ABSTRACT

Agriculture has been the mainstay of Nigeria’s rural economy. Food production and consumption started as a routine human activity. At a later stage, government got involved through provision of new agricultural inputs, collection, and redistribution of agricultural outputs, especially the staple foods such as grains, mainly millet, corn, and rice. The chapter explores various interventions in the areas of cultivation, processing, and distribution of food in the state. Historical method of enquiry is applied in the process of collection of materials and documenting this chapter. The findings of the chapter show that the state government has some degree of control on the production and distribution of food in the state. Technology boosts output and creates employment. Food products from Kebbi State are transported to many states in Nigeria, including a collaboration with a particular state in the southern part of the country. Thus, food production and distribution in the state is contributing to the national economy.
INTRODUCTION

Kebbi State was created on the 27th of August 1991. It was carved out of the former Sokoto State. Kebbi State lies between Latitude 10°N, Longitude 30°N, covering the south western part of the former Sokoto State. The state shares common borders with Niger and Benin Republics, both French speaking West African countries on its north-west boundary. The land mass covered by the state is about 36,229 square kilometres representing 3.92% of Nigeria’s total landmass of mainly tropical Savannah. The vegetation which comprises few trees of medium height dotted here and there provides good habitat for a variety of wild life and other animals (Official Dairy, 1999, pp. 1).

Agriculture has been the mainstay of rural economies in Nigeria, Kebbi State inclusive. The history of agriculture in Nigerian area is as old as the period when man settled after the period of collection of wild fruits and vegetables. Food production started as routine human activity but government involvement in agriculture led to its provision of farm inputs to farmers in form of loans. In the process of repayment, government also got involved in the collection and redistribution of agricultural outputs especially grains such as sorghum and rice. The agricultural produce available in commercial quantities in Kebbi State are: groundnut-*arachis hypogaea*, gum arabic-*acacia polycantha*, fruits like mango-*modifera indica*, guava-*psidium guajava*, pawpaw, banana, cashew-*grahamii*, sugarcane-*saccharum officinarum*, vegetables (tomatoes, onions, garlic, spinach), rice-*oryza glaberrima*, wheat-*triticum aestivum*, beans-*lablab niger*, etc. Other available produce in the state are soya beans-*lablab niger/cajanus cajan* and ginger-*alramom melegu*. There is cotton-*gossypium* which has a high demand within and outside the state. A lot of tree crops are also available in the state, they are sheanut-*vetellaria paradoxa*, thorn tree called *bagarwua in Hausa* language-*acacia nitotica*, (its seeds are used for tanning), baobab, locust bean tree-*adansonia digitata* for preparation of soup seasoning called *daddawa* in Hausa, as well as many other economic trees. This chapter focused more on rice production and processing.

According to the 2006 census, Kebbi State has a population of three million and two hundred thousand (3,200,000) persons, consisting of diverse ethnic and tribal groups.

In 2006, the state had a population of 3,238,626. The last known population is 3,802,500 (year 2011). This was 2.322% of total Nigeria population. Kebbi population density was 103.3 p/km². If population growth rate would be same as in period 2006–2011 (+3.15%/year), the population of Kebbi in 2019 is estimated to be 4,872,698 (City Population, n.d). The population is distributed across four Emirates namely; Gwandu, Argungu, Yauri, and Zuru. The state is made up of twenty-one Local Government Areas. The major ethnic cum tribal groups are; Hausa, Fulani,
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