of the state as an institution for a class rule, thus, of a particularistic purpose. The Marxian equivalent of a primordial state is a classless communal society devoid of property based distinctions with the means of production at an elementary state suitable only for subsistence and no surplus production. The ensuring inevitable development of the forces of production led to the creation of a surplus and its appropriation by some members of the society thereby creating classes. Lenin (1976:9) quoting Engels says the state "… is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble

contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to conjure away". The state was therefore created apparently to stand above the conflicting classes to mediate and moderate class conflict and keep it within bounds of order. The presumed impartial role of the state was however negated with the hijacking of the state by the class which had acquired pre-eminence and dominance in the process of the production of the material condition of existence. Arising from this, Marxists understand the state to be a product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class contradictions (Lenin 1976). The state to Marx, therefore, is an organ for a class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class for exploiting another. Writing with Engels in the Communist Manifesto, Marx declared that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle. Particularly, concerning capitalism, he notes that

> ...the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels 1998:242).

Under a capitalist society, the law only expresses the will of the bourgeoisie and the prevailing notions of freedom and justice are seen as unprecedented in pre-capitalist formations mean exploitation.

The main source of injustice in a capitalist system rests on the fact that those who work do not own property, while those who do not work, own property. Given the inequities and injustices of class society, therefore, the ideal organization of society as a logical outcome of historical materialism is predicted in the form of a socialist state which was expected to comprise a dictatorship of the proletariat. This dictatorship would effectively annihilate class distinctions leading to an inevitable withering away of the state out of sheer irrelevance. Similar to anarchism, the state under pre-capitalist and capitalist formations is seen as an institution for the perpetuation of injustice. The Marxist view of the state constitutes a radical break from pre-Marxian thinking which saw an intrinsic positive value in the state despite the imperfections evident in actually existing state forms.

2.8.3 The Nature of the State in Nigeria

It is important to examine the character as well as the evolutionary characteristics of the Nigerian state which came into being by the singular act of the amalgamation in 1914 as a colonial entity. The history of the Nigerian state closely ties with the development and internationalization of European capitalism arising as a colonial structure and instrument of domination and control of hitherto free and independent territories (Ake, 1981; Ekeh, 1975; Offiong, 1980; Agbaje and Adebanwi 2003; Akinyele 2003). The various entities drawn in as the composition of the state had existed as separate but interacting kingdoms, empires and egalitarian 'stateless' societies. These possessed developed political, social, economic and religious systems that functioned to preserve and perpetuate distinct and strongly held identities (Tseayo, 1975; Abubakar, 2003; Otoide, 2003). Particularly, Agbaje and Adebanwi (2003) and Akinyele (2003), writing on the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria and the subsequent history and challenges argue that the amalgamation itself was intended to ease the financial burden of administering the economically unviable North by relying on the more economically vibrant South and was not intended to unite Nigerians but the colonial administrations. This assertion is not spurious as it derives from the contents of a document submitted by Lord Lugard to the colonial office in May 1913 in which the financial merits of amalgamation for the North are clearly articulated (Olaniyan, 2003). The necessity to deploy the revenue from the coastal south for the administrative and development needs of the landlocked north was spelt out clearly in the document.

Through the process of amalgamation, pre-colonial identities including definite orientations to public authority crossed over from the free socio-political systems untransformed and unchanged into the colonial contraption christened Nigeria. Thus, the highly stratified emirate system ascribing huge privileges to the ruling class juxtaposed with mass deprivation survived and was nurtured by colonial authority for its aims contrasting with the more egalitarian and inequality eschewing east and central Nigeria as well as the 'constitutional monarchy' in the West. Abubakar (2003) explains further that apart from encouraging these differing tendencies through the instrumentality of indirect rule, colonial politics had the effect of marshalling authoritarian tendencies in indigenous culture, thus institutionalizing patrimonial politics and administration in Nigeria. These

surviving differences coupled with the overt and covert manipulations of colonial authorities succeeded in creating a state without a corporate identity, lacking a national agenda or a shared dream, a state as an enterprise (Hoffman and Graham 2009). To Abubakar (2003), these characteristics have at various points in time given rise to ethno linguistic conflicts, secession by the Eastern Region from 1967-1970, the Niger Delta crisis, the Sharia mayhem, the terrorist onslaught and several other challenges that serve as pointers to the dysfunctional nature of Nigerian statehood.

According to several social scientists who have written on the political economy of Nigeria, the management of the Nigerian economy and polity reflects colonial antecedents which focused primarily on the exploitation of resources (Ugwu and Kanu, 2012; Williams, 1980; Ake, 1981; Humphreys and Bates, 2005; Dumoye, 1989). The nationally debilitating dimension of the focus on the economy according to Agbaje and Adebanwi (2003:59) is that "the politics of distribution of pubic goods triumphs over that of production". Given the huge agricultural resources of the country, exploitation was more visible in the sector. During the life of the colonial state, certain inevitabilities developed chief of which was the formation of indigenous power elite made necessary by the demands of colonial administration (Williams, 1980). Owing to its education and exposure to the ways of the conqueror, this class increasingly identified itself with the interests of the occupying power and at independence readily stood as a reproduction of the conqueror. The emerging brand new independent state retained the very contradictions existing at the amalgamation and persisting throughout colonialism. The state bequeathed by the political economy of colonial rule:

> was defined and constructed as a set of administrative, legal, and economic systems whose overriding goal was to integrate the Nigerian economy with the dominant global capitalist system in a manner consistent with the needs and interests of Britain (Agbaje and Adebanwi, 2003:64-65).

Liberal inclined intellectualism attempts to veil the economic basis of political interaction and competition in Nigeria with emphasis on secondary characteristics such as tribalism and communalism (Williams, 1980). In opposition to such reasoning, Ake (1993:32) describes the state in Africa and Nigeria as retaining, in substantial measure,

"the colonial state structure which is inherently anti-democratic, being the repressive apparatus of an occupying power... a predatory force on the rampage". He further argues that the Nigerian state displays a gross absence of the rule of law, its system of justice is not plausible, and the coercive instruments of the state place themselves above the law with the people below. The political and social circumstances depicted here over two decades ago remain largely the form and character of the Nigerian state as over a decade and half of 'democratic practice' is yet to democratize governance attitudes which still manifest anti-people tendencies. The state is un-hegemonic; it is not in control of the dominant forces and is incapable of mediating conflict and even regulating political contest and use of political power which is often subject to flagrant abuses (Rafiu et al., 2009; Ake, 1993). The attraction of state power relates to the immensity of power at the behest of those who win elections, in the typical zero-sum game the winner takes all while the loser losses all.

An undermining but dominant trait in the Nigerian state and the state in Africa is official corruption. Tangie (2005) locates the propensity to corrupt behaviour by managers of the state in Africa in the authoritarian and predatory character of the state rooted in its colonial history. In Nigeria, corruption has come to characterise the management of the public sector as a norm rather than a breach. Pierce (2006) links endemic corruption within Nigeria's official circles to the complex network of patron-client ties constituting the moral economy and having ties to pre-colonial systems of governance. While this is significantly true for Northern Nigeria where he conducted his research it does not necessarily reflect the pre-colonial politico-social circumstances of other Nigerian communities or ethnic groups with more egalitarian inclinations. His second explanation for the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria is what he terms academic and technocratic paradigms of corruption that describe and drive governance practice. Thirdly and particularly applicable to Northern Nigeria is, the politico-administrative history of governance involving incorporation of indigenous systems of rule as structures of the contemporary state. What has endured as logic to African political relationship by Pierce's submission is Bayart's (1993) concept of politics of the belly which is essentially a system of patron-client ties involving distribution to a following. The vacuous nature of the state, lacking monopoly on the legitimate use of force with bureaucratic structures that covers

but do not replace patrilineal structures provides bulwarks for this logic. What strikes a resounding note with the thread of thought in this study is Pierce's concluding statement that the Nigerian state defined as an ideological entity conferring legitimacy on the actions of state agents is an illusion.

> The tragedy of this situation is that the distribution of various public goods- such as development money, revenue from oil exports, and basic commodities such as petrol- is dependent on a disinterested and rationalized bureaucratic system that does not exist (Pierce, 2006:911).

Historical experiences such as military rule "institutionalised" corruption which had already reared its ugly head in the First Republic (Usman, 2013:123). Humphrey and Bates (2005) emphasise that given the military's immunity to electoral challenge, it engaged in wholesale looting of the treasury. The government of Abacha alone diverted over $2billion in oil revenue to private accounts in foreign banks.

According to Enweremadu (2013), by the time Nigeria emerged from military rule in 1999, corruption had more or less become a national culture, where the public office was deliberately converted into avenues for wholesale plunder of public revenues and self-enrichment. In measuring the impact of corruption on economic development, he compares Nigeria and Indonesia between 1967 and 1998. The conclusion is that the two countries experienced two different types of corruption which accounts for the divergent economic paths each has experienced. Under Suharto for a period of 32 years, Indonesia experienced what he calls "centralized or franchise corruption" executed under a well-managed, restricted, stable and predictable system and where the proceeds from public loot were reinvested into the country thereby contributing to economic growth (Enweremadu, 2013:210). In Nigeria, corruption occurred in an unstable political and economic environment as a free for all looting spree executed by a band of roving bandits who were in office only to fleece the country and take flight, with massive foreign transfers of loot that crippled the country's economy.

In addition to political instability and intra-elite struggles for power, corruption is also attributable to the weakness of the economy. Due to the poor economic infrastructure, the public office provides the only avenues for wealth accumulation. Invariably public

officers who do not utilize the opportunity to feather their nest are condemned to poverty unless they get another shot at the public office at which time it becomes the case of once-beaten twice shy as such individuals do not allow the second chance to be wasted. Even with his much-publicized anti-corruption crusade, the government of Obasanjo during his time in office as a civilian president got more criticism than praise as far as corruption was concerned. In the national dailies of November 25th 2016, it was widely reported that Nigeria's national assembly described Obasanjo as the grandfather of corruption in Nigeria in reference obviously to his 'ghana must go'(Ojikaminor, n.d) interaction with the national assembly between 1999 and 2007.

Odinkalu (2010) succinctly ties together the twin challenges of corruption and class differentiation. He achieves this by arguing that the emergence of single-party regimes in post-colonial Africa created a monopolisation of power that led to the personalization, corruption and instrumental role of the institutions of the state. This negated the notion of government as a system with rules and constraints designed for the interest of all. The huge national losses to public sector corruption estimated to be about $400 billion between 1966 and 1999 derived from the privatization of public office and an alteration of Nigeria's moral system (Orngu, 2006; Enweremadu, 2012). Tolu and Ogunro (2012) opine similarly that corruption constitutes the greatest challenge to good governance in Nigeria by limiting the circulation of the gains of public expenditure among a privileged few and engendering perpetual poverty for the citizenry. Writing in the second decade after Nigeria's independence, Ekeh (1975) viewed public sector failure as a function of the co-existence of two publics, the primordial and the civic public. A phenomenon whose workings ensure that those in charge of state resources (from the civic public) convert them to their personal uses which includes employing such in dispensing political patronage (to the primordial public) and building economic bases for themselves.

Between 1999 and 2007, Nigerians and the international community witnessed the execution of an extensive anti-corruption campaign, through the setting up of anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) and several other reforms in the public service and the judiciary. The campaign witnessed limited

success due to weak capacity and inadequate political support for anti-corruption institutions, the resistance of states and local governments to the anti-corruption project and weak civil society engagement in the war against corruption (Enweremadu, 2012). Ojikaminor (n.d:5) even avows that during Obasanjo's presidency, Nigeria's politicians "engaged once again in what they know best: unconscionable looting of the nation's treasury". Perhaps the failure of Obasanjo's anti-corruption campaign validates the argument that corruption in Nigeria is, in reality, an integral component of parasitical capitalism and it cannot be abolished by appeals to morality or administrative measures (Williams, 1980). Williams states further that corruption in Nigeria arises from the failure of military and civilian regimes to establish the social institutions that are necessary for a successful Nigerian capitalist revolution and the maintenance of a capitalist society. This argument captures the reality of the political elite which has adopted the bourgeois ethic of conspicuous consumption without adopting the productive ethic thereby feeding parasitically on the public sector. This further explains the limited success of anti-corruption agencies established and functional between 1999 and 2007 under the administration of Obasanjo.

2.9 Assessment of Post-colonial Agricultural Policies in Nigeria

Agriculture was pushed and pulled through the metropolitan goals of colonial policy to contribute up to 64.1 per cent of the national output by 1960 (Aiyede, 2009). This remained high until overtaken by oil earnings between 1966 and 1970 (Shima, 1987; Aiyede, 2009). An increase in oil earnings was not deployed in the development of other sectors leading to the progressive decline of agriculture despite several programmes aimed at raising agricultural productivity such as the "green revolution, back to land structural adjustment schemes" (Aiyede, 2009:254). The post-colonial agricultural policy might not be fittingly described as exploitative in its original and authentic goals given the presupposed nationalistic disposition of the designers. For example, Odey (2011:194) identifies certain communities in Benue as the poorest but notes that "successive administrations have focused their development policies on these rural poor communities" A factual analysis of agricultural policies, programme and project documents since independence impresses the observer with a profound sense of commitment to

optimization of the agricultural potentials of the country as a component of national economic development.

Characteristically perturbing is the frequent changes and lack of logical conclusion and exhaustive implementation of agricultural programme. This applies not only to the politically unstable military era but also to the current democratic dispensation where every new administration portrays itself as a rescue mission succeeding a non-performing government. Discontinuities in agricultural policy circumscribe otherwise laudable enunciated programmes and policies. For example, the document that details the agricultural policy thrust of the Goodluck Jonathan administration makes little reference to any previous agriculture policy on which it was built or from which it learned lessons (FMARD, 2011). Agricultural development is invariably hampered by a lack of symmetry and continuity compounded by accompanying frequent shifts and inconsistencies in macro-economic policies. Idachaba (2011b) even views agricultural policy itself as constituting the key limiting factor for agricultural development.

From independence to date any listing of agriculture-focused or related policies requires meticulous attention to detail just to ensure a complete listing. Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012) analysed agricultural policies directing attention to particular lessons from each by undertaking a listing of post-colonial agricultural policies, projects and programmes. Aside from identifying specific lapses of each described programme, the authors' overall performance rating based on the state of agriculture in Nigeria indicates a general failure of agriculture policy. A wide gap exists between pronounced objectives and actual policy gains attributable to amongst others: the marginalization of key stakeholders especially benefiting farmers in the design of programme, poor translation of policy prescriptions into implementable programme, role conflict resulting from duplication of programme, frequent changes of programme and policy direction, embezzlement and misappropriation which affect funding and full implementation of programme and lack of extension services as well as insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the implemented programme.

Idachaba (2011) attributes poor posturing of the agricultural programme to the lacuna of an overarching agricultural policy since no statement of national agricultural

policy for Nigeria existed before 1987. Nigeria's National Development Plans of 1962, 1970, 1975 and 1980 had agriculture included only as a component of overall development planning for the country (Idahaba, 2011). The piecemeal approach to agricultural development and frequent shift in direction collaborate to place Nigeria's agriculture in an unenviable position. According to Idachaba, instability of agricultural policy has produced dire consequences for Nigerian agriculture including loss of stakeholder confidence, truncated individual and institutional capacities, and an enormous waste of national resources and partial completion of projects.

From independence, Nigeria agriculture has experienced a lot of motion and activity contrastingly achieving marginal forward movement. Ogen (2007) acknowledges policy efforts at steering the Nigerian economy away from oil dependence by increasing investment and funding of the agricultural sector. This has also included the government's direct involvement in the production of food crops from 1975. Failure of these schemes to achieve the envisioned food availability materialized in an increase instead of a decrease in net importation of food (Ogen, 2007; FMARD, 2011).

According to Osogwa et al. (2012), in 1988, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) articulated an agricultural policy statement directed at attaining massive structural transformation of Nigeria's agricultural production technology from low input-low output technology to a high input-high output technology. The performance of post-colonial agricultural policy in Nigeria can also be evaluated utilizing the yardstick of the pace of rural development where agricultural enterprise predominates. Developing the agricultural value chain demands fundamentals of rural infrastructure providing a basis for building a vibrant agrarian based rural economy. According to Laah et al. (2013), Nigeria's rural populace experiences extreme deprivation regarding access to basic infrastructure and amenities which are taken for granted within urban communities. Poor infrastructure and high poverty levels have induced the unending demographic phenomenon of mass rural to urban migration which strips agriculture of requisite manpower. Most economically active components of the population migrate away from the land and farms in search of urban-based opportunities. The presence of this phenomenon alone demonstrates the failure of schemes such as the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)

established in 1986 and the Better Life for Rural Women established in 1987 which were aimed at improving the lives of rural dwellers. Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012) identify corruption, lack of accountability and lack of programme focus as responsible for the failure of these schemes in their purpose of rural transformation.

2.10 Post-colonial Agricultural Development in Benue State

Benue state was created in 1976 from the old Benue-Plateau state with thirteen local government areas namely Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Gboko, Gwer, Idah, Katsina-ala, Kwande, Makurdi, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo and Vandeikya. In 1991, Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina and Idah were excised to combine with other local governments from Kwara state to form the new state of Kogi. The present Benue state has twenty-three local government areas, Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Katsina-ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ohimini, Ogbadibo, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarkaa, Ukum, Ushongu, Vandeikya.

Geographically, the state is located between longitudes 7º and 10º east of the Greenwich line and between latitudes 6º and 8º north of the equator with an area of 35,518 square kilometres (Hawaiin Agronomics Company International, 1980; Enokela and Seini, 2013), and a population of 4.253,641 million according to the 2006 census (National Population Commission, 2006). The state is bounded by Plateau state in the north, by Taraba state in the east, by Enugu and Cross-River states in the south and Kogi state in the west (Odey, 2009:35). The climate of the state according to the Köppen climate classification falls within the moist savannah type of the hot tropics, with monsoonal rainfall showing two seasonal maxima (Hawaiin Agronomics Company International, 1980). Annual rainfall is between 1270 and 1397mm with temperatures ranging from 21.6^0 C to 32.7^0 C. The total length of the growing season for the state is 215 days.

The climate of Benue state is conducive for the cultivation of a wide variety of food and cash crops cutting across tubers, grains, legumes, tree crops and vegetables. Examples of tubers grown in Benue include yams, cassava, sweet potatoes and coco-yams; the dominant grains are maize, guinea corn (sorghum), rice and millet. Tree crops include a wide variety of mangoes, different species of oranges and other citrus, African bush mango (Ogbonno), palm trees, coconut trees, African pear (*Mzembe* in Tiv), guava,

cashew, shea-butter, locust bean and many others. Legumes and other crops are soya beans, groundnuts, bambara nuts, beans, beniseed and melon. Vegetables include tomatoes, okra, pepper, eggplant, spinach and fluted pumpkin among so many others. In recent times some parts of the state have also begun to grow onions, watermelons and cucumbers. To some extent, it is even safe to aver that the title of 'food basket of the nation' enjoyed by Benue state is due more to the wide variety of crops produced by the state than the gross quantity of food it produces. Agricultural production in Benue state is dominated by the peasantry supported by the vast spatial coverage of fertile topsoils.

According to Odey (2011), there is a contradiction of change and continuity in colonial and post-colonial agricultural policy in Benue state. While political independence was attained in 1960, the philosophy and spirit of colonial exploitation and neglect of peasant producers persist and largely explains the poor performance of agricultural and rural development policies. Continuity in immediate post-colonial agricultural policy is evident in the existence after 1960 of the commodity boards, systems of taxation, labour policies characterized by poor working conditions and emphasis on cash crop production. Within the then Benue province agricultural policy promoted the cultivation of beniseed, groundnut and soya beans as export crops before crude oil overtook commodities as the major foreign exchange earner for the country. The commodity focus notwithstanding, agricultural policy and programme of Benue state since have also made attempts at the promotion of food production amidst institutional challenges. A concise summary of agricultural policies and programmes of successive governments of the present Benue state from its inception in 1976 is presented in Odey (2011:194-196). These have included:

1. The encouragement of farmers to increase food production by the allocation of large sums to the agricultural sector. In 1977, up to N21 million was allocated to agriculture, over N69 million in 1980 and N55.8 million in 1988. Figures for other years are however not given in his report.
2. Collaboration with the extension services of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, and the United Nations Development Programme to boost food production in Benue state.

3. Agricultural mechanization such as the purchase of agricultural machinery, spare parts, the establishment of the Tractor Hiring Agency, procurement of fertiliser, seed multiplication/ improved seedlings, pesticides and loan procurement for farmers.
4. Land clearing and development schemes for accelerated food production in the state, for example, 35,000 hectares in 1979.
5. Establishment of agro-allied companies and rural extension services, LGA mechanization schemes and rural development centres to check urban drift and enhance grassroots farming.
6. Large scale production of soybeans, which Benue state is known for through the procurement of a N5% million loan (1987-1992).
7. The establishment of the Benue Agricultural Development Corporation in 1977 to hasten food production for commercial purposes.

It is of interest for analysis that elaborate agricultural programmes and policies created nationally and adopted by the state have not translated into the development of agriculture. This is a contradiction in terms because the logical outcome of these policies should have been a vibrant agricultural sector. Documentation and analysis of the agricultural development trajectory of Benue in a more or less chronological manner produces an undulating gradient that arguably reflects the commitment of various administrations to agriculture. Evidence from other sources (Shima, 2017) indicates that the administration in charge of governance between 1979 and 1983 under Governor Aper Aku embarked on several own revolutionary agricultural projects in addition to the domestication and execution of federal agricultural projects. These were however truncated by its removal via a military coup in 1983.

Particularly of note is the land clearing and development scheme designed to facilitate accelerated food production. In the year 1979 alone, over 35,000 hectares of land were cleared for distribution to farmers especially those interested in large scale mechanized farming. The land clearing scheme was informed by the observation that while cultural practices and lagging technology limited the yield of major crops (Soya beans, maize and rice), there was no major constraint to the successful production of these

crops under large-scale, mechanized conditions. Given the limitations of the traditional land tenure system, and aided by the 1978 Land Use Act, the government secured large tracts of land in several places to make adequate land available for mechanized agriculture. In all, the Land Clearing scheme proposed that about 1000 hectares of land were to be developed from lands not currently in food production in each of the then 56 constituencies in the then 13 local government areas of the state. The major identified crops of maize, soya beans and rice were then to be cultivated after the clearing by members of the clans or tribal groups that controlled the land before official acquisition and clearing (Hawaiin Agronomics Company International, 1980).

Apart from the land clearing scheme, the administration of Aper Aku also realized that much of the additional revenue that accrued from the processing of crops produced from Benue was earned by people outside the state. This was due to the limited or complete lack of processing technologies within the state. The reasoning was therefore that with increased processing capacities located in the state adding value to farmers' crops, income for the farmers and the state could be increased substantially (Hawaiin Agronomics Company International, 1980). This was the persuasion behind the establishment of agro-allied industries with the Taraku Oil Mills as a flagship project of Benue's aspiration for an agricultural revolution. The feasibility study carried out by Hawaiin Agronomics Company International was comprehensive documentation of the potentials and challenges to agricultural productivity and economic advancement of Benue State. This study was part of the initial preparations for the establishment of Taraku Oil Mills limited designed as an integrated project. The project was to comprise a vegetable oil plant, a cornmeal plant as well as an animal feed plant. In its execution, however, only the oil and cornmeal plants were able to take off. The military interregnum of 1983 together with other internal technical and political issues contributed to the partial take-off of the project.

Agricultural and rural development policies executed in Benue state by their characteristics are derived from agricultural policies and programmes of the federal government (Odey, 2011). These include programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) the Green Revolution, the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure

(DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women. Odey (2011) observes a gap between the expressed focus of these policies which is mainly the poor and the persistent poverty plaguing the majority of the Benue peasantry. It is particularly noteworthy that the policy of procuring and distributing fertiliser has been in existence since the creation of the state in 1976.

2.11 Gap in the Literature

The various interlinked themes treated in the literature provide a theoretical basis for grounding the research and analysis of the process for the procurement and distribution of fertilisers in Benue state, Nigeria. The definitive approaches to the management of fertilisers are verifiably functions of a definite kind of state operating within a specific socio-economic milieu as detailed in the literature. Several gaps have been identified that provide scholarly justification for the present research. While studies on social stratification and its consequences for productivity and livelihood abound, the process of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state and Nigeria has not been adequately researched from the perspective of stratification and structural inequality. This angle of the discourse receives substantial attention in the course of this study. Related to this theme and arising from it, focus on the relations and dominant interest within Benue's agriculture centralizes politics as the deterministic variable for fertiliser procurement and distribution particularly as regards who accesses fertilisers and who gets denied or is restricted. The predominantly agricultural economy based research on fertiliser marginalizes the political variable.

While the literature on corruption elucidates the different dimensions of the problem, it has not demonstrated a strong link between the failure of fertiliser policy and the pervasive corruption in public office in Nigeria. Authors emphasize what and how without addressing questions of why policymakers insist on direct involvement in fertiliser procurement and distribution. This study attempts to answer these questions by connecting with the Neo-Marxist narrative predicated on the social relations between the political elite and the peasantry.

2.12 Theoretical Framework

The study utilises two political economy perspectives of structural violence and primitive accumulation with demonstrable relevance for the discussion of the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state. The salience of political economy arises from its concern with material conditions of existence, its analysis of the substructure and the positions of individuals in it as the basis for explaining and understanding the superstructure- politics, religion and culture. The relevance of the approach is its versatility in embracing the wide berth of political, economic and social processes, institutions and relations of power that underpin official action in the agricultural sector (Chinsinga, 2012). But most important is the fact that political economy interrogates both the economic basis of political decisions and actions and the political basis of economic decisions and actions. It includes a political dimension that accounts for the use of power by a variety of actors including individuals, groups and non-governmental organisations. Political economy assumes that resources are allocated not based on relative efficiency or merit but according to power (Salman, 2013).

Microeconomics demonstrates the price mechanism's ability to coordinate decentralized decisions of demand and supply and thereby maximize gains for individual investors and society but does not account for externalities and imperfections of the market (Scott, 2006). As a mode of inquiry, political economy accounts for these dynamics as it attempts to account for the use of power by a variety of actors entangled in a web of decisions on the distribution of tangible and intangible assets in society. Also, its concern with causality necessitates the search for explanations for political and economic behaviour and it questions the validity of conceiving reality only as objects of empirical observation and chose rather to probe laws of human behaviour that are critical for societal development (Nnoli, 1981; Bryman, 2004; Chinsinga, 2012). Again, political economy queries the artificial compartmentalisation of the social sciences into separate disciplines which hampers understanding. van der Pijl (2009:viii) argues that "a social compulsion must be understood in its totality, as a product of a totality of practices not limited by the typical academic boundaries and departmental subfields". Insights and methods derived from political science, economics, sociology and history should be synthesized to develop theories and perspectives that aid an understanding and

interpretation of the interrelationships between the state, market and society (van der Pijl, 2009).

The political economy approach has been widely employed in evaluating agricultural input and anti-poverty strategies of other African countries notably Malawi whose input subsidy programme is held up as a model for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa (Chinsinga, 2012; Dionne and Horowitz, 2013; Mason et al., 2013; Holden and Lunduka, 2013; Mason and Tembo, 2014). In the case of Nigeria, although studies acknowledge the role of political influence in fertiliser policy (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Liverpool-Tasie and Takeshima, 2013), adequate application of the political economy approach in examining the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Nigeria does not yet exist in the fertiliser literature. Utilization of the approach requires the identification of actors and their interests as the forces that drive the fertiliser procurement and distribution process, with a deliberate emphasis on the nature of social relations and politico-economic exchanges amongst the political elite, private capital, especially merchant capital, traditional political institutions, the peasantry, civil society and other actors in Nigeria's fertiliser sector. Application of the political economy framework enables a "comprehensive view of the people's material conditions in correlation to their socio-political milieu" (Odey, 2011:221). It facilitates an appreciation of material conditions in their interaction with socio-political structures while simultaneously enabling an objective understanding of the implications of these on peasant existence and thriving.

The integration of political, economic and social factors into one framework of analysis is intrinsically superior to any alternative that utilizes only any of the three in isolation. This is why it is important to examine the rationalizations behind the preference of the political elite for fertiliser subsidies over other policy options for promoting fertiliser use (Morgan and Solarz, 1994; Jerven, 2014). The political economy framework provides room for identifying gainers and losers in any policy process, the interests and powers that drive the choice of policy and the manner of implementation. Again, it is necessary to investigate social stratification dynamics which confer rights and powers (Wright, 2002; Grusky, 2002) on particular individuals over the management and allocation of resources for agricultural productivity, while largely excluding the primary

end-users of these production resources from the exercise of power and control. In other words, it is to examine and understand the distribution of political and economic power, how the patterns of distribution shape and condition definitions of class, status, notions of equality and inequality and how these impact access to fertilisers.

2.12.1 Structural Violence

Johan Galtung's (1969) framework of structural violence contributes to the Neo-Marxist narrative on political economy and provides insights that enable an understanding of the social relations between the political elite and the peasantry as dominant social and economic categories within Benue's agricultural economy. Structural violence is conceived as 'the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone can meet their needs below that which will otherwise be possible' (Leech, 2012: 10). The idea of structural violence expands the definition of violence beyond direct physical violence' and includes human suffering caused by social structures that disproportionately benefit some people while diminishing other people's ability to meet their needs (Leech, 2012). According to Galtung (1969), when a particular group or class monopolises resources or diverts them to other purposes, the actual levels at which those outside such groups access such resources fall below their potential and this indicates the presence of structural violence in the system. The major differentiation between direct violence and structural violence according to Galtung's postulation is that direct violence involves the tripod of subject-object and action, where the subject is the person or persons exercising violence, the object is the persons or persons receiving the treatment of violence while the action is the violence itself which in most cases refers to what is physical and easily identifiable. This is not so with structural violence as it is difficult to establish direct links to a human agency as this form of violence is exercised through social structures and may not even be construed as violence. He states that 'there may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances' (Galtung, 1969:171). Indicators of structural violence to him include uneven distribution of income, skewed access to health care, literacy and in aggravated

circumstances, the correlations of rank dimensions where those who are low in income are also low in health, education and power.

The idea of structural violence can be linked to Wright's (2009) thoughts on the structurally derived nature of social and economic inequality. Writing on the task of an emancipator social science he argues

> It is not enough to show that people are suffering or that there are enormous inequalities in the extent to which people may live flourishing lives. A scientific emancipator theory must show that the explanation for such suffering and inequality lies in specific properties of institutions and social structures (Wright, 2009:11).

Identification of political factors affecting access of the peasantry to fertilisers in Benue state demands a detection of the power structure(s) in fertiliser distribution. This is achieved by isolating actors and their roles in the fertiliser process in Benue state to include: the peasants (smallholder farmers), large-scale or capitalist farmers, policymakers and the bureaucracy (the political elite), market actors (contractors, merchants, traders, middlemen), and political gatekeepers such as traditional political institutions and the clergy. The second demand is the interrogation of variations in political power possessed by respective actors, location of structures facilitating the occurrence of structural violence as plausible factors explaining the nature of access for the peasantry. This involves: obtaining an appropriate grasp of peasant political and group consciousness, attitudes to and nature of engagement with the state, ability to mobilise resources and articulate demands and examining the consequences of these variables on access to subsidized fertiliser by the peasants. It also necessitates delineation of the power and roles of non-peasant listed actors as this could identify and highlight pressures brought to bear on the fertiliser distribution process by individual actors and how this qualifies access for the peasantry as primary intended beneficiaries of fertiliser subsidy.

2.12.2 Primitive Accumulation

Karl Mark's concept of primitive accumulation presents another veritable theoretical foundation for a political economy inclined discourse on the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state. De Angelis (2001) argues that Marx's theory of primitive accumulation can be said to contain both a historical and a

continuity argument implying that not only does the theory explain nascent capitalism but also its mature and reproduced forms. Amin (1974) views the history of capitalism as denoted by the phenomenon of primitive accumulation which was not only characteristic of its beginnings but has persisted as its defining attribute. According to De Angelis (2001:1),

> Marx's concept of primitive accumulation indicates the historical process that gave birth to the preconditions of a capitalist mode of production. These preconditions refer mainly to the creation of a section of the population with no other means of livelihood but their labour power to be sold in a nascent labour market and to the accumulation of capital that may be used for nascent industries. In this conception, the adjective "primitive" corresponds to a clear-cut temporal dimension (the past), which becomes the condition for a capitalist future.

Bryceson (1980:96) cites Marx who describes "primitive accumulation as the process through which the embryonic capitalist mode of production arose and extended itself while dissolving the feudal mode of production". The contest between these social categories resulted in "the dispossession of the means of subsistence and means of production from the producers and on the other hand, their concentration in the hands of non-producers" (Bryceson, 1980:96). It involved a forced separation between people and social means of production seen mostly in the expropriation of the peasant producer from the soil in Europe. Dispossessing the peasants was the most striking weapon in the large scale transformation of means of production and labour into capital (Luxemburg 1951).

The illumination for understanding the operation of primitive accumulation beyond the original birthplace of capitalism is credited to Lenin (1969) by Bryceson (1980). She argues that both primitive accumulation and imperialism are important historical processes of capitalist development relevant to the formation of today's Third World peasantries. Primitive accumulation became a feature of lands that hitherto had only marginal contact with capital through imperialist expansion, in the form of colonialism and later neo-colonialism, different from its classical form. The identified differences between the original and external forms of primitive accumulation relate to its manifestation in the latter as a confrontation between monopoly capital and pre-capitalist modes whose productive forces and relations of production had no congruence with the conditions for the existence of capital. Marx (1887:501), states that "the capitalist system

presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realize their labour". By implication, primitive accumulation continues to operate until the complete separation of producers from the means of production is attained. Primitive accumulation, according to Luxemburg, becomes the process of destruction of natural economies throughout the world because imperialism gives rise to primitive accumulation, but the relationship is inherently contradictory.

> ... capital cannot accumulate without the aid of non-capitalist organisations, nor, on the other hand, can it tolerate their continued existence side by side with itself. Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist organisations makes the accumulation of capital possible (Luxemburg, 1951:436).

Bryceson (1980) considers force as a peculiarity of the colonial and neo-colonial forms of primitive accumulation arguing that the use of force particularly contrasted with the classical form of primitive accumulation, given that dispossession of the means of production from the peasantry resulted from spontaneous class struggle where state sanctions still resided with those being dispossessed. Luxembourg (1951) identified force as revolutions and war in the European phase of primitive accumulation and as ruthless violence meted out on pre-capitalist formations to facilitate disintegration and subservience to capital. The ruthless plunder of the natural economies in Nigeria during colonialism as primitive accumulation arguably implanted a similar disposition of dispossessing the peasantry as the logic of capital in the managers of the post-colonial state where every means possible was utilised. Unequal exchange facilitated the dispossession while commodities earned foreign exchange. Beyond commodities, the political elite disposes the peasantry by denial of access to the means of production such as farming inputs which serves the purpose of accumulation either through the diversion of inputs earmarked for low-income farmers to investment in capitalist agriculture or direct consumption of the diverted value through arbitrage as seen in the case of fertilisers.

To Bryceson (1980), the variability of the process of primitive accumulation was also demonstrated in the non-expropriation of peasant producers' means of production under the colonial and neo-colonial forms of primitive accumulation, since the process of primitive accumulation proceeds in different successions depending on the nature of the particular pre-capitalist mode and its social relations. Also, the widely varying natures of

peasantries under different historical epochs points to the necessity to theorize the peasantry as a labour process to be understood within the context of specific modes of production or articulation of modes of production. In the case of the Nigerian peasant, the expropriation of his land which is the basis of primitive accumulation did not occur given the low level of development of productive forces (farm technology). There is high dependence for food and other agricultural raw materials on the peasant, accounting for the non-appropriation of his land. However, the agricultural production of the peasant is kept subservient to the needs and demands of capital.

Writing on *the geography of class power* Harvey (1998:55) states

> It is vital to recognize... how geographical reordering and restructurings, spatial strategies and geographical elements, uneven geographical developments, and the like are vital aspects to the accumulation of capital, both historically and today. It is likewise vital to recognise that class struggle unfolds differently and across this highly variegated terrain.

The study also adopts the dual conception of primitive accumulation as an objective historical reality that occurred in the period preceding capitalist production and also a continuing phenomenon characteristic of capitalist production which depends on the alienation of labour for the sustenance of surplus production. In all times and places where capital developed from or imposed itself on pre-capitalist formations, the deliberate separation of labour from the means of production to create an existing army of the unemployed is evidenced. The dispossession of the peasantry by capital utilising the apparatus of the state is what is evident in the political and bureaucratic handling of fertiliser procurement and distribution in the state. To maximally expose the peasant to capitalist exploitation, it is important to deny him access to the means of production. In other words, peasant agriculture is structured to serve capital as the management of input and output is securely in the hands of capital. In this sense, the ownership of land as a means of production by the peasant is illusory as all that adds value to the land and what happens to the proceeds from the land remain under the control of capital albeit in the guise of state power.

The peasant is little more than a wage labourer on his land. Under typical factory arrangements, land, labour and capital mostly in the form of machines are sourced and organized for production by the entrepreneur. Labour is objectified and ranked alongside

land and capital with the entrepreneur as the only "living" factor of production. Where the peasant has no control over access to crucial farm inputs such as fertilisers, tractors, pesticides and herbicides as well as seedlings, the mere ownership of land does not deny his dispossession. Moreover, even in the marketing of their produce, capital in the form of the middle man alienates the producer paying just the value of his labour and appropriating surplus through gross under-pricing of agricultural produce. The poor pricing of agricultural produce substantially achieves the same purpose as that of barely keeping the industrial labourer alive for continued exploitation. The peasant is separated from the means and the product of the production process and the surplus appropriated by capital in its naked form or the guise of the state.

The state is complicit in the exploitation of the peasant producer in failure to assist in value addition to agricultural produce even though this constantly forms part of cyclical campaign promises. It is in the interest of the state to maintain low prices for food and other agricultural produce to prevent urban restiveness that results from food shortages and high food prices. Primitive accumulation in Nigeria is evidenced in the dispossession of the peasantry through the management of farm input and output. In the case of fertilisers, denial of access of the peasantry to fertilisers translates directly into accumulation that is subsequently invested in capitalist production. It is a fact that few capitalists in Nigeria can trace their initial capital outside state sources and this is more apparent in the case of politicians and bureaucrats as well as their cronies who have at one point or another been involved in the management of fertilisers.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts the survey research design which is descriptive and offers a wide variety of data-gathering instruments allowing for robust data generation, analysis, findings and conclusions. The utilization of a survey for the study is suitable because the fertiliser sector encompasses a vast array of participants and interests with varying degrees of control over the procurement and distribution process.

3.2 Area of Study

This study was conducted in Benue state which was created in 1976 out of the then Benue-Plateau state with a total landmass of 34, 059km^2 and a population of 4,253, 641 based on the NPC population census (2006). The state lies within the Guinea Savannah agro-ecological zone bordered by Cross-River state to the South, Kogi state to the West, Taraba state to the East, Nasarawa state to the North, and Enugu state to the South-West. The state also shares an international border with Cameroun to the South- East. The name of the state is derived from the River Benue and the state is located within the coordinates of $7^0$20'N $8^0$45'E. Annual rainfall is between 1000-2000mm and lasts between April and October with mean temperatures of between 23^0C and 38^0C. A wide range of crops are grown in the state spanning across tubers (yams, cassava, sweet potatoes), cereals (maize, guinea corn, millet, rice), legumes (cowpea, soya beans), vegetables (tomatoes, pepper, eggplant, leafy green vegetables), seeds (melon, sesame seed) and tree crops (mangoes, oranges, palms). A vast majority of the inhabitants are farmers but full-time and part-time and the main language groups are Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Etulo.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of farmers from Benue State and the staff of the Department of Agricultural Services of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study utilised purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select nine local governments (Vandeikya, Ukum, Katsina-ala, Gboko, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Otukpo, Agatu and Oju) areas because of their large farming populations, arable land and also geopolitical representation. Simple random sampling was deployed to select participants in the survey from each of the selected local government areas to avoid bias and give each potential respondent an equal chance of participating in the survey.

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame for Farmers

Senatorial District	Local Government	Population of farmers
Benue North-east	Katsina-ala	49,859
	Ukum-	49,119
	Vandeikya	39,935
Benue North-west	Gboko	52,640
	Gwer-East	34,412
	Gwer-West	23,118
Benue South	Agatu	13,958
	Oju	24,973
	Otukpo	23,136
Total sampling frame		311,150

Source: National Population Commission, 2012

The Taro Yamene's formula for sample size determination was used to obtain a sample size of 400 from the sampling frame of 311,150 farmers. According to the formula,

$$n = \frac{\mathrm{N}}{1+N\,(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = sample size

N = population size

E= level of significant error (0.05).

3.5 Data Collection

Primary and secondary were collected for the study. Secondary data were obtained by the adoption and analysis of statistics from official and academic publications. Primary data were obtained through the questionnaire which was administered to individuals identified as farmers and the staff of MANR. In-depth interviews were conducted with two past commissioners of agriculture and one manager of a fertiliser company. Relevant official documents and statistics were obtained from the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), National Population Commission (NPC), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). Other sources of empirical data sets for the study include the International Fertiliser Development Centre (IFDC), the Fertiliser Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and Africafertiliser.org. Other secondary sources include books, journals, newspapers and magazines as well as conference proceedings obtained from public and personal libraries and the internet.

3.5.1 Validation of Instruments

The questionnaire and question set for the in-depth interviews were validated by a researcher in the department of geography at the Benue State University, Makurdi. This was to ensure that the questions were drawn based on the objectives of the study and the variables measured what they were expected to measure.

3.5.2 Reliability of Instruments

A pre-test of the instruments for content validity was done in communities at the outskirts of Makurdi town where commercial and subsistence farming is carried out. Thereafter, the instruments were reviewed in line with necessary corrections.

3.5.3 Questionnaire (for farmers)

A total of 400 questionnaires were sent into the field out of which 377 were duly completed and returned by respondents identified primarily as farmers, leaving out 23 questionnaires that were not returned. This gave a return rate of 94.3 and a non-return rate of 5.7%. Bowley's proportional allocation was used to distribute the questionnaires to the nine Local Government Areas selected for the study according to the formula

$$nh = \frac{n \times Nh}{N}$$

Where;

nh = Number of units to be allocated to each stratum

n = total sample size

Nh = total number of elements in stratum h

N= total population of the study

H =1----------9

Katsina-ala $\frac{400 \times 49{,}859}{311{,}150} = 64$

Ukum $\frac{400 \times 49{,}119}{311{,}150} = 63$

Vandeikya $\frac{400 \times 39{,}935}{311{,}150} = 51$

Gboko $\frac{400 \times 52{,}640}{311{,}150} = 68$

Gwer-East $\frac{400 \times 34{,}412}{311{,}150} = 44$

Gwer-West $\frac{400 \times 23,118}{311,150} = 30$

Agatu $\frac{400 \times 13,958}{311,150} = 18$

Oju $\frac{400 \times 24,973}{311,150.} = 32$

Otukpo $\frac{400 \times 23,136}{311,150} = 30$

3.5.4 Questionnaire (for staff of Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources)

A total of 43 respondents were purposefully selected for the study from this category as detailed below. The state Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources has a Department of Agricultural Services amongst several others. This is the department directly involved in the handling of fertilisers with a total staff size of 43. A questionnaire was designed for this group to obtain official information and data on the procurement and distribution of fertilisers in Benue state for the period under review. Due to the small size of the population, all the members were surveyed. Out of a total of 43, the study was able to distribute and collect 34 questionnaires as some staff members were not available due to various reasons (see appendix for a list of categories of staff that participated in the survey). The data generated from this set of questionnaires are presented and analysed separately from that which was administered to farmers.

3.5.5 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were also conducted with two past commissioners of agriculture and one fertiliser dealer.

3.5.6 Variables for the Study

Variables for the study comprise the dependent and independent variables. The independent variables included the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution, incomes status of farmers, membership of formal associations of farmers, farm sizes and fertiliser distribution. The dependent variables are the effectiveness of distribution and the quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

The data that were generated for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies, percentages and means, while the inferential statistics included the t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The in-depth interviews were content analysed.

For hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in effectiveness among forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State. An

independent t-test was used to analyse data for this hypothesis. The study grouped the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution into two.

The universal subsidy =1 while the GES =2. This was to enable the calculation of the mean differences between the two forms of intervention.

For Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to analyse the data.

The total quantity of fertiliser distributed by the state government =1.

The total quantity of fertilisers obtained by the farmers =2.

For Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue state. For this hypothesis, the paired t-test was used for the analysis of data.

Quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired =1.

Quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed =2.

For Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution by the membership of farmers' associations. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used.

Membership of farming association =1.

No membership of farming association =2.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Details that describe the general characteristics of respondents are presented and explained in this section and this provides the necessary background information that aids in the understanding of data presented and discussed in this chapter.

The data presented in Table 4.1 captures the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents to the questionnaire for farmers, reflecting existing circumstances that define their existence and providing evidence of their social placement as a distinct economic category. The characteristics of farmers reported in Table 4.1 agree with reports by Beer (1976), Zuckerman (1979), Ojiako et al. (2016), Cathy-Austin and Nahanga (2017) and Nyambo, Luhanga and Yonah (2019), The age distribution presents a relatively youthful rural population with a cumulative percentage of 68. 2 for those below 41 years compared to the typically aged nature of most rural and farm-based populations. A similar dominance of youth at 62% in a population of farmers is reported by Cathy-Austin and Nahanga (2017) in their study of Ojo and Badagry Local Governments in Nigeria. A readily available explanation is the persisting and worsening urban unemployment and falling real wages which have fostered some level of the resurgence of farming or at least created the expediency of maintaining strong links with the peasant origins of urban workers. The male majority at 57% while reflecting a characteristic of the population is also attributable to some level of incidental gender bias in the conduct of the survey. Such a bias could have arisen from the educational imbalance in favour of males who more readily accepted to participate in the survey. Vestiges of the early marriages phenomenon still exist among the rural populace in Benue state with the consequences of truncated educational aspirations for most girls. The single status of 56.2% of the population to a certain extent correlates to the youthful state of the population.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of Respondents

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
At least 20	70	18.6
21-30	135	35.8
31-40	52	13.8
41and above	120	31.8
Total	377	100
Gender Distribution		
Male	215	57.0
Female	162	43.0
Total	377	100
Marital Status		
Single	212	56.2
Married	165	43.8
Total	377	100
Household Size		
1-4	69	18.3
5-8	133	35.3
9-12	59	15.6
13 and above	116	30.8
Total	377	100
Farming Experience (years)		
At least 5	67	17.8
6-10	130	34.5
11-15	60	15.9
16 and above	120	31.8
Total	377	100
Educational Qualifications		
Non-formal	68	18.0
Primary	132	35.0
Secondary	64	17.0
Post –Secondary	113	30.0
Total	377	100
Primary Occupation of respondents		
Farmer	243	64.5
Trader/Business owner	11	2.9
Artisan	8	2.1
Farm labourer	3	.8
Wage/Salary earner	112	29.7
Total	377	100
Secondary Occupation of respondents		
Farmer	168	44.6
Trader/Business owner	111	29.4
Artisan	7	1.9
Farm labourer	17	4.5

Wage/Salary earner	56	14.9
Others	18	4.8
Total	377	100
Income Distribution (Annual)		
<200,000	211	56.0
200,000-400,000	75	19.9
401,000-600,000	44	11.7
601,000-800,000	24	6.4
>801,000	23	6.1
Total	377	100
Membership of farming associations		
All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)	34	9.0
Commodity Associations	111	29.4
None of the above	232	61.5
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Typical households are large where a cumulative 308 respondents representing 81. 7% belong to households of 5 persons and above. This is reflective of communal living within rural and semi-urban households. Most of the respondents in the survey have had extended experience in farming where a cumulative number of 310 representing 82.2 have above 6 years of farming experience. This is partly derived from the fact that participation in farming activities begins in childhood for most Benue people. The educational qualifications reflect typical rural and semi-urban characteristics with up to 18% lacking formal education, 35% having only primary education and 17% with secondary education. The 30% with post-secondary education represent the growing number of tertiary education graduates who have stayed back on the farm for lack of white-collar jobs in the urban areas.

Other typically agrarian economy characteristics reflected in the data indicate that a total of 243 respondents representing 64.5% engage in agriculture as their primary occupation. Extant literature, official reports and news media data bases give between 60 to 75% (Manyong et al., 2005; Suswam, 2006), which places the field results within an acceptable range. Stronger validation of this statistic is its closeness to the NPC (2012) statistics that indicates 61% engagement in agriculture-based occupation within Benue state.

The empirical fact demonstrated with this statistic is that the population sampled was substantially a farmer population. Even for the number that does not primarily consider itself as farmers, there is a 44.6% engagement in farming as a secondary occupation. This lends empirical validation to the assumption that Benue inhabitants are mostly farmers. The statistics also indicate a significant number of wage and salary earners at 29.7% from a mostly rural and semi-urban population. There are also a few other occupations implying that the rural economy also boasts some level of occupational diversity and may not necessarily be mono-occupational. Up to 29.4% of those who are primarily farmers also engage in business and trading activities to augment farm earnings while 1.9% operates as farmers and artisans. A negligible 0.8% constitutes the farm labourer category, while 4.5% of farm owning respondents seasonally transform into wage-labourers within or outside their communities. Valtonen (2000:21) views such

diversification of income sources as a rational resource management strategy in today's world, constantly affected and enhanced by changing government policies and other economic hazards. Morgan and Solarz (1994:62) also argue on the strength of availability of good evidence that many peasant farmers in sub-Saharan Africa turn to off-farm income-generating activities in combination with subsistence food cropping.

The circumstances within which farm production is organised restricts the growth and flexibility of farm income, placing most farmers within a stagnant low-income category with up to 211 respondents equating to 56% earning below ₦200, 000 per year from the sale of farm produce. The low-income status of smallholder farmers is corroborated by Liverpool-Tasie and Salau (2010) who stated that the low incomes of farmers are one of the reasons for the low consumption of fertilisers. Nnoli (1981) established a connection between smallholder farmers (peasants) and poverty which is a function of low farm incomes. Beyond them, 75 (19.9%) obtain between ₦200, 000 and ₦400, 000, 44 respondents (11.7%) earn between ₦401, 000 and ₦600, 000. Also, 24 respondents (6.4%) indicate farm incomes of between ₦601, 000-800,000 and only 23 respondents (6.1%) state farm earnings above N800, 000. The last two categories with relatively higher incomes probably represent the cumulative 11.6% (Table 4.2) that has fully or partially mechanized farm production. At the higher levels of farm incomes, the numbers of farmers dwindle substantially placing very few among the high earners and the greater majority within the brackets of low incomes, the group of Kulaks (Shima, 1987).

Statistical details from Table 4.1 also graphically demonstrate a politically salient characteristic of the population which is the limited organization of smallholder farmers depicted here as the peasantry, where up to 232 respondents comprising 61.5% of the sampled population do not belong to any farming association. Only 9% belong to the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) which is the umbrella body of all the farmers in Nigeria. An article by Grain de Sel (2010) portrays AFAN as more or less a quasi-government and agribusiness type of association without an effective representation for smallholder farmers. This probably explains why only 9% belong to the apex body. Low level of organization presents as a critical factor in the political powerlessness of the

peasantry since they thereby lack a common front to articulate their demands and constructively engage the executive arm of the state or lobby the legislature for the enunciation of favourable official policies, actions and laws. While the AFAN exists for advocacy and to function as an intermediary between the federal government and farmers, the poor representation of smallholders excludes them from any negotiated gains.

The low level of formal organization is a historical characteristic of small farmers in Benue state. The Benue state Statistical Year Book 1996-1999 (see Appendix 2) presents a picture largely in consonance with the data obtained in this study on farmers' membership of formal farm-based organisations. The report presents separate tables for membership of primary cooperative societies disaggregated by sex and local government and membership of secondary cooperative societies. Although it does not specify what it means by a primary and secondary cooperative, this study understands the former to represent local self-help communities and kinship-based groups which provide micro-credit and rotational farm labour. The latter (secondary cooperative societies) would refer to more formally state recognised farm groups engaging directly with formal state institutions. For the first category, there is a fair level of membership for both the years 1998 and 1999 with a high male representation and differences across local government areas with a total of 2243 for 1998 and 1303 for 1999 across the state (see Appendix 2). For membership of secondary cooperative societies, the picture is dismal with a total of 6 for 1997, 6 for 1998 and 4 for 1999, for the entire state. This comparison between data generated from the field in the current study and older statistics indicate that the category of farmers that constitute the core subjects in this study have a poor disposition to or are unable to formally organize.

Table 4.2 indicates that only 13.8% of the respondents produce exclusively for subsistence, while 86.2% produce for the market and subsistence. This aligns with Imoagene's (1989) depiction of the peasant as that farmer detached from the traditional land tenure and kinship-tied system of production and integrated into the market. Valtonen (2000), Idachaba (2011) and Obisesan et al. (2013) also acknowledge the contribution of smallholder farmers to the market supply of commodities and Nigeria's GDP. Although up to 86.2% of the sampled population produce for subsistence and the market, the latter

purpose is very limited as the market share of farm produce is hardly in real commercial quantity. This conclusion can be inferred from the average farm sizes where up to 45.9% cultivate between 1 and 2 hectares, the high reliance on simple manual tools (88.3%) and substantive dependence on family labour (53.1%) in production. These statistical attributes of farmers are in tandem with Ake's (1981), Manyong, et al.'s (2005) and Nwanze's (2010) description of peasant production as characterised by low productivity and poor infrastructure. Results from the data interestingly indicate a higher percentage of 52.8% for those cultivating between 3 and 4 hectares as against the 45.9% who cultivate between 1 and 2 hectares also in scattered plots of land. This also indicates the strong presence of market forces in the production cycles of the peasantry as the cultivation of increasingly large parcels of land mostly reflects a response to market demands. The negligible 1.3% cultivating above 5 hectares of land hardly fall within the bracket of smallholder farmers but comprises mainly the 29.7% primarily wage and salary earners who also double as framers as indicated in the data. This is the category of farmers described as Kulaks by Shima (1987).

Table 4.2: Scale of Farm Production of Respondents

Farmers use of crops	Frequency	Percentage
For feeding	52	13.8
Feeding/and selling	325	86.2
Total	377	100
Average farm sizes		
1-2 hectares	173	45.9
3-4 Hectares	199	52.8
5 Hectares and above	5	1.3
Total	377	100
Farming technique		
Manual labour/ simple tools	333	88.3
Partly mechanized	42	11.1
Fully mechanized	2	.5
Total	377	100
Source of farm labour		
Family/household	200	53.1
Hired from within the community	141	37.4
Labourers from other communities	36	9.5
Total	377	100
Source of capital		
Sale of produce from the farm	219	58.1
Personal savings	116	30.8
Borrow from relations and friends	3	.8
cooperative/bam/adashi	35	9.3
Loans from commercial banks	4	1.1
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Farm mechanization is almost non-existent at 0.5% with 88.3% indicating reliance on manual labour, while only 11.1% indicated a combination of mechanization and manual labour utilising simple tools such as hoes and cutlasses. This agrees with Manyong, et al.'s (2005) argument that farmers have poor technology adoption strategies. This limited use of farm technology is the situation that applies also to fertilisers as an input, correlating with the fact that the data reported a cumulative 98.7% of farmers as cultivating 4 hectares or less in scattered plots due to the nature of landholding. This indicates that most are smallholder farmers with limited income and they face the challenge of accessing requisite farm input such as fertilisers without official intervention. One of the respondents from the interview reported:

> Most of the farmers are small farmers cultivating small and scattered plots, making mechanization impossible. What is required is land clearing schemes by the state that can clear out large hectares of land and allocate the same to farmers for cultivation. This was started by the Aper Aku administration (1979-83) but has been abandoned (interview with a past commissioner of agriculture, 19th May 2016).

It is very significant to note that over 58.1% of funds for farm investments derive from the sale of farm produce with 30.8% per cent indicated as personal savings sourced probably from the secondary economic activities of the farmers as indicated in the data. Given that farming constitutes the main source of income for the farmer on which every other need depends, farm incomes are spread thin and do affect the ability to purchase inputs for the succeeding farming season. This existing reality of limited smallholder incomes has remained a key reason for official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution as argued by government agents.

4.2 Forms of Official Intervention in Fertiliser Procurement and Distribution in Benue State

From the early seventies to the present, successive governments at the federal and state level have actively intervened in the fertiliser sector with the expressed aim of raising levels of fertiliser consumption to support food production (FMARD, 2011). This intervention has taken various forms shown in the number of different fertiliser regimes beginning in the early '70s. The regimes of interest to the study date to 1999 which constitutes a watershed in Nigeria's political history marked with the return of democratic

government and an observable commitment to creating new policy pathways in all areas of governance. The FMARD (2011) while enunciating the ATA recognized and evaluated the universal subsidy with direct government participation in procurement and distribution from 1999 to 2011, and initiated the voucher system (targeted subsidy) which was operated between 2012 and 2015. Documentation for the zero-subsidy (PFI) which came into effect in 2016 and is still operational at the period of writing up this report is contained in an FGN (2017) publication titled "Everything you need to know about the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative". The NEEDS (2004) document also provided statistics and information on government fertiliser distribution.

4.2.1 Universal Fertiliser Subsidy (1999-2011)

The civilian administration that came to power in 1999 attempted to correct the in-balances and inconsistencies in the fertiliser sector after operating the system it met on the ground for over a year. In 1999 the government procured and distributed fertilisers with a 25% subsidy in keeping with the already existing system. Its corrective measures initiated in August 2000 were the removal of fertiliser subsidies and the abolishment of existing import tariffs. These measures were executed as a component of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004) which called for the review of the input supply delivery system and the development of an effective private input sector. The experiment with zero subsidies was however short-lived as the Federal Government again procured and subsidized a portion of fertiliser at 25% and re-introduced import tariffs at 5% in 2001. The resultant consequence was that except for the year 2000, the Federal Government from 1999 procured fertilisers for sale to states at 25% subsidy under the Fertiliser Market Stabilization Programme (FMSP). Under this arrangement, state governments also provided additional subsidies and also procured fertiliser independently outside FMSP for sale to their farmers. This arrangement was able to get subsidized fertilisers across to only 30% of smallholder farmers (Banful et al., 2010). The Federal Government through FMARD (2011) reported a lower figure of 11%.

The concrete mechanisms of the process within this period involved the federal government acting as the procurer of fertilisers through a subsidy programme. The FMARD in a policy document titled “Agricultural Transformation Agenda: We will grow Nigeria’s Agricultural Sector” (2011), provides a summary of the pre-2011 fertiliser

procurement process. Table 4.3 below indicates a clear difference between the pre-2011 system characterised by government distribution and the replacement denoted by private-sector distribution. The federal government, before 2011, had a fertiliser importation scheme with fertiliser depots around the country. Under this system, the private sector manufactured or imported and supplied fertiliser based on the order received from the federal government which then delivered it to the states per intent from states at 25% subsidy. According to an interviewee, (interview with a former commissioner of agriculture) fertilisers were at this time mostly imported from Ukraine. The states then distributed the fertilisers to farmers sometimes with their subsidies added within the frame of a universal and not a targeted subsidy. The amount paid as the subsidy was fixed by the MANR and varied with each cropping season due to the cost of procurement, change of government, the prevailing economy of the state for the year and foreign exchange rate fluctuations.

Table 4.3: Comparative Analysis of Government and Private-Sector Fertiliser Distribution System

Government Distributed	Private- Sector Distributed
The government distributed fertiliser support programme	Private-sector distributed fertiliser support system, utilizing input vouchers
Manufacturer/supplier gets an order from FG	The private sector sells fertiliser to farmers at market prices "minus" the fertiliser voucher discount provided by the government
FG has manufacturer deliver to states per intent at 25%subsidy	94% of actual farmers receive the subsidized fertiliser under the voucher programme
State "distributes" fertiliser to farmers occasionally adding their subsidy	States and FG coordinate to distribute fertiliser vouchers to targeted farmers

Source: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2011.

The report contained in the FMARD (2011) document supports results from interviews with past commissioners of agriculture in Benue state, which indicate that Benue was served by the depot in Keffi in present-day Nassarawa state. States were requested to submit letters of intent to the FMARD which were processed and forwarded to the Federal Ministry of Finance. Thereafter, the cost implication was deducted from the state's statutory monthly allocation and the state then transported its fertiliser from the depot. The Federal Government procured fertilisers through contractors who were not paid until the states indicated receipt of their allocation of fertilisers. The cost borne by the Federal Government included a subsidy which ranged from about 25 to 50% of the cost of the fertilisers.

In Benue state, the most significant change in fertiliser policy occurred in 1999 when the responsibility for procuring fertiliser was transferred to the state ministry of agriculture. Pre-1999 fertiliser procurement was handled by the Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA) as a part of the World Bank Agricultural Development Project (ADP). Apart from procuring and distributing fertilisers, BNARDA worked in close collaboration with the then Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide intensive extension services that made Benue farmers receptive to the use of fertilisers. In contrast to the huge and expanding demand for fertilisers, farmers in the state had to be educated and encouraged to adopt fertilisers for their crops during earlier periods of the introduction of the input. This explains why the BNARDA project included other components such as agricultural extension and provision of seedlings. Appendix 2 provides some raw data detailing fertiliser procurement and distribution by BNARDA in the years preceding 1999.

Within the period of the fertiliser regime under consideration, the government of Benue state also operated a process independent of that of the federal government which involved procurement of fertiliser through the use of fertiliser suppliers operating across the country. The process involved the participation of fertiliser companies or contractors in an open bidding process with their quotations submitted to the state executive council through the commissioner of agriculture (interview with a past commissioner of agriculture, 12-7-2016, Makurdi). The choice of fertiliser supplier or contractor and award

of the contract was then made by the council and the contractor then imported and supplied the fertilisers to the state government.

The main considerations behind the choices of suppliers of fertilisers varied widely, covering the cost, quality, results of research and trials of fertiliser formulations, recommendations from extension agents, existing government policy on fertilisers and recommendations from traditional rulers. Between 1999 and 2015, a total of 226,950.75 metric tonnes of fertilisers were procured for distribution in the state with year by year breakdown as indicated in Table 4.4 below. These figures are a combination of the fertiliser supplied by the Federal Government and the augment procured by the state. It is important to note that the figures for fertiliser sourced from the Federal Government and figures for the fertiliser procured by the state were not separated in the document obtained from the MANR. The content of Table 4.4 comprises the total fertiliser that came into the state for the years stated.

Table 4.4: Yearly Procurement of Fertiliser in Benue State (1999-2015)

Year	Metric Tonnes
1999	1,080
2000	1,700
2001	5,220
2002	7,820
2003	6,540
2004	6,670
2005	7,820
2006	8,640
2007	36,000
2008	61,380
2009	29,370
2010	9,090
2011	3,630
2012	2,783.5
2013	16,480.1
2014	21,364
2015	1,363.15

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Benue State, 2016

According to a document sourced from the MANR which presents details on the 199-2015 system,

> Benue State receives fertilisers from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture yearly. To ensure that farmers are properly taken care of, the State Government purchases additional quantities from contractors directly to meet up the shortfall of the demand for the commodity by farmers. The State sells the fertilisers to farmers at between 50-63% subsidy yearly (Benue State Government, 2015:2).

The change to the GES scheme in 2012 applied only to fertiliser supplied with the federal government subsidy. The state was still involved in direct procurement of the fertilisers supplied to farmers after the yearly flag-off of fertiliser distribution; a ceremony usually performed by the governor of the state and designed to coincide with the beginning of the cropping season but not always keeping to this timeline. This explains why the data in Table 4.4 stretch to 2015.

Table 4.5: Benue State Fertiliser Distribution in Metric Tonnes (1999-2015)

Year	Quantity
1999	1,080
2000	1,700
2001	5,220
2002	7,820
2003	6,540
2004	6,670
2005	7,820
2006	8,640
2007	36,000
2008	61,380
2009	29,370
2010	9,090
2011	3,630
2012	2,783.5
2013	16,480.1
2014	21,364
2015	1,363.15

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Benue State, 2016

Table 4.5 provides information on the quantity of fertilisers distributed by the Benue state government between 1999 and 2015. These figures are the same as those stated for procurement for the corresponding years in Table 4.4.

4.2.2 The Growth Enhancement Support (GES) Scheme (2012-2015)

The system of direct procurement of fertilisers by the federal government was suspended and replaced by the GES scheme which was enunciated in 2011 and implemented in 2012. According to FEPSAN (2012), this was an alternative system for fertiliser distribution built on the voucher system and developed by the International Fertiliser Development Centre (IFDC). The change from direct procurement of fertilisers by the federal government to the voucher system according to FMARD (2011) was informed by the need to stimulate a thriving private-sector fertiliser industry owing to identified inefficiencies in the government system and to enable the introduction of smart subsidies that get fertiliser to the farmers directly. This scheme targeted farmers through the use of an electronic wallet where pre-registered farmers received their allocation of fertiliser via a mobile phone alert and redeemed such from specified agro-dealers also registered on the scheme (FMARD, 2011; FEPSAN, 2012).

The objective of GES was the facilitation of collaborative and synergetic action amongst "critical actors" in the fertiliser value chain to increase productivity, incomes, and food security (FEPSAN, 2014:16). The scheme also set out to correct the distortions in fertiliser markets created by government direct involvement in procurement and distribution of fertilisers. The GES nucleus entailed moving government out of fertiliser procurement and distribution; engaging private-sector participants such as banks, fertiliser producers, importers, distributors and agro-dealers in the ownership of the fertiliser value chain.

The significant innovations of the GES were the withdrawal of the government from buying and selling inputs and the introduction of vouchers. Adoption of the voucher system can be viewed as a response to scholarly recommendations arising from academic research (Nagy and Edun, 2002; Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010). In its practical dimensions, the GES voucher system utilized mobile communication technology by distributing input vouchers through e-wallets. Under this arrangement, target fertiliser subsidy beneficiaries

(smallholder farmers) were mobilized to register with the FMARD with their phone numbers as the point of contact. Input dealers and merchants are also registered as the private-sector components of the scheme responsible for the importation and/or blending of fertilisers and sale to farmers. To obtain inputs, registered farmers received text messages notifying them of entitlement to two 50kg bags of fertiliser and 25kg of either rice or maize seeds at subsidized costs, redeemable from specified agro-dealers. Upon presentation of the e-vouchers and payment of a specified amount, the agro-dealers supplied the inputs and were paid the difference between the face value of the voucher and the landing costs by the federal government. Simultaneously, GES sought to guarantee smallholder access to agricultural inputs and remove impediments to thriving private input markets.

The GES in its conception targeted 10 million farmers for fertiliser and seed distribution. According to the FMARD, in 2012 which was its first year of operation, 4.2 million farmers were registered on the scheme across the country while between 1.2 and 1.3 million were able to redeem their inputs after the receipt of text messages. In 2013 alone the number of farmers registered was above five million with redemption rates appreciating to 3.6 million comprising farmers registered in 2012 and 2013. FEPSAN's (2014) assessment of the GES supports this claim by stating that the GES succeeded in reaching 1.2 million farmers in 35 states and the Federal Capital Territory in 2012. A graphic illustration of the significance of the GES for smallholder access to fertiliser is demonstrated in Table 4.6 which compares prices paid by farmers on the scheme and those outside the scheme. Differences between the price of subsidized and market fertilisers are however not unique to the GES scheme because universal subsidies have persisted as a vital component of government action in the sector.

Table 4.6: Prices of Fertiliser paid by GES and non-GES Farmers in 2012

	Price of 50kg bag of NPK (N)		Price of 50kg bag of Urea (N)	
	Farmers on the GES	Farmers not on the GES	Farmers on the GES	Farmers not on the GES
Average	2,936	5,448	2,731	5,416
Minimum	2,250	4,500	2,250	4,800
Maximum	3,350	6,000	3,000	6000

Source: FEPSAN, 2014

The modus operandi of the GES was uniform across the country given its identity as an initiative of the Federal Government. In Benue state, the FMARD office (Green House) located in Makurdi, the state capital operated as the spot monitor of the GES. This was achieved by working with the state's ministry in charge of agriculture, the FMARD headquarters in Abuja, agro-dealers, Cellulant and farmers. However, the registration of farmers and the process of redemption of fertilisers by registered farmers were handled directly by the FMARD operating from Abuja.

4.2.3 The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) (2016-2020)

In 2016, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched a new initiative that explicitly aimed at consolidating the gains of the ATA for Nigerian Agriculture. The new agriculture roadmap was known as the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) which like the ATA preceding proposed a holistic reform to address two key concerns in agriculture. The first was reducing the volume of food importation while the second was raising the contribution of agriculture to foreign exchange earnings of the country. The APP identified several value chain constraints in Nigeria's agriculture and proposed policy reforms for each constraint. Within the fertiliser sub-sector, the first value chain constraint identified was ill-timed availability and adulteration of fertilisers. This constraint was viewed as the reason for low farm productivity and related low-income earnings by farmers. With the identification of this value chain constraint, the stated policy intervention objective of the APP was to promote the timely availability of good quality inputs utilizing privately controlled agro-dealer networks. Actionable points in the proposed policy reform included approval of the Fertiliser Act, development of measures to stimulate domestic production of quality fertilisers and promotion of the penetration of rural markets by agro-dealers. The APP also detailed its specific programme prominent amongst which was analysing and addressing constraints in private-sector production and distribution as well as enhancing standards for fertilisers.

The APP also identified and proposed policy reforms to remove institutional constraints for the availability of fertilisers. These institutional constraints were: apathy in states for any programme driven by the Federal Government and the absence of local governments from policy execution discussions and processes. Other institutional constraints were disturbance of government intervention of market processes, hampering

of the development of the private sector and scattered and incompatible or inefficient policy processes and programmes of the various stakeholders at federal and state levels. The APP's policy objective in this direction was to ensure that all relevant stakeholders synergistically performed their roles to facilitate the free flow of activities within the fertiliser value chain. These stakeholders included the FMARD, other MDA's, the private sector, agribusiness investors, states, local governments, research/education and development partners. Key proposed mechanisms for removing institutional constraints comprised restructuring of dialogue mechanisms amongst the identified stakeholders. Another was the creation of investment advisory forums to work with local governments to produce a fertiliser policy process separate from that of the states. State governments under the APP were also expected to assume greater responsibilities for agribusiness within their terrains.

As a derivative of the APP, the Federal Government introduced the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI) in 2017 which broadly sought to address value chain constraints identified in the APP document. Under the PFI the Federal Government facilitated an agreement between FEPSAN and a Moroccan phosphate mining company OCP for the supply of discounted phosphate to support domestic production of fertilisers in Nigeria. FEPSAN also negotiated with local producers and suppliers of locally available components for blending fertilisers. Several fertiliser blending plants were identified across the country for the production of fertilisers based on this initiative.

The seminal difference between the PFI and other fertiliser schemes preceding it was the absence of subsidies on fertilisers and its private-sector-led character. Operationally, the PFI was designed to function as a self-sustaining revolving fund. According to the FGN (2017), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) provided funding for the PFI but this was not an agricultural intervention fund paid directly to blending plants. The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) managed a 9% per annum fund on behalf of FEPSAN on the CBN mandate. The NSIA executed this mandate through a Special Purpose Vehicle, known as NAIC-NPK Limited (where NAIC = 'NSIA Agricultural Investment Company'). After obtaining and paying for fertiliser raw materials, NAIC-NPK Limited delivered them to FEPSAN which in turn supplied them to the blending plants

already signed on as contract blenders and the contract blenders were paid a fee by NAIC_NPK. The responsibility of the blending plants was to produce, bag and sell the finished fertiliser to Agro-dealers and State Governments at the cost of 5,000 per bag, and remit this revenue to NAIC-NPK Limited, for re-investment into the next phase of production. The government expected that with this provision and process the price of fertilisers would be N5, 500 for a 50kg bag which was considered a fair price.

4.2.4 The Anchor Borrower Programme (ABP) (2015-2020)

The anchor borrower programme is also an agricultural input supply scheme established by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2015 and is running side by side with the PFI. The programme is funded from the ₦220 billion Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF) with loans given at a single-digit interest rate of 9% per annum. The approach of the ABP is through the establishment of links between smallholder farmers and anchor companies involved in agro-processing of key commodities such as cereals, tubers, legumes, tree crops, cotton, vegetables and livestock. Under the ABP SHFs are provided with agricultural inputs covering seedlings, herbicides, pesticides, fertilisers and cash as agricultural loans to boost agricultural productivity. The role of the anchor company is to buy off the produce from the farmers at harvest at agreed prices and pay the money into the farmers' account. The ABP thus aims at addressing the challenges faced by smallholder farmers in input and output markets and stabilizing input supply to agro-processors. Target beneficiaries of the programme are smallholder farmers who are required to be organized in cooperatives with membership ranging between 5 to 20 individuals. Apart from guaranteeing access to agricultural input, the ABP also includes training for smallholder farmers to enhance their capacity to manage farming as a business, improve their agricultural management practices as well as their group management abilities. Agricultural extension services are also a component of the ABP.

Unlike the GES and the PFI, the ABP is a more holistic agricultural intervention by the government with fertilisers still featuring as a prominent component. The method of operation of the programme as designed caters specifically to the needs of each participating farmer given that input disbursement is based on the farm sizes inspected before disbursement. Participation of farmers is not restricted to receipt of loans in cash or kind alone but also in decision making at certain levels. Inclusivity is facilitated by the

low demanding requirements for eligibility which are cross guarantee by the farmers and a 5% minimum equity contribution. Farmer cooperatives are required to be registered with the National Collateral Registry (NCR). Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) verify eligible farmers and their farmlands, open accounts for the farmers, ensure due diligence on loan administration, monitor and recover and credit farmers accounts after loans are approved (CBN, 2016) amongst other responsibilities.

The ABP has been implemented in Benue state since 2016 with a broad spectrum of participants including the targeted smallholder farmers and others. Most individuals participating as farmers are civil servants and other categories of public servants who are urban dwellers. It is not clear how much awareness has been created to bring the real intended beneficiaries on board. An early challenge to the programme is the tendency for side selling by beneficiaries where commodities are sold on the open market instead of being sold to the specified Anchor. This has led to a high rate of default in loan repayment which has the potential of compromising the sustainability of the programme.

The programme discussed above depicts the efforts of the government in getting fertilisers across to farmers from 1999 to the present. This presentation and analysis have focused almost exclusively on data generated from official sources which generally indicate a fair showing for official policy and action. A critical approach has been adopted in the presentation as evident through careful reading.

4.3 Effectiveness of Official Intervention

The data for this section were sourced from the questionnaire administered on farmers, the questionnaire administered on the fertiliser bureaucracy, official documents and results from in-depth interviews. The effectiveness of each form of intervention presented in the preceding section is evaluated in this section.

4.3.1 Farmers' Use of fertiliser

Before the evaluation, the research sought to establish whether the respondents utilize fertiliser on their farms. The concern here is to ascertain the extent of dependence on artificial chemical fertilisers by the sampled population before proceeding to evaluate the effectiveness of official intervention in the procurement and distribution of fertilisers.

Data in Table 4.7 indicate that high reliance on chemical fertilisers characterizes farm behaviour of the sampled population which finds congruence with results from experts studies on fertiliser use in Nigeria. Chude, et al. (2012:1, 4) state that fertilisers are required to "resuscitate plant productivity" because

> Most soils are highly leached resulting in medium to high acidity, moderate to low cation exchange capacity and base saturation, and low organic matter content. Soil nutrient replenishment from organic and mineral sources is a prerequisite for continuous cultivation of such soils, particularly under intensive production.

The high level of fertiliser dependence is demonstrated in the data which indicates that 43.2% of the respondents rely on chemical fertilisers every cropping season while 48.0% utilize chemical fertilisers some cropping seasons with only 8.8% indicating complete non-use of chemical fertilisers. Put together, the percentage of the sample that utilizes chemical fertiliser on the farm is 91.2. From the period of the first trial in Nigeria in 1937, chemical fertilisers have gradually replaced traditional land fallow practices and the use of farmyard manure due to the increasing intensiveness of farming and the introduction of higher-yielding and more nutrient demanding varieties of crops (Chude, et al., 2012:4).

Most respondents indicate that they purchase fertilisers in 50kg bags. Up to 319 are in this category representing 84.6% with only 58 or 15.4% who buy in small measures such as little bowls. This sort is usually marketed by roadside sellers who buy the 50kg bag, open it up and retail in little measures. Usually, this sort is patronized by individuals that are reached by the official distribution channels, are very poor farmers or urban dwellers requiring small amounts of fertilisers for their gardens. However, Gregory and Bumb (2006) discourage this practice because fertilisers are hygroscopic, exposing them could lead to caking and affect their quality.

Table 4.7: Use of Chemical Fertilisers by the Respondents

Use of chemical fertilisers	Frequency	Percentage
Never	33	8.8
Some cropping seasons	181	48.0
Every cropping season	163	43.2
Total	377	100
Measures of purchase		
Buy in Bowls	58	15.4
Buy in Bags	319	84.6
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

For most of the sampled population, the preferred brand of fertiliser in the state is NPK which comes in various formulations as indicated by 65.3% of the respondents. The second preferred type is Urea, explainable based on the dominant crops produced in the state which are mostly grains and tubers. There is a high level of convergence between the questionnaire for farmers and official sources on the formulations of fertiliser distributed under the subsidy scheme. This gives credit to the subsidy programme for providing the right kind of fertilisers required by the farmers in Benue state. With regards to the type of fertiliser procured for distribution, it is observed that a dominant factor driving distribution is consideration of the fertiliser brands that are preferred by farmers. The types of fertiliser formulations preferred by the respondents are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Fertiliser Preferences of Respondents

Type of fertiliser	Frequency	Percentage
NPK	246	65.3
Urea	102	27.1
SSP	7	1.9
Lime fertiliser	8	2.1
Combined formulations	14	3.7
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

4.3.2 Universal Fertiliser Subsidy (1999-2011)

From Table 4.9 effectiveness in the distribution of fertilisers can be measured from the level of awareness of the existence of an official subsidy on fertiliser. Up to 87% of the respondents were aware of the existence of an official subsidy on fertilisers as a result of the public awareness programme of the government. A total of 221 respondents or 58.6% selected radio and television as their source of information, 10.9% picked town criers/market square while 10.3% chose extension officers amongst others. The use of the cell phone is an innovation that accompanied the introduction of the GES scheme which explains the modest share of 4.0%.

High levels of awareness can be attributed to the publicity that accompanies the yearly ritual of flag-off ceremonies of fertiliser distribution by the Governor of the state as well as the multiplicity of sources of information on distribution indicated in the data. Adequate publicity largely facilitated the distribution process and enabled access by creating awareness. Only 13% indicated a lack of awareness of a subsisting official subsidy on fertilisers. Related closely to awareness of subsidy policy is respondents' attestation to the official presence in their respective local government areas for fertiliser distribution where over 84.9% of respondents agree that government distributes subsidized fertilisers in their local government areas.

Table 4.9: Access to Subsidized Fertilisers by the Respondents

Awareness of subsidy policy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	328	87.0
No	49	13.0
Total	377	100
Distribution of fertiliser in LGA		
Yes	320	84.9
No	57	15.1
Total	377	100
Access to subsidized fertiliser		
Never	170	45.1
Some cropping seasons	164	43.5
Every cropping season	43	11.4
Total	377	100
Quantity Accessed		
1-5	260	69.0
6-10	101	26.8
11-15	14	3.7
16-	2	.5
Total	377	100
Frequency of Distribution		
Once a year	332	88.1
Twice a year	27	7. 2
Once in two years	6	1.6
Once in several years	3	.8
I don't know	9	2.4
Total	377	100
Awareness of distribution		
Radio/TV announcements/jingles	221	58.6
Town criers/ market square	41	10.9
Announcement in churches	34	9.0
Announcements in mosques	13	3.4
Extension officers	39	10.3
Announcements in farm association	14	3.7
Cell phone text messages	15	4.0
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The data also indicate that not all respondents had access to subsidized fertiliser with only 11.4% of the respondents accessing subsidized fertilisers every cropping season and 43.5% accessing the subsidized commodity some cropping seasons. Banful et al., (2010) documented that only about 30% of intended beneficiaries accessed subsidized fertiliser for this period. The Universal fertiliser subsidy programme was not very effective in getting fertilisers to farmers. Although a well laid out programme existed for distribution it was largely circumvented by the intrusion of political considerations through which much of the fertiliser was channelled. The Federal Government of Nigeria in 2011 through the then Minister of Agriculture publicly acknowledged that only 11% of intended beneficiaries accessed fertiliser under the Universal Subsidy where the subsidy was paid at source. This percentage ties in with the 11.4% generated from the study for those who were able to obtain subsidized fertilisers every cropping season. Further examination of table 4.9 shows that of the cumulative 54.9% that access subsidized fertilisers intermittently or consecutively, 69.0% obtain between 1to 5 50kg bags, 26.8% obtain between 6-10bags, 3.7% obtain between 11-15 bags, while 0.5% obtain above 16 bags. Statistics demonstrate the smallholder denominated character of the sampled population. This is supported by interview results that "the category of farmers targeted in fertiliser subsidy is the small farmer, the peasant who requires just two bags of fertilisers per cropping season" (interview with a past commissioner of agriculture, 19th May 2016).

Table 4.9 also demonstrates the existence of a strong agreement between the responses of the farmers and the government on the schedule of fertiliser distribution. While 332 of the respondents representing 88.1% indicate that fertilisers are distributed once a year, the data from government sources also stated that fertilisers are distributed once a year, usually targeted to coincide with the beginning of the cropping season for each year.

Table 4.10: Respondents' Ratings of Subsidized and Market Fertilisers

Subsidized Fertiliser	Frequency	Percentage
Affordability	297	78.8
Predictability of supply	12	3.2
Quality	44	11.7
Ease of process	8	2.1
Extension services	16	4.2
Total	377	100
Market Priced Fertiliser		
Affordability	41	10.9
Predictability of supply	68	18.0
Quality	17	4.5
Ease of process	251	66.6
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Two items on the questionnaire sought to know respondents reasons for preference of either subsidized or market sourced fertilisers and this information is presented in Table 4.10. The affordability of subsidized fertilisers is chosen more than other reasons for preference for subsidized fertilisers at 77.8%, compared to market fertiliser where only 10.9% selected affordability as a reason for preference. Market priced fertilisers scored low with regards to quality at 4.5%, however, subsidized fertilisers also did not get a very high rating for quality at 11.7%. Market fertilisers are preferred for ease of the process of accessing fertilisers with 66.6% of respondents indicating so; while subsidized fertiliser had a score of 2.1. For predictability and ready availability, market fertiliser has 18.0%. In contrast subsidized fertilisers obtained only 3.2% on the score of predictability.

Table 4.11: Reasons for not Accessing Subsidized Fertiliser

Reasons for not accessing subsidized fertiliser		
I don't get to know when it's available	59	15.65
It is only given to selected people	5	1.3
It is never supplied to adequately meet the demand of all the farmers	124	32.9
It is only for prominent politicians and chiefs	181	48.01
It is only for members of political parties	2	.5
The process is too long and difficult	2	.5
I cannot afford even the government fertiliser	4	1.1
Total	377	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The process of obtaining subsidized fertilisers is depicted as difficult relating to unpredictability in the timing of distribution and the complicated procedures which are far removed from the typical market exchange of paying and promptly possessing the commodity. This is a challenge for distribution that arises from the complicated process of procuring fertilisers involving budgeting, selection of suppliers, approval of contracts, clearing of fertilisers at the ports and transportation to distribution centres. In most instances, the yearly flag of distribution is done after the optimum period for applying fertilisers to crops or even at harvest time. The introduction of the GES system complicated the process further for illiterate farmers who did not even own a phone or could not read text messages. Location of distribution centres also impacted negatively on access given the poor state of rural roads and the fact that sometimes several trips have to be made to the local government headquarters before fertilisers are obtained depending on the stated procedure. Although the location of distribution centres in all the local government areas has reduced distances for farmers, it has not eliminated the constraints as some communities are located far from the local government headquarters. Fertiliser supplied through official subsidy is also inadequate according to the respondents. Questionnaire and interview sources indicate that farmers obtain mostly two 50kg bags of fertilisers per year under the subsidy programme and this for most is grossly inadequate.

Another factor that constrained distribution and limited access of small-holder farmers to subsidized fertilisers is the perception held by some respondents that fertiliser distributed by the government is only for selected people, politicians and party members. This perception was supported by results from the interview that indicate the dominance of political patronage as a criterion for allocation of fertilisers as opposed to need. Selectiveness in the distribution process excludes the smallholder peasantry as individuals without access to political leverage. The presence of this perception affects distribution by limiting the number of smallholder farmers that actively demand subsidized fertilisers thereby increasing arbitrage opportunities for corrupt public officials who then divert an artificially and illegally created surplus of fertiliser supply.

4.3.3 The Growth Enhancement Support (GES) scheme (2012-2015)

The GES differed significantly from previous arrangements in fundamental ways but the concern here is with how much it expanded access of smallholder farmers to subsidized fertilisers and vital seeds. To facilitate and increase the number of farmers able to redeem fertilisers allocated to them in Benue state, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR) created a 'dummy form' to identify registered farmers. With this, farmers genuinely registered on the scheme were enabled to obtain inputs from redemption centres even when text messages were not received from Cellulant. According to a commissioner of Agriculture in the state (Donald Amokaha Gbugho) in an interview by the Africa Media Initiative (AMI, 2013), no complaint was received from any farmer registered on the scheme at the time he granted the interview. Everyone genuinely registered was able to redeem his two bags of fertilisers and seeds from the redemption centres whether they had received phone alerts or not.

In its assessment of the previous administration's Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) of the Buhari administration noted improved access of farmers to farm inputs of fertiliser and seeds. According to its assessment

> The ATA was a good platform to re-engage key stakeholders in Nigerian agriculture to shift focus towards how a self-sustaining agribusiness focused economy could be built. The ATA focused on how to make Nigeria's agriculture more productive, efficient and effective. It set a target of creating 3.5 million jobs by 2015; generating foreign exchange, and reducing spending on food imports. Among its key achievements was a restructuring of the federal fertiliser procurement system (FMARD, 2016:7).

The APP document states further that utilizing the GES, targeting of subsidy enabled access of an estimated 12-14 million Nigerians to fertilisers and seeds between 2011 and 2014. The identified shortcomings of the GES according to the APP are the setting aside of limited scope and exit strategy. Setting aside a limited scope of the GES relates to non-restriction of eligibility of registration to smallholder farmers. Lack of or abandoning of exit strategy implies that no timelines were set or followed with regards to the 'weaning' of farmers from dependence on input subsidies. These exerted pressure on

the FMARD's budget. Another related shortcoming not mentioned directly in the APP is the accumulation of arrears of payment of claims of agro-dealers participating in the GES attributable to budgetary constraints.

Nwalieji et al. (2015) conducted a study assessing the implementation of the GES among rice farmers in Anambra state utilizing an interview schedule in which 100 respondents were sampled. From their findings, 4.7% of registered farmers redeemed inputs in 2012 while 32% were able to redeem inputs in 2013. By the authors' assessment "the scheme had very low-performance indices in the redemption of inputs" (Nwalieji et al., 2015:71). They however agreed that it increased access to inputs which was higher than pre-GES figures and contributed to an increase in food production in the state.

From the submissions of the Buhari administration's APP, it is inferable that it attempts elimination of the phenomenon of policy capture by the political elite comprising elected and careered public officials. Reference to leakages from farmer registration and data capture encapsulates the fact that civil servants and politicians devised ways of sabotaging the process of registration. This was especially possible with the initial registrations done in 2012 and 2013 that did not involve full biometric registration. Forwarding a lot of fictitious names from Benue state as participants in the process became an easy way to sustain rent-seeking and arbitrage that had characterized the pre-GES system. This hijacking effectively constrained access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers even under the GES.

According to Valtonen (2000), state failures in translating pro-poor policies into tangible beneficial outcomes should not always be blamed on the state as the well-intentioned actions of the state are in most cases torpedoed by local strongmen and politicians, business elite and corrupt authorities as demonstrated in the behaviour of politicians and civil servants. Deprivation experienced by the farmers belonging to a subservient social category or class arises from their placement in the social structure. Official policies are circumscribed by social structures given the power of the dominant forces identified here as the elite. Higley (2008) supports this position with the argument that the elite tends to persist and reproduce their power overtime at the political and economic levels, potentially undermining the effectiveness of institutionalised reforms.

In Benue state the propensity for policy capture is heightened by the fact that the seeking of political power is not for administration or addressing basic problems through the use of state resources; it is not service motivated. Political office is a job for the accumulation of wealth and not for service (interview with a past commissioner of agriculture 19th May 2016). Political leadership's lack of confidence in the productive capacity of the peasantry, the outside push for the need for the private sector to lead agriculture as a synonym for mechanization of agriculture and the primitive accumulation tendencies of civil servants and politicians has produced incentives for sabotaging the process producing qualified success. Concerted pursuance of goals of agricultural intervention targeting smallholder farmers who produce the bulk of agricultural produce is lacking and this circumvents the noblest goals of any reform agenda or process.

It is also plausible to relate the poor showing of apparent pro-poor policies to the failure of the political elite to concentrate development policy energy on the peasantry in an inside–out focused development strategy. Because the political leadership lacks confidence in the productive capacity of the peasantry or smallholder farmers (Olayemi, 1980; Christensen and Witucki, 1982; Manyong, et al. 2005), there exists the tendency for half-hearted execution of policies targeting such demographics. Concerted pursuance of goals of agricultural intervention targeting smallholder farmers who produce the bulk of agricultural produce is lacking and this circumvents the noblest goals of any reform agenda or process in the agricultural sector.

The GES was a laudable reform measure aimed at guaranteeing access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers. As an incremental form of policy change, it did not effectively succeed in eliminating the more fundamental problems in the agricultural input sector. The most pernicious is elite capture and seeking of rents from pro-poor policies in a system where political power is unequally distributed between the political elite and the smallholder farmers. To remove constraints to access to fertiliser by smallholder farmers requires more fundamental change involving the political empowerment of peasants to make effective demands on the political system.

4.3.4 The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) (2016-2021)

The policy stipulations of this initiative represented a significant break with the past at two levels already mentioned as the elimination of subsidy and the assumption of a leading role by the private sector. The envisaged short and long term goals of the PFI were numerous including enabling domestic production of fertilisers as a key component of the APP, guaranteeing the quality of fertilisers in the market, elimination of arbitrage through the setting and sustenance of a uniform price for fertiliser, increasing fertiliser consumption by smallholder farmers through moderate pricing of the commodity and encouraging the penetration of rural markets by the private sector.

Stakeholder assessments of the PFI acknowledged the boldness of the initiative particularly the elimination of subsidies but highlighted several unworkable components of the policy. According to a prominent fertiliser dealer in Benue state (interview, 31-3-2018)

> the suspension of the GES and its substitution by the PFI is retrogressive because the GES was delivering fertilisers to smallholder farmers while the dealers had a ready and effective market facilitated by the input vouchers. Under the PFI, the government wrongly assumes that dealers will always get the products from the blending plants at N5, 000 and incur very little additional cost in transportation, loading, offloading and warehousing. Our real experience as dealers is that we don't even get the product at N5, 000 from the blending plants. Sometimes the price is N5, 200 or N5, 300, when you add up the cost of transportation and warehousing it adds up to more than the N5, 500 expected retail price. It, therefore, becomes impossible to sell at the government approved price of N5, 500 per 50kg bag.

The interviews with fertiliser dealers bring out the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution at the national and state levels. In the first place, the federal government is still actively involved in the fertiliser process through the CBN funded NAIC-NPK and is still administratively fixing prices. A truly privatized fertiliser market should also include private sourcing of raw materials and payment for the same. The government initiative of guaranteeing the supply of raw materials especially phosphate which is not readily available locally constitutes a significant boost to fertiliser and food production in the country. On the flip side, the agreement is mainly political and raises concerns with sustainability beyond the life of the government of Buhari which signed the agreement with Morocco.

The agreement with the Moroccan OCP for the supply of phosphate to Nigeria presents another page in the complicated, complex and prolonged conflict between Morocco and the POLISARIO over Western Sahara. Within Nigeria, groups and professional bodies like the Academic Staff Union of Universities support the SADR for the emergence of an independent Western Sahara. With the signing of this agreement and its subsequent implementation, the Nigerian government appears to have given tacit support to Morocco to continue its stranglehold on Western Saharan territory, the Saharawis and unlawful exploration of natural resources within the region. It is plain knowledge before the International community that the OCP' main source of phosphate is the Bou Craa mine located on the territory of Western Sahara. In this regard, the Buhari administration is towing the same line of previous governments in their recognition of the political salience of fertilisers in Nigeria. The government has opted for the choice of scoring political points domestically while ignoring the political aspects surrounding the source of phosphate from Morocco.

Within the states, the selection of contract blenders according to interview results is to a significant level the prerogative of the governor. An interviewee (agro-dealer) reported that although he met all the requirements for selection as a contract blender producing within the state, the contract was awarded to a company that is a front for the governor of the state. Patronage, therefore, remains a characteristic feature of the fertiliser sector in Benue state.

Another telling political facet of the PFI is the matter of prices. The Federal Government insists that it has brought down the price of fertiliser from between N8, 000 to N9,000 of imported fertilisers to N5, 500 of locally produced fertilisers. This represents another political gimmick as shown in the protestations of agro-dealers. According to an interview subject (agro-dealer), the agro-dealers complained to a top federal official during a formal meeting with them over the impracticability of the N5, 500 price of fertiliser given the fact that consumers have been mandated to report any agro-dealer selling above the stipulated price by calling certain designated numbers. The top federal official responded that the dealers could market the product at whatever price they could with the assurance that government will not arrest anybody selling above N5, 500. However, the government would not announce an increase in price because it was

approaching general elections. It is important to note that the administration that came to office on May 29th 2015 gained significant political mileage when it announced a decrease in the price of fertilisers and was not willing to lose such political gains.

It is also interesting to note that a careful reading of the APP document produced in 2016 shows no mention of a PFI as a well thought out and designed reform programme. It portrays the picture of an after-thought proceeding from an attempt to leverage an international political alliance for domestic political gain. The net effect of the hastily packaged programme is an increase in the retail price of fertiliser which has placed the commodity well beyond the reach of the Benue smallholder farmers who are the real food producers of the state. The abrupt removal of subsidy is also different from the gradual phasing out proposed by earlier forms of intervention like the GES. Replacing GES with PFI is also in keeping with the behaviour of succeeding administrations which tends to discredit and change policies of predecessors even when such policies are doing well just to create an impression of movement from one era to another. In most cases, movement is retrogressive and not progressive.

4.4 Factors that Determine Choices and Preferences in Fertiliser Procurement and Distribution

The data utilized in the segment of the study were obtained from the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources where a questionnaire was administered to the staff in the Department of Agricultural services. The data were also sourced from the in-depth interviews conducted in the course of the study. Table 4.12 presents data on official decisions and actions in fertiliser procurement. From the table, it can be observed that a broad range of formulations of fertiliser was procured under the government programme which was reflective of the diversity of crops that are grown within the state. The vegetation belt and climatic conditions of the state support the cultivation of almost any tropical crop including tubers, legumes, cereals, vegetables and tree crops. The dominance of tubers and cereals is evident in higher frequencies for NPK formulations and Urea at 32.35% and 26.47% respectively as these are the main fertilisers required by this range of crops. The dominant position of these formulations in the official data is collaborated by the data from the questionnaire distributed to farmers where the percentages for NPK and Urea are 65.3% and 27.1% respectively (see Table 4.8). Fuentes et al. (2012) also corroborate the preponderance of NPK and Urea in the fertiliser formulations procured for distribution in Nigeria generally. This indicates that one key factor affecting decisions on fertiliser procurement in Benue state is the utility factor, fertiliser formulations are not procured just because they are available but because they are demanded by farmers in the state.

Table 4.12: Official Decisions and Actions in Fertiliser Procurement

Fertiliser formulation	Frequency	Percentage
NPK	11	32.35
Urea	9	26.47
SSP	6	17.65
Organic liquid fertiliser	3	8.82
Lime fertiliser	5	14.71
Total	34	100
Source	Frequency	Percentage
State government purchase	12	35.29
Federal government supply	22	64.71
Total	34	100
Reasons for choice of formulation	Frequency	Percentage
Cost considerations	6	17.65
Quality considerations	5	14.7
Farmer needs considerations	9	26.5
Results of agronomic research	3	8.8
Recommendations from extension agents	4	11.76
Government policy on procurement	3	8.8
Recommendations from traditional rulers	4	11.8
Total	34	100
Consultation of farmers	Frequency	Percentage
Sometimes	10	29.12
Never	24	70.58
Total	34	100
Involvement of the private sector	Frequency	Percentage
Local blending and supply of fertiliser	10	29.41
Importation of fertiliser	15	44.12
Provide technical support	4	11.76
Distribution of fertiliser to farmers	5	14.71
Total	34	100
Selection of private sector participants	Frequency	Percentage
Open bidding	5	14.71
The decision of the commissioner for agriculture	3	8.82
The decision of the governor	16	47.06
The decision of the minister of FMARD	10	29.41
Total	34	100
Source of funds for procuring fertilisers	Frequency	Percentage
Official yearly budget	34	100
Total	34	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The data in Table 4.12 also demonstrates that under the Universal Subsidy involving the direct participation of government in the procurement and distribution of fertilisers, and the GES, the Federal Government's allocation of the commodity to the state constituted the main source of the input at 64.71%. This aligns with Datta-Chaudruri's (1990); Idachaba's (2011) and Wanzala-Mlobela et al.'s, (2013) views that official presence in fertiliser procurement and distribution is dominant. The state then procured and distributed the balance of 35.29% of the total fertiliser consumed in the state yearly. With a frequency of 9 representing 26.5%, the needs of farmers topped the considerations for choice of fertiliser formulation among a list of six other items. This is followed by considerations of costs at 17.65%. This also presumes a prioritization of farmers in the making and execution of fertiliser policies and programmes. The assumed prioritization of farmers is however not reflected in the data that indicates that farmers were seldom consulted in the making of choices in fertiliser procurement. This is evident in the response that farmers are never consulted with a score of 24 representing 70.58% against 10 or 29.12% that indicated they are sometimes consulted.

The private sector represented by contractors and fertiliser dealers were much relied on for the supply of fertilisers through importation and local blending. A total of 10 of the respondents representing 29.41% indicated that the private sector participated through the local blending of fertiliser which was then supplied to the government. Another 15 respondents representing 44.12% stated that the private sector participated through the importation of fertilisers. This demonstrates that even under the Universal subsidy, private input markets experienced some level of growth except that there was limited direct interface between the farmers and the market. However, the dominance of chief executives in the choice of participating contractors and fertiliser dealers at the state reflected in the governor and the Minister of Agriculture at the federal level is evident in Table 4.12. While 16 respondents representing 47.06% selected the governor of the state as responsible for the choice, 10 respondents representing 29.41% selected the Minister. The tendency to centralize decisions of the choice of participating contractors in governors and ministers promoted corruption and abuse of office where these chief executives in collaboration with top bureaucrats simply awarded contracts to contractors that were fronts to them. The impact of pecuniary considerations or the need to extract rents from

the system largely drove the system of procurement as demonstrated in the reliance on fronts as contractors.

The dominance of the need to extract rents from the procurement process was also evident in the transportation of imported fertilisers from the ports where state officials working closely with the governor deliberately mismanaged the process without consequences. From the interviews conducted, one frequently occurring response was the equation of fertiliser policy to pervasive official corruption. This was reflected in all the twenty-one (21) subjects for the interviews. According to one interviewee

> Fertiliser policy is a typical illustration of pervasive official corruption, it is a system designed to function in a manner that supports corruption, and this is the real purpose of fertiliser subsidy policy. Under the pre-GES system, at the federal level, billions were voted yearly for the purchase of fertilisers; however, much of this was never used in the purchase of fertilisers. State allocation of fertilisers was either transported to them by the federal government or the states transported their fertilisers from the ports themselves. Another demonstration of corruption, instead of moving the entire tons of fertilisers meant for the state, officials will collect only a proportion of the fertiliser and collect the monetary worth of the fertilisers. The official records will however show the full amount of fertiliser allocated to the state including details and movement of the trucks transporting the commodity to the state (Interview with a prominent fertiliser dealer in Benue state 31-3-2018).

The source of funding for the procurement of fertilisers was entirely the state's yearly budget at 100% as indicated in Table 4.12. This implies that yearly, the quantity of fertilisers procured for the state was dependent solely on the funds allocated from the budget. Oko (2011) indicates that generally in Nigeria, as applies to Benue state also, the budgetary allocation to fertiliser procurement took up a sizable portion of the total funds allocated to the agricultural sector. It is plausible to link the factor of rent extraction to the allocation of huge revenues to fertiliser procurement as against the touted need to increase food production and the incomes of farmers.

Table 4.13: Official Decisions and Actions in Fertiliser Distribution

Determination of price for distribution	Frequency	Percentage
The state ministry of agriculture	9	26.47
Federal ministry of agriculture	20	58.82
Fertiliser dealers	5	14.71
Total	34	100
Reasons for government subsidy on fertilisers		
Failure of agricultural input markets	10	29.41
Equity considerations	10	29.41
To improve access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers	14	41.18
Total	34	100
Decision on the percentage of subsidy		
Federal ministry of agriculture	15	44.12
State executive council	19	55.88
Total	34	100
Type of subsidy		
Targeted	6	17.65
Universal	28	82.35
Total	34	100
Frequency in the change of percentage of subsidy		
Every cropping season	34	100
Total	34	100
Reasons for variation		
The cost of procurement	9	26.47
Change of government	15	44.12
State of the economy	5	14.71
Exchange rate changes	5	14.71
Total	34	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

While Table 4.12 focused on official decisions and actions in the procurement of fertilisers, Table 4.13 deals with official decisions and actions in fertiliser distribution. From the table, individuals with roles in the fixing of the price for fertiliser distributed to farmers are identified. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture is selected by 20 respondents representing 58.82%. This correlates with the statistics in Table 4.12 which indicates a dominant role for the Federal Government in the supply of fertiliser consumed within the state. The state ministry of agriculture was also selected as playing a role in the determination of the final price of the commodity by 9 respondents representing 26.47% given the fact that the state also procured fertiliser outside the Federal Government's allocation. A minimal role of 14.71% was reserved for fertiliser which is attributable to fertilisers sold in the open market outside the subsidy programme.

The reasons for government involvement in the provision of subsidy on fertilisers were given as failure of agricultural input markets, equity considerations and the need to improve the access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers. A total of 14 respondents representing 41.18% were persuaded that official subsidy on fertilisers had the aim of improving the access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers. The failure of agricultural input markets and equity considerations both obtained 29.41%. The idea that emerges from these reasons for the provision of subsidy supports altruistic and service motivation for the funding of fertiliser subsidy by the government. To these, it could be added or surmised that an increase in the availability and affordability of agricultural produce is the central objective for fertiliser subsidy. While these data from official sources supports this line of thinking, a different perspective emerged from interviews conducted with past politicians like former commissioners of agriculture in the state and fertiliser dealers. A former commissioner opined for instance that "the latent function of fertiliser policy in the state was on money-making and not the manifest function of agricultural development" (interview with a past commissioner of agriculture 19th May 2016). According to another interviewee

> There is no way peasants can access subsidized fertiliser because it is not its real purpose. Given the importance of fertiliser to agriculture, fertiliser subsidy has become a potent political instrument utilized to gain political mileage for politicians and ensure re-election at polls. It is always an effective campaign strategy to lay claims to the

> distribution of fertilisers. This explains the extensive media coverage given to fertiliser distribution yearly (Interview with a prominent fertiliser dealer in Benue state 31-3-2018).

Given the government's acknowledgement that only 11% of subsidized fertilisers got to the intended beneficiaries under the Universal Subsidy scheme the view that contradicts that which is implied in Table 4.13 appears to have more credence. The data from the MANR in Benue state only presents the official position on the reasons for subsidy which is disputed by field data. Respondents identified the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the State Executive Council as involved in the determination of the percentage of subsidy at 44.12% and 55.88% respectively. The percentage of subsidy varied yearly as a function of various factors covering the cost of procurement (26.47), change of government (44.12), the state of the economy (14.71) and exchange rate of the Naira (14.71).

4.5 Stakeholders in the Fertiliser Sector in Benue State

The fertiliser sector in Benue state embraces a wide array of participants with various roles and responsibilities. At one end of a wide spectrum is the government which procures and distributes fertilisers and at the other end are farmers who are the consumers of the farm input. In between the two are several other intermediary participants and actors whose collective actions define the character of the process of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state. A careful analysis of these actors, their roles, responsibilities actions and decisions aids in the identification of the key social categories and structure in the sector. The import of the concern with identifying active social categories and structures relates directly with the definition of politics as access to and utilization of power for the attainment of private personal or group interests.

In Table 4.14 the Benue State Government has the highest frequency selected by six (6) respondents representing 17.65%. Alongside are other actors with important responsibilities in procurement and distribution for some, while others only have roles in distribution. Two important components of this group of individuals are the fertiliser distribution committees at the state and local government levels. At the state level, the committee is headed by the deputy governor with the commissioner for agriculture as the alternate chairman; other members are the state chairman of AFAN, representatives from

religious bodies and other sundry stakeholders. At the local government level, traditional rulers are also included. While these structures are designed to ease distribution, they represent a collection of forces and interests that are quite removed from the smallholder farmer who is supposedly the prime target of fertiliser subsidies. While the respondents to the official questionnaire were circumspect with the facts about the way these committees function, undocumented and observational evidence exists to suggest that the self-serving interests of members take precedence over the interests of smallholder farmers. Groups such as these function as instruments for elite-based clientelism and political patronage. The practice of electoral democracy with a central role for political parties works to ensure that members of official committees are members of or at least strong supporters of parties in power within which spoils of office are distributed.

There are several channels through which fertilisers get to the farmers with the highest frequency given to the MDA-LGA-Farmer chain selected by 14 respondents representing 41.17%. Traditional rulers and farmers associations are also channels through which fertilisers get to farmers. The role of the traditional rulers is however viewed as being of mixed consequences for the fertiliser process in Benue state. Traditional rulers

Table 4.14: The process of fertiliser distribution

Participants in the distribution process	Frequency	Percentage
Farmers	2	5.88
State Fertiliser Distribution Committee	4	11.76
LG Fertiliser Distribution Committee	4	11.76
Commissioner for Agriculture	5	14.71
Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture	3	8.82
Desk officer for fertiliser	2	5.88
Chairman AFAN	1	2.94
Benue State Government	6	17.65
Ministry of agriculture staff	3	8.82
Divisional agricultural office	3	8.82
Traditional rulers	1	2.94
Total	34	100
Fertiliser distribution	Frequency	Percentage
MDA-LGA-farmer	14	41.17
MDA-farmer	10	29.41
MDA-traditional ruler-farmer	5	14.71
MDA-farmer association-farmer	5	14.71
Total	34	100
Decision on quantity distributed to farmers	Frequency	Percentage
LG Fertiliser Distribution Committee	15	44.12
State Fertiliser Distribution Committee	10	29.41
Government of the day	9	26.47
Total	34	100
Roles of farmers in distribution	Frequency	Percentage
The State Chairman of AFAN is a member of the State Fertiliser Distribution Committee	15	44.12
Farmers' leaders identify real farmers	9	26.47
Local distribution committees	10	29.41
Total	34	100
Identification of beneficiaries of the subsidy	Frequency	Percentage
Through traditional rulers	4	11.76
Through religious organization	16	47.05
Through Registration	4	11.76
Through farmer's associations	10	29.41
Total	34	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

act as political gatekeepers and intermediaries between the government and the people. Political office holders, therefore, court their support and fertilisers have over the years proved to be a potent instrument for oiling such relationships. Results from interviews indicate that sometimes they contribute to the problem of corruption.

> Traditional rulers are involved in fertiliser distribution through their inclusion in the fertiliser distribution committees at the local government level. They also engage in sensitization and mobilizations of people within their domains to access subsidized fertilisers. They also do advocacy such as exerting pressure on the government to ensure their respective domains are covered in the distribution of subsidized fertiliser. On the other hand, the traditional rulers are also a part of the problem of corruption in the fertiliser sector as truckloads of fertilisers are allocated to them also for political reasons. In most cases, the individual allocated the fertiliser does not even physically sight it as the allocation paper is simply sold to a fertiliser merchant. The fertiliser is taken directly to the location specified by the merchant (interview with a prominent fertiliser dealer in Benue state 31-3-2018).

Decisions on the quantity of fertilisers distributed to farmers were made by fertiliser distribution committees at the state and local government levels and the government of the day with the local government distribution committee toping at 44.12%. Official data indicate specific roles and responsibilities for farmers which include that the state chairman of AFAN is a member of the fertiliser distribution committee at the state level. Farmers also participate by helping to identify genuine farmers and are members of local distribution committees.

The poor political form of smallholder farmers is graphically illustrated in Table 4.15. While 56.5 of respondents suggest that membership of farming associations facilitates access to subsidized fertilisers, 61.5% (Table 4.1) of them belong neither to the umbrella body of AFAN nor any of the commodity associations existing within the state. This is probably because a connection between membership of associations and improved access to farm input has never been established in their thinking. Most of the micro and medium credit institutions patronise only beneficiaries organised in groups which is not a strong point for most smallholder farmers. Low or lack of membership of formal commodity associations deprives smallholder farmers of the power to jointly demand and obtain requisite inputs from the state. Miller et al. (1981) exposition on groups and political

participation demonstrates the indispensability of organizational membership alongside high levels of education, income and occupational status for conscious political action by groups within a state.

It is worthy of note that viewed from the demand-side factors affecting fertiliser consumption in Benue, the cost of fertilisers, as well as timeliness of supply, have greater significance than the organizational strength of smallholder farmers. However, this significance holds strongly when fertiliser consumption is approached from a market perspective where state involvement is strictly restricted to regulation and where the pricing mechanism acts as the most important determinant of access. In the case of the fertiliser sector in Benue state, the existing situation presents a complex scenario where access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers is constrained by the high costs of fertilisers and the inefficient management of fertiliser subsidies. While it is true that most smallholder farmers would readily purchase market-priced fertilisers when the market supplies the commodity at the appropriate time in the cropping season, the reality is that with low farm incomes, such purchasing power is constrained or lacking entirely. It is in this regard that the inability of farmers to properly organize and make demands on the state becomes critical as a determinant of access to fertilisers. In the formal and informal structures of power, smallholder farmers operate at the pole of powerlessness. The avowed commitment on the part of the state to ensure that fertilisers get to the farmers invariably highlights this constraint as a paradox and complexity of the fertiliser sector. On the one hand, the state expresses a commitment to the cause of the smallholder; on the other hand, the smallholder is neglected due to a lack of political capacity (power) for effective engagement with the state. While the concern is this study is not restricted entirely to subsidized fertilisers, much of the politics from which the study takes its bearing relates to the management of fertiliser subsidy, especially within Benue state. Discourse on access is located more within the politically determined constraint to access and less within the market constraints to access.

Table 4.15 Does Membership of a Farming Association Make Obtaining Government Fertiliser Easier?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	213	56.5
No	164	43.5
Total	377	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Some level of similarity exists between the nature of factors constraining access of peasants to fertiliser in Benue state and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the similarities as detailed in the literature are factors accounting for the differential between fertiliser requirements and actual access which include high cost of market-priced fertilisers, non-availability of the commodity when it is needed, and inadequate supply when available (Mwangi, 1996; African Union, 2006; Kelly, 2006; Liverpool- Tasie et al., 2010; FMARD, 2011; Chude et al., 2012; Sommer et al., 2013; Wanzala- Mlobela et al., 2013; Okoboi and Barungi (2012). The data presented in this chapter shows that a separate set of factors affect access to market priced and officially subsidized fertilisers respectively. For some smallholder farmers, the high price of market fertilisers presents a primary disincentive for the consumption of fertilisers. Although successive governments implemented measures to control the prices of fertilisers, the price of the community has remained high. During the subsidy era, high prices were majorly a product of excessive diversion that created artificial scarcity that drove a hike in prices. In the post-subsidy era, the major driver of prices is the import base of raw materials especially phosphate rock for producing fertilisers. Although the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative has secured some level of price concessions from Morocco, it has still not succeeded in placing making chemical fertilisers within the ready reach of smallholder farmers given their low incomes. The PFI insists that fertiliser is readily available for the price of N5500 without government spending on subsidy but fertiliser dealers who buy from contract blenders to retail to farmers insist that the price of N5500 is not realistic as it does not even cover the cost outlay.

Closely related to the price factor is the factor of ready availability. The arbitration that happens with official fertilisers creates an uncanny connection between market-priced fertilisers and subsidized fertilisers in the area of ready availability. The connection is that what passes as market fertiliser has its source in official fertiliser which enters the open market through arbitrage perpetrated by the fertiliser input public bureaucracy and politicians. For the most part availability of fertiliser in the open market follows the same timetable as the yearly flag-off of distribution by the state government. Due to this convoluted arrangement between fertiliser dealers and the public bureaucracy, fertilisers

are not always readily available and this exerts a negative impact on smallholder access. However, because the official programme of distributing fertilisers lasts only for a few weeks, only the market guarantees a steady supply whatever the source might be. Access to and consumption of market-priced fertilisers is also constrained by the presence of adulterated fertilisers. The 'underground' connection between public bureaucrats and fertiliser dealers also contributes to the existence of this constraint to access. Adequate regulation is lacking due sometimes to the conflict of interests where the top echelon of the public bureaucracy also double as the fertiliser merchants through the use of fronts. Notwithstanding the constraints to access market-priced fertilisers, farmers' demand for fertilisers is met more by market-priced fertiliser than official fertiliser.

This scenario plays out with active connivance of the political and bureaucratic elite who facilitate access of these merchants to subsidized fertiliser by collecting allocations of trailer loads of fertilisers and selling same to these merchants. According to one interviewee who served in the state as a commissioner of agriculture between 2011 and 2015 fertiliser provided by the state government was for ₦2000 with an additional management fee of ₦200 added by the ministry of agriculture. A politician allocated a truckload of fertilisers at ₦2200 per bag which is what the farmer is supposed to pay for the fertiliser will sell the truckload to the fertiliser merchant for ₦2500 or even ₦3000 making a huge profit on each bag. The fertiliser merchant will then sell to the farmer at ₦5000 or ₦ 6000. The case of poor quality fertilisers purchased from dealers and merchants has become a recurring decimal as many farmers have reported purchasing such. The case of mud packaged as chemical fertilisers also affected fertiliser procured for distribution by the state government in 2012 where NPK supplied by a certain contractor was found to contain mud discovered only after receipt of the consignment. The case has eventually become a case for litigation as the company sued the state for incomplete payment for a consignment supplied. The state is arguing that the fertiliser supplied was mud and has been rejected by farmers and the fertiliser was still locked up in a store at the MANR as at the point of data collection. The commissioner in charge at that period was even quizzed by the state assembly on the matter. Generally, though, fertiliser supplied by the state through the subsidy policy scored high on the quality criterion. Subsidized

fertiliser scored very high on affordability but was low on ease of the process of purchase and the erratic and unpredictable nature of supply.

The overriding constraints in accessing subsidized fertilisers is the intrusion of political considerations in its allocation and the persistence of arbitrage and rent-seeking as officials allocate fertilisers to associates and people with political influence perceived as possessing the power to swing votes in favour of the party in office during elections and generally keeping the people pacified such as traditional rulers and the clergy. The task of keeping the people docile and preventing restiveness is increasingly been achieved through the medium of top traditional rulers and top clergy where appeals to tradition and religion are actively employed to keep people compliant within the circumstance of poor governance, outright corruption, misappropriation and misapplication of public resources and wealth. These gatekeepers prevent engagement with the government by calling mostly isolated active voices to order through the invocation of traditional or religious authority as the case may be. For instance, the immediate past Tor Tiv was accused by Tiv youths, sections of the Tiv elite and opposition parties in the state as being partisan and inappropriately subservient to the Governor of the state. In extreme cases, the Tor Tiv was even accused of siding with the government in its abuse of state powers against political opponents. Interview results connect this 'partisan' disposition to broad patronage enjoyed by the Tor Tiv and his council of chiefs from the government of the day. Trailer loads of fertiliser allocated at a subsidized price for resale to fertiliser merchants were annually re-occurring components of this official patronage. The low political and class consciousness of the predominantly peasant smallholder agricultural producers provides a suitable background for the political function played by traditional and religious institutions in precluding demands for accountability from state functionaries.

Table 4.16: Other Forms of official Intervention Received by the Respondents

Other forms of official intervention	Frequency	Percentage
Low-interest agriculture credit	89	23.6
Agricultural extension services	99	26.3
Improved seedlings	105	27.9
Storage facilities	42	11.1
Marketing	42	11.1
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The identification of categories involved in the fertiliser in Benue state is also facilitated by a look at other kinds of assistance received by farmers in the state. The data from the fieldwork indicate that the farmers receive other kinds of assistance from the government besides subsidized fertilisers. These are low-interest agricultural credit attested to by 89 respondents representing 23.6%, agricultural extension services indicated by 26.3% of the respondents, improved seedlings at 27.9%, storage facilities at 11.1% and assistance with marketing at 11.1%. The provision of agricultural credit constitutes another way of enabling distribution by raising the number of farmers that can access fertilisers. However, since only 23.6% accessed such credit, not much was achieved in this direction. Agricultural extension services have declined substantially and are no longer robust compared to the quality of such services when they were offered as integral components of World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Projects established across the country in the 1980s. They however remain critical components in the effective distribution of fertilisers.

Table 4.17: Source of Information on the Correct Use of Fertiliser Among the Respondents

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Taught by parents and guardians	120	31.8
Learnt from the cooperative or association of farmers	49	13.0
Trained by agricultural extension agents	104	27.6
Trial and error	102	27.1
I don't know which fertiliser is good for my crops	2	.5
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Another factor impacting the use of fertilisers is the extent of fertiliser education possessed by smallholder farmers. Fertiliser education is important as a factor of consumption.

Table 4.18: Categories of Assistance from Extension Workers by the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge of soil types and appropriate fertiliser	118	31.3
Knowledge of crop types and appropriate fertiliser	76	20.2
Appropriate quantity of fertilisers for different crops and soils	73	19.4
How to identify adulterated fertilisers	40	10.6
Information on the need to use fertilisers	70	18.6
Total	377	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

It may not be an overstatement to note that smallholder farmers are not soil scientists and so do not possess expert knowledge on the interaction between the soil type they cultivate and the correct type and amount of fertilisers to apply for optimum yields. The consequence of this is the probability of smallholder farmers competing for, obtaining and applying fertilisers that they do not need. However, from the data as reflected in Table 4.18, it is safe to acknowledge that smallholder farmers depend on knowledge gained from some form of authority such as parents and guardians, farmers' cooperatives, other farmers and agricultural extension officers. There is also some level of harmony between the fertilisers procured and distributed by the Benue State government and the formulation of fertilisers required by farmers as indicated in the research. While up to 27 .1% of the sample depends on trial and error and .5% does not know which fertilisers to use, a cumulative 72.4% apply fertilisers based on knowledge acquired from one or another knowledge source. Table 4.18 provides details on the kinds of assistance farmers receive from agricultural extension officers in places where they function. This supports the assertion that a high percentage of farmers possess some level of education on the correct use of fertilisers. Deficiency in knowledge is more profound in the area of alternatives to chemical fertilisers.

The high demand and competition for inorganic fertilisers and the politics resulting from such excessive demand is traceable to the absence of adequate knowledge on alternative soil management practices. Such deficiency in knowledge is in turn a function of excessive fixation on inorganic fertilisers by policymakers and farmers. Concern with reducing global carbon emissions and the need for healthier food is progressively shifting agriculture from dependence on inorganic fertilisers to environmentally friendly organic alternatives especially for health-conscious producers, consumers and environmental activists. While the use of organic fertilisers was popular among Benue and indeed Nigerian farmers before the introduction of inorganic or chemical fertilisers, the use of the latter has become so strongly entrenched to the complete relegation of the former. The return to organic fertilisers or compost as currently championed by environmental activists is yet to take centre stage in the options considered by policy managers and market actors in the fertiliser sector in Benue state and indeed Nigeria. The consequence of this is the

political importance attached to inorganic fertilisers and all that such importance creates including the problems of arbitrage, corruption and rent-seeking.

In Benue state, there are some initiatives to mainstream organic fertiliser in soil management practices with varying degrees of obstacles. One of these is the Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly (EBAFOSA) which proposed the conversion of organic waste to bio-fertilisers. It was a Municipal waste master plan launched in 2016 in Makurdi which is the state capital aimed at optimizing recycling and recovery. However, a phone call to the National President EBAFOSA revealed that the project did not take off due to funding problems. In the final analysis, the inability of initiatives like this to succeed, the fixation of government on chemical fertilisers and the absence of farmer education on alternatives to chemical fertilisers produce a suitable condition for the complete politicization of the fertiliser sector.

It is rightly acknowledged that exploring alternatives to chemical fertilisers can reduce the politics associated with the procurement and distribution of fertilisers. However, while these alternatives are assumed as feasible and profitable, Ruttan (1977) views them as belonging to an already transcended agricultural production strategy utilized extensively in Europe, Asia and America in the 20th Century. He termed this the conservation model of agricultural production which cannot cope with the current demands of agricultural production. However, for the production needs of smallholder farmers who cultivate small sizes of land, alternatives to chemical fertilisers are worth the while and this underscores the need for education in this area.

4.6 Tests of Hypotheses

H_1: Test of significant difference in effectiveness among forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State.

The result in Table 4.19 shows the average quantity of 14220 metric tonnes of fertilisers distributed under the universal subsidy regime and the average quantity of 10498 metric tonnes of fertilisers distributed under the targeted subsidy known as the GES. The result shows the t-test value of 0.398 with the probability of 0.696>0.05. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a mean difference and the null hypothesis is that there is no mean difference (Equal variances assumed). From the results in Table 4.19, the

t-test value of 0.398 is not statistically significant at a 5% level of significance (p =0.696>0.05). This means that the null hypothesis that the mean difference is equal to zero is accepted (that is the equal variances). This implies that the average performance of the official interventions in fertiliser procurement and distribution is statistically equal. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the subsidized fertilisers distributed and obtained by farmers under different forms of official intervention. The implication is that while policies and programmes of the government in fertiliser procurement and distribution have varied over the years, there has been no significant variation in the efficiency of distribution.

Table 4.19: T-test showing differences in effectiveness among the forms of official intervention in the procurement and distribution of Fertiliser

Variables	Means	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Universal Subsidy	14220	0.398	15	0.696
GES	10498			

P = not significant if p-value >0.05.

H_2: Test of a significant relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state.

The results of the correlation test to determine whether there is no significant relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state are presented in Table 4.20.

The result in Table 4.20 reveals a positive correlation coefficient of 0.834 with a probability value of 0.000. This means that there is a strong positive relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state. The implication is that there is a strong relationship between the changes in the quantity of subsidized fertiliser distributed to farmers yearly and the changes in the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by farmers in the state. There is a positive co-variance in the two variables with both tending to move in the same direction. This does not however imply that distribution was effective; neither does it imply that farmers had access to much fertiliser. While the quantity distributed correlated and co-varied with the quantity accessed by farmers, the latter was consistently a small percentage of the former.

Table 4.20: Pearson correlation showing the relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers

Variables	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Quantity of fertiliser distributed by Benue State Government in Metric tonnes Quantity of subsidized fertiliser obtained by Respondents in bags in each cropping session	17	0.834**	0.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H3: Test of significant difference between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue state.

The results of the t-test to determine whether there is no significant difference between the quantities of fertiliser desired by farmers every cropping season and the quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers are presented in Table 4.21.

The result in Table 4.21 shows the average quantity of 314 subsidized fertiliser desired and the average quantity of 113 subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue State. The result shows the t-test value of 12.59 with the probability of 0.000>0.05. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a mean difference between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue State and the null hypothesis is that there is no mean difference (Equal variances assumed). This means that the null hypothesis that the mean difference is equal to zero is rejected (that is no equal variances). This implies that the average quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the average quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue state is statistically different. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser desired and the quantity of subsidized fertiliser accessed by the farmers in Benue State. The amount of fertilizer desired is significantly higher than the amount of fertilizer accessed by the farmers in the state. It shows that the desires of farmers in terms of fertilizer are not satisfied based on the significant difference between the amount desired and the amount accessed in the state.

Table 4.21: T-test of Mean Differences between the Quantity of Subsidized Fertiliser Desired and the Quantity of Subsidized Fertiliser Accessed by the Farmers in Benue State.

Variables	Means	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Quantity of subsidized fertilizer desired by the Respondents in Benue state in bags in each cropping session	314.471	12.59	16	0.000
Quantity of subsidized fertilizer obtained by Respondents in bags in each cropping session	113.294			

Source: Extracts from SPSS output

Test of significant difference in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution by the membership of farming associations

The ANOVA result in Table 4.22 reveals that there is a significant difference (F = 111.219) in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution (measured by the quantity of fertilizer accessed) as experienced by farmers based on their social association status as members of all farmers association of Nigeria (AFAN), Commodity Association and those who are not members of any association. This, therefore, implies that the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative is accepted. A further test of the separation of means across the different sources using the Duncan Multiple Range test shows that on average, the quantity obtained by commodity association members (about 7 bags) is the highest, but not significantly higher than the average accessed by AFAN members (about 6 bags), while none members accessed the least (about 3 bags). This result simply implies that membership of association puts farmers in a more vantage position in accessing agricultural information and associated services.

Table 4.22: ANOVA table showing a test of significant difference in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution as experienced by farmers based on association membership status

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1085.296	2	542.648	111.219	.000
Within Groups	1824.784	374	4.879		
Total	2910.080	376			

Table 4.23: Duncan multiple range test of mean separation by effectiveness based on association membership status

Membership of farming associations	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
	1	2	1
None of the above	232	3.3103	
AFAN	34		6.3824
Commodity Associations	111		6.9099
Sig.		1.000	.158

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 70.206.

b The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveal that the government of Benue state intervened in fertiliser procurement and distribution through several forms between 1999 and 2020. Most of these were initiatives from the federal government which ran alongside the state-based programme. This predisposition of the government to intervene in the economy finds scholarly backing in Egwu (1999), who sees the role of the state as a critical factor in the organisation of economic production. The state organisation of the fertiliser sector dates from the 1970s and 80s when national institutions were created to produce and oversee government distribution networks such as the FPDD, FSFC, FFD and NAFCON. Within the last two decades (1999-2020), official fertiliser was distributed first through a universal subsidy at source scheme (1999-2011); this was succeeded by the Growth Enhancement Support scheme (2012-2015). Subsequently, the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative and the Anchor Borrowers Programme were both implemented in 2016. However, there was no significant variation in the effectiveness of different forms of fertiliser distribution within the period under review. For the test of hypothesis, only the quantity of fertiliser distributed from 1999-2015 which covered the universal subsidy and the GES was used. According to officially sourced data, the total quantity of fertilisers procured between 1999 and 2015 under the Universal subsidy and the GES was the same quantity that was distributed for the same period. However, the real test of effectiveness lies in the extent to which the intended or targeted beneficiaries were able to access subsidized fertilisers and not in absolute figures procured and distributed. Nagy and Edun (2002); Eboh et al. (2006); Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010); Idachaba (2011); Druihle and Barriero- Hurle` (2012); Wanzala-Mlobela et al. (2013) and Jerven, (2014), in their separate studies rated fertiliser subsidy systems in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa as inefficient due to various factors which include arbitrage behaviour of public officials.

The t-test used in testing differences in the effectiveness of forms of intervention produced the t value of 0.398 which is not statistically significant at a 5% level of significance ($p > 0.05$). While official accounts view the GES as having performed better, the findings of the study indicated similar levels of performance. For instance, under the universal subsidy, only an average of 22% of smallholder farmers benefitted from

fertiliser subsidies and this situation was not significantly altered under subsequent interventions.

Under the GES the percentage of beneficiaries only appreciated to about 30% having been enhanced by the use of mobile telephones. In Benue State, the performance of the GES was sabotaged by public officials who registered fictitious farmers and succeeded in diverting fertilisers away from the targeted beneficiaries. This explains why the gains of the intervention were modest despite its direct targeting of beneficiaries and the withdrawal of government from direct procurement and distribution. This scenario mirrors Valtonen's (2000) assertion that in most cases, public policies designed with sincere intentions are torpedoed by local strongmen, politicians, business elite and corrupt public officials. Government fertiliser business was executed within the framework of formal policy statements but more in the breach than in the observance and this tendency provides empirical material for building up arguments and deductions which indicate political and economic instrumentation of fertiliser policy by the political and bureaucratic class. The government's involvement in fertiliser business gave rise to state bureaucratic capitalism in a rather underhand and distorted fashion in a typical case of rent-seeking. For instance, an interview with a past commissioner of agriculture highlighted and described the practice whereby top bureaucrats at the federal and state levels exploited their insider privileges and utilizing fronts, awarded contracts for fertiliser procurement to them and still superintended the distribution process which thwarted any quality control goals. The use of fronts in distorting the fertiliser procurement process particularly emerged from interviews as a prevalent feature in Benue state under the universal subsidy regime. Fuentes et al. (2012) observe correctly that the new fertiliser policy prioritized government responsibility for quality control to ensure that fertilisers contain the required soil nutrient. The results of their research reveal a contrasting non-implementation of this provision. Arguably, the concentration of official energy on procurement and distribution of fertilisers diverted attention from an emphasis on quality control.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient showed a strong positive relationship between the quantities of fertilisers distributed by the Benue State Government yearly and the total quantity of fertiliser obtained by farmers in the state. However, this positive correlation coefficient of 0.834 with the probability value of 0.000, only demonstrated co-variance

and did not necessarily imply efficiency in distribution. The fertiliser distributed to farmers usually constituted a small proportion of the total fertiliser procured each year. A greater proportion was dispensed with through patron-client networks in the service of political interests as seen in interview results. Fuentes et al. (2012) demonstrate through comparative quantitative tabulation of fertiliser targeted for distribution and successfully delivered for several years to demonstrate clear disparities in figures. The t-test of mean differences between the quantity of subsidized fertiliser needed or desired by farmers and the quantities they obtained was significant at a probability of 0.000>0.05. This shows clearly that the destination of a high proportion of subsidized fertiliser was other than the farms of smallholder farmers. The fertiliser dealer interviewed in this study was emphatic that

> there is no way peasants can access subsidized fertiliser because it is not its real purpose. Given the importance of fertiliser to agriculture, fertiliser subsidy has become a potent political instrument utilized to gain political mileage for politicians and ensure re-election at the polls. It is always an effective campaign strategy to lay claims to the distribution of fertilisers.

The findings also reveal that smallholder farmers have no role in the procurement of fertilisers and only a marginal role in distribution due to the inability of farmers to organise for political action. The poor political form of smallholder farmers is illustrated in the fact that while 56.5 of respondents suggest that membership of farming associations facilitates access to subsidized fertilisers, 61.5% of them did not belong to any association. This challenge is compounded by the fact that the apex farmer organisation (AFAN) that has the ear of the government significantly excludes smallholder farmers where only 9% of the sampled population belong to the body. This denied them a voice and the capacity for effective demands on the system. The ANOVA result reveals that there was a significant difference (F = 111.219) in the effectiveness of fertilizer distribution (measured by the quantity of fertilizer accessed) as experienced by farmers based on their social association status as members of all farmers association of Nigeria (AFAN), Commodity Association and those who are not members of any association. The implication is that membership of association puts farmers in a more vantage position in accessing

subsidized fertilisers. But the reality is that they do not belong to especially the kind of association that could make a difference in their ability to access fertiliser distributed through official channels. The inability to organise and/or associate stems from a low level of political consciousness and a fatalistic world view which prevents them from connecting their existential realities to the decisions and actions of the state.

Although the data from official sources stressed farmers' needs as a primary consideration in the procurement of fertilisers it was not very clear whether the kind of rigour demanded by Wanzala-Mlobela et al. (2013) applied to the process of procuring and distributing fertilisers in Benue state. The mentioning of farmers need as informing procurement of fertilisers is contradicted by their exclusion from decisions on the procurement of fertilisers. Active involvement of farmers in the design and execution of subsidy programmes would provide a key component for the success of the fertiliser subsidy programme. The primary considerations exerting more impact on the process are the cost of fertilisers, the state of government revenues which is heavily dependent on monthly allocation from the Federation Account and the exchange rate of the Naira. The de-emphasis on farmers and prioritization of budgetary considerations is captured in Oko (2011). These determine the number of fertilisers procured yearly for distribution and the rate of subsidy which varied yearly. The dominance of arbitrage and leakages is a derivative of insufficient rigour in the planning process and the pre-eminence accorded considerations without direct bearing on the use of fertilisers.

The marginalisation of smallholder farmers also comes out in the course of identifying actors in the fertiliser procurement and distribution process with a multi-layered chain including state and non-state actors. The process of procuring and distributing fertilisers especially in the pre-GES period was characterized by direct participation of government where the private sector played the role of supplier through contract arrangements. The main actors were the government agencies such as the MANR at the state level and the FMARD at the federal level as well as the fertiliser companies involved in importation and blending of fertilisers, the farmers had no roles at this stage of the fertiliser chain. Wanzala-Mlobela et al. (2013) emphasized the need for rigour in the planning process involving annual estimation of the fertiliser requirements which should

take into account the number of targeted beneficiaries, the size of the planted area as well as the crop mix. However, this was not the case in practice.

According to the 2006 National Fertiliser Policy for Nigeria, the fertiliser sector is a liberalized private input market. By this provision, official policy is restricted to the regulation of the sector to ensure quality and well-functioning markets. Similarly, Nigeria's policy on agriculture which was adapted in 2001 from the First National Policy on agriculture designed in 1988 was unequivocal on the fact of fertiliser being an exclusive preserve of private sector investment. According to the official document, Fertiliser supply is hinged on complete privatization and liberalization and in the production, distribution and marketing of the commodity. The main role of the government is to strictly monitor the quality standard of all fertilisers (local and foreign) to ensure that only certified products reach the farmer (FGN, 2001:16).

It is plausible to reason that with the repeated reference to the private sector as key to the fertiliser industry, the formulators of fertiliser policies recognize the business of fertiliser as private-sector and not government business. However, the Federal government and the Benue state government sustained a subsidy on fertiliser which also involved direct procuring and distribution. The persistence of inconsistencies between official policy pronouncements and practice is acknowledged by Nagy and Edun (2002) Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010) and Jerven (2014). Policy inconsistencies are so endemic that the federal government was still occasionally distributing subsidized fertilisers up till 2020 despite the official pronouncement that the current regime is that of the zero-subsidy. While official justifications for this contradictory sustenance of subsidies are many and varied, the administration of official subsidies and other forms of official intervention firmly place fertiliser within government business. As with all cases of subsidy administration denoted with high levels of ‘gerrymandering’, the fertiliser sector in Nigeria equates politics. Ostensibly, the objective within official circles is to raise agricultural productivity, encourage farmers to use fertilisers and meet the demands of farmers for the commodity; also, to bridge the gap between the cost of fertilisers and the ability of farmers to afford high-cost fertilisers from the open or black market.

Other official justifications for subsidies include promoting research and extension activities that enable farmers to earn higher profits through improved agronomic

efficiency in fertiliser and higher yields; promoting and facilitating the integration of the national fertiliser market into a larger regional fertiliser market; maintaining the supply of quality fertiliser and improving access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers (FGN, 2006:3). However, the experiences of smallholder farmers as demonstrated in the data provides little validation that these set of objectives are the real reasons for government involvement in fertiliser procurement and distribution.

The substantive argument or thesis of this research is therefore that the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state is a function of primitive accumulation as a legacy of the colonial economy. Within the workings of the colonial economy, primitive accumulation which has been defined by Marx as a forced separation between people and social means of production manifested in deliberate neglect of the improvement of rural farmers' means of production (Forest, 1981; Shima, 1987, Odey, 2009; 2011). The African's entry and exit from colonialism with a hoe (Rodney, 1972), resulted from the workings of the phenomenon of primitive accumulation. This implies that accumulation is impracticable without prior dispossession of producers of the means of production whether in the form of land, machines, capabilities or any other resource for production such as fertiliser. The political 'instrumentation' of peasant production needs while simultaneously restricting their access to fertilisers as a means of production is indistinguishable from dispossession as primitive accumulation. For an illustration, the expressed objective for official intervention in the fertiliser sector to support food production presents a ready yardstick for measuring the extent to which the politics of fertiliser functioned as primitive accumulation. This applies specifically to the pre-GES era (1999-2011) which witnessed the highest levels of rent-seeking, arbitrage and the dominance of political criteria in the distribution of fertilisers. Arguably, Nigeria's highest food import bills amounting to N1.923 trillion were recorded within this period. It is difficult to discount low access to fertiliser by smallholder farmers from such high food import bills. Official intervention in the fertiliser sector to support food production only provided a cover for appropriation. Also, within the same period and more, the marginal increases in food production have resulted from the expansion of cultivated land and not in the intensification of production or increase in yield per hectare.

Explanations for the disparity between official pronouncements on the government's role in the fertiliser sector and observed official action can also be explained as a function of the incompatibility between economic and political objectives of the policy. This explanation finds support in Schmitt's (1976) argument that, unlike economists, policymakers have no intention of achieving Pareto optimality even when they possess all the information and instruments necessary to achieve it. Because politicians' possibility function is not solely determined by economics, their preference function also includes objectives that are often not related to the economy. The role of non-economic objectives in politicians' possibility and preference functions shows clearly in the preferred choice for fertiliser delivery system. Scholars Nagy and Edun (2002), Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2010) and Idachaba (2011) and policy practitioners (FMARD, 2011), acknowledge the existence of two alternative fertiliser delivery systems and their respective levels of efficiency. The first is a high cost and inefficient delivery system characterized by government intervention and subsidy while the second is the low cost and efficient delivery system based on private-sector participants and the market economy. Agricultural research (Idachaba, 2011) has also shown that there are viable alternatives to an official subsidy for encouraging consumption of fertilisers by smallholder farmers such as agricultural credit. However, because political objectives trump economic objectives in the policy action of the politician, the inefficient and high-cost alternative for delivering fertilisers has persisted as the preferred official option. In Benue state, even the coming on stream of the PFI with zero subsidies has not eliminated the state government's participation in fertiliser procurement and distribution; even the federal government did not completely abolish the procurement and distribution of fertiliser in actual practice.

Within systems where property rights are politically determined, the maximization of the growth potential of the economy is not considered imperative; rather, efforts are concentrated in maximizing returns to rulers and politically strong groups (North, 1981). The impact of Benue’s fertiliser subsidy policies on economic efficiency, equity, costs to the treasury, transparency of policies and programmes and food security has been established as negative but government involvement in fertiliser business persists. It becomes easier to agree with North (1981) that official intervention in the Benue fertiliser

sector has less interest in economic growth and more interest probably in the maximization of returns to politicians, top bureaucrats and other politically strong groups. This trio is what the study refers to as the political elite. The place of competition between the political elite and the peasantry (smallholder farmers) in determining access to fertiliser is deducible from this deterministic role of politics which effectively excludes politically weak groups such as the peasantry which lacks group organization as the most rudimentary requirement for political power.

4.7.1 Structural Violence and the Fertiliser Process in Benue State

Operating on the fringes of an economy with a state-market mix, the peasant or smallholder farmer functions under the active domination of state-market collaboration within the frame of a system of structural violence where the functioning of formally established political, economic and social structures inadvertently limit its access to the means of production, in this case, agricultural input as well as restricts its access to its own produced agricultural surplus.

The functioning of class defined structures with active collaboration between the political elite which here includes the bureaucracy and the merchant class lends empirical strength to the theoretical postulation of structural violence. Deprivation experienced by the farmers belonging to a subservient social category or class arises from their placement in the social structure. Official policies are circumscribed by social structures given the power of the dominant forces identified here as the elite. Higley (2008) supports this position with the argument that the elite tends to persist and reproduce their power overtime at the political and economic levels, potentially undermining the effectiveness of institutionalised reforms.

The idea of equating the circumscription of peasant existentialism to the proclivities of the political elite can be spared the charge of reductionism given empirical validation of elite culpability in the emasculation of the peasantry. According to an interviewee who is an out of office member of the political elite

> the peasantry is not politically conscious or organized sufficiently to demand and obtain concessions from the political elites, it is a sack of potatoes not a revolutionary class, only a political elite with the

> political will to empower farmers will change the fortunes of farmers as there are unable to engineer a change of their circumstance

The driving force behind the political action of the political elite in Nigeria and particularly in Benue state is at variance with this expectation as aptly captured by the same interviewee who stated that “the seeking of political power is not for administration or addressing basic problems through the use of state resources, it is not service motivated, and political office is a job for accumulation and not for service”. Although this statement appears self-explanatory on face value, the intellectual challenge is to identify the factors that drive elite decisions and actions in fertiliser procurement and distribution. Attempts at identifying sources of attitude and behaviour of the political elite in the design and execution of pro-poor, majorly agrarian policies and the failure of the peasantry in constructively engaging the state are here located first in class relations. Secondly, they are located in the failure of the development project and the ensuing escapist and class preservation panic measures masquerading as public policy.

The reality of the existences of classes or economic categories within the Nigerian agrarian economy has already been demonstrated in the literature with class relations determining the play of politics and the design and execution of public policy (Williams, 1980; Nnoli, 1981; Imoagene, 1989; Dumoye, 1989; Ake, 1996; Agbaje and Adebanwi 2003). The character of the political elite towards the peasantry is arguably condescending and translates in the words of Rowbotham (1998:6) to "offering them (peasants) protection that they (political elite) think fit and denying them their voices". Unlike the peasantry with low political and class consciousness, the political elite and the merchant class through common or similar education and similar patterns of consumption have developed class consciousness that sets them apart from uneducated or less educated groups with largely different patterns of consumption. Where class differentiations are properly factored in, it becomes obvious that exploitation, opposed interests and conflict constitute the defining factors for the differences in the life chances of individuals and groups.

The political elite is fixated on class preservation, using political power for accumulation as security is sought in an emasculated peasantry amenable to manipulation and control for political ends. The political elite employs the exploitative logic of

capitalism which is minimum input for maximum output, where legitimate emoluments are not viewed as maximizing gains from access to political power or proximity to the same. Rent-seeking manifesting here in the diversion and arbitrage of subsidized agricultural inputs serves as a means to maximize gains from public office. The apparent ease with which arbitrage, rent-seeking on fertilisers and the restriction of access of smallholder farmers occur within the frame of public policy gives credence to the structural theory of inequality which explains that the source of inequality lies in relations between classes. The structurally created strategy for the reproduction of the peasantry originates in the realization that access to and possession of rights and powers over productive resources determines class placement (Wright, 2002). Limiting, restricting or outrightly preventing access to productive resources functionally keeps the peasant as a peasant irrespective of the extent of his toil and back-breaking labour.

The peasantry in Nigeria and especially Benue state has demonstrated a marked inability to leverage the voting power inherent in it its large numbers as a bargaining chip in engaging the state due to a related inability to think strategically on its long term interests. It exists in a response mode lacking any form of economic or lacking political pro-activity and reacting only to the actions of the state or the market, two categories that contrastingly constantly strategize on how to extract surplus created by the peasantry. Comparative studies on the development of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia (Berendsen et al., 2013) have demonstrated the prevailing tendency of the political elite for the political instrumentation of peasant needs. However, it is noteworthy that similarities in attitude and thinking of the political elite from the two regions produced paradoxically differing paths regarding policy choices and actions in economic development. The differences derive from the way and manner each region answered the agrarian question. The peasantry in sub-Saharan Africa is apolitical in fundamental terms and thus left to remain the un-revolutionary sack of potatoes. In contrast, the leverage of the electoral power of the peasantry explains why agricultural development constituted the bedrock of Southeast Asia's development. Fernando (2013) reports that the post-colonial Malayan government recognised that the balance of electoral power was with the rural Malays and this provided impetuous for agricultural development with policy measures

focused on rural development, the lowering of the income gap between the rural and urban population as well as poverty alleviation.

On the contrary, the political elite in Nigeria exploits the political weakness of the peasantry by using the number leverage of the latter against it as well as capitalising on the needs and poverty of the peasantry for political advantage. Instead of devising policies and measures to ensure constant availability of fertilisers so that farmers can access them when needed, build productive capacities over time and stabilise political support from the peasantry, such fertilisers are distributed sometimes free to rural voters during electioneering to sway votes in their favour with a focus on short term and immediate political gain.

Another case is that of Cambodia (Leliveld and Brummelhuis, 2013) where the country was able to make rapid gains in agricultural development after a period of prolonged crisis even though the authors are persuaded that the government increased interest in agriculture stemmed more from its anticipation of an attractive income from selling agricultural products on the international market, rather than concern for Cambodia's rural poor. Although the primary motivation was increased revenue for the political elite, inadvertently, the peasantry also benefited from the consequent transformation and development of productive resources. In contrast, the political elite in Benue state has carried on the colonial legacy of extracting surplus from the peasantry without transforming peasant means of production.

The attitudes and behaviour of the political elite towards the peasantry while remaining the same in fundamental terms changes in tactics and measures depending on the nature of the value or surplus derivable at any material point in time. During the colonial era, the peasantry was required to provide commodities that were deliberately poorly priced, pay taxes and provide free or forced labour. The appropriate policies were created to facilitate surplus extraction such as commodity boards and farmers' cooperatives. According to Williams (1980), capitalist farmers could not dislodge peasant producers because of the ability of peasants to use resources more effectively and produce more cheaply, this suited European trading companies who controlled the price of

commodities because profit-making was made easy with peasants operating as indirect slaves with no market control over their produce.

The view of the peasantry as suited only for surplus extraction has also persisted as a colonial legacy where the exploitative logic paradoxically produces a disdain for peasants and their production systems. The prevailing perception is that peasants are best kept in their place given their proven resilience. Left to their own devices, peasant producers are still able to supply the urban populations with required food and do not require particular attention or meticulous attendance to details of the implementation of policies that target them. For surplus to be extracted from the peasantry, it is not necessary to be committed policy-wise in investment as surplus can be extracted without such hassles. Class mobility is not a requisite for peasant existence, the daily survival and subsistence of the peasant is sufficient as all that is required for exploitation is for the peasant to be alive and continue in basic production. The driving force of primitive accumulation does not permit the prioritization of the transformation of the peasants' means of production. This is because dispossession of the peasantry and its alienation from the means of production provides the primary platform and mechanism for primitive accumulation. Where educated, politically and economically conscious farmers produce and exercise power over their productivity, primitive accumulation becomes automatically impracticable or at best difficult to execute.

The design and execution of agricultural policy are fundamentally informed by a view of peasant agriculture as unsuited for sustained economic development (Olayemi, 1980). For instance, interviewees from the top political players were of the view that the peasantry does not possess the productive capacity to provide input for agro-based industries given their low acreage of cultivation and use of only basic tools for cultivation as well as low technology utilization. The consequent policy behaviour is an emphasis on farm mechanization leading even to the solicitation for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in agriculture deriving from the perception that requisite local capacities are lacking for expansion in agricultural productivity especially such that will drive agro-based industrialization.

The paradoxical need to extract surplus without a policy commitment to the transformation of peasant productive systems creates a lack of consistency in policy that concomitantly produces ambivalence and even outright suspicions by peasants of official programmes and interventions in agriculture (Sithole et al., 2003). Official programmes and interventions in agriculture are not enthusiastically embraced by the peasantry given previous disappointing experiences. In the purchase of seedlings, farmers have grown wary of government sources that fail to germinate in most cases choosing rather to obtain seedlings from fellow farmers who have proven the productivity of such seedlings by their bumper harvests. With such low psychological and emotional engagement with the official programme, the motivation to ensure that that policy implementation follows the rule of the book is lacking from the beneficiaries, as such policy executors operate largely with a lot of personal discretion consequently providing room for arbitrage and the seeking and obtaining of official rents from the process of fertiliser procurement and distribution.

Related to non-engagement due to suspicions and lack of confidence in the official programme, Imoagene (1989), had argued that peasants cannot also systematically express and realise their class interests which have been linked to low-class consciousness derived from the non-realization of the class determined nature of their existence and inability to organize for constructive state engagement. Instrumental utilization of peasant needs for political ends is made possible by such none realization of the functioning of class interests in sustaining rural poverty. The political class thrives on such ignorance in its use of fertiliser subsidy policy for the building of political capital largely unchallenged. The identified constraints to the use of fertilisers in the literature and the data include low income, lack of access to agricultural credit, political influence on distribution, insufficient availability and other factors that have direct and direct linkages with the nature of social relations prevailing in the agricultural economy. The channels of accumulation have consistently flowed from the bottom-up, from the peasantry to the political elite with the politician and merchant having access to productive capital and the peasantry lacking access to the same. The behaviour of the political elite lends strength to Ake's (1981) characterization of the state as displaying a gross absence of the rule of law, with an implausible system of justice where the coercive instruments of the state place themselves

above the law and the people below. The operations of the state especially in the allocation and consumption of public resources is not in keeping with the notion of a *res publica* or *res Populi* as contended by Cicero (Sabine and Thorson, 1973) negating the idea of the state as a commonwealth. A situation where a handful of citizens dispense with public resources at will while denying others the right to the same fictionalises equality espoused in the laws of the land, rather it validates the existence of inequality actively promoted by the state through the politics of policy.

The interplay of patrimonial politics, ethnic politics, corruption and abuse of public office with a history rooted in colonialism and military rule has also conspired to create a politically docile and unconscious peasantry. Although this malaise afflicts not only the peasantry but also the educated working segment of the population, it nonetheless has more impact and negative consequences for the peasantry. Public office identifiable with Ekeh's (1975) civil public is an enclave from which members of varying primordial publics appropriate benefits which their respective arrowheads are free to dispense unquestionably. The system is perceived as just and fair even where the out of power members of the primordial public benefit only symbolically.

The role of political factors in conditioning the level to which smallholder farmers access fertilisers in Benue state begins to come out in clear relief when access or non-access is viewed against the backdrop of this power differential and the non-awareness of such causality on the part of those who are deprived, depicting the scenario of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). Lack of consciousness of their class defined existence gives credence to Imoagene's (1989) view that peasants cannot systematically express and realise their class interests. The structural character of their deprived existence is demonstrated by Coghlan and Huggins (2004) utilising simulation exercises, where the salience of social stratification in creating and perpetuating economic and social inequalities comes out clearly in those exercises. The outcome of the simulation exercises also includes the tendency of the dominant group to hold the underprivileged responsible for their deprivation. Cultivation methods and post-harvest management practices of the peasantry are viewed as unfavourable for development, thus providing an explanation for their poverty (Olayemi, 1980; Morgan and Solarz, 1994; Ake, 1996). The prevailing view

of poor peasants within Benue state currently, especially young people is that of lazy and unproductive individuals who prefer to throng homes and offices of politicians for hand-outs instead of engaging in productive ventures like farming. For most of these young individuals, farming is unattractive because of the difficulty and cost of obtaining inputs as well as the backbreaking demands of farm labour due to non-mechanization of production.

The deprivation and exploitation of smallholder farmers as peasants is also facilitated by the low level of affiliation with formal organisations that could function as pressure groups or provide forums for the formal articulation of particular interests of peasants and thus obtain concessions from the state. It is important to note that because it is not strictly sociological, the study did not identify patterns of social interaction and exchanges existing within the surveyed communities which could provide explanations for the limited involvement of farmers in formal farm associations. Although the data did not seek to establish explanations for the limited membership of formal and officially recognised farm associations, scholarly expositions bearing on the subject provide some level of illumination. One such scholarly research is that by Sithole et al. (2003) who argue that due to repeated poor performance of official programmes of intervention in rural agriculture, peasants have developed suspicion for such official programmes and interventions.

There exists a related tendency by mostly peasants of low or no education to view any formal social structures as emanating from the government and thus best avoided as previous engagements with such led to unsavoury experiences. A probable inference derivable therefrom is that, whereas peasants do not reject social or occupational associations, they tend to treat formal and officially recognised structures with suspicion and this attitude acts to limit their engagement with such bodies. While the data demonstrate a positive relationship between membership of farm associations and access to subsidized fertilisers, it paradoxically indicates low membership of such associations. This presents a contradiction because in one part of the questionnaire the respondents affirmed that access to subsidized fertilisers is improved by an individual's membership of a farm association but an overwhelming number does not belong to any.

Lack of formal organization is politically disabling of the peasantry due to the absence of altruism as the defining motivational denominator for political decisions and actions. Political leaders on the attainment of public office are primarily preoccupied with securing and protecting their hold on power (Ake, 1973; Southall, 1974; Chabal, 1998) and are not driven by public welfare sentiments. Citizens can obtain concessions from the state not because the leaders are predisposed to doing so but because organised citizens leverage the strength of organization to demand and obtain such. Individuals belonging to social categories without the leverage of organized state–society engagement tend to benefit less from the state and this is particularly so for sub- Saharan Africa. This line of thought finds congruence with Fernando's (2013:229) linking of leadership choices and management of intense competition by political groups for limited economic resources with the selection and effectiveness of the implementation of development policies. Invariably in the face of stiff competition for scarce resources, stronger and more organized groups wrest more concessions from the state while the weak experience deprivations.

It is deducible from the discussion that the access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers is circumscribed by several factors which are economic and political. Political constraints to access have been accorded greater salience in this study given the fact that smallholder farmers experience more difficulties in accessing subsidized fertilisers than market priced fertilisers.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

5.1 Summary

This study examined the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state, Nigeria employing structural violence and primitive accumulation as frames for analysis. The motivation for the study was the fact that although the government has intervened in fertiliser procurement and distribution for up to four decades with the clearly stated objective of catering to the consumption needs of smallholder farmers, this category has been marginalized in access to fertilisers. The claims that the needs of smallholder farmers are marginal in public fertiliser distribution networks are not spurious as the government itself acknowledged in 2011 (FMARD, 2011) that only 11% of intended beneficiaries benefited from the universal subsidy which was the longest-lasting form of intervention (1999-2011). This study, therefore, concerned itself with the following objectives. It examined the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue State and brought out the details of their practical workings. It also evaluated the effectiveness of the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution and sought to find out if there were any variations in the effectiveness of the different forms of intervention. The study also identified and examined the factors that determine choices and preferences in fertiliser procurement and distribution to establish the motivations and considerations that drive the public sector fertiliser distribution system. Lastly, the study identified and examined the different social categories and structures of power in the fertiliser sector in Benue state to locate the nexus of power in the process and system and its effect on distribution and access to subsidized fertilisers.

Empirical data sourced in the course of the study and theoretical arguments substantially confirm the correlation between the realities of smallholder farmers and the predispositions, prejudices, decisions and actions of the political elite in Benue's

agriculture. Characteristics displayed by data from the sample indicate the limited production capacity of the peasantry as smallholder farmers cultivating small portions of land with the use of simple tools, earning little income, employing limited farm technology and having a limited market share for their products in a market system of unequal exchange which facilitates extraction and appropriation of agricultural surplus by the state and forces of capital.

There is a wide gap between the quantity of subsidized fertilisers that Benue farmers require for their crops every farming season and the quantity they obtain. Test of hypothesis using the t-test (t-12.59) was statistically significant as the quantity of fertiliser desired had a high mean of 314.471 compared to the quantity of fertiliser obtained with a low mean of 113.294. The politics of policy understood as "leadership choices on resource allocation and effectiveness of implementation" (Fernando 2013:230) provided the explanations for this deficit. Politics of policy is demonstrated in the data and analysis of the process of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state situated within the period 1999-2020 coupled with identification of the constraints to use of fertilisers by smallholder farmers as evident in the data. These are captured in this summary.

Although different programmes or forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution have been operated in Benue state, they have not yielded any significant differences in results. The effectiveness of distribution was measured in how much of the fertilisers got to smallholder farmers who were prioritised in policy and programme statements. The findings showed that public sector fertiliser distribution systems did not succeed in getting fertiliser to smallholder farmers whether as the universal subsidy, the GES which was a targeted system, the PFI and the anchor borrower programme that emphasized the expansion of private markets.

The findings also indicated that the primary reason for the sub-optimal performance of public sector fertiliser distribution systems is the fact that public fertiliser programmes are circumscribed by the attitude of the political elite that places little value on the productive capacities of the peasantry. This is a key aspect of the politics of policy explaining the limited access of the peasantry to fertilisers as this feeds diversion, arbitrage and rent-seeking. The persuasion that peasant agriculture is ill-suited to the

demands of economic progress and industrial development invariably implies that investing technology in peasant production amounts to a displacement of productive resources given the meagre returns envisaged on such investments. Large scale farmers with the capacity to consume market-priced fertilisers are the preferred beneficiaries of subsidized fertilisers from the perspective of public officials who also share class sympathies and interests with other elites. The prevailing circumstances within Benue state are even such that it is difficult to draw a fine line between the political elite which include the top bureaucracy and the merchant class as there is a fusion of both in the same personalities. These socio-economic categories mirror a politico-economic regime of state participation and dominance within a capitalist system.

The low political and class consciousness of the Benue peasantry underpins its subjugation, domination and exploitation by the dominant social forces of the political elite and capital. Poor political mobilization and organization as a function of low consciousness forswear the peasantry real political power for engagement with the state. Without cognizance of a social contract between citizens and the state, constructive engagement is negated providing avenues for the relegation of peasant interests through the politics of policy.

The fertiliser procurement and distribution process in Benue state is highly multi-layered with supposed beneficiaries constituting only a minute part of the chain. This multi-layered chain functions to restrict access as fertilisers filter through several layers to reach farmers within which period a greater proportion of it is lost to political criteria, outright arbitrage and the fixation on rent-seeking. Multiplication of actors is also a function of systemic gate-keeping where traditional and religious leaders benefit from fertiliser subsidy while safeguarding grass-root support for the political elite.

The politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution is also evident in the frequent changes in policies and programmes given the tendency of every administration to introduce its agricultural policies. With each succeeding agricultural policy, changes occur in the input sector also. In most cases, new programmes are introduced to supplant existing ones where the latter have not even properly taken off. This produces disruptions and confusion for administrators and relevant stakeholders. Smallholder farmers are

particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of frequent policy changes as this causes losses in time and money. For example, under the GES, farmers without cell phones had to acquire the same to participate and participation included spending extended amounts of time at registration centres. The introduction of the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative under the Buhari administration which has eliminated fertiliser subsidy has effectively cancelled out the GES system. All stakeholders including civil servants, fertiliser dealers and fertiliser consumers have had to readjust to the new system even before becoming familiar with the previously existing one. The motivation for these changes is mainly political and not necessarily for increased policy efficiency as each succeeding administration seeks to create its own distinct identity.

5.2 Conclusions

The study on the strength of the findings, therefore, concludes as follows:

One, class analysis within the theoretical moulds of structural violence and primitive accumulation is appropriate and applicable to understanding and explaining the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state.

Two, the active social categories identified within the fertiliser sector in Benue state are the political elite defined broadly to include the bureaucracy, the smallholder farmers and the merchant class.

Three, the political elite in Benue state since 1999 in keeping with the legacy of the colonial political elite exploit the agricultural needs of the peasantry to achieve political ends especially to obtain legitimacy from the dominant forces and political support from the subordinate categories. Several changes and reforms in the forms of official intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution did not significantly alter levels of effectiveness measured in the proportion of subsidized fertiliser that got to the targeted beneficiaries. Test of hypothesis showed no significant differences in the effectiveness of forms of intervention in fertiliser procurement and distribution.

Four, the failure of the development project in Benue state which has limited opportunities for wealth creation produces the expedience for wealth accumulation through the design and implementation of agricultural policies especially the use of subsidies that provide arbitrage opportunities. Agricultural policies as implemented in

Benue state also facilitate rent-seeking behaviour given the power of officials to arrogate powers to themselves thereby legitimizing action even when it is at variance with the officially and formally laid down procedure.

Five, there exists active collaboration between the dominant forces of the Benue political elite and non-state actors bound by common interests originating in class consciousness and identity, distinct and opposed to the peasantry. This collaboration is tantamount to a mechanism for excluding or limiting smallholder farmers access to fertiliser while facilitating appropriation of state resources and extraction of surplus from peasant production.

Six, official programmes and policies designed by the federal government and the state are not necessarily faulty in design and implementation strategies. However, these are circumscribed by the demand for the attainment of the interests of the dominant social forces which operate according to the unwritten rules of the existing social structure. Appropriation on one hand and denial of access on the other, are facilitated by the established social structures of power at one pole and powerlessness at the other.

Seven, the political dominance of the political elite juxtaposed with the subservience of the peasantry in Benue state finds strength in the absence of political organization amongst the peasantry where a greater proportion has no affiliation to formally organized commodity and farm associations within which to organize and engage with state organs. The peasantry is exploited because of the inability to leverage the power of organization and its numbers.

Eight, the reality of its class defined existence is absent from the mind of the peasant. Lack of class and political consciousness prevents the Benue peasant from rightly identifying the source of its deprivation and misery with a tendency towards fatalism where God or some other deity takes responsibility for the existing circumstance. The peasant is an un-revolutionary class incapable of effecting any transformation in the circumstances of its existence and can only be emancipated by a political elite committed to the cause of the peasantry.

Nine, the Benue peasant is reproduced as a peasant without any transformation in its means of production because the political elite with the power to emancipate the peasant is pre-occupied with preserving and consolidating its hold on political and economic power with little or no considerations of altruism which could support the pursuit of the cause of the peasant.

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The study has demonstrated that fertiliser policy in Benue state functions as a veritable instrument for exploitation and expropriation of the peasantry by the dominant social forces of the state (represented by the political elite) and capital (embodied by merchants) in a process of primitive accumulation where the politics of policy is utilized for systematic dispossession of the peasantry of the means of production. In this regard, the scholarly conversation is furthered through focusing the lens of social stratification on the allocation and exploitation of fertiliser in Benue state as a means of production. The unenviable circumstance of small cultivators operating within a peripheral capitalist formation is made evident by the findings and conclusions of this research.

Another contribution to knowledge is that the study has challenged dominant capital induced intellectual predilection for de-politicized explanations of economic outcomes where purely economic or market forces (van der Pijl, 2009) are advanced as reasons for low consumption of fertilisers by peasants in Nigeria. While acknowledging the role of price in market allocation, it has moved ahead to succinctly provide validation for the consequences of the politics of policy on the ability of a less politically conscious and organized peasantry to access fertiliser which is a significant determinant of the peasant's quality of life.

Although the study is not a polemic, there are polemic undertones in its connection with the age-long debate on the place of values in social research and is unequivocal in its rejection of the denial of value considerations in social research due to its defensible assertion that artificially prodded obstacles to accessing fertilisers by the peasantry constitute acts of injustice. The contention put forward before the intellectual community by this study is that value considerations are germane to social science research and refutation of the place of values retards rather than advances the fortunes of scientific

inquiry with a social character. Without an organic linkage to social challenges, a scientist' work questionably adopts the pre-fix of social. Wright (2010:10) developed the idea of 'emancipatory social science' as that which seeks to generate scientific knowledge relevant to the collective project of challenging various forms of human oppression. Social concerns should necessarily reside at the core of social science research instead of being incidental or marginal. This research rejects the notion that the generation of knowledge purely for its own sake is the real objective of social science. The liberal scholarship is value loaded, un-pretentiously lauding the advantages of market economy with an ironic tenacious claim on objectivity and an in-plausible accusation of scholarship with leftist underpinning as value loaded and unscientific. For this study, consideration of the place of value did not obliterate objectivity.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Study

The challenges of peasant producers in Benue are not restricted to limited or circumscribed access to fertiliser. The politics of policy functions to demarcate owners of means for agricultural productivity from non-owners within the entire agricultural input sector. Given the challenges to accessing fertilisers, further research can ask questions about what is happening in the area of motor-powered agricultural machinery (tractors), herbicides, insecticides and the entire input economy in Benue state.

Generally, the political elite has demonstrated a profound lack of commitment to the development of agriculture in Benue state. The consequence of this disposition is that Benue state once the real Food Basket of Nigeria, arguably holds just the form of the title and not the substance presently. Further studies can ask why a scheme such as the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) located in the state capital has collapsed and what is the present state of the Benue World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Project.

Also of research interest is the Lower Benue River Basin Development Authority (LBRDA). Although this exists as a Federal Government agency, it is useful to examine the effect of the political environment of Benue state on the operations, successes and failures of the agency. On a more comprehensive level, further research can encapsulate the politics of agricultural production in Benue state.

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APPENDIX 1

Research Instruments

Department of Political Science,
The University of Ibadan,
Ibadan,
Nigeria.
September 15th, 2015.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST TO COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a PhD student with the above-named department undertaking a study on 'the politics of fertiliser procurement and distribution in Benue state, Nigeria'. To assist me in this, I request you to kindly complete the attached questionnaire which will be anonymously and confidentially used for academic purposes only. I do appreciate your cooperation.

Uganden, Iveren Adoo.
168698
M.Sc., B.Sc.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please tick √ in the spaces provided the option that best represents your opinion. For questions without options please write in the space provided.

1. Age
   i. At least 20 [ ]
   ii. 21-30 [ ]

iii. 31-40 [ ]

iv. 41 and above [ ]

2. Gender

i. Male [ ]

ii. Female [ ]

3. Marital status

i. Single [ ]

ii. Married [ ]

4. Size of Household

i. 1-4 [ ]

ii. 5-8 [ ]

iii. 9-12 [ ]

iv. 13 and above [ ]

5. What is your main occupation?

i. Farmer [ ]

ii. Trader/Business owner [ ]

iii. Artisan [ ]

iv. Farm labourer [ ]

v. Wage/salary earner [ ]

vi. Others [ ]

vii. None [ ]

6. What else do you do? (tick all that apply)

i. Farmer [ ]

ii. Trader/Business owner [ ]

iii. Artisan [ ]

iv. Farm labourer [ ]

v. Wage/salary earner [ ]

vi. None [ ]

7. Which is your local government? _____

8. What do you use your crops for?

i. For feeding [ ]

ii. Feeding/and selling [ ]

iii. For selling only [ ]

9. What is the size of your farm?

i. 1-2 hectares [ ]

ii. 3-4 hectares [ ]

iii. 5hectares and above [ ]

10. How much money do you realize from the sale of your crops each year? ₦----------

11. What is your method of farming?

i. Manual labour/Simple tools [ ]

ii. Partly mechanized [ ]

iii. Fully Mechanized [ ]

12. What is your source of farm labour (Tick all that apply)

i. Family/household [ ]

ii. Hired from within community [ ]

iii. Labourers from other communities [ ]

13. Where do you get money to farm? Tick all that apply.

i. Sale of produce from the farm [ ]

ii. Personal savings [ ]

iii. Borrow from relations and friends [ ]

iv. Cooperative/bam/adashi [ ]

v. Loans from Bank of Agriculture

vi. Loans from commercial banks

14. Which farming association do you belong to?

i. All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) [ ]

ii. Rice farmers association [ ]

iii. Maize farmers association [ ]

iv. Cassava farmers association [ ]

v. Soya beans farmers association [ ]

vi. Yam farmers association [ ]

vii. Tomato and pepper association [ ]

viii. Groundnut farmers association [ ]

ix. Tree crop framers association [ ]

x. Fruit farmers association [ ]

xi. None of the above [ ]

15. Do you use chemical fertilisers on your farm?

i. Never [ ]

ii. Some cropping seasons [ ]

iii. Every cropping season [ ]

If your answer to question 11 is sometimes or every cropping season continue from question 12 skip only 15.

If the answer to question 11 is never then answer only questions 15,31,32,33,34 and 35.

16. Through which source do you obtain fertilisers?

i. Divisional agricultural office [ ]

ii. State Ministry of agriculture [ ]

iii. Fertiliser Dealers/market [ ]

iv. Farming association/ cooperative [ ]

v. Church [ ]

vi. Mosque [ ]

17. In what measures do you buy fertilisers each cropping season?

i. Buy in bowls [ ]

ii. Buy in bags [ ]

18. Which is your most preferred fertiliser formulation?

i. NPK [ ]

ii. Urea [ ]

iii. Liquid organic fertiliser [ ]

iv. SSP [ ]

v. Lime fertiliser [ ]

vi. Combinations of different formulations [ ]

19. If you don't use fertilisers, what are you reason (s)? Tick all that apply.

i. My soil is fertile and does not require fertilisers [ ]

ii. Fertilisers make no difference to the crops [ ]

iii. Fertilisers only increase the cost of production without increasing output [ ]

iv. I have no money to buy fertilisers [ ]

v. Fertilisers are too expensive [ ]

vi. The fertiliser market/depot is too far from my home [ ]

vii. Fertilisers are not available when I need them [ ]

viii. I use manure for my crops [ ]

ix. There is no adequate supply of fertiliser in my community [ ]

20. How many bags of fertiliser do you need for your crops every cropping season? -------

21. How many do you actually obtain? ----------

22. Are you aware that government distributes fertiliser in the state?

i. Yes [ ]

ii. No [ ]

If the answer to question 18 is yes go ahead and answer the rest of the questions if no, then answer questions 31 to 35.

23. Does government distribute fertiliser in your Local Government Area?

i. Yes [ ]

ii. No [ ]

24. Which government MDA supplies fertiliser in your local government area?

i. State Ministry of Agriculture [ ]

ii. BNARDA [ ]

iii. FMARD [ ]

iv. Divisional Agricultural office [ ]

25. Who distributes fertiliser in your local government area? (Tick all that apply).

i. Agricultural extension officers [ ]

ii. Officials from State Ministry of Agriculture [ ]

iii. Officials from Federal Ministry of Agriculture [ ]

iv. Officials from BNARDA [ ]

v. Staff from the Local Government office [ ]
vi. Officials of my association/cooperative [ ]
vii. Party officials [ ]
viii. Religious Leaders [ ]
ix. Community Elders [ ]
x. Traditional rulers [ ]
xi. Fertiliser dealers [ ]

26. Do you have access to government fertilisers?
    i. Never [ ]
    ii. Some cropping seasons [ ]
    iii. Every cropping season [ ]
27. If you do access government fertilisers how many bags do you receive in a year? -----
28. If you do not access government fertilisers, which reason(s) apply?
    i. I don't need government fertilisers; I can buy at the market price [ ]
    ii. I don’t get to know when it’s available [ ]
    iii. It is only given to a selected people [ ]
    iv. It is never supplied to adequately meet the demand of all the farmers [ ]
    v. It is only for prominent politicians and chiefs [ ]
    vi. It is only for members of political parties [ ]
    vii. The process is too long and difficult [ ]
    viii. I don’t know how to read and write [ ]
    ix. The distribution centre is too far from my home [ ]
    x. I cannot afford even the government fertiliser [ ]
    xi. I do not have a cell phone [ ]
29. What type of fertiliser formulations are offered by the government?
    i. NPK [ ]
    ii. Urea [ ]
    iii. SSP [ ]
    iv. Liquid Organic fertiliser [ ]
    v. Lime fertiliser [ ]

30. How often is the distribution done?

i. once a year [ ]
ii. Twice a year [ ]
iii. Once in two years [ ]
iv. Once in several years [ ]
v. I don't know [ ]

31. How do you know that the government is distributing fertiliser? Tick all that apply.

i. Radio/ Television announcement/jingles [ ]
ii. Town criers/ Market square [ ]
iii. Announcements in Churches [ ]
iv. Announcement in Mosques [ ]
v. Agricultural extension officers [ ]
vi. Announcement in farm associations [ ]
vii. Cell phone text messages [ ]
viii. Mobile film shows [ ]
ix. Rallies/road shows [ ]

32. Which type of fertiliser do you prefer?

i. Government fertiliser [ ]
ii. Market fertiliser [ ]

33. If you prefer government fertiliser, indicate reason (s)

i. It is cheaper [ ]
ii. Supply time is fixed and predictable [ ]
iii. It is supplied when it is needed [ ]
iv. The process of purchase is fast and easy [ ]
v. It has better quality [ ]
vi. Agricultural extension workers educate us on the correct use of fertilisers [ ]
vii. There is a distribution centre in my community close to my home [ ]
viii. I will not make any profit from my farm if I use market fertiliser [ ]

34. If you prefer market fertiliser, indicate reason (s)

i. I can afford the market price [ ]

ii. Supply is steady and predictable [ ]

iii. It is available on demand [ ]

iv. The process is fast and easy [ ]

v. The quality is better [ ]

vi. I do make profit from my farm by buying and using market fertiliser [ ]

35. What other kind of assistance do you receive from the government? Tick all that apply.

i. Low-interest agriculture credit [ ]

ii. Agricultural extension services [ ]

iii. Improved seedlings [ ]

iv. Storage facilities [ ]

v. Marketing [ ]

36. What should the government do to help you get fertiliser? Tick all that apply.

i. Increase the number of bags of government fertilisers that I can buy [ ]

ii. Increase the number of distributing centres [ ]

iii. Establish a distribution centre close to my home [ ]

iv. Stop distributing fertilisers and invest in rural infrastructure [ ]

v. Provide agricultural loans [ ]

vi. Provide agricultural extension services [ ]

vii. Buy and distribute mobile phones to farmers [ ]

37. Does membership in a farming association make obtaining government fertiliser easier?

i. Yes [ ]

ii. No [ ]

38. How do you know the correct fertiliser to use for your crops? Tick all that apply.

i. Taught by parents and guardians [ ]

ii. Learnt from the cooperative or association of farmers [ ]

iii. Trained by agricultural extension agents [ ]

iv. Trial and error [ ]

v. I don’t know which fertiliser is good for my crops [ ]

39. If you receive training from agricultural extension agents, what area?

Tick all that apply

i. Knowledge of soil types and which fertilisers they require [ ]

ii. Knowledge of crop types and which fertilisers they require [ ]

iii. Adequate quantity of fertilisers for different crops and soils [ ]

iv. How to identify adulterated fertilisers [ ]

v. Inform on the need to use fertilisers [ ]

vi. Request for feedback on fertiliser use [ ]

36. Indicate the total number of bags of fertiliser you obtained for each of the years below

S/N	Year	Total Number of bags Desired	Total Number of Bags Accessed from Government	Total Number of Bags Obtained
1	1999			
2	2000			
3	2001			
4	2002			
5	2003			
6	2004			
7	2005			
8	2006			
9	2007			
10	2008			
11	2009			
12	2010			
13	2011			
14	2012			
15	2013			
16	2014			
17	2015			

Department of Political Science,
The University of Ibadan,
Ibadan,
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September 15th, 2015.

Dear Respondent,

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Uganden, Iveren Adoo.
168698
B.Sc., M.Sc.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, MAKURDI

Instruction: Please tick √ in the spaces provided the option that best represents your opinion. For questions without options please write in the space provided.

Section one: Fertiliser procurement

1. Name of government Ministry/ Department/ Agency ----------
2. Location ----------
3. What type (s) of fertiliser do you procure for distribution?
   - i. NPK [ ]
   - ii. Urea [ ]
   - iii. SSP [ ]
   - iv. Organic liquid fertiliser [ ]
   - v. Line fertiliser [ ]

4. What is your source of procuring fertilisers?

   a. Local fertiliser blending plants

      i. Name---------- Location----------

      ii. Name---------- Location----------

      iii. Name---------- Location----------

      iv. Name---------- Location----------

      v. Name---------- Location----------

   b. Importation

      i. Name---------- Country----------

      ii. Name---------- Country----------

      iii. Name---------- Country----------

      iv. Name---------- Country----------

      v. Name---------- Country----------

5. What is/are the reason(s) for the choice of sources?

   i. Cost considerations [ ]

   ii. Quality considerations [ ]

   iii. Farmer needs considerations [ ]

   iv. Preferences of officials involved [ ]

   v. Result of agronomic research and trails of fertiliser formulations [ ]

   vi. Recommendations from farm extension agents [ ]

   vii. Fertiliser donor's choice [ ]

   viii. Government policy on fertiliser procurement [ ]

   ix. Recommendation from traditional rulers [ ]

6. Who decides on the choice of source of fertilisers?

   i. Governor of the state [ ]

   ii. State Executive Council [ ]

   iii. Commissioner for Agriculture [ ]

   iv. Executive Director [ ]

   v. President of the Federal Republic [ ]

   vi. Minister for the FMARD [ ]

   vii. Open bidding [ ]

7. Are farmers consulted on the source and choice of fertiliser type?

   i. Sometimes [ ]
   ii. Always [ ]
   iii. Never [ ]

8. Who are the participants/actors in your fertiliser chain and what are their roles?

---

9. In what way(s) is the private sector involved in fertiliser procurement?

   i. Local blending and supply of fertiliser [ ]
   ii. Importation of fertiliser [ ]
   iii. Provide technical support [ ]
   iv. Distribution of fertilisers to farmers [ ]

10. How are private-sector participants involved in procurement selected

   i. Open bidding [ ]
   ii. Decision of Commissioner for Agriculture [ ]
   iii. Decision of the Governor [ ]
   iv. Decision of the Minister for FMARD [ ]
   v. Decision of the President [ ]

11. What is the quantity of fertiliser procured from 1999-2015 (tonnes)?

S/N	Year	Tonnes
i.	1999	
ii.	2000	
iii.	2001	
iv.	2002	
v.	2003	
vi.	2004	
vii.	2005	

viii. 2006
ix. 2007
x. 2008
xi. 2009
xii. 2010
xiii. 2011
xiv. 2012
xv. 2013
xvi. 2014
xvii. 2015

12. What is the breakdown of distribution to the 23 local government areas for the same period?

L.G.	Years																
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
Ado																		
Agatu																		
Apa																		
Buruku																		
Gboko																		
Guma																		
Gwer-East																		
Gwer-West																		
Katsina-ala																		
Konshisha																		
Kwande																		
Logo																		
Makurdi																		
Obi																		
Ogbadibo																		
Ohimini																		
Oju																		
Okpokwu																		
Otukpo																		
Tarka																		
Ukum																		
Ushongo																		
Vandeikya																		
Total																		

13. What is/are the source(s) of funding for fertiliser procured yearly?
    1. Official yearly budgetary allocation
    2. Private investment
    3. Foreign aid donation
    4. Proceeds from previous year sales
14. What is the current unit price per 50kg bag of fertiliser? ----------
15. Who fixes the price for fertilisers?
    1. The state ministry of agriculture
    2. Federal ministry of agriculture
    3. Ministry of Finance
    4. BNARDA
    5. State House of Assembly
    6. Fertiliser companies
    7. Fertiliser dealers
16. Why does the government subsidise fertilisers?
    i. Failure of agricultural input markets
    ii. Equity considerations
    iii. To improve access of smallholder farmers to fertilisers
    iv. To increase local food production
    v. To increase political support
17. Nature of subsidy?
    i. Targeted
    ii. Universal
    iii. Partially targeted
18. Who decides the amount of subsidy?
    i. State Ministry of agriculture
    ii. Federal Ministry of agriculture
    iii. Ministry of finance
    iv. State executive council
    v. State House of assembly
19. Is the subsidy constant or varies annually?

i. Constant
ii. Changes every cropping season
iii. Changes in every two cropping seasons
iv. Changes once in three cropping seasons
v. Changes once in five cropping seasons

20. If it varies, what is/are the reason(s) for variation?
i. ----------
ii. ----------
iii. ----------
iv. ----------

21. Is there any budgetary allocation for fertiliser subsidy?
i. Yes
ii. No

22. What is/are the other option(s) put in place to improve farmers' access to fertiliser apart from the subsidy? ----------
---

---

23. Fertiliser extension is listed in the National Fertiliser Policy for Nigeria, 2006 as part of the general extension programme of the government utilising the Training and Visit extension method (T&V). What is covered in the T&V extension?
vii. Train farmers on knowledge of soil types and which fertilisers they require [ ]
viii. Train farmers on knowledge of crop types and which fertilisers they require [ ]

ix. Train farmers on the adequate quantity of fertilisers for different crops and soils [ ]

x. Train farmers on how to identify adulterated fertilisers [ ]

xi. Educate farmers on the need to use fertilisers [ ]

xii. Request for feedback on fertiliser use [ ]

Section two: fertiliser distribution

24. What is your major fertiliser distribution chain(s)?

i. MDA-LGA-farmer [ ]

ii. MDA-farmer [ ]

iii. MDA-Traditional ruler-farmer [ ]

iv. MDA-farmer association-farmer [ ]

v. MDA-MDA-farmer [ ]

25. Who decides on quantity distributed to farmers?

---

26. How are stakeholders in distribution selected?

---

27. Who decides on the timing of distribution?

---

28. Do farmers have any role (s) in distribution?

i. Yes [ ]

ii. No [ ]

29. If yes, what is/ are the role (s)?

---

30. How are target beneficiaries of subsidized fertiliser identified?

---

31. How are they organized for fertiliser distribution?

---

32. How are they reached?

---

33. What are the channels of communication?

---

34. What monitoring mechanisms exist to ensure that fertilisers reach the farmers?

STAFF OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, BENUE STATE (PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY).

S/N	Designation	Number
1	Permanent Secretary	1
2	Director of Agricultural Services	1
3	Divisional Agricultural Officer	23
4	Desk Officer for Fertiliser	1
5	Assistant Desk Officer for Fertiliser	1
6	Desk Officer for Agricultural Loans	1
7	Assistant Desk Officer Agricultural Loans	1
8	Produce Officer	1
9	Improved Seeds Officer	1
10	Desk Officer for Farmers Associations	1
11	Herbicides and Pets Control Officer	1
12	Store Officer	1

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Benue State

In-depth interview questions with former commissioners

1. What was the official policy on fertilizer while you were in office?
2. What was your source of fertilizers?
3. Who decided on the source of fertilizers?
4. What type of fertilizer formulations did you deal in and what were the reasons for their choice?
5. Can you describe the procurement process?
    i. Participating suppliers?
    ii. Criteria for choice of participants?
    iii. Process of selecting suppliers?
    iv. Who decided on participating suppliers?
6. Can you describe the distribution process?
    i. Participants?
    ii. Reasons for choice of participants?
    iii. What was the role of the traditional political institutions in the state eg Tor Tiv, O'chi Idoma, Uter, District heads etc?
7. Was fertilizer subsidy targeted or universal, i.e was it for everybody or small-holder farmers?
8. Would you say farmers had access to fertilizers meant for them?
9. What measures existed to ensure access of small-holder farmers to fertilizer?
10. What measures would you suggest to improve the access of farmers to fertilizer?

In-depth interview questions for participating suppliers of fertiliser.

1. How did you become a supplier of fertiliser to the state government?
2. What role(s) do you perform in distribution?
3. Can you comment on the role of political considerations in the distribution process?
4. From your experience what is the role of the chief executive of the state in the fertiliser procurement and distribution process?
5. Can you describe the process of procurement and distribution of fertilisers under the federal government GES scheme, highlighting your role in the process?
6. What are the challenges you encounter in the process?

APPENDIX 2

Membership of primary and secondary cooperatives in Benue state, selected years

MEMBERSHIP OF PRIMARY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SEX AND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA. 1998

Local Govt Area	Male	Female	Total
Ado	9	8	17
Agatu	15	8	23
Apa	15	5	20
Buruku	73	11	84
Gboko	365	13	378
Guma	13	12	25
Gwer	63	5	68
Gwer-West	24	7	31
Katsina-Ala	48	23	71
Konshisha	69	34	103
Kwande	102	18	120
Logo	16	29	45
Makurdi	501	79	580
Obi	19	20	39
Ogbadibo	31	6	37
Ohimini	35	13	48
Oju	44	7	51
Okpokwu	44	4	48
Otukpo	120	20	140
Tarka	88	16	104
Ukum	31	5	36
Ushongo	59	7	66
Vandeikya	100	9	109
Total	**1889**	**359**	**2243**

MEMBERSHIP OF PRIMARY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SEX AND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA. 1999

Local Govt Area	Male	Female	Total
Ado	13	-	13
Agatu	10	-	10
Apa	21	-	21
Buruku	62	3	65
Gboko	182	7	189
Guma	38	5	43
Gwer	46	4	50
Gwer-West	29	3	32
Katsina-Ala	33	4	37
Konshisha	43	4	47
Kwande	40	-	40
Logo	51	1	52
Makurdi	313	8	321
Obi	19	10	29
Ogbadibo	18	-	18
Ohimini	28	-	28
Oju	10	-	10
Okpokwu	25	1	26
Otukpo	48	2	50
Tarka	24	4	28
Ukum	25	1	26
Ushongo	57	2	59
Vandeikya	109	-	109
Total	**1244**	**59**	**1303**

MEMBERSHIP OF SECONDARY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SEX AND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 1997.

Local Govt Area	Male	Female	Total
Ado	-	-	-
Agatu	-	-	-
Apa	-	-	-
Buruku	1	-	1
Gboko	-	-	-
Guma	-	-	-
Gwer	-	-	-
Gwer-West	1	-	1
Katsina-Ala	-	-	-
Konshisha	-	-	-
Kwande	-	-	-
Logo	-	-	-
Makurdi	-	-	-
Obi	-	-	-
Ogbadibo	-	-	-
Ohimini	-	-	-
Oju	-	1	1
Okpokwu	-	-	-
Otukpo	-	-	-
Tarka	-	-	-
Ukum	-	-	-
Ushongo	-	-	-
Vandeikya	-	3	3
Total	**2**	**4**	**6**

MEMBERSHIP OF SECONDARY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SEX AND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 1999.

Local Govt Area	Male	Female	Total
Ado	-	-	-
Agatu	-	-	-
Apa	-	-	-
Buruku	-	-	1
Gboko	-	-	-
Guma	1	-	1
Gwer	1	-	1
Gwer-West	-	-	1
Katsina-Ala	-	-	-
Konshisha	-	-	-
Kwande	-	-	-
Logo	-	-	-
Makurdi	1	-	1
Obi	-	-	-
Ogbadibo	-	-	-
Ohimini	-	-	-
Oju	-	-	-
Okpokwu	-	-	-
Otukpo	-	-	-
Tarka	-	-	-
Ukum	1	-	1
Ushongo	2	-	2
Vandeikya	-	-	-
Total	**6**	**-**	**6**

MEMBERSHIP OF SECONDARY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY SEX AND BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 1999

Local Govt Area	Male	Female	Total
Ado	-	-	-
Agatu	-	-	-
Apa	-	-	-
Buruku	-	-	1
Gboko	-	-	-
Guma	-	-	-
Gwer	-	-	-
Gwer-West	-	-	-
Katsina-Ala	1	-	1
Konshisha	-	-	-
Kwande	-	-	-
Logo	-	-	-
Makurdi	1	-	1
Obi	-	-	-
Ogbadibo	1	-	1
Ohimini	-	-	-
Oju	-	-	-
Okpokwu	-	-	-
Otukpo	-	-	-
Tarka	1	-	1
Ukum	-	-	-
Ushongo	-	-	-
Vandeikya	1	-	1
Total	**4**	**-**	**4**

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industries, Makurdi, Benue State.

APPENDIX 3

Statistical Analysis

```
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ftl mop ftzprf afp v
    od asf qacsd fod aod ssdzd mp rfnuf rfnaf ooi sicuf afew sx ag ms hhsz edu fmexp
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Frequencies

Notes

Output Created		31-Aug-2021 19:01:03
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Users\DR. CHRIS OGBANJE\Desktop\DR. OGBANJE BACKUP\Documents\MRS ACHIOKO ANALYSIS.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	377
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data.

Syntax		FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=sof mdass pid priocp secocp useofcrps fmsz fmtech sclbr sccap fminc fmasoc fmasocacsftl usftl mop ftzprf afp vod asf qacsd fod aod ssdzd mp rfnuf rfnaf ooi sicuf afew sx ag ms hhsz edu fmexp /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
Resources	Processor Time	00:00:00.000
	Elapsed Time	00:00:00.000

[DataSet1] C:\Users\DR. CHRIS OGBANJE\Desktop\DR. OGBANJE BACKUP\Documents\MRS ACHIOKO ANALYSIS.sav

Statistics

		Identification of sources of fertilisers	Govt MDAs that supply fertiliser	Participants in distribution	Primary occupation	Secondary occupation	Farmers use of crops	Average farm size (ha)	Farming technique	Source of farm labour	Source of capital	Yearly farm incomes	Membership of farming associations	Membership of farm associations and access to fertilisers	Use of chemical fertilisers	Measures of purchase	Fertiliser preferences	Awareness of subsidy policy	Visibility of distribution
N	Valid	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Access to subsidised fertiliser	Quantity accessed	Frequency of distribution	Awareness of distribution	Rating of subsidised fertilisers	Rating of market priced	Reasons for not using fertilisers	Reasons for not accessing fertilisers	Other forms of official interventions	Source of information on correct use of fertilisers	Category of assistance from extension workers	Sex	Age (years)	Marital Status	Household size	Educational status of respondents	Farming experience (years)
377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

Identification of sources of fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Divisional agric office	115	30.5	30.5	30.5
	State Ministry of Agric	43	11.4	11.4	41.9
	Fertiliser dealers and marketers	201	53.3	53.3	95.2
	Farming association/cooperative	18	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Govt MDAs that supply fertiliser

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	State Ministry of Agric	144	38.2	38.2	38.2
	BNARDA	54	14.3	14.3	52.5
	FMARD	21	5.6	5.6	58.1
	Divisional Agric Office	158	41.9	41.9	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Participants in distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agric extension officers	89	23.6	23.6	23.6
	Officials from State Ministry of Agric	85	22.5	22.5	46.2
	Officials from Fed Min of Agric	19	5.0	5.0	51.2
	Officials from BNARDA	41	10.9	10.9	62.1
	Divisional Agric office	53	14.1	14.1	76.1
	Officials of my association/coop	11	2.9	2.9	79.0
	Party officials	56	14.9	14.9	93.9
	Traditional rulers	10	2.7	2.7	96.6
	Fertiliser dealers	13	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Primary occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Farmer	243	64.5	64.5	64.5
	Trader/business owner	11	2.9	2.9	67.4
	Artisan	8	2.1	2.1	69.5
	Farm labourer	3	.8	.8	70.3
	Wage earner	112	29.7	29.7	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Secondary occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Farmer	168	44.6	44.6	44.6
	Trader/business owner	111	29.4	29.4	74.0
	Artisan	7	1.9	1.9	75.9
	Farm labourer	17	4.5	4.5	80.4
	Wage earner	56	14.9	14.9	95.2
	Others	18	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Farmers use of crops

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	For feeding	52	13.8	13.8	13.8
	Feeding/selling	325	86.2	86.2	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Average farm size (ha)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2	173	45.9	45.9	45.9
	3-4	199	52.8	52.8	98.7
	5 and above	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Farming technique

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Manual labour/simple tools	333	88.3	88.3	88.3
	Partly mechanised	42	11.1	11.1	99.5
	Fully mechanised	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Source of farm labour

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Family/household	200	53.1	53.1	53.1
	Hired from within the community	141	37.4	37.4	90.5
	Labourers from other communities	36	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Source of capital

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sale of produce from the farm	219	58.1	58.1	58.1
	Personal savings	116	30.8	30.8	88.9
	Borrow from relations and friends	3	.8	.8	89.7
	Cooperative/bam/adashi	35	9.3	9.3	98.9
	Loans from commercial banks	4	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Yearly farm incomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<200,000	211	56.0	56.0	56.0
	200,000-400,000	75	19.9	19.9	75.9
	401,000-600,000	44	11.7	11.7	87.5
	601,000-800,000	24	6.4	6.4	93.9
	>801,000	23	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Membership of farming associations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AFAN	34	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Commodity Associations	111	29.4	29.4	38.5
	None of the above	232	61.5	61.5	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Membership of farm associations and access to fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	213	56.5	56.5	56.5
	No	164	43.5	43.5	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Use of chemical fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	33	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Some cropping seasons	181	48.0	48.0	56.8
	Every cropping season	163	43.2	43.2	100.0

Use of chemical fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	33	8.8	8.8	8.8
	Some cropping seasons	181	48.0	48.0	56.8
	Every cropping season	163	43.2	43.2	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Measures of purchase

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Buy in bowls	58	15.4	15.4	15.4
	Buy in bags	319	84.6	84.6	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Fertiliser preferences

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NPK	246	65.3	65.3	65.3
	Urea	102	27.1	27.1	92.3
	SSP	7	1.9	1.9	94.2
	Lime fertiliser	8	2.1	2.1	96.3
	Combined formulations	14	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Awareness of subsidy policy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	328	87.0	87.0	87.0
	No	49	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Visibility of distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	320	84.9	84.9	84.9
	No	57	15.1	15.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Access to subsidised fertiliser

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	170	45.1	45.1	45.1
	Some cropping seasons	164	43.5	43.5	88.6
	Every cropping season	43	11.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Quantity accessed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5	260	69.0	69.0	69.0
	6-10	101	26.8	26.8	95.8
	11-15	14	3.7	3.7	99.5
	16+	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Frequency of distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a year	332	88.1	88.1	88.1
	Twice a year	27	7.2	7.2	95.2
	Once in two years	6	1.6	1.6	96.8
	Once in several years	3	.8	.8	97.6
	I don't know	9	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Awareness of distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Radio/TV annoucements/jingles	221	58.6	58.6	58.6
	Town criers/market square	41	10.9	10.9	69.5
	Annoucement in churches	34	9.0	9.0	78.5
	Annoucement in mosques	13	3.4	3.4	82.0
	Extension officers	39	10.3	10.3	92.3
	Annoucement in farm associations	14	3.7	3.7	96.0
	Cell phone text messages	15	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Rating of subsidised fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Affordability	297	78.8	78.8	78.8
	Predictability of supply	12	3.2	3.2	82.0
	Quality	44	11.7	11.7	93.6
	Ease of process	8	2.1	2.1	95.8
	Extension services	16	4.2	4.2	100.0

Rating of subsidised fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Affordability	297	78.8	78.8	78.8
	Predictability of supply	12	3.2	3.2	82.0
	Quality	44	11.7	11.7	93.6
	Ease of process	8	2.1	2.1	95.8
	Extension services	16	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Rating of market priced

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Affordability	41	10.9	10.9	10.9
	Predictability of supply	68	18.0	18.0	28.9
	Quality	17	4.5	4.5	33.4
	Ease of process	251	66.6	66.6	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Reasons for not using fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	My soil does not require fertilisers	9	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Fertiliser makes no difference	4	1.1	1.1	3.4
	I have no money to buy	15	4.0	4.0	7.4
	Fertilisers are too expensive	219	58.1	58.1	65.5
	Fertilisers are not available when I need them	119	31.6	31.6	97.1
	Inadequate supply of fertilisers	11	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Reasons for not accessing fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I do not get to know when it is available	159	42.2	42.2	42.2
	It is only given to a selected people	5	1.3	1.3	43.5
	It is never supplied to adequately meet the demand of all the farmers	124	32.9	32.9	76.4
	It is only prominent politicians and chiefs	81	21.5	21.5	97.9
	It is only members of political parties	2	.5	.5	98.4
	The process is too long and difficult	2	.5	.5	98.9
	I cannot afford even the government fertiliser	4	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Other forms of official interventions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low interest of agriculture credit	89	23.6	23.6	23.6
	Agricultural extension services	99	26.3	26.3	49.9
	Improved seedlings	105	27.9	27.9	77.7
	Storage facilities	42	11.1	11.1	88.9
	Marketing	42	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Source of information on correct use of fertilisers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Taught by parents and guardians	120	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Learnt from cooperative or association of farmers	49	13.0	13.0	44.8
	Trained by agricultural extension agents	104	27.6	27.6	72.4
	Trial and error	2	.5	.5	72.9
	I don't know which fertiliser is good form my crops	102	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Category of assistance from extension workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Knowledge of soil type and fertiliser required	118	31.3	31.3	31.3
	Knowledge of crop type and fertiliser required	76	20.2	20.2	51.5
	Adequate quantity of fertilisers for different crops and soils	73	19.4	19.4	70.8
	How to identify adulterated fertilisers	40	10.6	10.6	81.4
	Information on need to use fertilisers	70	18.6	18.6	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	215	57.0	57.0	57.0
	Female	162	43.0	43.0	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Age (years)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At least 20	70	18.6	18.6	18.6
	21-30	135	35.8	35.8	54.4
	31-40	52	13.8	13.8	68.2
	41 and above	120	31.8	31.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	212	56.2	56.2	56.2
	Married	165	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Household size

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-4	69	18.3	18.3	18.3
	5-8	133	35.3	35.3	53.6
	9-12	59	15.6	15.6	69.2
	13 and above	116	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Educational status of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non formal	68	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Primary	132	35.0	35.0	53.1
	Secondary	64	17.0	17.0	70.0
	Post secondary	113	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	

Farming experience (years)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At least 5	67	17.8	17.8	17.8
	6-10	130	34.5	34.5	52.3
	11-15	60	15.9	15.9	68.2
	16 and above	120	31.8	31.8	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	