



BORDER CLOSURE POLICY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES.

¹Obiorah, Chidozie Beneth PhD. And ²Davies Emmanuel Opuene PhD.

¹Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

²Department of Political Science, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

Abstract: Policy making is one of the responsibilities of the modern governments through which development agenda are initiated. However, every decision taken by any government has its implications which could either be positive or negative depending on the spirit of such decision. Consequently, on 20th August 2019, the Nigerian government, under the administration of President Buhari, came up with the policy of border closure where the country partially closed all its land borders with Benin, Togo, Niger, Cameroon and Chad – citing the irate level of smuggling of goods into the country, especially staple food commodities like rice, cooking (vegetable) oil, poultry, tomato, flour and pasta as her reasons. The closure of Nigeria’s land borders has now been fully consolidated – with further restrictions on import and export of goods through land borders. Arising from the above, there has been an argument and counter-arguments over the implication of the recent policy. Thus, the study generally examined the impacts of the recent (2019) border closure on socioeconomic development in Nigeria. To appraise this, the study adopted Elite Theory to interrogate the implication of this recent policy on economic growth and development. The method of research was anchored on ex-post facto design utilizing qualitative data, and the deductive method of data analysis was adopted. The study revealed that the policy was untimely established by the government and identified some of its implications to include; unprecedented rise in the prices of food/goods, loss of employment/businesses, corruption and increase in smuggling of goods among others. The study recommends that government should revert this policy for the interest of the national economy, take care of the security agents along the border areas and provide the factors that could cushion the effect of border closure before embarking on it.

Keywords: Border Closure, Economic Growth, Socio-economic Development, Unemployment and National Economy.

1.1 Introduction

The Nigeria-Benin-Niger and Cameroon border closure in August 2019 was unexpected and made without any formal communication with government officials of these neighbouring countries. The aim was to stop all movements of goods, except oil, from import to export. The

closure was part of Nigeria’s economic strategy to tackle the smuggling of goods across the border, to increase local production and protect local producers, as outlined in its 2017-2020 Economic and Recovery Growth Plan. Smuggling activities across the Nigerian-Benin border account for about 110 billion naira (\$303,614,300 United States



dollars) in trade revenue loss every year (Liedong, 2019).

Meanwhile, historically, Nigeria lies between latitudes 4° and 14°N and longitudes 2° and 15°E. Nigeria is attributed as possessing a total area of 923,768 km² (356,669 sq mi), making it the world's 32nd-largest country. It shares a 4,047 kilometres (2,515 mi) border with Benin (773 km), Niger (1497 km), Chad (87 km), Cameroon (1690 km), and has a coastline of at least 853 km. Nigeria's claim to territorial sea (offshore space) rose from 3 miles of continental shelf and about 200 miles on exclusive fishing zones from 1958 to 1978 as a country signatory to conventions on continental shelf despite its inability to determine its extent of claim (Prescott, 1975).

However, smuggling is nothing new along these borders, with historical roots from British and French colonial authorities, when colonial rivals implemented trade policies to protect local industries from external competition, which exacerbated illicit trade activities across the border. Activating a prolonged trade restriction to solve the recurring issue of smuggling will have a negative economic effect on Nigeria and puts a damper on Africa's much-anticipated intra-regional trade investment agreement, the African Continental Free Trade Area, known as AFCFTA, slated to begin in July 2020. It is to be noted that Nigeria recently joined and signed compact with African Continental Free Trade aimed at increasing GDP of African members. However, Nigeria acted just three months after it had signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. With 55 member countries, a combined GDP of \$2.4 trillion and a total population of 1.2 billion, the agreement will create the world's largest free trade

area. Its aim is to promote intra-Africa trade, which is abysmally low at 16% (Tahiru, 2019).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) projected to add a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$3.4 trillion USD to Africa's economy — focuses on creating a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business, persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African Customs Union. It also intends to expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation. The border closure has spiked food prices, causing inflation to increase to 11.24 percent, the highest level since June 2019, and it is expected to rise even higher if continued. Presently, Nigeria produces about 6.9 million metric tons of rice annually, but the country has to import rice worth \$4 billion USD to meet the rising consumer demand.

By and large, Nigeria's 2017 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan aimed at deepening investments in agriculture and increase the sector's contribution to economic growth from 5% in 2017 to 8.4% by 2020. The idea is to revive domestic farming and save on food imports (over \$22 billion a year). It is this national plan that precipitated the border closure. The government wants to protect domestic farmers from cheap imported foodstuff. While Nigerian rice farmers are happy about their government's actions, there are concerns about whether domestic food production can meet domestic demand. In 2017, demand for rice in Nigeria reached 6.7 million tons, almost double the 3.7 million tons produced domestically and this has presently led to unprecedented hardship among Nigerian citizen as the border closure has led to



hike in prices of food particularly rice. For instance, since the border closure, the price of a 50 kilogram bag of rice has increased from 9,000 naira to 30,000 naira while local rice has risen from 5,000 naira to 26,000 which is, extremely hard for the poor masses to afford (Tahiru, 2019).

Consequently, it is against this backdrop that this study interrogates the impacts of the recent land border closure policy on socio-economic development with a view of bringing out the challenges and prospects therein.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Elite Theory:

The framework of analysis is anchored on Elite Theory of the state. The theory was adopted because of its explanatory adequacy to study the state's policy making. Elite theory's origins lie most clearly in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Robert Michels (1876-1936). Other classical elite theorists are C.Wright Mills, John Porter, Lowell Field and John Higley among others.

Although the elite profounders have their different route of reaching their destination, but their central point remain the same. The theorists have sought to prove that there may exist in any society a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society". According to them, every society is ruled by a minority that possesses the qualities necessary for its succession to full social and political power against the majority group of the masses. Thus, the theory contends that the society is divided into two groups – those who have power and those who do not. The theory reflects the pluralist view concerning the distribution of power in the society. Consequently, they further argued that it is possible to divide the population into two broad categories; the first

category according to him are those who excel at whatever task they have undertaken while the second category, 'the majority', would be those whose performance we would consider "average". In other words, he categorized them as the governing elites and non-governing elites.

Finally they also contend that in all societies – from societies that are very meagerly developed and have barely attained the dawning of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies – two classes of people exists; a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always few, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism. In a nut shell, they categorized them as thus; "the ruling class and class that is ruled".

Assumptions of the Elite Theory

Dye (1987), identified the assumptions of the elite theory as thus:

- The society is divided into two unequal parts – a few who have power and many who do not.
- Only a small number of persons allocate value to the society – the masses do not decide public policy.
- The few who govern are not typical of the masses that are governed. Elites are drawn in appropriately from the upper socio-economic strata of the society.
- Non-elites movement to the elite's position must be slow and continuous in order to maintain stability and avoid resolution. Only



non-elites who have acquired and accepted basic elite consensus can be enlisted into governing aids.

- e. Elite share a consensus on the basic values of the social system and the preservation of the system.
- f. Public policy does not reflect the demands of the masses but rather the prevailing values and preferences of the elite. Changes in society are usually incremental rather than revolutionary in order not to alter the status quo.
- g. Active elites are subject to relatively little direct influence from apathetic masses. Elites influence masses more than masses influence elites.

The above assumptions of the elite theory clearly implied that changes and innovations in public policy are the result of definitions and redefinitions by elites of their own values. Thus, public policy follows downward from the elite to the masses.

Generally, the theory recognizes “elites” as the organizing category for exercising power in the society. Those who excel in whatever they do and control the ownership of the means of production constituted themselves into the ruling or dominant class. In doing so, the rest of the society (the masses) is compelled to obey and toil under the leadership and control of the elites. The ruling class especially the type we have in Nigeria resorts to exploitation of the dependent class through several policies and programmes that they may be targeted towards achieving very little but more to their own personal interest. The implication is that it is in the interest of the elite class to maintain the existing social lack, exploitation, and poverty of the dependent class to avoid being challenged through excessive circulation of the elite. Indeed,

the elites who mainly control the means of social production, distribution and exchange in a capitalist state like Nigeria are firmly entrenched through several measures to deprive the “majority ruled class” of the opportunity to move from their lower class to the upper class to avoid confronting them. However, the poor masses are being deceived by these hollow policies that in the end bring very little or no positive results in their lives. The implication of the elite theory is that public policies do not reflect the demands of the people contrary to David Easton’s input-output analysis. Therefore, public policy or policy outputs constitute the preferences and value of the ruling elite in every society. Thus, elitism views the masses as largely passive, apathetic and ill-informed; mass sentiments therefore, are more often manipulated by the sentiments of the elites; and for the most part, communication between elites and masses flows downward.

Thus, looking at the public policies in Nigeria, we see clearly a situation where government efforts, in terms of policy making and implementation, seem to be continually made with little or no results. Governments usually formulate and implement policies without involving or seeking for the opinion of the people they make these policies for in order to give them an ample opportunity to make an input. This can be attested to the failure of numerous public policies in Nigeria, hence poverty and underdevelopment. It is in the same spirit that the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has ordered the closure of land borders across the bordering states in Nigeria without considering the feelings and livelihood of the border communities whose major source of living depends on businesses being done on the border areas.



In sum, the problem of the elite theory is that it is conservative and tends to defend the status quo. According to Dahl (1995), the theory is a mere attempt to divide the society into two classes. Irrespective of this problem, the elite theory stands most germane in explanation of this study because the elites dominate and determine the course and direction of national decisions. Consequently, the masses are usually helpless and powerless since policy choices are defined and determined by the elites.

3.1 Methodology

The study employs ex-post facto design approach designed to gather study's data qualitatively. However, data generated through secondary sources included textbooks, journals, government publications, internet sources among others which help to elicit useful information for the study. Analysis is made from the inferences drawn from the extant literature. Thus, deductive analysis was deployed to analyze the study's data.

4.1 Conceptual Explications

4.1.1 Border Closure

There is not a coherent or unified body of theory explaining border relations and dynamics, therefore most of the theoretical work on borders draws from different disciplines such as geography, international relations, political economy, economics, public administration, etc. and our work is not the exception. Most studies of international relations traditionally use borders as a proxy for geographic proximity, typically as a control variable, to explain conflict and war (Starr and Thomas 2005).

The degree to which borders between two states are officially open or closed relates to their historical context, level of economic integration or dependence, and other more localized border

factors, such as urban settlements and categorizations of border populations living in border regions. Our approach thus incorporates social, economic, and political dimensions, as suggested by the work of Oscar (1994), who conceptualizes borderlands classified by four categories. Closed borders reflect hostility between two states and there is little movement across the international boundary (e.g. North and South Korea, India and Pakistan, and East and West Germany before unification). When tensions have lifted but relations are not close, states may share a co-existent borderland (e.g. Iran and Iraq; Greece and Turkey). If states share warmer relations at a higher level of interaction, then they may share either an interdependent (e.g. US–Mexico) or integrated borderland (e.g. European Union). The difference between the last two categories is that the quantity and quality of movement of people and goods is deeper and official most overtly between two states in the latter type.

We assume that the free movement of people across state boundaries is related to friendlier relations and varying levels of integration. Thus, documentation requirements, a panoptical filter, capture the tradeoff of the potential benefits from bilateral economic interactions and the costs of associated with maintaining national security. We treat entry requirements as an ordinal category rather than as a dichotomy. The most closed states may prevent entrance altogether or at least impose stricter threshold filters and demand both a passport and a visa. We should expect this of states in the closed and coexistent border categories. The requirement of visas is typical to at least gain special permission or government review to enter the most closed states. For this reason, the most



isolated states are not specifically conceptualized as special cases.

Borders may not be just demarcated zones or containers separating peoples but instead spaces shared by a political community. Socially and economically, people may be informally integrated by varying degrees without the explicit plan of their national governments. Such residents will likely put pressure on their own state governments not to invoke policies that disrupt localized interactions (Ajayi, 2006).

In other words, the cross-border flows (i.e. flows whose origin and destination are local) may be more important than bi-national flows that do not need a border location and are ubiquitous (Charisma, 1998). We earlier hypothesized that a higher income state would be more closed to its lower income neighboring state; therefore, the greater the differential of development between neighboring states the more closed will be the richer to the poorer. However, the degree of restriction can be mitigated by the weight border regions have in the respective national economies; the presence of urban settlements or cities within borderlands should capture the weight or importance of border regions. Urban settlements at the borders shift policy from abstract constructs, such as “national security” or “national interest,” to concrete interactions such as trade, investment, and environment that take place in a real time and space. In summary, the geographical adjacency of structural differences (Charisma, 1998) creates an arbitrage economy that intensifies flows of goods and people in both directions, making the richer state in a dyad slightly more open to its poorer neighbor than otherwise would be the case.

However, Nigeria’s 2017 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan aimed to deepen investments in

agriculture and increase the sector’s contribution to economic growth from 5% in 2017 to 8.4% by 2020. The idea is to revive domestic farming and save on food imports (over \$22 billion a year). It is this national plan that precipitated the border closure. The government wants to protect domestic farmers from cheap imported foodstuff. While Nigerian rice farmers are happy about their government’s actions, there are concerns about whether domestic food production can meet domestic demand. In 2017, the demand for rice in Nigeria reached 6.7 million tons, almost double the 3.7 million tons produced domestically, and this shortage has the potential of plunging Nigeria into food crises that can lead to degeneration of the country (Unah, 2019).

By and large, Borno through its 12 official borders has about 440, 800 traders who transacting across the borders. Jigawa through Maigatari border has about 20, 630 traders while Katsina with 9 official borders has about 185, 730 traders who were cross border traders across boundary. On the other hand, Kebbi has 7 official borders whereby about 280 000 traders engaged in cross border trading. Sokoto state in its 3 official borders has about 60 000 traders across borders while Yobe state through 4 borders estimated to be having 220, 000 traders across borders which made the estimate to the tune of 1, 207, 160 across the Nigeria – Niger Border. This is quite huge individuals trading across the international boundary. Thus, when a border is closed many individuals will lose their jobs. For instance, closing the Nigeria – Niger Border will cause about one Million people to lose their jobs (Gordon, Moore, Park & Richardson: 2009).



Finally, the researchers see Border Closure as the policy of the government meant to stop or checkmate the movement of goods and services across the borderlines or boundaries of one country and another. It is therefore on the interest of the national government to restrict these movements or close its borders in order to encourage home production/ goods and services. But the fact remains that such national government must create a conducive environment to cushion the effect of border closure on its citizens before such policy is embarked upon, otherwise, the pains of such policy will surpass its gains and therefore expose the citizens and the economy to an untold hardship in the country.

4.1.2 Development

Rodney (1972) explains that development implies "increasing capacity to regulate internal and external relationships". As he further points out, that development is many sided or multinational process. For the individuals, he opines that it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well-being. By this definition I believe that development starts from the individuals. It is when the inhabitants of a state are developed that the country can be developed. So it is essential for the people to develop so that it can reflect on their environment and nation.

Rostow (1971) explains development as a process of evolutionary succession in stages, where human societies leave a rudimentary model until they arrive at a western industrialized civilization consumption model, which is considered unique and universal. To Perroux (1978), defines development as "the combination of mental and social changes among the population which decide to increase its real and global products,

cumulatively and in sustainable manner." According to Drewnowski "development is a process of qualitative change and quantitative growth of the social and economic reality which we can call either society or economy.

According to Mabogunje (1980)", there are four main ways in which the term development has been used: development as economic growth, as modernization, as distributional justice and as socio-economic transformation. He argues for a long time following the Second World War, development was seen simply as economic growth, it implied a rapid rise in per capita productivity and a changed in economic structure. Mabogunje (1980) goes on to distinguish between 'development and modernization', the latter being seen as the social transformation of a nation. This is second way in which the world 'development' has been used. It still in sense of economic growth came to be seen as part of a much wider process of social change described as modernization.

4.1.3 Socio-Economic Development

Although there are limited scholarly definitions on the concept of socio-economic development, an attempt was made to give an understanding of what the concept is all about. Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors are also, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society.

Socio-economic development is considered a key concept central to any problem of change in the socio-economic sphere. Its significance is aptly expressed by Tayebwa, (1992) who states that



“the concept of development functions as both, a product of an optimistic vision and an articulation of social interests, and a tool of analysis”. In principle, the concept of development rests on that of change. Change is a transition from one state of affairs to another. In this approach, development can be defined as a series of changes characterized by such properties as irreversibility, spontaneity, and a monotonic character and directionality (Chojnicki, 1989). Without going into the details of those properties, or formulating any basic (ontological) definition of development, I shall pass on to a characterization of socio-economic development, but still keeping in mind the fundamental sense of development. The definition of socio-economic development as a series of changes involves stating what characterizes those changes and what determines them. In other words, we have to determine what changes count as socio-economic development. To present the specific nature of socio-economic development, we must refer to the character of processes and goals of changes making up this type of development, since there is much arbitrariness in understanding and using them effectively. The concept of socio-economic development can also be seen as activities involving both social and economic factors which result in the growth of the economic and societal progress and is measurable in both economic and social terms e.g. growth in the number of jobs created and reduction in the level of poverty etc. Socio-economic development like development emphasizes progress in terms of economic and social factor within a geographical unit. Economic development is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Social development on the other hand

refers to the complexity of social dynamic (the interplay of social structures, processes and relationships) and focused on the following: the social concerns of the people as objectives of development.

People-centered, participatory approach to social development is about inclusiveness, social justice and the common good. Indicators of social development provide comparative information about areas such as income, poverty, employment, employment security, education, health, crime and civic participation.

5.1 Impact of Border Closure on Nigeria’s Socio-Economic Development: Challenges and Prospects.

The recent closure of borders, by President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration, across Nigerian land borders has both positive and negative impact on the socio-economic development of the country and the researchers critically analysed these factor on two subheadings as follows;

5.1.1 Challenges of the Border Closure Policy in Nigeria.

- Violation of African Continental Free Trade Agreement among AU.

Nigeria acted just three months after it had signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. With 55 member countries, a combined GDP of \$2.4 trillion and a total population of 1.2 billion, the agreement will create the world’s largest free trade area (Tahiru, 2019). Its aim is to promote intra-African trade, which is abysmally low at 16%. To restrict trade flows so shortly after this momentous agreement is a major blow to integration efforts in Africa. It also shows how unprepared African countries might be for free trade. It’s hard to see how the free trade deal can



increase intra-Africa trade to 60% by 2022, as projected, when it is being undermined from the start. In other words, the border closure policy will not only affect Nigeria, but also the entire African nations that are still managing to come out of poverty many of its members have found themselves.

➤ **Low Flow of Foreign Direct Investment**

Foreign investment inflow, particularly foreign direct investment (FDI) is perceived to have a positive impact on economic growth of a host country through various direct and indirect channels. It augments domestic investment, which is crucial to the attainment of sustained growth and development. Thus, when borders are closed it disrupts the smooth flow of FDI. Moreover, the volatile policy of border land closure is not favourable to investors who have invested huge amount of money which takes long time to become profitable. A good example is for those who invested in Agriculture, Machinery, Storage or Transport Facilities which require amortisation over long period of years. Hence, the closure disrupts these kinds of investments especially if the said investments were meant for Cross Border Trade. The policy is by this reason a disruptive one.

➤ **Increase in Illegal smuggling of goods**

Nigeria has porous borders, and therefore, the government's policy on border closure has helped to escalate the smuggling of goods into Nigeria markets and thereby leading traders to escape excise duties and tariffs and fuel illegal smuggling. To reduce fuel smuggling, customs officials last month banned the supply of petroleum products to filling stations within 20km of the borders. Perhaps, Nigeria is losing millions of naira to smugglers who do not pay various taxes they

supposed to pay to the government. A friend was narrating his experience over this recent border closure imposed precisely at Seme Border. According to him, "Nigeria is shooting itself on the leg by this border closure and further argued that Nigerian government has opened a large means of money making to the security agents attached to these borders. According to him, once it is mid night the security agents will collect money from the prospective merchants and open the borders for them to pass. They will continue this till early in the morning and they will now close the borders again". Thus, these are the monies that are supposed to be paid to the government for common good of the people.

The recent inflation report released by the National Bureau of Statistics also revealed that Nigeria's inflation rate rose by 11.61% year on year in October 2019, the highest in about 18 months. The rise was largely attributed to an increase in the cost of food items following the closure of the borders to cheaper imported goods.

➤ **Increase in Inflation Rate**

Since the border closure announcement and its immediate implementation in August, inflation has been on the rise. For instance, the latest consumer price index (CPI) report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in November 2019 proved that the year-on-year food inflation rate increased from 13.2% in August 2019 to 13.51% in September 2019 and then from 13.51% in September 2019 to 14.09% in October 2019. This was a 1.33% month-on-month increase – with rice, poultry products, frozen fish, cooking oil/fats and bread/cereals recording the highest increase in cost prices nationally. The rise was largely attributed to an increase in the cost of food items following the closure of the borders to cheaper imported goods.



Moreover, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that local demand for rice in Nigeria alone is at 7.3 million metric tonnes. Currently, local production stands at 4.8 million metric tonnes yearly (Abia, 2019). This suggests that the inability of domestic supply to meet local food demand will cause an inflation of food prices when and if food imports are proscribed.

➤ **Loss of Job and Employment Among the Border Communities**

Another major disadvantage border closure is the loss of job/employment among the host communities. This is because border closure policy has negative effects on informal trade that take place across the land borders. It is almost impossible to estimate the value and volume of the informal trade that takes place across the land border since there is no available data but without doubt, this will run into several millions of naira on a daily basis providing several thousand with a daily means of livelihood. The importance of this informal trade must not be underestimated as it is the major source of funds for many and the Federal Government is not able to provide enough jobs or opportunities to reduce the adverse effect of the land border closure.

➤ **Increase in Prices of Staple Foods**

Another challenge of the land border closure on socio-economic development include increase in the price of staple foods in Nigeria especially rice which is one of the most popular foods in the country. It is a known fact that many states in Nigeria are yet to implement the minimum wage for workers and any increase in staples or any other product for that matter will make many Nigerians worse off. Even where the minimum

wage has been implemented, it is unfortunate that the #30,000 minimum wage is not even capable of taken home a bag of rice presently in Nigeria let alone other fundamental human needs. Also, local farmers were not particularly ready for the sudden increase in demand that came about as a result of the land border closure and have not been able to react fast enough to take advantage of it.

5.1.2 Prospects of the Policy of Border Closure

➤ **Government Savings.**

The border closure which began in August, 2019 has noticed a remarkable achievement in terms of saving from huge amount of U.S. Dollars spent on subsidy by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Ghins and Heinrigs (2019), stated that it has been recorded that 20 % decrease in fuel imports which reduced the Nigerian state's hefty fuel subsidy bill. In addition to the above, Bouillon (2019) pointed out that the sales of gasoline alone in Nigeria ha fell by 12.7 %after the border closure. This by extension indicated that, Millions of subsidized litres are being secretly smuggled and taken abroad for resale at the Neighbouring countries of Nigeria. Thus, the reduction in consumption, if triumphantly sustained could lead to subsidy savings of about N13.5 billion naira equivalent to \$37 million U.S. Dollars monthly and N162.1 billion naira annually which is equivalent to \$444 million U.S. Dollars (Bouillon, 2019).

Moreover, Suppliers of nationally produced goods and other agricultural related commodities have recorded huge patronage and higher profit from the local processing and milling companies. This positive and remarkable achievement was as a result of border closure which prevented smuggling and import of Rice and Agro Allied Chemicals and other Agricultural tools and inputs.



- Increase in home production of rice and other staple foods in Nigeria.

Indeed, the border closure has positively helped the local rice millers in all states of the federation and Nigeria markets are full of local rice produced in Nigeria. Not only that, the border closure has made a significant progress with regards to the value chain of rice production particularly on Production, Processing, Packaging, Marketing and Storage of both processed rice and paddy ones. The aforementioned positive impact especially the improved value chain or value addition has kept the local farmers functional, the indigenous Rice Mills more operational which compel those Rice Mills to employ more teeming unemployed youth thereby increasing the living standard of those employed youth in the Rice Mills and related industries.

6.1 Conclusion and Recommendation

- Conclusion

With Nigerians already feeling the negative consequences of the land border closure – rising food inflation which in turn is reducing their relative purchasing power, it is important for government to rethink its border policy as it doesn't sufficiently address the causal factors for irate smuggling and dwindling national productivity in the country. Indeed, corruption and economic sabotage are the major factors responsible for porosity of Nigerian borders. Government needs to tackle the cause of a disease rather than treating the symptoms. Thus, the policy has caused about 1, 207,160 cross border traders in Nigeria to lose their jobs of trading across borders. This led to the high rate of unemployment, poverty and crime rates among the youth and the general public who lost their means of earning a living.

- Recommendations.

By and large, the study recommends that Nigerian government needs to strengthen its border by increasing the capacity of border agents to do their job well and enforce laws and regulations effectively. This requires professionalising staff, motivating them well through improved salary structure, creating systems of accountability that discourage corruption among border officials and pushing for the implementation of a common external tariff among ECOWAS states. This would likely lead to a better outcome than the short-sighted reaction of border closing, and instead it would lead to a better long-term outcome and strengthen AU agreements on free trade.

Finally, the study also recommends that, if the government must close its borders, it should encourage mechanized agricultural production, provide adequate security for farmers, embark on indigenization policy and of course, create a conducive and enabling environment for the local and foreign productions (businesses) to thrive in order to cushion the adverse effect of border closure that must be witnessed, so as to encourage socio-economic development in Nigeria.

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