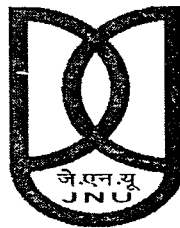


POLITICS OF FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER (1960-2005)

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	:	African Carribean and Pacific Countries
AEC	:	African Economic Community
AEF	:	Federation of French Equatorial Africa
AFC	:	Alliance des Forces de Changement
AFDS	:	Alliance des Forces Democratique et Sociales
AFN	:	Association des Femmes Nigerien
AFPLAN	:	Regional Food Plan for Africa
AN	:	Assemblee Nationalee
AOF	:	French West African Federation
AU	:	African Union
BP	:	Bureau Politique
CCA/UNDAF	:	Common Country Assessment under the UN
CD	:	Conseils de Developpement
CDF/PRSP	:	Comprehensive Development Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
CENI	:	Commission Electorale Nationale Independante
CILSS	:	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CM	:	Conseil des Ministress
CMS	:	Conseil Militaire Supreme
CNCA	:	National Bank for Agricultural Credit
CND	:	Conseil National de Developpement
CRA	:	Coordination of Armed Resistance
CRN	:	Conseil de Reconciliation Nationale
CSN	:	Conseil de Salute National Developpement
DNPGCA	:	Food Crisis Prevention and Mitigation Mechanism
EC	:	European Commission
ECOWAS	:	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	:	European Development Fund
EEC	:	European Economic Community
EU	:	European Union

FAO	:	Food and Agricultural Organization
FARA	:	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FIDES	:	Fonds d' Investissement Pour le Developpement Economique et Social
FLAA	:	Liberation de l' Air et de' Azawak Framework
FRDD	:	Front Pour la Restauration
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	:	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HKI	:	Helen Keller International
IFIs	:	International Financial Institutions
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
LPA	:	Lagos Plan of Action
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
MNSD	:	Mouvement National de la Societe de Developpement
MSA	:	Mouvement Socialist Africa
NEPAD	:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	:	Non Governmental Organizations
NIGETIP	:	The Agence Nigerienne de Travaux d' Interet <i>Public Pour l' Emploi</i>
NNJC	:	Nigerien-Nigerian Joint Commission
NNMB	:	Northern Nigeria Marketing Board
OALAN	:	Office du Lalit du Niger
OAU	:	Organization of African Unity
ODA	:	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and
OFEDES	:	Office de l' Expotation des Eaux du Sous-Sol
OPEC	:	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPVN	:	Office des Produits Virriers Nigeriens
PNDS	:	Parti Nigerien Pour la Democratique et le Progress Social
PNLCP	:	National Framework Program to Combat Poverty
PPN	:	Parti Progressiste Nigerien
PRS	:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RDA	:	Rassemblement Democratiqu African
RINI	:	Riz du Niger

SAP	:	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAWC	:	Sahel and West African Club
SIP	:	Societies Indigenous de Prenoyances
SNCP	:	Societe Nigrienne de Collection de aures de Peaux
SONARA	:	Societe Nigrienne de Commercialisation d' Arachide
SONERAN	:	Societe Nigrienne d' Exportation des Ressources Animales
SONITAN	:	Societe Nigerinne de Tammerie
SPFS	:	Special Programme for Food Security
SSA	:	Sub Saharan Africa
SSC	:	South South Cooperation
TSCI	:	Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative
UCFA	:	Union Pour la Communauté France Africaine
UDN	:	Union Democratique Nigerienne
UDSR	:	Union Democratique et Social de la Ressistance
UNCC	:	Union Nationale de Credit et de Co-operation
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Programme
UNICEF	:	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRRA	:	UN Relief's and Rehabilitation Administration
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
USTN	:	Union des Syndicates des Travailleurs du Niger
VAT	:	Value Added Tax
VSCN	:	Union des Syndicates Confederation du Niger
WARP	:	West African Regional Programme
WFP	:	World Food Programme
WTO	:	World Trade Organization

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PREFACE

The Research provides a comprehensive study of political aspects of food crisis in Niger. The devastating food crisis that overtook Niger in recent years brought into sharp focus the existing political scenario in the country. The relationship of politics and food crisis has been defining feature since colonial period. Niger, the second poorest country on the human development scale is facing continuously enormous challenge of food insecurity in the 21st century. Though, the food crisis attributed to the natural disadvantages, poverty, population growth, drought and desert locust, the in-depth study to the crisis might have different conclusion. An attempt has been made to understand food crisis from the political perspectives.

In the colonial period, political powers were confined to alien class mostly being city dwelling European administrators. With the attainment of independence, the European regime colonial power had handed over the power to the new class of urban and ethnic based political leaders who were hostile to the rural oriented developmental policies and focused on the elite services. Therefore, the short term interest of these groups may be enough by itself to prevent the formulation and implementations of rural policies reform needed to guarantee economic growth. The *Coup d' etat* in Niger had further deepen the problem of food crisis as it resulted in termination of aid and assistance from the international community. In the present context, the problem of food crisis can be related to the existence of dual land law system, gender biased policies, administrative incapacibilities of distributing food aid with poor infrastructural facilities and corruption. Therefore, an attempt is made to analyze the food crisis in the context of political development in Niger.

The study is organized in four chapters. Chapter-I provides an overview of Niger providing the basic information of the country. In the second part of the chapter, an attempt has been made to understand food crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa from different perspectives. Chapter-II an attempt has been made to analyze the colonial history of

Niger to find out the possible link between the political set up and the food crisis in the country. It also analyzes the responses of French colony in the food crisis of Niger Chapter-III takes up the food crisis in Niger from 1960 to 2005 from the political perspectives, it focuses on the relevant political regimes and their capabilities/in capabilities in dealing with the problem of food crisis. It also looks into the aspects of political development and the degree of decentralization of power, which are crucial in achieving the goal of food sufficiency. Chapter-IV looks at the different challenges that Niger faces in achieving food security, it makes a critical analysis of governmental and non-governmental organizations. It looks at all sort of issues- Gender, Land tenure, and implications of Nigerian economy with respect to food security. The chapter also briefly deals with food aid policies of donor agencies and analyzes their role in implementing the policies and programmes in Niger.

In the end based on the arguments of the study the prospects of political implication in attending food self sufficiency is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

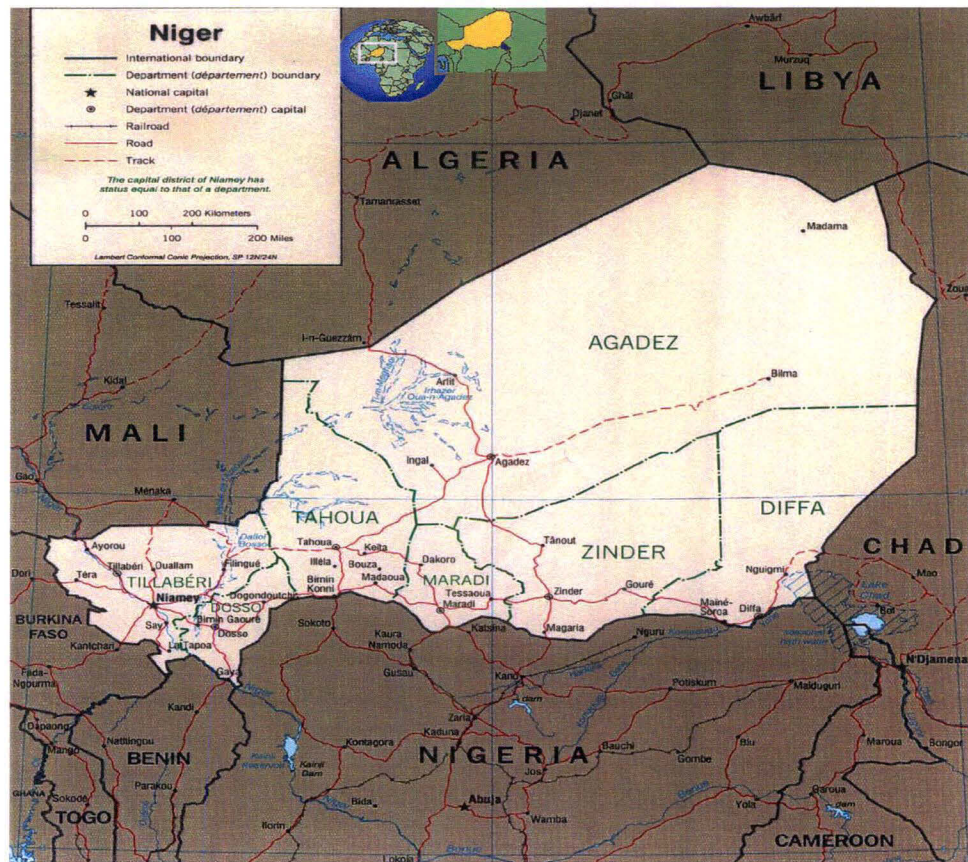
CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Geographical, Demographic and Economic Background of Niger:

Republic of Niger, the former French colony located in central West Africa with an area of 1,267,000sq.km (489,191 sq. miles), of which more than 60% is covered by the Sahara desert. Niger being landlocked is bounded in the north by Algeria and Libya, South by Nigeria, west by Mali, southwest by Benin and Burkina Faso and east by Chad. The Niger Republic has acquired its independence from France on August 3rd, 1960. The administrative organization of Niger is divided into seven administrative regional departments and thirty-five districts and its capital city, located on the South bank of Niger River, is Niamey¹. The seven regional departments are Agadez, Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabery and Zinder, is being administered by a Prefect. Further, departments are subdivided into districts are headed by a sub-prefect.

MAP OF NIGER²



¹ Ousseinia, Alidou (2003), "Niger" in Tripp, Aili Mari (ed.) *The Greenwood encyclopedia of women's issue worldwide-of sub Saharan Africa*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, p. 295.

² Accessed on 15th March, 2006, URL: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/niger-2000-pol-jpg.

Niger's population is estimated by UN to be 13,499,000 at mid-2004 with a density of 10.7 persons per sq. km³. Of the overall population, 50.4% are Nigerien women, of whom 42 % are between fifteen and forty two years old. In Niger, life expectancy is 47 years. The climate of Niger is similar to that of other hot, dry lands of West Africa. It has mainly dry climate with considerable temperature variations. Precipitation determines the geographical division into a southern zone of agriculture, a central zone of pasturage and desert-like Northern zones. Rainfall in no place exceeds 32 inches and even falls to below 4 inches over almost half the country⁴.

Although a small portion of Niger's land is capable of supporting settled farming, agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing contributed an estimated 39.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2003 and accounted for some 87.3% of the working population in 2002⁵. Principle staple products are millet, sorghum, and cassava, all grown mainly for household consumption with cowpeas, cotton, groundnut and onions. Livestock rearing are concentrated in the western, southern and effective northern limit generally 15⁰N except for Air and its confines with account for 13% of GDP in 2003⁶. Cattles are the significant export item in terms of foreign exchange earnings after uranium with an estimation of earning 17.5% in 2003. Cattle breeding is the most important activity of the nomadic population. The main livestock's are cattle, sheep, goats and dromedaries.

However, the mining and export of uranium plays a very significant role in Niger's economy, representing a steady source of budgetary revenue and providing most of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Niger ranks third among the world's principal producers of uranium accounting about one-tenth of total output. Continuous efforts are being also made by the successive governments to encourage the development of the country's other mineral resources which include cassiterite, coal, phosphates, iron-ore, gold and petroleum.

³ Church, R.J (2005), Niger: Physical and social geography in Frame, Iain and Murison, K. (ed.), Africa south of the Saharan, 2006, Europa publication, London, p. 846.

⁴ Accessed on, 19th December, 2005 URL: www.nigerembassyusa.org/profile.html.

⁵ Hodkinson, E. (2004), Niger Economy in Frame, Iain and Murison, K. (ed.), Africa south of the Saharan, 2005, Europa publication, London, p. 823.

⁶ *ibid.*, p.824.

In the manufacturing sector, the efforts were made to industrialize. Basically, manufacturing in Niger is limited to agricultural processing and import substitution which contributed about 6.6% to GDP in 2003⁷. Activity in this sector remains predominantly small-scale and artisanal based on local inputs which have been stimulated by the currency devaluation making foreign manufactures correspondingly more expensive leading to the closed down of several business in 1994.

The transport system in Niger remains inadequate despite considerable road development project being funded by the World Bank, the European Development Fund (EDF) and Saudi Arabia being undertaken .In 2000, there were an estimated 14,000 km. of classified roads, of which some 26% was paved⁸. At present, there is no railway and most of the foreign trade is shipped through Cotonou, via the organization *commune Benin-Niger pour le Reseau Ferroviaire*.

The brief introduction of Niger's geographical, demographical and economic condition depicts of the overall situation in Niger which is comparatively poor in comparison to other countries of the African continent. Therefore, it can be said that Niger is a small nation, typical of the interior of the West African Sahel. By any measures, it is among the world's poorest economies, due in part of its location, nearly thousands miles away from a seaport, off any of modern West Africa's major trade and transportation routes and to its harsh environment

1.2 Understanding of food crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa:

The most intractable problem facing the world in the 21st century is the food and hunger crisis in Sub Sahara Africa (SSA), the poorest part of the world. Africa's current food crisis is long term in nature and it has been building up for several decades; blanketing the entire sub-continent are its two interrelated components- a food production gap and hunger. The food production gap results from an alarming deterioration in food production over the past decades.

No human rights has been so frequently and spectacularly violated in recent times as the right to food, despite the fact that it is one of the most consistently

⁷ *ibid.*, (Data), p. 825.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 825.

enshrined rights in international human rights law, as constantly re-affirmed by governments⁹. Of which the most cases can be vividly seen in SSA where a large part of the continent is chronically affected by a severe food crisis which threatens the human security of many of her inhabitants. A peculiarity of this continent is that food production is not only a source of food but also a source of income for the numerous smallholders producers who form the most important group expose to the risk of hunger. Therefore, growing food insecurity is generally associated with a crisis of food production¹⁰.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projections to the year 2010 reveal the increasingly distinctive food security circumstances of SSA. SSA's food security is distinctive compared to the improve picture in other developing countries as the region is increasingly facing food insecurity. The projection compared with other regions, food supplies per capita were lowest in SSA in 1988-90, and gains for Africa are projected to be the least among all developing regions by the year 2010. Food supplies per capita are expected to increase by only 3% for SSA from 1988-90 to 2010. In terms of projected number of malnourished people, Africa distinctive position becomes even more visible. Numbers of malnourished persons in all developing countries are expected to fall 20% from 1990-92 to 2010, but in Sub-Saharan Africa, they are expected to rise 23%. By the year 2010, an estimated 264 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are expected to be undernourished, roughly 30% of the population, at a time when no other world region will have more than to 12% of its population undernourished¹¹.

Different explanation has been given by the experts and intellectuals to understand the problem of food deficits in SSA. Africa's food security circumstances have no single explanation. In the analysis, different perspectives of the crisis are examined with a view that all odds to be treatable by sound public policy. The most powerful over riding explanation for understanding policy failure can be traced to the

⁹ Clover, Jenny (2003), Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Africa Security Review*, Vol.12, No.1, p. 5.

¹⁰ Platteau, Jean Philippe (1990), "The food crisis in Africa: A comparative structural analysis", in Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (ed.) *The political economy of hunger*, Vol.2, Famine prevention, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 279.

¹¹ Paarlberg, Robert L. (1999), Politics and Food Insecurity in Africa, *Review of agricultural economic*, Vol.21, No. 2, p.500.

Africa's distinctive political history i.e., colonialism and in presents context neo-colonialism. A trouble mismatch emerged from the history, between the continent's extreme ethnic diversity and its conventional practices since, decolonization of conferring sovereignty upon the institutions of high centralized territorial nation states. Sound public policies remain difficult to construct in Africa because of this political history and because of this continuing intellectual mismatch¹².

1.2.1 Drought and natural constraints:

In understanding the Africa's food crisis, it is essential to consider the countries particular environmental constraints. Droughts are frequent and severe in many African countries as a result of extreme variability of rainfall in the extensive arid and semi arid regions. Widely quoted estimates suggest that at least 60 percent of SSA is vulnerable to drought and perhaps 30 percent is highly vulnerable¹³. However, the underlying difficulties of agricultural production in tropical Africa are the general fragility of most of the soil. Environmental factors impact heavily on agriculture and agriculture in turn has a substantial impact on the environment. There are increasing report of land degradation, deforestation, water logging and salinisation contributing to the declining ability of Africa to feed itself. The situation got aggravate with the landlocked position of many countries and lack of infrastructure which hinder the flexible responses with the onset of drought.

An account of the impact of drought in SSA is documented by Rasheed (1993)-“The 1968-1973 droughts in the Sahel caused more than 100,000 deaths, the loss of twelve million cattle, large-scale migration of herders and farmers and massive degradation of rangeland. The 1984-1985 severe draught in this zone and other regions claimed over 100,000 lives, caused famine among forty million people, displaced another 10 million people and had a negative impact on the economies of many countries. The drought has not spared even the normally rain-bountiful Eastern and Southern Africa sub-region. The failure of rain in late 1991 and early 1992 cause the food harvest to drop by about of half that of previous years, necessitated four million food tones of food aid and imports of over \$200 million worth of emergency

¹² *ibid.*, p.501.

¹³ Clay, Edward (1998), Aid and drought: Responding to the human and economic consequences of natural disasters in Neill, Helen O. and Toye, John, (ed.), *A world without famine: New Approach to aid and development*, Macmillan press Ltd., Houndsmills, p. 200.

non-food aid and caused the death of large number of livestock and wild life, power cuts and the closing down of factories”¹⁴.

In SSA, the National Food Policies and other strategies are lacking as compared to the other regions of the world as natural disadvantage has been overcome to achieve prosperity. So, SSA too can make difference by making investment on human capital and technologies which are more important as components of productive agriculture to achieve food security. With 44% of African land been affected by drought with 16% of land being suitable for agriculture, only an estimated 6% is actually being cultivated. Of which, most portion being used for cash crops for the export market. The agronomical view of African land is that more cultivable land per capita than any other continental is available in Africa. It is speculated that it has 22% of world’s cultivable land and only 9% of the world’s population. In spite of this currently food aid to Africa is estimated at 60% of world’s food aid¹⁵.

1.2.2 Malthusian Explanation of Food Crisis:

To the Malthusian view, the major cause of Africa’s decline in the per-capita food production is attributed to the region’s high rate of population growth. Africa is the region where population growth rate continued to increase throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. The annual population growth rate in Africa was 2.1% in the mid 1950s, 2.7% in the late 1970s, until mid 1990s, it was about 3.1%¹⁶. Moreover, FAO world agriculture towards 2010, Alexandratos shows that population growth in Africa, 3.2% today, is expected to remain above 3% between now and the year 2010, at a time when population growth in South Asia and Latin America will have subsided to less than 2% and in East Asia to less than 1%. Without taking population into account, Africa’s agricultural production growth rate will be 3%, the highest in the

¹⁴ Elbadawi, Ibrahim (1998), “Structural adjustment and drought in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in Neill, Helen O. and Toye, John, (ed.), *A world without famine: New Approach to aid and development*, Macmillan press Ltd., Houndsmills, p. 221.

¹⁵ Amla, B.L. and Majumdar, S.K (1987), “Strategy for food production and food security in NAM countries with special reference to Africa”, in *African economic development: an agenda for future*, Research and Information system for Non-Aligned and other developing countries, p. 138.

¹⁶Platteau, Jean Philippe (1990), “The food crisis in Africa: A comparative structural analysis”, in Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (ed.) *The political economy of hunger*, Vol.2, Famine prevention, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.290.

world between now and 2010. But, when population growth rate is taken into account Africa's growth rate of -02% becoming the lowest in the world¹⁷.

In 1989, Cornell University sociologist Fredrick Buttel and Laura Reynolds published a careful study of population growth food consumption and other variables in 93 third world countries. Their statistical analysis found no evidence that rapid population growth causes hunger. What they did find was that the population of poorer countries, and those countries were the poorest 20 percent of the population earned a smaller percentage of the nation's total income, had less to eat. In other words, poverty and inequality causes hunger¹⁸. The best example to cite the population not a decisive factor in the cause of food crisis is the example of Rawanda. Rawanda experience as many as 17 famines between 1900 and 1950 despite that it has only 1 to 2 million people at that time. However, by middle of the 1980s, Rawanda had a population of 8 million, yet on average, nation was far better fed¹⁹.

1.2.3 The Theory of Underdevelopment:

Number of analysis by prolific theoreticians such as Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstien, Walter Rodney, Samir Amin and Argihiri Emmanuel had made an attempt to understand poverty and agricultural failure in developing countries which bears direct impact on food deficit and on the failure of the food producing sector of developing country's agriculture. The theorist of under development viewed that the root causes of Africa's economic problem like those of other developing lies in the nature of countries relationship with the global economic system. The theory is based on presupposition that the world is divided into core and periphery. The core are developed countries group who have been able to developed advance capitalist economic system while periphery consists of those countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere, referred as development areas whose, economies are underdeveloped. To the under development theorist, developed countries have been able to achieved advance form of capitalism at least in part because of their capacity to exploit by extracting surplus from the periphery.

¹⁷ Paarlberg, Robert L. (1999), Politics and Food Insecurity in Africa, *Review of agricultural economic*, Vol.21, No. 2, p. 504.

¹⁸ Frances Moore Lappe, Joseph Collins and Peter Rosset with Luis Esparze (1998), *World hunger 12 myth*, Earth Scan Publication Ltd., London, p. 29.

¹⁹ Paarlberg, Robert L. (1999), Politics and Food Insecurity in Africa, *Review of agricultural economic*, Vol.21, No. 2, p. 505.

Conversely, the peripheral countries are poor as their resources drain off to sustain the process of economic growth in the core. Though, Africa benefited from colonial rule was minimal, they were not gift from the colonialist rather fruits of African hard labour and resources for the most part. Indeed what was called the development of Africa by colonialist was a cynical shorthand expression for “the intensification of colonial exploitation in Africa to developed capitalist Europe”. The colonisation of Africa lasted for just over seventy years in the most part of the continent. That is an extremely short period within the context of universal historical development. Yet, it was precisely in those years that in other parts of the world the rate of change were greater than ever before²⁰.

Colonial period marked Africa’s political economical and social sphere to be in more disadvantageous position. In political sphere, African political states lost their power, independence and meaning resulting in the foreign overlords to retain political power. However, in some cases African rulers were chosen to serve as agents of foreign colonial rule to act as puppet. In post independent, as peripheral countries find it hard to transformed their states in the world system as they are highly dependent on the core for capital, technical and for market of their product. As the policies being formulated by the elite referred as ‘Comprador’ advance the interest of western capital for their selfish interest resulting in further worsening of the dependent relation. The peripheral countries being too poor, are politically as well economically weak have no option but to accept the term of trade as they are confronted with a set of givens over which they have little or no control.

In economic sphere, the theory of underdevelopment attempt to explain the reason for the failure of the agricultural sector of developing areas to generate an adequate supply of locally needed food items. As the economies of the developing areas are fundamentally shaped by their dependence upon the global economic system, there is pronounced tendency to favour export agriculture over the production of food crops for domestic consumptions. Dependency gives rise to a pronounced dichotomy between the export sector and the food producing sector; the striking

²⁰ Rodney, Walter (1974), *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Howard University Press, Washington, D.C, p. 224.

contrast between the two has given rise to the concept of agrarian dualism. For export production is often carried on in large, plantation sized farms which are highly favored in terms of agricultural inputs, where's food crops for local consumption are grown on peasant farms which are badly deprived of needed agricultural supports²¹. In case of export oriented plantation, there were input supports which were not available to the peasant farmer. The export oriented plantation avail benefit from highly developed infrastructure in terms of transportation, packaging and storage of products along with access to agricultural extension services which help to introduce and sustain scientific methods of production, including high yield seeds, pesticides and advanced irrigation techniques. Most of private farms and government agencies provide soft services-credits, insurance, market analyses and most importantly, which handle the actual sales transaction to foreign purchasers or commodity exchanges. In contrast, the peasant sector producing foodstuffs are relatively in far disadvantageous position as units of production are small in scale with inadequate extension services and little or no provisions of scientific inputs for the production of food crops. No adequate measures has been undertaken to improve infrastructure i.e. transportation, storage and preservation of food grains. With the result that appalling portion of the food which is produced goes wasted for want of access to markets. Thus, the systematic structural neglect of the food producing sector led to the further shortage of food stuff in Africa. Peasants producing only food stuff are also exploited by capital in the sense that he is obliged to market at least part of his production because he lives in money economy and he need cash to meet certain obligations. In doing so, he sells his products at very low prices to non food stuff producers who in general work for capitalist market and are poorly paid, in particular because of the low prices of agricultural products. Thus, the non food stuff producers find themselves exploited and through them, the small peasants are too²².

Due to neglect of food production many agricultural labourers devoted to cash crops hoping to buy food stuff with the incomes from the cash crops. However, the provision of inputs and collections of products are carried out by other social strata.

²¹ Lafchie, Michal F. and Commins, Stpen, K. (1982), Food deficit and agricultural policies in tropical Africa, the *Journal of modern African studies*, Vol. 20, No.1, p. 4.

²² Gakou, Lamine (1987), *The Crisis in African Agriculture*, The United Nations University, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 70.

The colonial administration and trading companies that performed this function during colonial were replaced after independence by a new national administration and structures. With transnational corporation the same social strata has continued to dominate the price fixing by keeping the price paid to producers as low as possible with substantial rise in the inputs to be purchase by the same producers. The small peasant being integrated into the capitalist system created an unalterable role in the general functioning of the system leading to rural exodus and proletarianization.

The problem with theory of underdevelopment is that it leaves hosts of questions unanswered. It suggests way out for underdevelopment in form of withdrawal from external market but not an alternative for development. Secondly, capitalist farmers would continue to be attracted to the higher levels of profits available in western markets, and their influence over the local state would enable them to influence agricultural policy in such a way as to facilitate production for exports. The merit of underdevelopment theories lies on the pointing out the nexus of African elite and capitalist world which dominate the post independent scenario.

1.2.4 Modernization as wheel for food production:

To modernization theory, the agricultural production is constraints by primitive tools, outmoded and unscientific farming practices and inhabiting customs. The solution to the agricultural production lies in defusing the knowledge and the values that would free peasant farmers from the constraints imposed by customs and traditions and in equipping them with necessary technical inputs, such as tractors, high yielding seeds and fertilizers, along with the requisite social infrastructure that would enable output to be expanded is the crux of the modernization theory.

In Africa, the farmer produces for local and world market with inputs which are outmoded and primitive. As an example, the numbers of tractors employed per 1,000 hectors of land in 1994 was very low in Africa when compared to other region 1,645 for Latin America; 804 for Asia and only 290 for Africa. Whatever little technological modernization has taken place is exclusively limited to large agricultural estates and the technology used there is exclusively imported from outside. There has been no effort to link national industrialization strategies to increase agricultural productivity by supplying intermediate technology and basic

inputs to the rural areas, as the Asian Non Industrialized Countries (NICs) did in the early phase of their development. Similarly, investment in research and development to raise the productivity of the agricultural sector has been neglected. Insufficient attempts are being made to create a multiplier effect by establishing agro-processing industries to increase the value-added on processed goods²³. The declining agricultural output is attributed to the governments who failed to recognize the role of small farmers in formulating their development priorities. In the small packed, modernizations have been introduced but are limited to urban areas or on highly mechanized export agriculture. Thus, the neglect of rural agricultural sector by African governments, it has killed the 'goose' that laid the 'golden egg'. The crux of underdevelopment theories criticized modernization which lies in the control over the estate and its apparatus by the dominant classes in the society notably, the foreign merchant classes and transnational interest in alliance with the local elites enabling the latter to mobilize state resources for the development of these institutions and infrastructure which facilitates capital accumulation.

1.2.5 Comparative Advantage theory:

The alternative to dependency theory is the principal of comparative advantage which viewed that countries can maximize their economic potential by specializing in the production of commodities at which they are most efficient in terms of such input as capital and labour. It stress on the production which it can efficiently produce and can compete in the world market. The concept was originally developed in the writings of David Ricardo.

For Ricardo, the notion of comparative advantage was a powerful argument for free trade since an unrestricted flow of products between countries would enable them to use their productive resources most efficiently; it is quite important to the happiness of mankind that our own enjoyment should be increased by the better distribution of labour, by each country producing those commodities for which by its situation, its climate and its natural or artificial advantages, it is adopted, and by their

²³ Cheru, Fantu (2001), *Africa renaissance-road maps to the challenges of globalization*, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 109.

exchanging them for the commodities of other countries, as that they should be augmented by a rise in the rate of profits²⁴.

It is believed by comparative advantage theorist that by specializing narrowly in their range of products that would enable them to trade in world market on the most advantage terms which would not only lead to more wealth for all nations but to the greatest possible improvement in living conditions of the people. However, the basic premises of comparative advantage theory remained same but significant addition has been made to expand the number of factors of production which are taken into account to determine country's comparative advantage.

Contrary to the expectation of comparative advantage theorist, believing that tropical export to be scarce and highly demanding good with limited supplier is facing continuing competition with new supplier entering market. In case of coffee, African countries that produce coffee not only compete intensely for market shares against not only each other, but also a host of producers in Latin America. The weakness of the tropical producer is further reinforced by ready availability of substitute products - synthetic chocolate for cocoa. As a result, tropical agriculture could do no better than it has done previously as in the past in generating the level of foreign exchange necessary to finance a sustained programme of food imports. The comparative advantage development approach is thus, risky strategy as it places many developing countries in vulnerable position especially given their weakness in the international market place.

1.2.6 Amartya Sen's entitlement approach to the food crisis:

Sen's approach to food crisis is society focused and illustrated it in the context of social problem. He negates Malthusian views on the food crisis in terms of the growth of food supply falling behind the expansion of population being primarily determined by nature. Entitlement approach argued that food availability per head is a very poor indicator of starvation as major famine have taken place, without any

²⁴ Lofchie, Michael F. and Commins, Stephen K., (1982), Food deficit and agricultural policy in tropical Africa, *The Journal of modern African studies*, Vol. 20, No.1, p. 8.

significant decline in the ratio of food to population and even there are some cases where famine have occurred at the time when food availability is at peak.

The entitlement approach to starvation and famines concentrates on the ability of people to command food through the legal means available in the society, including the use of production possibilities, trade opportunities entitlements vis-à-vis the state, and other methods of acquiring food²⁵. For example, in a private ownership market economy, how much food person can command will depend on (1) what he owns and (2) what he get in exchange for what he owns either through trade or through production, or some combination of the two. Obviously, in such an economy a person may suddenly face starvation either because his ownership bundle collapse or because the exchange entitlements of his ownership collapses²⁶.

Sen, thus, tried to understand the problem of food crisis by applying entitlement approach. In analyzing the food crisis, it should be kept in mind that food production is not only a source of production but also a major source of income and livelihood for vast sections of the African population. So, any reduction in the production is positively related to the decline in income for groups depending on food production. However, any decline in the food production per head would not have resulted in their collapse of food entitlement had there been option of alternating incomes usable to acquire food from other sources. The argument that entitlement approach put forward is that had there been alternating source of incomes, Africa would not have faced food crisis.

The point is the need of diversification from the food crop production to the non-food production where the entitlement of the rural and poor Africans can be assured to which public policy can play a vital role. The hunger are entirely avoidable as a phenomena and would be avoided if there was 'public action' in the sense of the state action under public pressure, a necessary condition for which is the existence of a free press and other democratic institutions that make it 'too expansive' for

²⁵ Sen, Amartya (1982), *Poverty and Famine: An Essay on entitlement and deprivations*, Oxford University Press Delhi, p. 45.

²⁶ Sen, Amartya (1982), *The food problem: Theory and policy*, *Third world quarterly*, p. 451, Vol.4, No.3.

government (politically) to ignore famines. Sen's effort has been to press for public action to eliminate less dramatic forms of human misery like poverty and hunger²⁷.

Patnaik criticized Sen's view that liberalizations would be beneficial provided land reforms, the provisions of basic health and education facilities be undertaken. The problem however, is that 'liberalization' is a process, a particular direction of movements of the economy, i.e. fundamentally opposed to the direction of the egalitarian reform, he advocates, if the developmental strategy is to be based on the enticing multinational corporations and domestic capitalist to undertake large investments in the domestic economy then this very choice of direction imposes, constraints on the ability of the state to raise resources for undertaking the kinds of expenditures that Sen advocates. By the same token if a state were to honestly implement the programme approved of by Sen, then willy-nilly it would had to take a series of steps, one following form another that would reverse the direction of the economy away from liberalization²⁸.

1.2.7 Diversification of crop patterns:

African agriculture has undergone great variety of change leading to the various form of domination by the capitalist mode of production. In the post independence, like the colonial system, policies in the Africa were geared towards the production of primary commodities for the export market. In this mode of production, Africa experienced decline in the food production. To Utsa Patnaik there has been differential decline of all types of crop production per head but not overall decline. There is decline of staple food grains consumed by the peasantries of developing countries in particular, which is accompanied by substantial rise in the per head production of the non-staple and commercial crops.

The reason for this common patterns have to do with the superior purchasing power vis-à-vis third world agriculture, of the metropolitan centres, which we may think of having two highly unequal segments of varying weight. The domestic metropolitan centers comprise the non-agricultural sector of the national economy

²⁷ Prabhat Patnaik (1998), Amartya Sen and the theory of public action, *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 7, p. 2857.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 2859.

concerned; this is not exactly, but is substantially co-terminus with the urban powerful, by several dozen multiplies in terms of purchasing power, than the domestic metropolitan centre, and if the third world economy concerned relaxes protectionism and liberalizes trade and the entry of foreign capital, the suction effects of the immensely larger purchasing power of the international metropolis is felt in a more or less rapid alternation of the agricultural production structure in the direction required to satisfied the needs of the metropolis. This process enriches the domestic capitalist producers who in collaboration with the MNCs are the instruments of this alteration in the cropping structure, and at the same time precipitates a crisis of livelihood for the ordinary mass of the peasantry and labourers. The predominance of *international* metropolitan purchasing power also tends to affect adversely most of the *domestic* metropolitan population by relative displacement and therefore high cost of basic staple crops, and through lowered domestic availability of and higher prices of a range of specialized goods in increasing foreign demands²⁹.

Diversification to export cash crops is dangerous when exportable prices are in fact declining relative to those of manufactured importables as has been the case for Africa during the 1980s and even the hitherto better of agricultural export oriented economies in Africa are bound to be in dependency trap. So, there is need for an institutional framework which will enable the creation of productive assets with employment and income generating capacity, by and under the control of the rural small and poor producers and not under the clutches of metropolis.

1.2.8 Food aid approach:

The most widely accepted response to the food crisis has been to import food which is urgently needed in the form of food aid. Total food aid to the developing countries actually amount to about \$ 2.5 billion a year and accounts for 9.4% of all official development assistance³⁰. Although food aid saved millions of lives in developing countries in case of experiencing famine, it has negative effect too. If food crisis/starvation is for short period caused by the drought, war etc, food aid can provide remedies to overcome the crisis. However, the ultimate impact of food aid is

²⁹ Patnaik, Utsa (1992), Peasant production in the context of export promotion, *Social Scientists*, Vol.20, No.11, November, p. 28.

³⁰ Mellon, John W. (1987), "Food aid for food security and economic development", in Clay, Edward and Shaw, John (ed.), *Poverty Development and Food*, Macmillan Press, Houndsmills, p. 173.

to be analyzed to understand the food crisis. As Presidential Commission on World Hunger noted in its final report.

“At best there is an inherent contradiction between food which increases the dependency of recipient upon donors, and measures to increase purchasing power and basic food production within developing countries themselves.... In some cases, food aid undermines the efforts of recipient nations to develop a more self-reliant base of their own. Food aid has also enabled some recipient governments to postpone essential agricultural reforms, to give low priority to agricultural investment, and to maintain a pricing system which gives farmers inadequate incentives to increase local production required for greater self-reliance in basic food stuff³¹ .

Food aid can also count itself to serious abuse within recipient countries. It has produced a source of enrichment for corrupt elites who somehow managed to siphon away an appalling amount of the food intended for the hungry, and who cheat relief organizations by charging exorbitant sums for transportation and storage. Politicians have also taken advantage of assistance programmes by demanding elites to allow relief organizations to operate, by using food relief as a source of patronage, and by threatening to withhold food relief from potentially disaffected groups. Moreover, food-for-work projects are clearly of much greater benefit to well-to-do landowners whose holdings increase substantially in value from infrastructural improvements than to landless and destitute families. Indeed, food relief programmes have been subjected to such a wide variety of forms of corruption that they have helped to widen the gap between rich and poor in virtually every country in which they operate³² .

The food aid has created disincentives on the part of local agricultural production as the imported food aid competes with locally produced foodstuffs. The availability of concessional priced food from abroad has thrown out of business local farmers who face higher production costs in growing food which has contributed to further decline of agricultural economics.

³¹ Lofchie, Michael F. and Commins, Stephen K. (1982), Food deficit and agricultural policy in tropical Africa, in the *Journal of modern African studies*, Vol. 20, No.1, p.19.

³² *ibid.*, p. 20.

Food aids in most cases are politically motivated as donor agencies often provide relief by keeping its national interest in view. For example, the Bengal famine of 1943 where the relief operations in the Bangladesh famine of 1974 were delayed because of the lowness of the stock of food grains in the public distribution system that problem was, incidentally, vastly worsened by the decision of the United States government to cut off food aid to Bangladesh and because of Bangladesh temporary refusal to accept the US demand that exports of Bangladeshi jute to Cuba be stopped. Finally, US food aid was resumed only when Bangladesh cancelled further exports of jute to Cuba. By the time, famine was largely over thus, had aid being provided in time number of lives could have been saved.

Importantly, food aid is prevented from reaching the needy areas due to lack of administrative capacity and inadequacy in infrastructure and marketing mechanism. So, to make food aid more effective, there is need for reformulating the policies and programmes towards the overall improvement in public distribution system. To enable food aid reach the vulnerable groups and also to balance and retain incentives to produce food stuff, to alleviate hunger on long-term basis, the resources and human energy are needed to be invested in the country's own system of economic management. This is the ultimate challenge of the government to maintain balance between the two extremes.

1.2.9 Land tenure and food security:

Land tenure in simple meant the terms and conditions on which land is held, used and transacted. The principal feature of land tenure in traditional African life was the lack of individual freehold. Land was held communally by the tribe or village groups, and land was allocated to individuals within the tribe by the tribal leaders or village chiefs; those who cultivated a piece of land had the right to products of that land, but not to sell it³³. The land tenure system in Africa was thus, customary land law. The advantage of customary land was that everyone had some land with more or less equal in the size of the holding according to needs.

³³ Griggs, David (1985), *The world food problem, 1950-1980*, Basil Blackwell, Ltd., Oxford, UK, Pp. 170-71.

The serious deficiencies of communal land tenure in context of today are:

1. It leads to greater and greater fragmentations of land through subdivisions as land is bequeathed from generation to generation;
2. it prevents consolidation of land to achieve economies of scale;
3. It forfeits the advantage of rapid innovation diffusion associated with increase in farm size; and
4. It is associated with frequent boundary and ownership disputes, which discourage long-term investment. As a result agricultural land is exhausted, as the scope for the traditional fallow system, where land is taken out of production for a year or more, becomes more and more limited³⁴.

Thus, communal and allocated lands are frequently abused because neither the farmers nor the grazer feel any responsibility for their conservation. To the farmer there is little to be gained from constructing conservation ditches if they are to be trampled by another's cattle when farms are open to communal grazing after harvest. In some range land areas often pays the harder to over-use the forage, if he does not, someone else will and he will be the loser³⁵. There is the ever danger for the benefit to be appropriated by other. Thus, farmers are reluctant to invest in physical and to adopt innovative due to insecurity. It is no doubt true that possession of land is personal and statutory, since only someone considered to be a member of the relevant social group is entitled to a portion of the communal resources. However, except in extreme circumstances, the allotte's right of access is safeguarded as long as he keeps cultivating the land³⁶.

With the intervention of the European colonial power, the century old customary land tenure become subject to stress. The pressure to undergo changes in communal land tenure came under the combined effects of population growth, the level of communication, the rise of market, the adoption of new plants and the increasing incidence of taxes which characterized the colonial period. In post-independent Africa, the land law passed by many governments proved to be

³⁴ Cheru, Fantu, (2001), *Africa renaissance-Road Maps to the challenges of globalizations*, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 99.

³⁵ Platteau, Jean Philippe (1990), "The food crisis in Africa: A comparative structural analysis", in Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (ed.) *The political economy of hunger*, Vol.2, Famine prevention, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.353.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 354.

confusing, inconsistent or incapable which had raised insecurity. As a result, there is conflict between two laws resulting in confusion which hampers food production. In the newly established land control, politicians and bureaucrats are given considerable power that seems to be biased in their decisions influenced by personal and other sectional interests. In most African countries, there has been clear shift to individual ownership of land. But there is exclusions of many social groups, women in particular who are being denied the just access to or ownership of land. Even though the system seems to enable small farmers to own their titles to land and agricultural loans from lending institutions granting small farmers access to credit, the absence of effective financial institutions has made small farmers the object of exploitation by local loan forcing many to become tenant farmers or agricultural labourers. The situation became further worsen with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). After the acceptance of SAP proposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the emphasis on market oriented production remained in priority. The World Bank rather proposed a land policy to privatize the land and rendering it to the multinationals for market oriented production, which has hampered the prospects of grain production. It has also controlled the policy formulation processes and distributive system³⁷. So, there is need for land reform to address unequal distribution to reduce food insecurity by comprehensive programme of agrarian reform including access to credit, savings and markets in rural areas. So, agrarian policies of African country are needed to reformulate in direction which would ensure food self-sufficiency with the available resources.

1.2.10 Gender bias and food insecurity:

To understand African hunger, it is necessary to examine certain basic features of social relations in these fields. Though, it is assumed that distribution of commodities among different members of the family is done on the basis of needs fulfillment but, there is considerable evidence that this division often marked very unequal treatment. The differential treatment of women is not only because of biological differences but, in fact socially generated. In Africa, by and large, women are the major food producers. They provide the bulk of hoe farming, planting, weeding, winnowing, storage and marketing. In addition, women are responsible for

³⁷ Malakar, S.N, (2005), Emerging dimension in Indo-African Agricultural Co-operation, *Journal of Indian ocean studies*, December Vol.13,No.3, p.433.

looking after the cattle, and for collecting water and firewood³⁸. Women's relation to land affects the political economy of their lives as producers-procreators. Conversely, women's productive-procreative role influenced their access to and use of land. While both sexes participate, though not always equally, in agricultural production and reproduction, the bearing and nurturing of children's and other tasks associated with nurturing family and commonly are predominantly the responsibility of women in Africa. Consequently, women in contrast to men, often carry a dual labour burden³⁹.

Gender relation to the land on the African continent has undergone modification overtime by internal and external intrusion. The lack of significant advancement in women's economic position is rooted in traditional values, which determine the position of women in society which was secondary to their status in the family under male headed households.

With the advent of European colonial capitalism, Europeans favored the consolidation of scattered tracts in the hands-of male owners. The owners were often asked to grow cash crops for export over food crops which continued to be followed in the post colonial period. This trend has in turn affects the institutional status of women and their children who lose their entitlements in midst of the diversification of crop production as men were dominant labour force in cash crops production.

Women's economic advancement in rural areas is further hampered by lack of access to productive assets, particularly land. Both the customary law and the body of common-law derived from the relevant colonial power, as modified by the statute or decree since independence had adversely affected women's access to land or use of property. The customary system typically prohibits women's direct access to land, either by ownership or inheritance. Statutory systems affect property rights in other ways, often limiting women to the status of legal minors, hence rendering them

³⁸ Cheru, Fantu, (2001), *Africa renaissance-Road Maps to the challenges of globalizations*, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 107.

³⁹ Davision, Jean (1988), *Land and woman's agricultural production: the context*, West View Press Inc, USA, Pp. 1-2.



incapable of owning property⁴⁰. Moreover, with the continuation of customary laws in many African countries women are still denied Right to inheritance.

Agricultural support service extended by government's are mainly male oriented as the provisions of agricultural education, training are limited. Study by the FAO had further shown that women have been the last to benefit from the economic growth and development and in some cases have been negatively affected.

Gender bias and gender blindness persists: farmers are still generally perceived as male by policy makers, development planners and agricultural services delivers. For this reason, women find it more difficult than men to gain access to valuable resources such as land, credit and agricultural inputs, technology, extension training and services that would enhance their production capacity⁴¹.

Sooner, the African countries realize the importance of women in achieving food security better could be the economic scenario. As long as policy maker continues to hold the view that the real problem is poverty and not gender the country could not make any headway. In Nigeria, focus has been to rural development in general and food security in particular to improve the economic growth. The effort has failed to make any significant impact on national food sufficiency because proper attention had not been focused on the particular needs of women in food production. The rationale for focusing on women in agriculture is a necessary for food security strategy as they are the largest labour supplier in small-scale farming system producing over 90% of total food in Nigeria. Also, small-scale farmers account for over 80% of marketed food surpluses by aggregate in Africa generally. In addition rural women have demonstrated in different parts of the country overtime that given necessary environmental and input they are capable of responding to expand agricultural output. Furthermore, over 95% of the country's farmers and small scale and deriving a large pool of farm labour from rural women⁴². So, there is a need to



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⁴⁰ Cheru, Fantu, (2001), *Africa renaissance-Road Maps to the challenges of globalizations*, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 107.

⁴¹ Madely, John (2002), *Food for all-the need for a new agriculture*, United Press Ltd. Dhaka, Pp. 93-94.

⁴² Ajayi, Samuel (1997), Women in agriculture as a strategy for food security in Nigeria, *Journal of rural development and administration*, Vol. XXIX, No.4, Autumn, p. 12.

focus on new strategy for access to and control of productive resource in rural areas on gender equity basis to ensure long term food security.

1.2.11 Globalization, World Trade Organization and food security:

There are close link between hunger and food security on the one hand and a large number of issues of global relevance on the other. The adverse impact of structural adjustment and liberalization policies on food security and agriculture, along with persisting trades barriers, the overall downward trend of Official Development Assistance (ODA), agricultural subsidies in the north, and debt burdens in Africa are just some of the issues highlighting the needs for international cooperation as an instrument for addressing food insecurity⁴³.

As the SSA in 1960s, focus on the planning machinery directed towards accelerating industrial growth which claims large chunk of the available development funds with preference for cash crop production in agricultural sector. This lead to neglect of food production with urban demand for wheat and rice imports, affecting the production of local staples like millets, plantains yarms etc. which for want of sufficient demand were finally confined to the subsistence sector.

Though, it was expected that SAP in the early 1980s would present solution for all economic ills but the result was reverse. The failure of SAP can be assessed by analyzing differential in the income per head. Between 1960 and 1980, before SAPs income per head in the region grew by a third. Between 1980 and 1997 it fell by a quarter. Part of the problem was that higher income from export crops did not materialize. In mid 2001 the price of every major traded agricultural commodity, with the exception of sugar, was substantially lower, by way of example, than in mid 1998⁴⁴.

The result of SAP implementation compelled the State to reduce its intervention role and user fee was introduced for all subsidies and welfare programme being earlier supported by government. Moreover, the misery of African farmers

⁴³ Clover, Jenny, (2003), Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, *Africa Security Review*, Vol.12, No.1, p. 13.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 13.

further got aggravated with the increase support of United States (US) and European Union (EU) for agricultural sector. Despite, the promise by northern government for reduction of agricultural subsidies, the tariff barriers in rich countries are higher for poor countries. Africa, thus, has been the worst sufferer of free trade policies because of dumping by European and US producers which are subjected to two sets of rules. Therefore, there is an urgent need to restructure the world trade to facilitate the active participation of the poorer countries and assistance. The practice and rules of international trade can play a key role in achieving food security to which South have to take active role by supporting the united voice of southern government.

1.2.12 Political constraints-case for misgovernance in SSA:

Treating the issue of diminishing food supply primarily in terms of natural calamity will be to overlook the analysis of food crisis. In fact, political constraints in forms of political instability and authoritarian in the approach to rural development has constitutes the basic premises in understanding African hunger. Africa's food problem is rooted in its past history of colonialism. The partition of the continent into various states without regard to existing cultural, social, religious or national affinities of various ethnic groups has facilitated ethnic based conflicts. The ethnic identity has become an important criterion for rationing access to scarce government of administrative post as well as to the monopoly rents allocated by the state bureaucracy. As aptly noted by Young, ' the politically ambitious had discovered that crystallizing ethnic consciousness was the swiftest and surest way to attract a political clientele⁴⁵. It is not that ethnic affiliation along structured rivalry but are articulate at around individuals, families, religions, sociocultural and economic groups, subgroups, sects etc. These faction are often engaged in merciless struggle for access to power and to the wealth and material privileges which automatically reward the power holders And it is precisely because these struggles are so fierce (since the stakes are so big) that the state in Africa is being imposed in the most elementary sense of the term⁴⁶. The struggles between different groups are detrimental to the food production as it create unfriendly environment for agricultural production with its tendency toward violent political conflict has hampered food security.

⁴⁵ Platteau, Jean Philippe (1990), "The food crisis in Africa: A comparative structural analysis", in Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (ed.) *The political economy of hunger*, Vol.2, Famine prevention, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.368.

⁴⁶ *ibid* p. 368.

In Africa, there is dualism in the agricultural record which stands in rather contrast to one another. In the late 1960's when food production was lagging behind the population rate, the production of export was rising by about 4% a year⁴⁷. The most dramatic example, however is Mali one of the Sahel countries worst affected by drought conditions and a principle recipient of emerging shipments of food. Here, the production of food crops for local consumption had fallen precipitatorisly by the early 1970s crop production, for example, fell by more than one third between 1969 and 1971, and millet desperately needed to take up the stock showed no increases whatsoever. During the same period, Mali's export crop has attained bumper levels. During the crop year 1971-72, Cotton seed productions reached a record high of 68,000metric tons, a figure which reflected more than 400% increase during a six-year period. Groundnut production totaled more than 150,000 tons that year, an increase of nearly 70% during a four-year period. Rice production also largely for export, reached record high in 1972, amounting to about 174,000 tons.

This agrarian paradox is central to political analyses of the problem of African food crisis. There has been strong political support for the export sector linking the policies of colonial period to those of independent African government. The policies of African regime rest on improving infrastructure to develop transport and Communications to facilitate the movement of exportable agricultural commodities from the interior to the principal ports, rather than to improve the internal distribution of food items. The agricultural extension service of African government is directed primarily towards the exporting areas. The benefits therefore, are limited to the farms which grow export cash crops. The government-sponsored irrigation schemes too limit its delivery of supply water to export crop areas. The crux is that African government support and service to the export sector has benefited by financing substantial subsidy resulting in increase of cash crops production while food crop production has declined as it was denied whole range of governmental service available to the export sector. Moreover, no substantial policy has been formulated by the government to address the difficulties of transporting basic food items from the countryside to the urban market which get spoiled in rural market which resulting in

⁴⁷ Lofchie, M (1975), Political and Economic origin of African hunger, *The Journal of African studies*, Vol.13, No.4, p. 554.

sharp decline in the purchasing power of the rural peasant producer who would have got better deal in urban market.

There are not even elementary facilities for the storage of period able food items which could have facilitate to overcome the period of scarcity or utter during agricultural off seasons. This has resulted in the import of food from abroad at the great cost of foreign exchange. Thus, African governments exhibit more interest in the satisfaction of European consumers than they do to their own population.

The neglect of rural sector in SSA can be traced back to colonial period as they concentrated developmental activities limited to the urban areas resulting in huge gaps between rural and urban areas. When the colonizer departed in the 1960s, they typically handed over highly centralized instruments of taxation and form of control to a new class of urban based African political leaders bent on the rapid development of urban services and industry. This leaders are ignorant of and hostile towards agricultural partly because of its colonial associations, and they after sought to maintain their central control by intentionally blocking the emergence of powerful institutions in rural areas⁴⁸. Thus, rural areas continued to be neglected, marginalized and improvised lacking popular participation in governance and effective devolution of power to empower local communities. Thus, the government that engaged after independence soon became undemocratic, over-centralize and authoritarian. This political monopoly led to corruption, neopotism and abuse of power to serve its own interests. The African states and their various institutional structures, therefore, enhance the role of imperial states in the internal system without advancing the concept of democratic governance and economic development in Africa. Moreover, since 1960, 40 to 50% of the regimes in the continent had been military in origin and in states not under military rule, intervention by the security forces remain a tangible threat. In Africa, military coup has become an institutionalized ' vehicle for ruler displacement', a feature which came to dominate the African political scene when it became clear that' political monopolies guanteeing incumbent indefinite prolongation

⁴⁸ Paarlberg, Robert L. (1999), Politics and Food Insecurity in Africa, *Review of agricultural economic*, Vol.21, No. 2, p. 506.

of their mandates to become the rule⁴⁹. In most of the cases, elections are held but tendencies are that the former one-party ruler; in number of cases had managed their own victory. Of more than 150 National leaders in post independence Africa up through 1990, only six left office voluntarily. The wave of democratic transition that swept through Latin America, East Europe and the former Soviet Union between 1974 and 1990 missed Africa⁵⁰.

In SSA, even after democracy has been established in number of African states the hegemonic control of the groups continued in similar fashion. Therefore, the march to constitutionalism and democratic consolidation will continue to be problematic unless effective decentralization to empower rural people takes its root. Freedom of press, expression, association and information are essential for realizing the goals of transparency and accountability in the governance if democratic and constitutional government is to thrive in SSA. It would ensure not only participation but citizen friendly policies which would provide food security to all.

⁴⁹ Platteau, Jean Philippe (1990), "The food crisis in Africa: A comparative structural analysis", in Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (ed.) *The political economy of hunger*, Vol.2, Famine prevention, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.367.

⁵⁰ Paarlberg, Robert L. (1999), Politics and Food Insecurity in Africa, *Review of agricultural economic*, Vol.21, No. 2, p. 507.

FOOD CRISIS IN COLONIAL NIGER

CHAPTER-II

FOOD CRISIS IN COLONIAL NIGER

2.1 Social Composition of Niger:

The Niger's, pre-colonial history covers a wide spectrum of societies ranging from so-called segmentary, 'acephalous' ones to what certain authors have qualified as 'states' who not only maintain their independence but where often ethnically distinct from the surrounding population.. Hausa being largest ethnic group constitutes 56% of the total population, the zerma/sanghoy; the second-largest group constitutes 22%, while the rest like Fulani (8.5%), the Tuareg 8% and the Kanuri 4.3 %, the Toubou and the Gourmantche people make up the remaining 1.2 % of the population, along with some 1200 French expatriates¹. Therefore, it can be said that Niger is a multi-ethnic but pre-dominantly Hausa states.

The Hausa are a people chiefly located in northern and south-eastern Niger, the Zerma/Songhai in south-west, the Fulani are dispersed throughout the country, most being nomadic and the Kanuri in the east of Zinder, the Tuareg live mainly in South and West of the air massif.

2.2 Food security during the pre-colonial period in Niger:

In the simplest case, West African farmers trade in foodstuff based on the decision of individual households to plant an area that would give an adequate return in a poor year, with the result that the average years there would be a surplus to trade with deficit villages; more often, households would plan their production of food stuff with the intentions of producing a small surplus for trade. This surplus is of different nature in a subsistence pastoral economy. In pastoralist economy, where pastoralist have been in contact with farmers or market, it seems likely that they had an option of either they can keep male animals or they can barter or sell them for cereals. It seems likely that they could obtain more calories by bartering their surplus male animals for cereals than by eating them. This exchange took two main forms. In some places it became part of a wider set of reciprocal transactions between farmers and nomads, in which the farmer provided cereals and stubble grazing for the herds, and a latter

¹ Accessed on 21st April, 2006 URL: www.nationalencyclopedia.com/africa/niger-ethnic_group.html.

provided meat, milk and animal transaction to draw water or mill and carry grain². However specialized institution also developed alongside the pastoral economy to organize livestock marketing. The development of external livestock trading over long-distance was undertaken by the specialist such as tobacco farmers of 19th century of Katsina in northern Nigeria, who conducted a three conered trade in tobacco from Katsina, livestock and natron from Zinder and Agadez and cola nuts from Lagos³. Moreover, *Borono* Fulani sell their cattle principally through the agency of middlemen, *Dillaloi*, both at market places and in the bush

During the pre-colonial period, shortage of food and resources are respond by the movement of the people, i.e, short and long-distance to take advantage of seasonal pastures or to flee the drought stricken area. In this context, the relationship of the Sahelian grassland zone to complementary economic zones, especially the Sudanic Savanna agriculture zone to the south and the sahara and the north African markets to the north formed an pre-colonial regional economic interdependence zone. Baier and Love- joy has well described the special case of the area between central Niger and north Nigeria. They argued that this zones is characterized by two principal economic sectors the Tuareg and the Hausa linked by strong current of trade and mutual interdependence. The Sahel supplied pastoral products and Saharan trade products (salts and dates); the Savanna provided grain and the products of town craft industry such as cloth and leather goods. The Tuareg maintained a commercial infrastructure in the savanna consisting of urban brokers, landlords, traders and craftsmen, investment in farming estates in Nigeria provided annual tribute in grain lodging for traveling and a network of resting places on the North-South transhumance route and guaranteed access to land in the dry season and especially during serious drought. This chain of activities spreading from desert to Savanna not only formed an integrated economy co-operation but was also safety valve for pastoralists during the drought; they could migrate to the far southern end of the network, pasture their herds there, and concentrate on non pastoral activities⁴. In the light of economic integration in pre-colonial period, Baier and Lovejoy suggested that there was a drought/recovery cycle in which migration from drought struck areas was systematically organized.

² Swift, Jeremy (1997), Sahelian pastoralist; under development, desertification and famine, *Annual review of Anthropology*, Vol.6, p. 461.

³ *ibid* p. 462.

⁴ *ibid*.

In the region, from the 14th to 16 centuries, the areas was part of Songhai empire marked by efficient organization of agriculture, of communications and of trans-Saharan trade which brought peace and prosperity. Though the period was marked by several epidemics, there was no famine. This period of prosperity and security came to end in the second half of the 16th century with the consolidation of power by a new class of administrators and bureaucrats who increasingly exploited the peasants marked further deterioration in foreign trade and commerce and final blow came with the conquests of Songhai Empire in 1591 by Moroccan army. Throughout the 17th and 18th century, the area was fought over by competing groups with the result that least shortage of food or natural disaster such as drought, floods or locusts led to the outbreak of famine. Thus, the political development has the direct consequence with the economic crisis as the ongoing battles in the region hampered the free movement of the people during the time of economic crises. In this context, mention can be made of Hausa societies which experienced major shakeup after 1804 in form of Fulani Jihad which led to the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate. The Jihad was led by the famous *Usuman dan Fodio*, a member of the qadiriyya brotherhood. As Hausa polities, unable to present a common front, fell an easy prey to dan Fodio and his followers. Although religious motives were primarily in the overthrow of the Hausa rulers, there were also many other grievances which the Fulani and many Hausa had against their government. Excessive taxation, raids on cattle herds and unfair courts were some of the reason why Usuman dan Fodio, the moving force behind Fulani protest, could appeal to the masses who could not become excited over the religious issue⁵. Muhammad Bello further consolidated the conquests and created the political structure of the Fulani Empire. The empire was divided into areas which were each ruled by an emir Fulani basically retained the same administrative machinery as in Hausa states revising it only to make it more amenable to centralized control and purified Islamic states. Except to the case of the emirs which were being held by Fulani, the rest offices within the emirates were opened to men of merit whether Hausa or Fulani as may be. However the united empire underwent a number of changes in the years after Bello's death. The fervor of the Jihad died away and emirs became increasingly materialistic. In the south -eastern part of the West in the second half of the 19th century, there were frequent attempts

⁵ Gailey, Harry A., JR (1972), *History of Africa from 1800 to present*, Halt Rinehart and Winston Inc., New York, USA, p. 24.

made by the Zerma, the Mawri and the Dendi to free themselves from the Fulani rule. The war of the 19th century, seem to have given rise to or rather to have accentuated, 'the war-lord ' aspect of the Zerma, the Songhay and the Fulani societies. As a corollary, the condition of bondsmen and slaves probably deteriorated further⁶.

2.3 Advent of French and its policy in Niger:

The advancement in science, technology, medicine, communications, means of transport, establishment of industry and discovery of new land and exploitation of alien resources were inseparable part of the European resurgence French was one of the several European countries to acquire vast overseas colonial empire. Prior to 1880s, the French had only a nominal presence in Africa. But, by 1914 the lives of almost all Africans were deeply affected by the changes brought about by the foreign rulers. However, the emergence of French can be linked to the unification of Italy and Germany in 1870s to acquire colonies and to the digging of the Suez Canal which had changed geo-strategic and geo-political importance of north-eastern Africa compelling French to acquire naval bases on Africa's eastern coast. France, finally participating in Berlin conference in 1885 along with other European power had partitioned Africa. Thus, French black Africa composed of French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Madagascar and two trust territories-Cameroon and Togo. However, the West African resistance to the French occupation was a stronger than to that of Britain. Thus, during the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of 20th centuries, Niger experienced long series of invasions, conquests and upheavals.

The French political and administrative policies in Africa provided litmus test of her intentions in Africa. The France government adopted the policy of assimilation to assimilate African into the France culture and accept them as partner in government and missionary enterprises. The French African Empire from Senegal to Congo was linked by continuous block of land and the military and political thinking in France aimed at developing a federal structure in Africa. The federal concept, however, reflected the belief in the superiority of French culture and the African were denied the political rights of self governance in their territories. The early French colonial policy proved to be failure as African representation in French national assemblies

⁶ Fuglested, Finn (1983), *A history of Niger- 1880-1960*, CUP, Cambridge, London, p. 41.

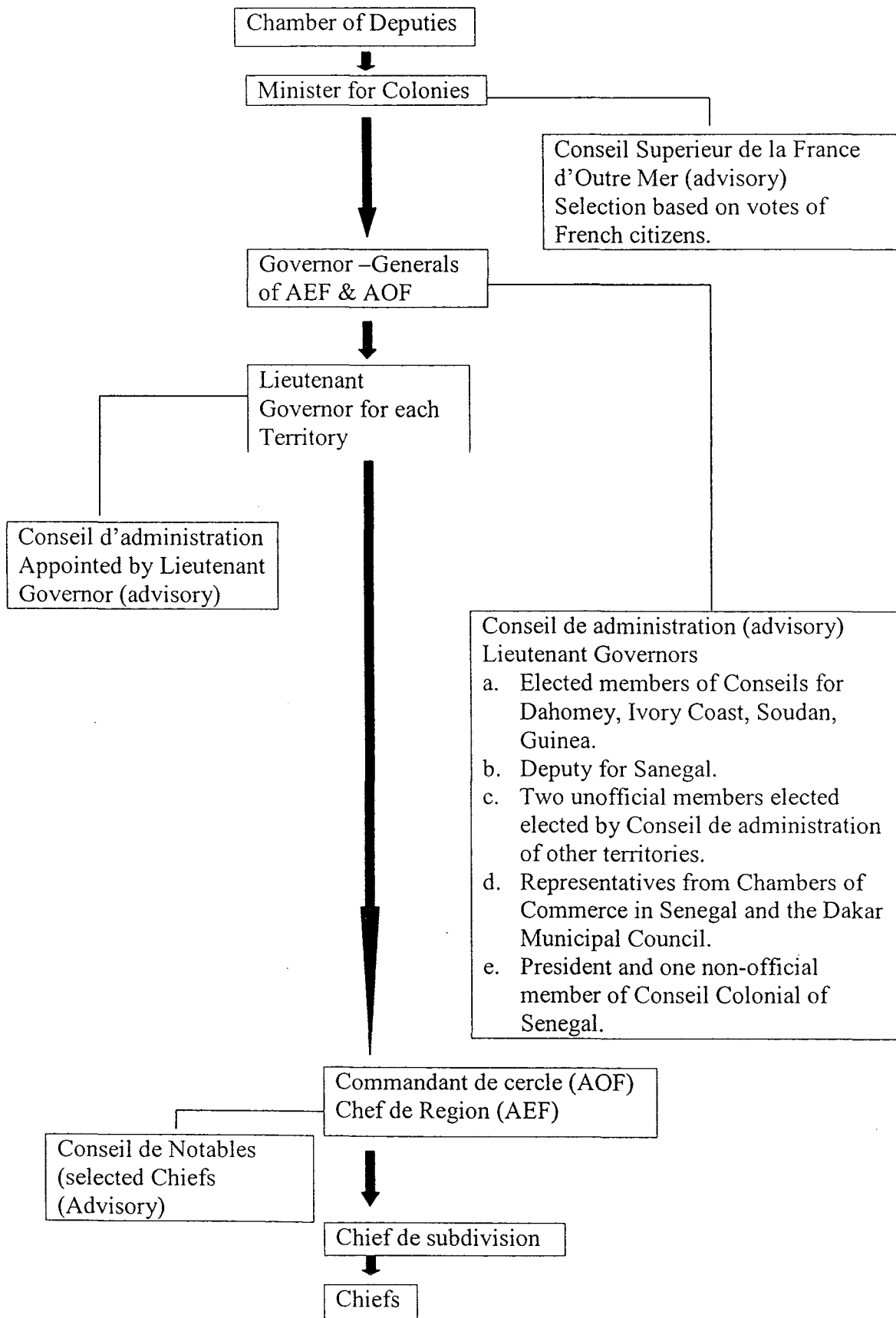
was on the basis of their proficiency in French language and adoption of French culture and traditions and not on the basis of population. Indeed, very few had qualified for French citizenship rights⁷.

The economic and financial burden of governing a vast empire in Africa and the fears of numerical strength of African representation in French parliament, if given right to vote, forced Paris to opt for undemocratic, centralized, pyramidal administrative structure which associated African traditional elites at the lowest level of administration. The government organization of French Africa was relatively uniform unlike noticed in British Africa. As the early decision to create two large federations also facilitated the adaptation of a uniform policy for all of the African territories which continued until the Adaptation of the Loi cadre in 1956. French West African Federation (AOF) and Federation of French equatorial Africa (AEF) were entirely administrative entities with no independent rights and powers for the component territories. Thus, the chain of rule was simple and direct, very similar to a military organization. At the apex was the Governor-General, the only official to deal directly with the colonial Ministry in Paris. Though, the Governor General required prior approval for most of his action from the Minister but because of poor communications often acted on his own initiative which resulted in the undue centralization of the system. Each colony within the Federation also had a lieutenant - Governor and a staff of French civil servants who carry out orders of the colonial ministry and the Governor-General's office. Within each colony the largest administrative unit in the AOF was called a cercle and in the AEF a region which was further divided into smaller units called subdivisions which were in turn composed of cantons, a collection of African villages⁸. The table-2.1 depicts French administrative control in Africa as shown below.

⁷ Sheth, V.S (1999), French policy in Africa: An assessment, *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 73.

⁸ Gailey, Harry A., JR (1972), *History of Africa from 1800 to present*, Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc., New York, USA, p. 185.

Table- 2.1 French mechanisms of control in Africa
Terms of government established in the AOF and AEF was the following



Since, the French aimed at establishing a uniform administration, all the Canton chiefs were to be put on equal footing and to be given identical duties, obligations and prerogatives. Thus, in Niger the Songhay *amirus*; the Fulani *lamidas*; and *arealfaize* of Say were appointed *Chefs de Canton*. In acephalous region of the west, the French solved the problem by appointing priest-chiefs or war-Chiefs and in regions of dual institutional structure, the political Chief was appointed and religious chiefs completely overlooked. Thus, French modify their approach to maintain and cement the alliance with number of local leaders, factions and groups. As a consequence of centralized administration, lack of African participation at the level of policymaking and the replacement of African rulers by pliant men willing to collaborate with French colonial administration, the French Parliament showed little interest in the development colonies.

The French colonial policy in Africa by passed the ideological divide in French political life as irrespective of ideological differences, the leftist and rightist elements among French policymakers had a common belief in the superiority of French civilization. The desirability of a uniform political structure for the colonies and repudiation of the notion of immediate or eventual self-government for colonies reflected total domination of France. Therefore, the France political life before the Second World War was dominated by the Conservative elements and was repressive and exploitative in nature which denied application of French democratic principles to the colonies

The expansion of economic base of African societies during the early days of French colonial rule was made possible by the use of forced labour and migration of workers over long-distance in search of jobs. Forced labour was limited by the decree of 1912 to no more than 5 days a year for every fit adult male. At the beginning of colonial period in West Africa only small part of the region was affected by the growth of a cash economy. However, later the economic policy of the new French West African colonies was based on the likewise example of the Senegal where Faidherbe and his successors had made the colonial administration self-supporting by encouraging the African population to grow groundnuts on their own farms⁹. By this,

⁹ Oliver and Atmore (1969), *Africa since 1800*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge p. 131.

the Senegalese peasants had a crop which they could sell for cash, with some of which they could pay the head-tax imposed by the government. The similar cash crop was introduced in the newly conquered district as French armies advance into the interior.

These analyses of the French colonial policy give us a general overview of the administrative, political, social and economic policy in French overseas territories in Africa. With this, an attempt has been made to examine the food crisis in Niger and French response to the crisis during the colonial period.

2.4 Initial years of France in Niger:

In all the French West Africa occupation was carried out by military forces, of which the backbone was the Senegalese army trained by Faidherbe and Gallieni in course of their struggle in the interior part of the West Africa. Resistance against France was obvious in Niger as it had distinguished tradition of resistance against foreign conquerors.

Zerma/Songhay was staunch and early rebellers in the Niger but later collaborated with France. Hausa, after the initial shock of the Voulet-Chanoine mission which was not strictly in sense but sizeable military coloum started to opposed the France with a particular kind of passive resistance and successful one from the point of view of the 'traditionalist', since the Hausa society remain relatively impermeable to French influence. However, French severely circumscribed the power of the Hausa, *sarauta* including that of Damagaram and in doing so reversed the dominant trend of the second half of 19 century. The Tuareg who were trade oriented sought to accommodate the French. But, by 1908, the Tuareg way of life was incompatible with the French rule. Though, the repression of Tuareg did not let them down as they continued their struggle with the same strength. In Niger, it was only in 1908 that all the regions which later became the Republic of Niger had been brought under more or less effective French control except the sparsely populated north east where conditions remained uncertain. Niger was granted autonomous status, in the sense that its Governor received his order directly from the Governor General in Dakar and Zinder was declared as its capital. As mentioned earlier, the French colonial administration in Niger was entirely bureaucratic and its legislative and executive power devolved from the President of the Republic through the Minister of

colonies and the Governor General of French West Africa in Dakar to the Governor and his district officer. Till 1922, Governor in Niger was usually a lieutenant colonel or full colonel to whom the seven *commandants de cercle* were responsible. The scenario of Niger change in 1922 as it achieved the status of the civilian govern colony with cercles being subdivided into varying number of secleurs which comprise indigenous political entities such as provinces, cantons, tribes or groups under the authority of traditional chiefs. Moreover, the cornerstone of French rule in Niger was based on the notion of 'subjects' governed by administrative decree and not by laws. This implied that Africans enjoyed none of the right or duties defined by the Constitution of the third Republic. The decree of 21 November 1904 defined a number of special legal provisions collectively known as '*indigenats*' most notorious of this provision was that any subject could be tried on the sport by local French administrator and sentence and imprisonment of 15 days and 50 francs in fines. This punishment were laid when subject refused to carry order, or carry out in careless or reluctant manner, non payment of taxes and fines, disrespectful attitude or remarks towards the administrators and on collaborative attitude of the subject. This harsh treatment was further carried forward by continuing forced labour. The subject came under jurisdiction of the cercle courts preside over by the *commandants* in matter of both criminal and civil law that could impose even capital punishment which meant there was no limit to the sentence¹⁰. Thus, the administration could do as they please with no institutional channel through which African could voice their grievances. Therefore, an average Nigerien was left with three options, that is, obey the decree, or to migrate if possible or to revolt. Thus, the initial year of French in Niger was marked by resistance, revolt and establishment of despotic and inhuman conditions to plunder which was further deteriorated with the requisition that proved most detrimental to the Africans as the French could legally tax the resources of the African at will. With the requisition it meant anything from the forceful seizure of foodstuffs and animals at prices set by the French which would establish important link between food crisis and the colonial rule in Niger.

¹⁰ Fuglested, Finn (1983), *A history of Niger, 1880-1960*, CUP, Cambridge, London, p. 81.

2.5 Food crisis during Colonial period:

The initial years of French as discussed was marked by revolt, resistance, conflict and plunders which had deteriorated the food problem together with the drought. The problem of food can be related to the new economic policy introduced after 1908 which led to the expansion of the extra subsistence sector in parts of Niger. The new economic policy consisted of imposing heavier taxes which doubled between 1914 and 1915 and trebled in the period 1906 and 1916 as a whole. By 1911, Nigerien was not in position to pay their taxes in kind and further by 1916, French insisted that taxes should be paid exclusively in franc. As a consequence of increased tax burden the average Nigerien had to part with the total amount of wealth more sharply. At the same time extra amount of tax collected was misappropriated by two sections of people at the great coast of poor Nigerien-first being those African whom the French sent out to collect taxes without supervision and second are the chiefs who came to power after 1908 especially in Hausaland and Kanuriland. Further, the establishment of custom barrier in 1914 between Niger and Nigeria in the middle of very severe famine of 1913-15 further deteriorated the condition of Nigerien. It is basically done to channelise the surplus into the hands of the French and to deny the Nigerien access to some of the opportunities which enable them to meet new tax burden .As a result African farmer started to move to more remote and previously sparsely populated regions.

After 1908, France adopted a new approach towards the Hausa, the Kanuri and the Tuareg chiefs. French had adapted direct approach to rule and even contemplated outright abolitions of the institution of provincial and canton's chief. In case of the Tuareg nomad chief, France respected the pre-existing tribal entities as well as the position and status of the Tuareg warriors and nobles, the *imajeghen*¹¹. However after 1911, French tried their best to circumscribe the influence of the *imajeghen* and encourage the clerics, the *ineslemen*. In Hausaland and Kanuriland too, French tried to circumscribe the power of the *sarauta* and to liberate subdued entities. Thus, the crush and destroy method of the French was marked by the harsh action in which the French dealt with individual chiefs.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 84.

However, after the outbreak of the First World War and subsequent mobilization led to the shortage of personnel to which Governor found himself in uncomfortable position. This led French to depend heavily upon the chiefs than before due to the shortage of personnel and increasing administrative burdens. As marked by the shortage of personnel, French were unable to exercise any firm day to day control over the chiefs but left with only options of making occasional display of authority to demonstrate that they were still in the command. This provided chiefs an opportunity to make profit out of their position in office. Tehikouma, one of the province chiefs of Damagaram between 1907 and 1914 make best use of his office by plundering thirty villages which disappeared altogether who requisitioned millet not only on behalf of the administration but also on behalf of himself. So, when famine struck tehikouma was able to sell its stock at far high prices. Thus, Tehikouma regime was one of the organized robbery in which chiefs envoys saw to it through the systematic acts of intimidation that no complaint reached the ears of the French.

The period after 1913 is further marked by number of disasters in Niger which began with the consequence of Italian-Turkish war which led Turks to evacuate Tibesti and Fezzan in 1912-13. Based on the security reasons French decided to occupy the Western slopes of Tibesti which was costly deal for Tuareg. As French column requisited camels from Tuaregs, the economy of Tuareg suffered as the drought occurred at the same time who could have earned by taking part in transportation in Northern Nigeria. The history of Niger experienced worst drought with rainfall abnormally low compared to 1960s and early 1970s. In the western part too, Niger was ravaged by an invasion of locusts. Undeterred the Governor wrote in his annual report for 1913 that “la situation économique du territoire est des plus satisfaisantes” which was wrong¹². The stage was always set for the great famine. Though famine was chiefly due to the drought but was made more general more intense and prolonged by the attitude and the policy of the French. This implied that French paid scant attention to the plight of the Nigeriens as they never contemplated launching anything in form of relief programmes. The magnitude of the disaster can be gauged by the figure advanced by the Stephen Baier, that is, 85000 died out of a total

¹² *ibid.*, p.90.

population of 3, 50,000 for the cercle of Zinder¹³ and local commandment reported that an estimated 32,000 fled to Nigeria. Moreover, Perie reports that the price of millet per bag in Maradi soared from 1.50 francs to 15 francs in and then to 20 in 1914, with the price of cattle five hundred times less, in terms of millet than in good year. Moreover tax revenue amounted to 1,113,000 francs in 1914 compared with 1,633,000 francs in preceding years which shows that in face of terrible plight of the Nigeriens, the French officers in 1913 -15 were hardly sympathetic. To maintain garrisons in Bilma in midst of shortage of funds and understaff is really a hard task in which the local administration had to make increasing use of the whole range of sanctions embodied in the *indigenat* to get the necessary quantities of millets. However, situation was reached when French feared a general mutiny as they had no necessary supplies as peasant of Hausaland had no more millet to part with. Along with this, the event on international scene had begun to make their impact felt throughout the Central Sahara. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, the defeat of Italians, the holy war declared by caliph and substantial reduction in French forces throughout western and northern Africa had profound effect upon the nomads of Saharan and in Niger. Hausaland and Kanuriland were on the brink of revolt as they were opposed to recruitment which resulted in large-scale exodus in Southwards. Similar unrest also marked in the west. The Tuareg revolted in 1916 which proved to be disastrous as they lost nearly all their camels, estates, pastures and trading contacts which they control in the south and were not in position to play any significant role.

The situation improved in Niger with the good harvest of 1915 and 1916. The improvement of food situation together with assurance that there would be no recruitment encourages few to return from Nigeria but preferred to settle south of the border. However, concentration of military forces in Niger during 1917-18 led to the increasing requisition and was also forced to produce groundnut for metropolitan France.

The France government order for the recruitment of more African troops in 1918 but Niger was exceptional as they feared revolt. But Lt Col Mechet had his way for recruitment which was marked by revolt in the Hausaland and the Kanuriland. So

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 91 (figure collected).

there was no larger scale drives in Niger. In 1918, French realize that the new approach adopted in Niger was largely responsible for the disturbances, unrests and revolts as it imposed considerable hardship for the Nigeriens. It led to the establishment of officially sponsored and control co-operatives known as *societies Indigenes de purveyance* (SIP) and advisory board composed of chiefs and notables known as *conseil de notables*. But, it met with same consequences as it proved to be inefficient.

Regarding food situation, only the harvest of 1920 seems to have supply above average during 1917 to 1922, otherwise it had all bad years with localized famines. However, French levied sizeable requisition of millet and cattle in the sedentary South in 1919, 1920 and 1921 which had led to another southward exodus among the Hausa and the Tuareg to revolt. Thus, the French exploitation policy continued even during the famines.

The period of conquest and consolidation was over by 1922 and became preoccupied with purely practical administrative matters. By the period, no money was spent on social service, veterinary service with very low literacy rate which is lowest in Africa. Of the *evolues*, most numerous were Zerma/Songhay who tended to replace the chiefs as intermediaries as early as the interwar years. The French policy in the period of 1920s was associated with the name of Jules Brevie who was sent to Niger in 1922 as first civilian Governor who argued in favour of reversal of the administration and advocated neo traditionalist policy aiming at integrating the chiefs more closely with administrative structure and at the same time safeguarding the true nature of the chiefly institutions.

Brevie put an end to the requisitioning of foodstuffs and pack animals abolished all taxes on the market at the same time encouraging the exportation of hides and skins, limited the recruitment of soldiers and strictly control the application of the punitive measures known as Indigenat. Thus, Brevie attempted to provide a stable administration. In economic sphere, custom barrier was abolished which encouraged economic growth in Northern Nigeria. This provided an opportunity in the centre and the east as it led to the cultivation of groundnuts for export which spread across the border into the cercle of Maradi and Zinder and the subdivision of

Magaria in particular as early as in 1924. The expanding market also encourages Nigeriens to export cattle and millet to the South and many Nigerien Hausa found work in Northern Nigeria in dry seasons. The Tuareg, the *bugaje* in particular was profited from the commercial expansion as camel remained the preferred mode of transportation. The economic recovery policy of Brevie made the Nigerien in less than 10 years after the great famine to export cattle, groundnut and even millets. Moreover, the population increased around 1 million in 1922 to more than one and a half million nine years later¹⁴.

During the 1920's, French shifted their emphasis towards the various ethnic groups and region of Niger. They focus their attention on the west and on the Zerma/Songhay to whom French considered to be more reliable than the traditionalist Hausa. The shift of emphasis is in way symbolized by the transfer of capital from Zinder to Niamey to make colony more western oriented.

Though Niger experienced good year but it again got entangled as the similar situation developed which marked increasing tax, requisition of millet, decree of compulsory military service and further international economic crisis led to the drop in the prices of groundnut. However, French did not take any positive action. In contrast, it continued with similar tax rates, compulsory and forced labour which French termed as 'volunteers' for the construction work in Niamey and for save railway.

However, for all the greatest tragedy of 1931, the French administration was to be responsible to a large extent and especially for its effect. As the officials responsible both in Niamey and in certain region capitals did nothing to respond the grave situation. Further, they authorized a relatively larger scale requisitioning of millet more than 500 tons for the functionaries. Sol's mission to investigate the situation argued that administration could have acquired between 150 and 200 tons of grains from outside the west, it could have been distributed for seed to the agriculturist of the west, so that harvest of 1931 might have improved and also reveals too many glaring examples of malpractices and mismanagement. The official

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 124.

estimated of death and number of people who fled by are unreliable as it was often based on pure guesswork¹⁵.

Apart from severely hit West, the centre, the east and the Far East suffered from acute and severe shortage of foodstuffs in 1931. Though, the Hausa produced surplus of millet and other foodstuffs during the early 1930s but failed to find buyers due to depression in Northern Nigeria. As the Hausa were forced to pay severe taxes as before, they had to break into their capital to sell their cattle which resulted in a very sharp drop of the cattle prices.

The marked difference in the aftermath of famine 1913-15 and 1931-32 could be noticed as sufferings of 1913 -15 went without any notice but famine of 1932 came under the strong attack. The news of mis-management and malpractices made their way to Paris. After 1931-32, famines, the system of millet grainaries was remodelled to be established in each village under the control and supervision of French and ordered to store quantities. Among other measures it established a system of the *societies indigenes de presivoyance* programme designed to combat locust plagues and campaign in favour of root crops as it was immune to locusts and issued a decree designed to check the continuing process of accumulation and capitalization of land in the West, the process which stimulated by the famine. Though, the French maintained the pre 1931 tax level, but look the other way to collect taxes where villages could not pay i.e. is, by cutting back on the already small sums spent on education and social services. Though situation seemed to be improved, it lasted for few years

The administration in Niger after 1933 adapted new policy designed to encourage the development of cash crop sector of the economy by providing price support and undertook number of measures designed to protect the interests of the producers, i.e. to regulate the groundnut trade severely. As the Zerma/songhay were not interested in groundnuts in the west, French adapted coercive method to cultivate. The Nigerien experienced in between 1940 -43 the harshest rule of their history under Vichy regime. In Vichy regime, Nigerien was reduced to the state of no better than slavery. It establishes entirely state controlled economy and banned all trade with

¹⁵ Fuglested, Finn (1983), *A history of Niger, 1880-1960*, CUP, Cambridge, London, p. 133.

Nigeria to retain labour forces that used to migrate during dry seasons. They were forced to produce locally goods which previously was imported to increase production and to sell the surplus at prices fixed arbitrarily by the administration which are below the prices in Nigeria. Moreover, production of cotton was made compulsory and two centres of warehousing were established in Zinder and Tessaoua. In addition to groundnut, pack animals, meat, clarified butter, millet etc. the French also needed a number of natural products for which the Nigerien were sent out in the bush to gather castor oil, tannin, timber, charcoal, straw and so on¹⁶.

As the stepping demand of French conceded with unfavourable climatic conditions and plague of locust, the peasant after satisfying the demand of the administration were left with insufficient quantities of foodstuffs for themselves. As a result, there were acute shortage of foodstuffs in the cercles of Niamey, Tillabery and N'guigmi in 1940, Dosso-loga in 1941, the cercle of Gouri in 1941-42, the cercle of Zinder in 1942 and the cercle of Haradi in 1942-43¹⁷. The French tightened control over their subjects by abolishing the previous exemption from *indigenat* by making vigorous use of it. During the period, the chiefs were compelled to assume the role of front men for French policy who need to display an evident, assistant and uncompromising pro French attitude. Thus, the situation developed was such that one of the world poorest people, Nigerien was to provide one of the richest, i.e. French with all sorts of commodities at lowest possible price. However, situation improved with Gaullist takeover as the ban on trade with Nigeria was lifted, victim of Vichy were liberated and paid damages for injustice that they had endured, the unpopular administrative bodies were also abolished. However, it failed to make any significant improvement. As French made extensive use of forced labour, requisitioning huge quantities of millet, groundnuts, cotton and so on with increased tax burden and also removed chiefs who failed to meet their demand

2.6 French Colonial policy after 1945 and process of decolonization:

With de Gaulle the new colonial policy was articulated at the famous Brazzaville conference in 1944 which proposed a shift of emphasis and of responsibility as they had moral obligation to assist their colonies and to implement

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, Pp.140-41.

principle of the 1789. Thus the nature of interaction between French and Niger changed radically after 1944.

The constitution of 1944 importantly abolished what colonial empire speaks of i.e., 'colonies' to rename it as 'overseas territories' inside the unitary structure of the Republic. As a result, Africans were no longer subject but citizens with the same rights and duties as the people of Metropolitan France, abolished forced labour and the *indigenat* and called upon to take part in the shaping of their own future i.e., to elect the representatives to the Parliament in Paris

However, 1946 saw a resounding victory for a tiny and in many ways corporate group. The évolués succeeded in achieving equality. But since it was only a theoretical equality, their natural inclination was to press for more or real equality¹⁸. The impact of reform was stronger on the societies of the west than on the other societies of Niger. In midst of these reforms, important political development took place with the emergence of political party in Niger. The first political party in Niger, *Parti Progressiste Nigerien* (PPN) was formed by two young African teachers, Dijbo Bakary and Hamani Diori in 1946, shortly after the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) Bamako conference as the Niger section of the RDA¹⁹. The policy adopted by PPN was based on extreme hostility towards the chief and administration on but never against France. It was a struggle between the administrator and évolués, in which the latter sought through the local branch of the inter Africa RDA, PPN to supplant the French administration.

With the establishment of Tony administration repressive measures were introduced which produced widespread discontent in Niger. Thus, coercive measures of colonial policy continued in one way or other. Important political development took place in Niger with the RDA changing its policy resulting in split in the rank of the PPN, Hamani Diori who took the side of Houphouët Boigny but Dijbo Bakary disagreed with the new policy of the RDA, resigned from the PPN and formed new party, called the *Union Démocratique Nigérienne* (UDN). In 1951, RDA affiliated themselves to the small pivotal group of the *Union Démocratique et Social de la*

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 148

¹⁹ Sik, Endre (1974), *The history of black Africa*, Akademiai Kiado Budapest, Hungary, p. 42

Resistance (UDSR) becoming a parti administratif. But PPN/RDA failed to perform in the election.

Corresponding to the political reform of 1946, there was an economic “new deal”. The economy of Niger became more and more embroiled with that of Federation and of French and less and less autonomous which was opposite to political reform as all the important decision of economies of home territories were not only taken outside Africa but also outside their control. Due to favorable climate condition with plentiful rainfall, the millet harvest was well above the average during the second half of the 1940s and throughout the 1950s. In between the period, drought had struck which led to drop in millet production but no famine-localised or otherwise was reported. The administration in Niamey organized a relief programme and the federal authorities in Dakar granted special subsidies. The period also noticed unprecedented expansion in the cash crop sectors of the economy after 1945. The increase in production is credited to French initiative and intervention which included outright price supports subsidies destined to cut transportation costs, regulation governing the operation of the market leading to benefit of the ordinary producer. In 1954, the operation Hironnelle was lunched to facilitate the transportation facility. Thus, all kinds of constructive work was initiated however, it failed to induce the peasant of the West to cultivate groundnuts.

During the process of reforms, the development fund and associated programmes was lunched in favour of state planning and state expenditure on a huge scale, through the famous *fonds d'investissement pour le developpement economique et social* (FIDES) to which the French public purse contributed substantially but were negligible compared with the needs. In case of FIDES, Niger had by 1952 spent some 555 million francs CFA i.e. roughly half the amount originally granted for that period or about 1.6% of the money spent in French West Africa. The fund earmarked for rural development enable the France in Niger to lunch a vast programme of well sinking after 1952. Ironically, the official development plans between 1947 and 1957 contributed to widen the gap between the richer coastal territories and the inland territories and that of towns and countryside. Moreover, the credits granted through FIDES and other funds were paid out to expatriate.

This led to the emergence of urban proletariat in Niamey, Zinder and Maradi who played important role in the politics of Niger for the sort period. Mention can be made of Dijbo Bakary and Mamani Abdoulage. They were successful in organizing number of strikes which resulted in the increase of wage. This strike marked the rise of prominence of Dijbo Bakary's trade union movement, the Communist affiliated *Union des Syndicats Confederalistes du Niger* (USCN) which the vast majority of labourers and workers joined was affiliated to UDN.²⁰

The post 1945 was marked by the increase in the acerage reserve for groundnuts cultivation in the centre and the east which doubled between 1950 and 1960 at the expense of the subsistence sector. Thus, it led to the shortage of land which provoked a chain reaction that had far-reaching consequences which resulted in the movement of the people in the region considered unfit for cultivation and increased tax burden. The tax level after 1951 was complicated as tax burden rose after 1951 and sharply after 1956 making life difficult for the Nigeriens.

2.7 Towards independence:

The momentum for independence got accelerated with the international happenings in 1950s. The turning point came with the 1956 Loi cadre which setup elected territorial assemblies in each colony introducing universal adult suffrage and of abolishing the two college system. In 1957 election, Dijbo Bakary merged the party in the Mouvement Socialiste African (MSA) which regarded itself the Niger section of Lamine Gueye's party. The territorial assembly election result in absolute majority of MSN and new government headed by Dijbo Bakery was formed. Dijbo Bakary, however, fell from the power after 18th months due to his own mis judgement in the referendum of 1958. As General de Gaulle returned to the power in 1958 wanted to restructure his nation and offered the African territories a choice of becoming either departments of France or autonomous republic with the newly conceived French community or opt for independence. Colonies were told that the continued association with France and the new community would bring substantial benefits, whereas a vote for independence would mean a total break and loss of all economic assistance from

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 181.

Paris²¹.

The referendum resulted except Guinea to opt for staying within French community. As Dijbo Bakary and his party, followed Sekou Toure's stand for complete independence from francs which proved to be disastrous as Niger voted for 'yes'. This led to the resignation of Dijbo Government and finally dissolved the territorial assembly and convened general election. Despite the election defeat, Himani Diori became Prime Minister of the Autonomous Republic of Niger under the banner of *Union pour la Communauté Franco Africaine* (UCFA). As Diori got rid of all organized opposition and enlisting support of the French government and of the reactionary chiefs, he became the master of the situation.

²¹ Sheth, V.S (1999), French policy in Africa: An assessment, *Africa Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 76.

**PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER, 1960-2005:
A POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

CHAPTER-III

PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER, 1960-2005: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Ethnicity and Politics in Niger

An ethnic group in Niger plays an important role in the politics of the country. In this respect, mention can be made of Zerma/Songhay who were most benefited from the colonial rule of French with respect to other ethnic groups. As already mentioned, Niger's total population, approximately half of which composed of Hausa; the rest being divided unevenly between four main groups-the Zerma/Songhay, Fulani, Tuareg and Kanuri ensures the situation that ethnicity is a significant political factor. As with many African states, however, the ethnic arithmetic does not match the political arithmetic, which in Niger had been reflected by minority Zerma/Songhay domination of the political arena since World War II¹. Zerma/Songhay inhabits the western Niger marked by political ascendancy during late colonial period has significant role in the politics which has considerable relevance for understanding the country's political history as it has also important bearing on the economy of Niger. At the time of French penetration in the late 19th century, Zerma/Songhay proved to be potential allies of French who were more receptive to French influence than the rigidly structured Hausa, and prompt to grasp any benefit colonial rule had to offer, especially the opportunity to send their children to French Schools. It must also be noted that besides being benefitters, the people of west, on the other hand were also principal victims of colonialism, suffering more heavily from such measures as forced labour and the obligatory millet granaries. This was due to the fact that western part of Niger was always in close contacts with France, especially, after the capital of the territory had been transferred from Zinder in the east to Niamey in the Far West in 1927 remains to be in the hands Himani Diori. Political empowerment of Zerma/Songhay by French began with the practice of treating all chiefs as equal resulting in the reinforcing the position of the weaker traditional rulers of the west at the expense of a reduction in power of the stronger Hausa chiefs of the East. Western ascendancy ensured that the few educated indulged in politics after 1946 were nearly all Zerma/Songhay *evolues* and their PPN-the local

¹ Higgot, Richard and Fuglested, Finn (1975), The 1974 *Coup d'etat* in Niger: Towards an Explanation, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 384.

branch of the RDA drew all its support from their Kinsmen in the West. Politically, the PPN/RDA represented what A.D. Yahaya had described in the Northern Nigerian case, as counter elite, a group of educated, young and ambitious Africans that were capable of taking over the power from the two classic power elites in the colonial situation—the colonial administrators and their aristocratic allies, the traditional rulers. True to type, the party campaigned against the colonial administration and the chief but not against French rule as such². With the attainment of independence PPN were able to persuade new collaborators to join the PPN itself but none of these allies was ever admitted into the politburo of the PPN, the major decision making body in Niger which continued from 1956 until the time of the coup d' etat in 1974. In the politburo, there were no Hausa, Tuareg, Fulari or Kanuri which represent significant population. During the period of 18 years, oligarchy of the Niger made full use of the state machinery to ensure its continuity in power and no non-westerner were admitted into the 12 member politburo of the party which can be reflected from the table 3.1.

Table 3.1
The Politburo of the P.P.N, 1956-74³

Position	Holder	Ethnic group
President	Boubou Hama	Songhay
Premier vice-president	Diambala Maiga	Songhay
Deuxieme vice-president	Toulou Mallam	Zerma
Secetaire general	Hamani Diori	Zerma
Secetaire adjoint	Dandhobi Mahamane	Mawri
Secetaire politique	Courmo Barcourgne*	Zerma
Secetaire cconomique	Noma Kaka	Mawri
Secetaire social	Rene Delanne*	Metis
Tresorier general	Barkire Halidou	Zerma
Secetaire a la propagande	Alou Himadou	Songhay
Secetaire a la propagande	Issa Garba	Zerma
Secetaire de seance	Abdou Gao	Mawri

* These two members were dismissed during 1971.

However, the dominance of Zerma/Songhay continued until the National Conference in 1991 was formed. The politics of Niger being dominated by minority ethnic group Zerma/Songhay became the decision maker of the Niger destiny as the

² Jebrin, Ibrahim (1994), Political exclusion, Democratization and dynamics of Ethnicity in Niger, *Africa Today*, Third Quarter, p. 22.

³ Higgot, Richard and Fuglested, Finn (1975), The 1974 *Coup d'etat* in Niger: Towards an Explanation, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 386.

top two official holders were always Zerma/Songhay: Hamani Diori and Boubou Hama; Seyni Kountche and Sani Sido; Seyni Kountche and Ali Saibou; Ali Saibou and Ahmadou Maiga. According to Soulay Adji, in terms of political control, the only contest in Niger politics in 30 years has been between aristocrats and commoners of Zerma/Songhay groups while the elites of the other ethnic groups have been uneasy onlookers. He adds that even in the army, the Zerma/Songhay composed at least 70% of the officer's corps. This ethnic control had repercussions on the distribution of natural resources⁴. The survey carried out by Adji in 1990 revealed that 62.7% of development projects were in Zerma/Songhay areas and only 22.7% in Hausa areas. To Finn Fugelstad, Niger had been the victims of sub-imperialism of the Zerma/Songhay in the sense that the Diori government pursued exactly the same policy as the French after 1922 that of trying to sterilize all political activity to silence the voice of the average Nigerien. Thus, Niger has been characterized by the authoritarian exclusion of large segments of society from the participation in the political process.

On the other hand, the Hausa looked for the opportunities in the economic field as they were engaged in the production of groundnut and livestock. As the east continually paid higher taxes than the west, it resulted in the regional conflict. Thus, ethnicity and regionalism has strong bearing in the economy of Niger. The European powers being divided the continent in the straight lines without taking into account of ethnic composition had resulted in situation where different ethnic groups clashes with each other. Therefore, in the analysis of political economy of Niger, ethnicity is needed to be kept in minds.

3.2 Political Economy of Development in Niger:

The post-colonial expansion of Niger organizational bourgeoisie was driven by party control of the political and administrative apparatus and by Diori determination to establish a modern economic sector. As one of the France's poorest colonies marked by landlocked and drought prone territory, the people of Niger long depended on resources external to the region for their survival. The development strategy that emerged from the colonial era was based on revenues generated by

⁴ *ibid.*, Pp. 24-25.

groundnut exports, sporadic livestock sales, French subsidies and modest amounts of foreign aid, of which, two of the sectors-groundnuts and livestock sales could be directly influenced by the policies of the National government. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the groundnut production remains the mainstay of a cash crop economy. Under the state led modernization programme the revenue from groundnut continued to provide the most important source of finance for economic expansion. Public sector control of prices along with marketing and credit for groundnuts and less important cash crops such as cotton and rice together with the taxation of exports provided legal mechanism for extracting revenue and transferring them to the budding secondary sector thereby stimulating the growth of a vast parallel market. During the period, despite the fact that 80% of Niger export proceeds came from groundnut, the rural sector was only allocated \$4.3 million out of the total general budget of \$79.7 million for 1968 and 1969⁵. The key institutions during the one party rule were established – Bureau Politique (BP) and the Conseil des Ministres [CM] and the Assemblée Nationale (AN). The party sought to extend central political control by favouring PPN loyalist for high level administrative posts and appointments to the chieftaincy. To this, Diouri relied primarily on clientelistic relation with rural elites who served either as deputies in the Assemblée Nationale or as member of local PPN party committees. Patronage was the glue that held the system together with resources derived from the state. The system that developed in Niger aftermath of independence is marked by the neglect of rural development and the small portion of budget that allocated to it was pocketed by rural elites which led to the deepening of underdevelopment of rural Niger.

Transportation policy as a whole shaves a very poor development. The road system (4,000 km) and the parking facilities (for 1,700 lorries) were planned with the sole aim of making the country independent of Nigeria. The joint Dahomey-Niger railway and transport undertaking (OCND) set up in 1959 to support 'operation swallow' has an average annual operating deficit of more than 200m francs, covered until 1964 mainly by subsidies from the government of Dahomey and Niger (at a rate of 7.60 franc per Kilometric ton). The existence of the organization is also constantly threatened by the disagreements between the two countries. In contrast, the

⁵ Higgot, Richard and Fuglested, Finn (1975), *The 1974 Coup d'etat in Niger: Towards an Explanation*, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 384.

improvement of the river as a transport route has never been given sufficiently serious consideration, in the framework of the economic integration of Mali, Niger and Nigeria⁶.

Groundnut marketing was partially nationalized with the Union Nationale de Credit et de Cooperation (UNCC) and the Societe Nigerienne de Commercialisation d'Arachide (SONARA) both established in 1962, spearheading expanding state involvement in commercial markets. The UNCC organized cooperatives, extended credit and provided extension services, while SONARA was the marketing board. In the initial year of 1960s, it holds record purchase which permitted Niger to accumulate substantial surpluses from its groundnut exports. With the proportion of subsidies from France, SONARA offered producer prices above world market level until 1967 and attracted groundnut from Nigeria too. Indeed, artificially low prices paid by the Northern Nigeria Marketing Board (NNMB) until 1972, combined with the weakness of the Nigerian Pound relative to the CFA Franc, enabled the Niger government to use its producer price setting powers to manipulate the direction of cross border flow in its favour⁷. This was due to the terms of agreement that establish the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1967, France stopped paying preferential prices for the agricultural commodities purchased from her former colonies which had immediate impact on the peasant producer. The situation got worsen with the onset of drought in 1968 followed by the NNMB's turn to an aggressively competitive pricing policy in 1972, steadily eroded SONARA's volume of commercial purchases and export sales resulting in downside of a monocrop economy. The planner tried to diversify the economy by developing commercial markets in the livestock sector. Between 1968 and 1972 four parastatals were established to create new markets and co-ordinate state intervention: the *Societe Nigerienne d'Exportation des Animaux* [SONERAN] targeted the production and sales of meat and livestock for export, the *Societe Nigerienne de Tannerie* [SONITAN] and the *Societe Nigerienne de collection de cuirs et de Peaux* [SNCPP] assumed the responsibility for the collection, tanning and export of hides; while the *office du Lait du Niger* [OLAN] organized commercial dairy, production for the

⁶ Amin, Samir (1973), *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*, translated by Francis McDonagh, Monthly Review Press, New York, p. 138.

⁷ Robinson, Pearl T (1991), Niger-Anatomy of a Neo-traditional Corporatist State, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Oct., p. 6.

domestic market. These agencies had only a marginal impact on the economic behaviour of herders⁸. As in case of SONARA and the UNCC, they served the state both as instruments of intervening in the economy and as political patronage bureaucracies, providing jobs, services and contracts for the party's clients in the countryside.

With the diminishing revenue from groundnuts from 1968, it shrank the patronage base of the state having its impact in politics too. It resulted in internal clashes over ideological direction and party renewal. By 1971, few disgruntled cadres were openly challenging the legitimacy of one party rule and calling for competitive elections to seats in National Assembly.

3.3 Uranium, the backbone of Niger's economy in 1970's

Niger being landlocked with poorly developed infrastructure had deterred major foreign investment but with the discovery of vast deposits of uranium, the state enterprises of Niger created several fields notably banking, communication, hotels and construction along with a host of agencies to control the import, export, prices and marketing of key commodities. The rapidly expanding public sector provided a steady source of sinecures and contract work for party loyalist. In addition to their high salaries, leading bureaucrats also received housing transport and other allowances as well as preferential access to staple commodities such as millet through the agencies of the central government⁹. As French maintained near total control over decision about exploration, production and commercial sales, while exports were subject to the restrictive provisions in the Franco-Nigerien defence agreement. However, during the waning years of the groundnut economy, when drought severely crippled agricultural and livestock production, Diouri became convinced that the terms of France's participation in the mining industry has to be altered. Agonizing over the specter of economic collapse as well as worsening political problem within the PPN, Diouri apparently drew a direct link between party revitalization increased uranium

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹ Higgot, Richard and Fuglested, Finn (1975), The 1974 *Coup d'etat* in Niger: Towards an Explanation, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 384.

revenues and his own political salvation¹⁰. To the new agreement it would guarantee more rapid development of the mining sector, securing a better price for uranium and expand the Niger's government involvement in the industry.

3.4 The Sahelian Disaster of 1968-74

For the three million people of Sahelian zone of West Africa, the right to eat was endangered from 1968-74 when the world war and longest draught of the country descended upon them. Famine killed an estimated 200,000 people. Up to 6 million more were in the grip of malnutrition reducing their already limited life expectancy. More than 3.5 million cattle died by UN counts. The environment and economies of the six worst affected countries – Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta and Chad stretching nearly 2,500 miles along the southern edge of the Saharan desert were damaged permanently¹¹. The period marked the shortfall of rain compared with normal was more severe from further north within the Sahelian region i.e. the areas that normally received less rainfall. The pastoral and agricultural economy of the region was severely affected by the drought. The peak year of suffering had been 1973. There were reports of prolonged drought across West Africa which got worse as the drought progressed and by the spring of 1972 the UN WFP noted that drought in the Sahelian countries has been endemic requiring that special treatment be given to the region in providing emergency food aid. Of the countries of Sahelian region, Mauritania, Mali and Niger been hitted harder than any countries.

Different explanations have been forwarded for the causes of disaster of 1968-73. To some it is ecological while to other it was decline in food production or mono-crop production etc. Therefore, it is necessary to look in depth about the causes of food crises in Niger which led to the famine of 1968-74. The historical process to the understanding of the food crisis may be linked to colonialism which implied a major break with the previous organization to life in a number of important respects. As discussed, colonial period marked its conquest by war and disruption creating fertile ground for famines, epidemics and social chaos by reducing the capacity of local people to withstand draught. Along with this, French rule induced many changes. The

¹⁰ Robinson, Pearl T (1991), Niger-Anatomy of a Neo-traditional Corporatist State, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Oct., p. 7.

¹¹ Gavsan, Arthur (1985), *Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West*, Penguin books Led, England, p. 46.

imposition of colonial boundaries blocked off immediate response to drought by pastoralists and others as in case of boundary of Niger and Nigeria which had long term impact in the economy of Niger who would otherwise have migrated freely. The process of colonization being marked by high taxation to make African peasants to forcibly take wage labour or export crop production have further reduced the food availability. This primarily affected men, leaving an increase portion of farm work to women to have dual work. After independence, the process of commoditization and integration of African peasant further got accelerated in form of neocolonialism. Another important explanation to the crisis is the entitlement approach. The figure of food availability per head and calorie consumption from 1961-75 are given from 1961-75 from which the prime reason for the crisis could be analysed.

Table 3.2

Net Food Output per Head (Index)¹²

	1961-5	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Chad	100	90	87	84	84	69	63	69	71
Mali	100	93	99	97	90	73	61	65	80
Mauritania	100	98	100	98	92	80	67	68	68
Niger	100	92	99	88	88	81	57	65	60
Senegal	100	81	87	66	89	56	67	88	107
Upper Volta	100	106	103	102	93	85	76	84	90

Source: FAO Production Yearbook 1976, Table 6.

Table 3.3

Calorie Consumption per head in Sahel countries¹³

Countries	1961-5	1972	1973	1974
Chad	100	76	73	76
Mali	100	86	86	88
Mauritania	100	91	94	95
Niger	100	86	89	85
Senegal	100	93	104	107
Upper Volta	100	86	85	96

Source: Calculated from data given in Table 97 of FAO Production Yearbook 1976.

¹² Sen, Amartya (1981), *Poverty and Famine: - An essay on entitlement and deprivation*, OUP, Delhi, p. 117.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 117.

It could be analysed that apart from Senegal, rest of the countries had decline in the food consumption. However the food availability decline (FAD) approach cannot be accepted as the explanation of the food crisis as it delivers rather little. First, in the peak year of famine, 1973, the decline in food availability per head was rather small. Even a comparison with the pluvial early 1960s for Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Upper Volta (less than a 15% decline of calorie availability per head) and none at all for Senegal¹⁴. Niger and Mali had decline in the famine year of 1973 with indices standing respectively at 57 and 61. But Senegal, which was less affected, had an index value of 56 for 1972. The lowest index value for any country for any year. So the availability of food in Niger was not the problem. FAD approach moreover, relies on aggregate supply and ignores distributional changes. However, clear dramatic shift in the purchasing power distribution have been identified between dry Sahel regions and rest of the regions. With the destruction of crops and the death of animal these dry part of the Sahel experienced decline in the income and purchasing power of pastoralists and agriculturalist resulting in decline of food and also in the sharp reduction in the ability of the affected people to command food. Therefore, it matters little whether the crop destroyed happened to be food crops which is consumed directly or cash crop which is sold to buy food. To Sen, in either case the person's entitlement to food collapses. It is this collapse that directly relates his starvation rather than some remote aggregate statistics about food supply per head. Even though better condition in the south permitted some relief, discrimination against the pastoralist nomadic people in the camp can be noticed. The point is that the food output in the country has gone down by moderate ratio, but it is the command over the food that had slipped drastically.

The problem got further, worsens with the monetary obligation of taxation which had to be paid despite the drought and by the loss of job opportunity arising from 'derived deprivation'. In Niger, Public expenditure has been rigidly controlled and taxation has been kept as high as the country could sustain. The result of this austerity has been a rise in the national income from 2,300 million CFA franc in 1958 to 6,300 million in 1963.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 119.

During the period of Hamani Diori, number of plot was engineered with considerable terrorist activities. A large consignment of arms was discovered in the Southern town of Zinder on September, 15, 1964 and on October 27, 1964 several skirmishes broke out on the frontier near Tera between the rebels and the national army and police forces. The repressive measures was taken after these organized outburst of violence which were very harsh making excited mind think twice next time before they took up arms against their government. Moreover, Niger also experienced tribal unrest causing new worries and the government was reshuffled to provide accommodation to the Hausa. The period of 1960s though had stable government, political unrest continued with the terrorist activity and tribal unrest which had its impact on the agricultural production.

The problem of food crisis got deepen with the corruption of the PPN elite which was of common knowledge in Niamey for several years, personified by Madame Diori, the President's wife whom the student called '1' Aulrichieme after Marie Antoinette. She had acquired a considerable fortune, including many luxury houses in Niamey which she rented to foreign embassies and State Corporation at exorbitant rates¹⁵. Along with Madame Diori, other members of the PPN elite also profited by use of its power. So, along with the natural, it was man-made disaster.

3.5 Coup de tat of 1974:

The deteriorating political and economic condition of Niger led to the *Coup d'etat* in 1974. However, the period 1960-74 was marked by number of attempts to overthrow Diori government but was unsuccessful. Diori regime did not tolerate any opposition as it banned Sawaba party in late 1960s and its member was arrested. Members were later released in 1968. The situation became serious with ethnic and racial tension as different groups vying for power. According to Africa contemporary record: 1968-1969.

“Inspite of the overall picture of political stability, there were tension in the ranks of the ruling party, the Progressive Party of Niger (PPN) ... until 1968 there had

¹⁵ Higgot, Richard and Fuglested, Finn (1975), The 1974 *Coup d'etat* in Niger: Towards an Explanation, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 390.

been no reorganization of the party... During the first half of the 1968 there was a growing chorus of accusations ranging from mismanagement to corruption.

At the beginning of August (1968), the President told a meeting of PPN personnel that the party was not fulfilling its mission. Many of the charges against public officials had been justified; a number of prefects and other officials were dismissed; some were posted to other areas. The guidelines for the reorganization of the PPN were laid down in a document published in October. It condemned regionalism and excessive personal ambition”¹⁶.

The problem of ethnic and regional tension in Niger assumed special significance, in 1968 with the civil war going on in Nigeria. However, an entirely different crisis developed which was to affect political fortunes of Diori in coming years. In 1968, along with civil war, devastating drought descended on Niger and rest of the Sahel. The environment of Niger got critical with crop failure, people and livestock dying from starvation and lack of water which resulted in the starvation of half of the country’s population with the failure to respond at the time of crisis with continuing excess of PPN elite the economy of Niger got collapsed. Diori tried hard to renegotiate with French *the accords de Cooperation* on the terms which would be more advantageous to Niger notably to secure a substantial increase in the price being paid for uranium. Ironically for Diori, this relief was too late to come. As drought continued unabated in 1974, Lieutenant-Colonel Seyni Kountche, Chief of staff of Niger’s small 2,500 man army overthrow Diori on April 15, 1974 accusing Diori’s government of corruption and of mishandling the drought situation.

3.6 Kountche’s policies and programmes related to food security

Kountche justified its action as to get rid of the corrupt politician and civil servant and to put Niger on a firm and orderly path towards economic development. Kountche suspended the constitution, centralized power in a supreme military council and waged an incessant battle with the help of a pervasive intelligence network against what was perceived to be an intransigent and venal bureaucracy. Seizing power, conseil Militaire Supreme [CMS] install a neotraditionlist military regime.

¹⁶ Mwakikagile, Godfrey (2001), *Military coups in West Africa since the Sixties*, Nova Science Publishers Inc, Huntington, New York, p. 127.

Officers from the armed forces were named to head government, ministries, all seven administrative prefectures, strategically sensitive sous-prefectures, as well as the state bureaucracy charged with food aid and famine relief as Kountche military regime made an emergency appeal to other nations for relief package which was substantially received.

CMS resuscitated the Association of Traditional Chiefs from the colonial past, launched the moderately reformist Islamic Association of Niger and fashioned a national youth movement called *Samariya* modeled after the Hausa age-grade association to served both as cultural referents to accenture national identity and mediating structures to facilitate communications between centralized power and influential individual in the countryside.

Kountche's development programme in rural areas began with launch of *Societe de developpement*. Irrigation schemes became the key components in the ministry of rural development's as two pronged strategy to reduce chronic food deficits and expand the commercial production of rice and cotton. Kountche's in 1974 declared that all land, no matter how it had been acquired and no matter under which tenure rule it was held should henceforth belong as private property to the poorer cultivating it. Thus, provoked conflict between users and owners of the land in which the latter defied the declaration and insisted that a tithe be paid in recognition of their ownership. However, tithe was still paid recognizing that land belonged to the owner and not to the cultivators – a defiance of the Koutche decree¹⁷. The government issued a decree prohibiting any land tenure dispute resolution by any local authority – governmental or traditional leading to a situation of precarious stability. It legalized six different types of politico-legal institutions for settlement of conflict. The six politico legal institution has its primary domain as drawn in table 3.4.

¹⁷ Lund, Christian (1997), Legitimacy, Land and Democracy in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 24, No.71, p. 101.

Table 3.4

Institutions Dealing with Land Conflicts¹⁸

Adm.	Trad.Farmers	Trade.Past.	Legal	Police	Rol.
Prefet Sous-prefet Chef de Poste	Sultan Chef de Canton Chef de Village	Chef de Group Chef de Tribu	Juge de Paix	Gendamerie	Kadi

Thus, the institutional building was focused to overcome agricultural crisis by the issue of decree of land to tiller. But, it was unsuccessful. Additionally, regional productivity project established in each prefecture to promote surplus production of millet and sorghum which provided credit and extension service for the diffusion of annual traction, fertilizers and improved seeds varieties through co-operatives was organized by UNCC. The other most important governmental agency in terms of the breadth of its distributive operation was the *office des produits Vivriers Nigeriens* (OPVN) which undertook purchase and subsidized sales of millet and sorghum serving as channel for food aid was established. However, it has been noted in practice that the efforts for making Niger self-sufficiency in food remain to be distant dream. As the effort for irrigation schemes and productivity projects for distributing patronage in rural areas remain ill-suited for the long term goal of transforming the rural economy. The impact of the development project was minimal and their beneficiaries were few. It must be noted that the welfare state measures the *Societe de developpement* with wide ranging initiatives proved beneficiaries only to state functionaries, rural elites, salaried workers, urban residents, merchant, truckers, building contractors for the provision of goods and services.

The origin of *Societe de developpement* can be traced to the need to draw rural producers into the market led regime to focus on grass root participation in socio-economic development. Kountche appointed a National Commission presided by Lt. Col. Adamou Moumouni Djermakoye to set forth the guidelines for a formal participatory structure that would institutionalize a new set of political relations and drew key elements of society into dialogue with the state and called perspective structure the *Societe de developpement*. Lt. Col. Djermakoye reported in 1981 suggested corporatist solution to the problem of governance posed by the economic

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 102.

crisis. Kountche, who never warmed to the prospect of sharing power with civilian politicians, was nevertheless interested in building a popular consensus to support his rule. Participation in the *Societe de developpement* was to be the embodiment of this consensus¹⁹.

Initiative was made to create a network of local *conseils de developpement* (CDs) sufficient in scope and number to incorporate the entire Nigerien populace into grass-roots assemblies. The *societe de developpement* was structured into five tiers of CD's-village, local, sub regional, regional and national, latter called the *Conseil National de Developpement* (CND). Each tier corresponds to a rung in the administrative authority assumed the presidency of the corresponding CDs. Thus, village chiefs and canton's chiefs were the designated leaders of village and local CD's, the *sous-prefets* headed the sub-regional CDs, and Niger's military *prefets* functioned as president of all seven regional CD's. The Conseil Militaire Supreme [CMS] appointed civilian administrators to preside as President of the CND. By design, the CND was a consultative body lacking legislative authority²⁰. The council meetings generally discussed on the issue of declining revenue, rural investment priorities, trade liberalization policies, measures affecting the administrative and commercial management of the livestock sub sector and security issues.

In practices, it has been found that the composition and its effectiveness are limited to a particular section. A study was conducted by Pear T Robinson in 1985 to find popular participation in Western Niger where 34.3% of 500 respondent were ignorant of the existence of their own village CD's, 46.8% did not know why CD's had been created and 79.2% had no knowledge about the operation of their local councils; in 1984 survey conducted in Tibri, rural Hausa community in the South-Central region of the country revealed high level of awareness but only handful conceived of the *Societe de developpement* in political terms. Of which 54% heard of CND; in Dosso, the seat of *prefect ure* in the south-west shows higher level of awareness among urban residents as individual are aware through routinely reports in the radio and television in the indigenous language news broadcast whereas as low

¹⁹ Robinson, Pearl T (1991), Niger-Anatomy of a Neo-traditional Corporatist State, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Oct., p. 12.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 12

awareness in rural areas accounted to the news vacuum which remain insulated from informal networks of communication within the village or town. Though, rural producers and youth were regarded as the backbone of the *Societe de developpement* but at every level composite profile of CD's seems to be unrepresentative of such claims 50% of all council seats designated for UNC and *Samariya* delegates in CD's, was in reality representative of the either big farmers or big farmers who double as entrepreneurs, primarily merchants, truckers, building contractors etc. The other mass organization called *Association des Femmes Nigerien* (AFN) was represented by professional woman, civil servants, royal woman and female griots. Thus the notion of creating social strata close to rural development incorporate into the *societe de developpement* does not hold in practice. The actual representation was limited only for the socio professional organizations: the merchants and truckers associations' trade union, the Islamic association and the respective association's chiefs, retired soldiers and griots. In simple, representation is limited to the urban elite and people with money.

3.7 Structural adjustment and its impact on food:

After the drought of 1968-73 Niger experienced boom in its economy as the price of uranium on the world market got sky-rocketed. It recorded six fold increases in uranium prices between 1973 and 1979 which resulted of an accidental confluence of external political development that were unlikely to be sustained. According to the energy market analyst, Marion Redetzki, key among these factors were the OPEC induced oil price shock, which buoyed the demand for alternative energy sources, the improved ability of uranium producers to set monopolistic prices through their own cartel, a political decision in the U.S to postpone the recycling of spent uranium fuel, the uncertainty in supply caused by the nuclear non-proliferation policies of the Australian, Canadian and U.S. governments, and sudden shift in the uranium contracting practices of power utilities from short term agreement to fixed commitment contracts stretching eighteen years into the future²¹. These created new market condition spurred prospecting activities and by 1980 its uranium revenues increased 8 folds within a decade becoming from the status of a non-producers to fifth

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 9.

rank in the world. Overall GDP, adjusted for inflation increased at an annual average rate of 7.6% between 1976 and 1980 peaking at 13% in 1979²².

Thus, the period marked structural shift from groundnut to uranium economy generating huge financial resources. This led to the peak off from the initial pronouncement concerning scarcity in the economy to growing economy. But within short period the demand for uranium dropped sharply in 1981, combine with decline of agricultural production due to unfavourable weather created yet, another situation for economic crisis in Niger. Being unable to meet its repayment obligations, the government appealed for external help from Paris and London Clubs. Finally, getting agreed to the proposed rescheduling of debt, albeit only on condition that a rigorous IMF stabilization programme was implemented.

The different economic reform programmes undertaken since 1983, elements of which frequently overlap, were backed by the IMF [with four standby agreements up to November, 1986], by the World Bank [with a structural adjustment loan of US \$60m. for 1986 and 1987 [first phase] and an \$80m. Credit for 1987 and 1988 for an adjustment programme affecting public enterprises and finally by USAID [with an aid programme for the agricultural sector: the first phase amounting to \$29m. to be disbursed between March 1985 and August 1987]. Further, IMF support was agreed in December, 1988, amounting to SDR 50m²³.

The World Bank analyst blamed the crisis to the following factors:

- The poor management of public resources mainly because of the dominant role of a large and inefficient parastatal sector;
- A modern private sector constrained by lack of raw material and with development hampered by a system of incentives encouraging investment per se and not the economic viability of projects.
- A weak resource base, rapid demographic growth in an isolated economy in which agriculture, always at the mercy of climatic hazards, remained the principal sector and agricultural policies which failed to encourage appropriate production through adequate price incentives.

²² *ibid.*, (Data), p. 10.

²³ Connick, John and Tingiuri, Kiari (1992), "Niger", in Duncan, Alex and Howell, John (ed.), *Structural Adjustment and the African Farmer*, Overseas Development Institute in association with James Curry Ltd., p. 164.

- The inefficient use of human resources²⁴.

Therefore, the reform aimed at three areas:

Budgetary Stringency: The World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme [SAP] aimed to encourage growth through efficient use of allocation of resources with IMF stabilization programmes to reduce internal demand through improvement of the tax structure, limiting the growth of government current expenditure, reducing and restructuring capital expenditure, reducing arrears in internal payments to the state, improving the financial returns of parastatals etc.

Parastatal sector reforms: Adjustment programme aimed at reduction of the sector's role through privatization and incentives policies for the private sectors and greater efficiency in those remaining under state control.

Rural Sector: In rural sector revision of cereal policy, system of agricultural credit and lastly administrative and fiscal friendly exports were aimed by USAID and SAP programme to increase agricultural productivity. Measures for reorientation of the investment programme in favour of small rural direct initiatives mobilizing local resources relying on the devolution of responsibility to village groups with the hope that each investment be able to create the resources necessary to cover its operation and maintenance costs and be able to survive without recourse to external financing.

Economic reform programme revised cereals policy by reducing the role of *Office Des Produits Vivriers Du Niger (OPVN)* by freeing the marketing of cereals. Thus, monopoly of OPVN's import was abolished and made its purchases and sales cut down to the renewal of one-third of the stock each year. It also reduces the number of OPVN's sales outlets which led to the establishment of a system of tendering for its purchasing and sales to introduce for encouraging the participation of the private sector and co-operatives in cereals marketing. Thus, official producers prices for millet and sorghum been abolished along with other agricultural products paving way for price liberalizing. Cow peas and livestock exports are also to be stimulated through the removal of fiscal and administrative barriers and marketing monopolies held by *Societe Nigerienne de l'Arachide (SONARA)* and *Riz du Niger [RINI]*. The subsidies granted for the purchase of agricultural credit, the operation of the National Bank for Agricultural Credit (CNCA) were suspended due to low rate of

²⁴ *ibid.*, 164.

debt recovery but was allowed to continue for certain projects subject to the assurance by donors for supplying the appropriate funds. Credit system was to be replaced by the new system to encourage the co-operatives to play intermediary role in the supply and marketing of cereals and in supplying farmers with inputs.

Under SAP, agreement the state was to retain only 25 of 60 publicly owned enterprises, 22 of which would be partially privatized. Deep cuts were to be made in personnel for example; by 1986 the staff was to be reduced by 38% in three public enterprises and by 20% in the national development bank. Other reforms have included improvement in the collection of revenues, the elimination of public sector import monopolies and the reduction of price control on over 40 principal commodities²⁵.

However, the dismay picture has emerged of the relative ineffectiveness of state involvement in rural areas of Niger. Producers and consumers had not been provided with the services they need in order to recover from economic crisis. Instead, they have obliged to rely on their own resources or on an informal sector which has, in many instances, considerable shortcoming²⁶. The weakness of the link between the rural population and a formal public sector, which has been the focus of the economic recovery led to the inevitable conclusion that the rural population have so far been little affected. In case of water supply in Niger *office de l'Exploitation des Eaux de Sous-Sol* (OFEDS) was given responsibility for new installation of watering point but had in practice failed to come up to expectation level. This was particularly due to insufficient resources to ensure upkeep and lack of well-structured distribution network for spare parts. Moreover, corruption and high default rates on season lending eventually bankrupted the agricultural credit agency which together made Niger far from self-sufficiency. Thus, the SAP programme has failed to take into account social and economic constraints that limit the ability of small scale farmers to respond market incentives.

²⁵ Graybeal, N. Lynn and Picard, Louis A. (1991), Internal capacity in Guinea and Niger, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, June, p, 293.

²⁶ Connick, John and Tingiuri, Kiari (1992), "Niger", in Duncan, Alex and Howell, John (ed.), *Structural Adjustment and the African Farmer*, Overseas Development Institute in association with James Curry Ltd., p. 187.

3.8 Implication of domestic and international events on food crisis.

3.8.1 Political instability of 1990's

With the death of Kountche in 1987, the chief of staff of the Armed Forces, Col. Ali Saibou assumed the role as chairman of *Conseil Militaire Supreme* (CMS) and head of the state. In August 1988, Ali Saibou announced the creation of *Movement National De La Societe De Developpement* (MNSD) and appointed a national development council to draft a constitution based upon the national charter. The national charter reiterates the policy orientation previously agreed with the World Bank and included in the regime's 1987-91 development plan and further articulates an economic strategy for the Nigerien administration that :

- (i) Gives priority to the engines of growth in the economy
- (ii) Promotes food self-sufficiency
- (iii) Provides investment which considers recurrent as well as direct cost and
- (iv) Ensures that plans for national development include the private sector and local collectivities. In this context of policy reform, the new role of the state would be to co-ordinate activities and to provide institutional and financial support in order to achieve balanced development²⁷.

The constitution was finally adopted and election for the President was held in 1989 to which Ali Saibou was elected. The election for National Assembly was also conducted. During the period GDP per-capita remained far below pre-1980 levels. The decline was mainly precipitated by the dramatic deteriorating in the market and price for uranium which fell from \$460m in 1980's to an estimated \$187m in 1990 and further estimated \$152 millions in 1992²⁸. The decline is attributed to deteriorating terms of trade being intensified with the deadlocking of uranium by state of the former U.S.S.R. The loss of Niger can be gauged by the percentage that it constitute to the Niger's total export revenue i.e. 80% resulting in rapid decline in the country's overall industrial growth and its governmental revenue. Moreover, poor rainfall had precluded any significant gain in agricultural production and exports e.g.

²⁷ Graybeal, N. Lynn and Picard, Louis A. (1991), Internal capacity in Guinea and Niger, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, June, p.297.

²⁸ Charlick, Robert B. (1994), "Niger", in Shaw, Timothy and Okolo, Julius Emeka, (ed.), *The political economy of foreign policy in ECOWAS*, St. Martin Press, Great Britain, p. 104.

in 1990, total agricultural and livestock export valued at only \$48 million. All this contributed to an economic crisis translating into debt and liquidity crisis. Thus, Niger's transitional government found itself in trap of fiscal collapse. The crisis became so severe that University of Niger, like many other public sector establishment was forced to suspend operations for want to revenue. Niger total foreign debt had infected grown geometrically from less than \$20 million in 1978 to an estimated \$1.58 billion in 1990. This level of debt produced a totally unmanaged debt service ratio of over 50% in the mid 1980's. Even, significant debt relief concessions by the World Bank, the French, Swiss and US in 1991 could reduced this to about 32%²⁹.

Along with this, Tuareg revolt broke out in 1990 attacking prison and gendamerie at Tehin-Tabaradn in North Eastern Niger as a reaction of the Tuareg dissatisfaction to the promises made by Saibou following his accession to power in 1987. Further, students and Trade Union began protest in response to austerity. This led in 1991 to announce that the armed forces were to withdraw from political life as measure to pacify the situation. Saibou resigned as chairman of the MNSD and the National Conference was convened with 488 delegates representing 52 political parties, professional organization, religious groups, peasants and woman groups declared as sovereign from government authority and appointed transitional Prime Minister charged with organizing a return to democratic civil rule overriding all pre-existing institutional power. The National conference finally voted to suspend the constitution and way for multi-party system was made. It also voted for suspend adherence to the IMF and World Bank sponsored programmes of economic adjustment.

The three issues were widely debated in the National Conference. The first was the history of political crime in the country from state directed political assassination in the 1960's and 1970s to the massacre of Tuaregs. The second issue was of corruption where the vast majority of Niger's political and technocratic elite have evolved in a culture of wide spread unchecked corruption. To check corruption, tribunal was formed to try the accused persons and recover the money

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 105.

misappropriated. Lastly, economic and financial crisis which virtually bankrupted Niger. The participants of conference were unimpressed by the argument of SAP and voted to reject it. A constitutional referendum took place in December 1992 where new document was approved by 89.8%. Ousmane *of alliance des forces de changement* [AFC] became President with Issoufou as Prime Minister. Though the government adapted the minimum programme of action aimed at promoting democracy, social justice, national unity and integration as well as peaceful resolution of the Toureg problem with the transition from an austere ethnically based and authoritarian military regime to a civilian democratically elected pluralist regime. However, number of constraints remains with the potential to destabilize the decentralization process. Firstly, Niger being bankrupt had arrears of salary payments in the public sector for over the past two years. The situation got complicated with the unwillingness of government or its incapability to carry out massive cuts in salaries or in the size of the public work force that being demanded by IFIs and also unavailability of new sources of funds.

Secondly, Tuareg insurrection led by *Liberation de l'Air et de* ('Azawak (FLAA), Front de Liberation du Sahara and an umbrella organization, *Co-ordination of Armed Resistance* (CRA) created political turmoil. However, attempts to work out compromise in 1994 failed over the issue of federalism with government refusing to accept federal structure. The Tuareg uprising continued imposing severe strains on the democratization process in a complex and dangerous game played by the army, the Tuareg elite and the rest of the elite³⁰.

Thirdly, organized strike by USTN, unrest in the army along with political turmoil continues to dominate the decade of 1990's. MNSD leading an opposition campaign of civil disobedience demanded representation in the government proportionate to the percentage of votes won by Mamadou at second round of the presidential voting in 1993. This led to the arrest of Mamadou and other opposition leaders in 1994. Political environment got aggravated with the PNDS withdrawing from AFC and resigning of Issoufou as Prime Minister in protest of transfer of some of the premier's power to the President. A new minority government led by Souley

³⁰ Jebrin, Ibrahim (1994), Political exclusion, Democratization and dynamics of Ethnicity in Niger, *Africa Today*, Third Quarter, p. 36.

Abdoulaye of the CDS was formed but failed to survive 'no-confidence' motion proposed by the MNSD and PNDS. However Ousmane dissolved the Assemblée nationale, confirming the Abdoulaye government in office by pending new elections provoking criticism and strike by USTN and other organizations. Finally, election to assemblée nationale was conducted in 1995. However, Ousmane declined to accept the new majority nominee Hama Amadou, the Secretary – General of MNSD as Prime Minister instead appointed another member of that party, Amadou Aboubacar Cisse stating that the latter as a former official of the World Bank would be ideally suitable to the essential task of negotiating new funding agreements with external creditors. But, Ousmane had to bow before parliamentary motion of censure against Cisse and accept the majority nomination of Amadou as Prime Minister. The new government swiftly ended several months of labour unrest, agreeing to cancel right to strike legislation that had been major source of dispute and to pay two months salary arrears. However, the scenario of Niger soon got disrupted with frequent dispute between the President and the Prime Minister on the question of procedure concerning the prerogatives and competence. Further, the problem got deteriorated with the government draft legislation for the sale of 30 state aids parastatal enterprises exacerbated both industrial and institutional friction and renewed strike action by USTN in support of various salary demands. These finally resulted in *Coup d etat* in 1996 under the command of Col. Ibrahim Bare Mainassara who formed a 12 member *Conseil De Salut National (CSN)* which he chaired. The coup was justified on the ground that it was necessary to avoid the ongoing political chaos resulting in suspension of the constitution, assemble nationally dissolved and a state of emergency was imposed. A national forum was constituted to reconsider the constitution and the electoral code, with the aim of preventing a recurrence of the paralysis and set timetable for the return of civilian government. In 1996, Boukary Adji was appointed as Prime Minister and arrangements were made for constitutional government by signing of joint text with Ousmane, Amadou and Issoufou in presence of Mainssara. The constitutional referendum took place which was approved by 92.3%. This was followed by frequent restriction of movement of political leaders. Despite, CSN assurance of remaining away from political ambition, Mainassara contested Presidential election in 1996 resulting in controversy when authorities before election result are being declared dissolved the electoral supervisory body, the *Commission Electorale Nationale Independente (CENI)* and appointed a new commission to

announce the result. However, court declared mandate as valid and fourth Republic was formed with Mainassara as its President in August, 1996. With this, the election for National Assembly was scheduled, to which group of eight opposition parties including CDS, MNSD and PNDP formed *Front Pour la restauration* [FRDD] demanding several preconditions for their participation in the elections. Among them there was condition for the annulment of the Presidential election and re-institutionalisation of the CENI. However, the election was held for the national assembly which was boycotted by the opposition parties. In the election, pre-Mainassara Party won and Cisse was appointed as the Prime Minister. This followed continuous demonstration by the supporters of the opposition parties generating clashes with the security forces with demand for access to the media, of press freedom, freedom of association and the termination of the Government's privatization programmes. Mainassara in contrary, using its power dismissed the entire Cisse government and appointed Maiyaki as the Prime Minister. By the time resumption of hostility was compounded by chronic food insecurity as a result of poor harvest labour unrest and by ongoing political agitation.

The food crisis in Niger, where there was a cereal deficit of 152,000 tonnes in 1997, is exposing over a quarter of the population to famine which led to rise of 30% in the price of main cereals according to an enquiry by the early warning system³¹. Appeal was made by Trade Union to the government to take measures to attenuate the suffering both of the people in rural areas and of civil servants who have 4 to 5 months pay arrears owing. As the situation of food crisis hardly being addressed, Niger faced fresh political crisis as Mainassara was assassinated by his own guard. This had led to the *coup de tat* and *conseil de reconciliation nationale* (CRN) under the chairmanship of Major Daouda Mallam Wanke, leader of the presidential guard to assume executive and legislative power till the restoration of elected civilian government. This development was criticized by international community—EU, France, ECOWAS etc. The UN's Secretary General, Kofi Annan and OAU Secretary General Salim were among world leaders that reacted to the assassination, considered

³¹ May 16th-Jun 15th. (1998), Food crisis in Niger, *Africa Research Bulletin*, Economical, Financial and Technical, Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., p. 13466c.

a set back to democracy on the continent³². France reacted strongly by suspending its cooperation with Niger. While opposition FRDD/AFDS alliance commented the death was tragic – “it should be seen in the context of a three years political impasse... for which the president was largely to blame”.³³ Wanke, however, assured for the restoration of democracy and decided to maintain prefects aimed to guarantee neutrality during coming elections.

With the election of 1999, Mamadou Tandja was elected as the President and Hama Amadou of MNSD as Prime Minister. However, the government continued to be in power, by surviving two no-confidence motion.

3.8.2 Role of International Communities in 1990s

In international context, every political *Coup d etat* in Niger was followed by the cut in the aid and assistance programme which further worsen the problem of food crisis. The most serious blow to Niger came with France declaring to take hard look at their African commitment. Though France public assistance to Sub Saharan Africa increased significantly 1985 to 1990, serious concern was made to long term aid. The condition for French support also appears to be getting tougher since the issuance of the Hessel Report and Mitterands views speech in La Baule which asserted the linkage of aid to mere open political process and to management of internal dispute³⁴.

Moreover, in post-cold war period, US has changed its policy of aid and assistance with the collapse of Soviet Union and its dispute with Libya been reduced to minor regional conflict. U.S. thus adopted a public position of linking its assistance to progress in democratization and improve governance to facilitate progress in economic policy reform. But, Niger on neither area has been rank high. However, attempts are made to enlist support of U.S. by supporting its campaign against Iraq which has resulted in the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Niger with the student protest against the decision of the government.

³² April 1-30th (1999), Niger Mainassara assassinated,, *Africa Research Bulletin*, Political, Social and Cultural series, Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., p. 13496B

³³ *ibid.*, p. 13497A-13497B.

³⁴ Charlick, Robert B. (1994), “Niger”, in Shaw, Timothy and Okolo, Julis Emeka (ed.), *The political economy of foreign policy in ECOWAS*, St. Martin Press, Great Britain, p. 119.

Thus, it can be seen that in midst of food crisis, Niger has been facing political turmoil in form of political instability, popular protest against misgovernance and tuareg rebellion have further aggravated the problem. As long as Niger failed to achieve political stability with institutional capacity and recognition of priorities areas to be addressed for food security, it cannot make any headway. Along with this, continuous withdrawal of aid and assistance from Niger during *Coup d etat* in quick succession in 1990's has deepened the problem of food crisis which got worsened with drought in late 1990's affecting particularly rural areas. Therefore, there is a need for stable government having popular support which could provide entitlement to overcome the food crisis particularly in rural areas.

3.9 Food Crisis in the 21st Century:

Though elected government has been formed in Niger, there has been widespread demonstration against the apparent attempts to restrict the freedom of press and broadcast media. Further new alliance of Tandja with Bush administration in its 'war on terror' had created new situation in Niger. Tandja in order to create a sense of terrorism threat in Niger, provoked the Tuareg to take arms by arresting the leader of Tuareg rebellion. This led government to secure military aid under the mode of *Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative* (TSCI). Thus, concern has been paid to the artificially created terrorism in Niger by neglecting urgent need to address food crisis. The food situation in 21st century got devastated as country's own President has long denied of food crisis. The situation became far more severe by the embezzlement of foreign aid by country's political and commercial elites. It was discovered that foreign aid destined for Tuareg drought ridden areas were embezzled by senior government official for personal use. Moreover, with the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) Niger faced yet another serious crisis.

In mid-March up to 20,000 people protested in Niamey against rising prices, following the introduction of 19% VAT on basic commodities organized by a coalition against costly living, comprising some 30 groups including trade unions, human right organizations and consumer's movement. This was followed by country wide strikes and protest. Finally, government and coalition against costly living came to an agreement. The agreement exempts flour and milk from new 19% VAT on

food³⁵. The government justified the introduction of VAT which was forecast to increase tax revenue by seven million CFA Francs (US \$14m) per year; by saying it brought Niger into line with other member states of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)³⁶. However, the situation failed to improve and stage was set for strikes and protest.

Thus, it could be concluded that though the seeds of crisis are being sown by drought and locust, it was politics and economics not the nature, which led to the crisis spiraling out of control. The price of staple food millet has soared because traders have been exporting grains from unaffected parts of Niger to other West African countries such as Nigeria while markets in Niger are filled with produce; the poorest starve because they cannot afford the prices³⁷. Moreover, government refused to distribute free food fearing that it would disrupt the market which led to deepening of the problem. Finally, when a subsidized price for millet was introduced, the poorest still could not afford to buy creating an environment for famine in Niger. Thus, the scene of Niger clearly depicts the unresponsive governing by the authority.

³⁵ April 6 - May 15 (2005), Niger ongoing VAT repercussion, *Africa Research Bulletin*, Economical, Financial and Technical, Blackwell Publishing, Ltd. p. 16512A.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 16512A.

³⁷ Vasagar, Jean Niger's children doomed to starve, *The Hindu*, August 9, 2005, p. 11.

CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN NIGER

CHAPTER-IV

CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN NIGER

4.1 An initiative of the Nigerien Government to ensure food security:

State plays an important role in ensuring the food security of the country. State not only ensures food supply, control over prices, and marketing in normal times but also to make food available for the people during the time of crisis. The dismal performance of the State may increase the discontent of masses in its failure to ensure food. It has even the potentialities to threaten the stability of the country. In the wake of food shortages, mid 1970s government in Ethiopia and Niger were overthrown. In other parts of the world, merely the threat of food prices raises formented violent demonstration in Egypt in 1977, the Liberia in 1979, and in Tunisia, Morocco and the Dominican Republic in 1984¹. In sub-Saharan Africa, there has been weakness in the structure and performance of the agricultural sector, official food marketing and distribution system, infrastructure and government policies. The governments of sub-Saharan Africa have responded to the weakness by making food self-sufficiency major national objectives and in most cases have formulated strategies for increasing domestic production. In this context, an attempt has been made to understand the initiatives of Nigerien government in ensuring food security.

In 1962, on the eve of independence, the government of Niger declared its intention to pursue a participatory development policy through rural communities. The institution used for this purpose was the 'Mobilization for Development' agency (Services d' Animation au Developpement) created in 1963 with the following objectives:

- To institute dialogue between government and people
- To organize the people and,
- To promote participation in development of the village by inviting people's to express their need and to find answer through a consensus

¹ Hopkins, Raymonds F. (1986), "Food Security, Policy Options and the evolution of State Responsibility", in Tullis, F, Lamond and Hollist, Ladd W. (ed.), *Food, State and International political economy*, Lincoln, University of Nebrasik Press, US, p. 9.

building process that would take initiation, discussions and programming².

However, the process of development through rural communities proved to be failure. Instead of this, states controlled by one man continued with no devolution of political and economic power which had long-term impact on the food production. The abuse use of power has further worsened the economy scenario of Niger which led to the severe famine in 1968-74.

The military regime that took power in 1974 opted for *societe de developpement* by basing its slogan on the three pillars of consultation, joint action and participation. It relied essentially on the traditional system of youth organization, the *samaria* and on rural co-operation. It represented a "bottom-up" approach to development, using structures for which the Samaria and the co-operatives formed the backbone, together with other components of society, namely, women and social professional associations. The system was placed on non-elected representatives at various levels in communes, the districts, or the provinces influencing decision-making process. During the military regime, President Kountche in 1974 declared that land belongs to the tiller of the soil. It was a great move by the regime to ensure participatory development for achieving food sufficiency. Although, Kountche embarked on priority projects of rural betterment with the help of considerable donor assistance, these initiatives were greeted with scepticism and distrust, especially at the local level. According to William Miles, an "integration of traditional with modern institutions of government was being attempted by Niger's neo-'Lugardians' But neither the Chiefs nor the 'Commoners' perceive (d) any lessening of ultimate governmental authority... all are now expected to" participate" in national efforts, although these are still determined, and controlled, from the capital'. It was the technical ministries that benefited-rather than the rural producers-- as donors provided millions of dollars to improve their institution capacity"³.

² Acces 24th Oct, 2005, URL: www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/2002/ner/01/010102.pdf

³ Graybeal, N. Lynn and Picard, Louis A. (1991), Internal Capacity and Overload, *The Journal of modern African studies*, Vol.29, No.2, p. 285.

After the failure of state led development, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced as a measure to check the growing economy crisis in 1983 but it had been hardly able to deliver any practical result. In 1991, Sovereign National Conference was formed which provided base for civil society to involve them in the management of public affairs to increase the level of awareness and ownership of grassroots communities. However, the efforts met with the same consequences as the previous. The initiative that authority had undertaken were generally limited only to the government documents. By mid-1990s, government of Niger undertook the strategies of sustainable human development and fighting poverty as Central theme of its economic and social development policy. Finally, in 1997, the authorities first drafted and implemented a large scale National Framework Program to Combat Poverty (PNLCP) with active participation of all the key developmental players (government, the private sector, and civil society and donors). The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) was prepared in context of the initiative for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) been designed to meet the challenge with sector analyses. The PRS was prepared on the basis of broad consensus involving all parties to the process; the government and its specialized and decentralized agencies; assemblies representing all elected bodies; 'the Republican institutions', the general public; including members of different social groups and people of both genders and all ages; the poor, rural organizations; civil society organizations; including the NGO's collective, other NGOs and national and international association that are not member of the NGOs collective, grassroots community organizations (OCBs), labour unions, farmer's group etc; the private sector, represented essentially by private professional associations; development partners, bi-lateral and multilateral representation; political parties; university; religion denominations and traditional structures⁴. The PRS was coincided with the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) and the, Common Country Assessment under the UN Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF). Though it is certain that government plays an important role in identifying goals and objectives for attaining self-sufficiency, it must also ensure that other sections and groups are also involved. It is because, certain functions are efficiently performed by local and the enlisted groups. They must incorporate partners such as NGOs international aid agencies, voluntary organizations and form important alliance where

⁴ Accessed on 24th Oct, 2005, URL: www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/2000/ner/01/100600.pdf.

appropriate in order to ensure the accomplishment of these objectives.

However, the key to the self-sufficiency lies in participatory democratic governance. Unless and until, there is no people's involvement in the formulation of the policies with the cooperation of NGOs, it could not make any headway. Looking at the political development of Niger, it can be summed up that it lacks active people's participation. Policies and programmes that were undertaken are limited to the few rich, traders, rural elites and politicians. Niger had a long history of military rule where the voice of Commons failed to knock the door of policy makers. Adebayo Adedji, the renowned Nigerian economist who served as executive secretary of the UN economic commission for Africa put it; "what we confront in Africa is primarily a political crisis, albeit with devastating economic consequences"⁵ so, there is a need to develop participatory democracy which would ensure sustainable food security in the country.

4.2 Public Private Partnership for ensuring food security:

The importance of food security and public work programme generating employment based income has been long recognised in many African countries. In Niger, public work programme was launched after the Great drought of 1970s. The public work programme emphasized small-scale programme to generate labour for soil and water conservation and to minimize the effects of droughts. These programmes have been effectively supported by donors and non governmental organizations working in close collaboration of government. In 1985, 180 small projects, primarily and the NGO management, were being implemented, most using food as an incentive for mobilizing Labour. In addition to this, a large number of projects were funded by international donors, such as the world food programme (WFP) and the World Bank, operating in collaboration with government ministries. At least 14 donors and NGOs were supporting labor-based works programs at more than 100 sites in Niger during 1992.⁶ Table 4.1 provides a profile of the programmes implemented in Niger since the 1980s and early 1990s.

⁵ Mwakikagile, Godfrey (2001), *Military coups in West Africa since the sixties*, Nova Science Publishers, New York, p. 131.

⁶ Webb, Patrick (1995), "Employment programmes for food security in rural and urban Africa: experiences in Niger and Zimbabwe" in Braun, J. Von (ed.) *Employment for poverty reduction and food security*, IFPRI, Washington.

Table 4.1—Profiles of selected labor-intensive public works programs in Niger in the 1980s and early 1990s

Primary Task	Years of Operation	Area Covered	Participation	Work-days Created	Salary Type ^a	Female Involvement ^b (1,000)	Project Costs		Main Donors (US\$ million) ^c
							Donor	Government (percent)	
Soil works, trees	1976-84	Tahoua	1,500 households	?	F	50	0.02	...	SWISSAID, Tahoua
	1985-2005						0.3 ^e	?	
Terracing, gullying	1981-87	Tahoua	148 villages	?	F, V	80	3.3	...	KFW, GTZ, WFP, DED
	1988-92						4.7	0.5	
Terracing, soil works	1984-91	Keita	5,000 households	4,200	F, C	65	33.0	1.2	Italy, FAO, WFP, UNDP
	1992-96		22,000 households	5,700	F, V	50	28.3	0.7	
Trees, soil works	1984-88	Tahoua	1,000 households	30	F	70	?	...	UNSO, Holland, UNDP
	1989-92			50 ^d			0.2	?	
Terracing, gullying	1986-90	Tillaberi	150 villages	6	F, V	50	3.3	?	KFW, GTZ, WFP, DED
	1991-95	Tahoua					10.5	0.2	
Terracing, gullying	1987-90	Galmi	11 villages	80	F	85	0.6	?	CARE, WFP, USAID
	1990-93			70			0.5	?	
Roads, wells, trees	1987-89	Maradi	300 households	36	F, C	5	0.4	...	ILO, UNDP, UNCDF
Trees, soil works	1987-93	Dosso	40 villages	?	V, FI	20	2.0	?	UNSO, UNDP
Irrigation, soil works, pastoral	1988-92	Tahoua	7,000 households	?	F, V	50	27.6	0.7	IFAD, WFP, UNDP
Irrigation, trees	1989-95	Dosso	7,000 households	?	C	40	17.1	0.9	World Bank, KFW, EEC
Urban sanitation, soil works, roads	1990-94		?	10,000	C	10	25.0	2.7	World Bank, EEC, KFW, UNDP

Source: Data obtained from the offices listed under "Main Donors" and from the Office of NIGETIP.

Notes: The list of programs is not exhaustive. The full names of the acronyms for donors are as follows: SWISSAID, Swiss Agency for International Development; WFP, World Food Programme; KFW, German Bank for Reconstruction; GTZ, German Agency for Technical Cooperation; DED, German Development Service; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNSO, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office; SNV, Dutch Volunteer Service; USAID, United States Agency for International Development; ILO, International Labour Office; UNCDF, United Nations Capital Development Funds; IFAD, International Fund for Agricultural Development; EEC, European Economic Community.

^aF = Food wage; V = Voluntary participation (no wage); FI = Food Incentive; C = Cash wage.

^bEstimates based on project reports.

^cCFA franc converted at a rate of 285/US\$ (the rate for April 1991).

^dEstimates based on averages for 1989-91.

The project registered participants on a “first come, first served” basis; unemployed male household heads were usually first in line. Most rural projects concentrated activities during the dry season. As it is season of immigration, projects offering means of livelihood offers an opportunity to the poorest.

The *Agence Nigerienne de Travaux d' Interet Public pour l' Emploi* (NIGETIP) was created as a private NGO to disburse funds through a bidding process to private agencies for public works. NIGETIP's three-main objectives are to generate short-term jobs; to stimulate the private sector by funding the implementation of projects through small local enterprises; and to generate public goods and services through labour-intensive technology⁷. In 1992, NIGETIP came to full operation and expanded its coverage to all urban centres. In this project, poorer having few non farm income sources is more dependent on public works for their short-term food security. However, the public work program suffers from serious limitations:

- The wage rates were below the market rates.
- Limited supervision of public works.
- Limited participation of households as few people were employed.

Despite the constraints in the implementation of public work programs, it has potential to strengthen food security at a local level. So, for the success of public work programme, there is need for democratic decentralisation which would empower the rurals not only politically but economically to ensure active participation in the programmes. So, there is need for a political will and effective functioning of NGOs to ensure the implementation of public work programs

4.3 Impact of Land tenure System:

Land as one of the prime constituents of nature, is an important source of human survival. In the beginning land remained a social asset. Common ownership of land was the basic characteristics of land relationship. But in the due course of changing socio-economic setup of the society, land relationship took a new turn when an individual private ownership system was evolved by the emerging dominant social

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 179.

forces. The private landownership system took place at a rapid pace throughout the world. In Africa such process was at slow pace⁸.

In 1990s, several African states celebrated democracy and political pluralism. Similarly, Niger experienced two major political reforms since 1986; land tenure, Rural Code, aimed at increasing security for the rural populations through a codification and formalisation of indigenous land rights, followed by constitutional democracy in the early 1990s. Both reforms aimed at securing some basic rights and were expected to confer legitimacy on the state.⁹ The area where the immediate political pay off was highest was one where the political competition also put the credibility and legitimacy of the new political system most at risk, namely the legal procedures and in particular those concerning disputes over land. Land tenure has been highly actualise as a political issue since 1986 with the announcement of a tenure reform, a Rural Code-securing rights in land by transforming traditional rights of tenure into private ownership. The task of overseeing this adaptation of the tenure regime was put into the hands of a new local tenure commission¹⁰. The tenure commission is composed of sous-prefet who presides over it; the secretaire permanent du Code Rural, the heads of the local ministerial departments concerned with rural development, the traditional chiefs concerned and representatives of the farmers', the herders' the women's and the youth organizations. The commission is supposed to conciliate in tenure disputes and oversee the establishment of the 'dossier rural' for a piece of land -the transitional tenurial stage leading to private property¹¹.

Finally, in 1993, Rural Code was adopted. This was new governing rules which depart earlier use and management of natural resources in Niger. However, the power of land commission was limited. The land commission had the power to register ownership and give the certificate to the applicant provided that no challenge has been made against registration during the inquiry in the field. The limitation of land commission is that it was not competent to arbitrate in disputes, nor can it issue ownership titles.

⁸ Malakar, S. N (1995), *Land reforms in independent Namibia; problems and perspective*, Ocational Paper, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, p. 1.

⁹ Lund, Christian (1997), Legitimacy, land and democracy in Niger, *Review of African political economy*, Vol. 24, No. 71, p. 99.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 110.

In Niger, as in most African societies, the institutional and normative structures managing disputes are plural and often quite ambiguous. The colonialization and modernization process engenders a split in legal system between the State Law and more customary regulation of social life. The colonial and independent government administration inculcated this dichotomy in the legal system, but the two types of law is rarely internally consistent¹². Currently, two rural land use management regimes exist; a customary system which draws on ancestral practices substantially influenced by Muslim law, and the state system, which draws its legitimacy from the rules of 'modern' law, heavily influenced by colonial legislation¹³. This often engenders incongruence and competition over jurisdiction between the various institutions and ambiguity and contradictions in terms of which principles should be applied. Consequently, in such a context, social conflicts, and indeed disputes over land have implications on several issues¹⁴. The disputes mainly dealt were related to the boundaries of livestock corridors and their observance in cropping areas. This was basically due to demographic pressures accompanied by environment degradation giving rise to increasing number of tenure conflict. Moreover, with the failure of structural adjustment programmes, it has been accused by donor agencies that continuation of customary land that the natural resources management is mishandled. So, it is believed that unless opening up of land for private investment is undertaken, no real agricultural development can take place which directly hampers the food security of the country. But there is ever danger of misuse of land by multinational corporations at the great cost of Africans lives.

Moreover, it has been observed that despite the existing of different structures lasting solution through arbitration are by no means assured. So, there is need for institutional management of conflict over land tenure which is urgently required to be addressed as disputes on arable land for agricultural production threatens food security.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 100.

¹³ Gado, Boureima Alpha (2002), "Arbitration and resolving tenure conflict in boboye, Niger", in Toulmin, Comilla; Lavigne, Phillipie and Traore, Samba (ed.) *The dynamics of resource tenure in West Africa*, International Institute for environment and development in association with James curry and Heinemann, IIED, London, p. 160.

¹⁴ Lund, Christian (1997), Legitimacy, land and democracy in Niger, *Review of African political economy*, Vol. 24, No. 71, p. 100.

4.4 Gender bias in Achieving Food Security:

In spite of their contribution in economic production and household management, Nigerian women are most vulnerable groups during the food crisis. This is mainly because they have least formal education or opportunity to raise the resource needed to develop their full potential. The problem can be traced to their lack of adequate technical and business training as well as access to agricultural loans which have not only impeded their productivity but affected the quality of their working conditions and access to food. Nigerian women are under-represented in public as well as private professional sectors. In 1998, the overall number of wage labour compared to 91.9% of men there were only 8.1%¹⁵. Nigerian women were the worst victims of the SAP programme which had a devastating impact in the form of discrimination in the labour market, unequal wages compared to male workers and loss of tenure security in employment. Though, the Rural Code allocated parallel rights as par with men having equal access to natural resources, protection of rights etc. But, in real terms it is still to be practiced. Rural women work an average of 14 hours a day, fetching water and firewood, transforming millets, grains into food and assisting in famine¹⁶. Thus, in spite of their contribution in the form of labour for the cultivation of husbands' farmland, they were denied the right of food.

Niger's patriarchal nature can be gauged by the non-ratification of the international convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Though, the successive regimes in Niger signed the African Charter on Human Rights advocating the equality of sex, it is still dependent on the legal system which holds strong patriarchal nature—modern civil code, customary code and Islam. The domination of men in politics can be seen in voting patterns where secluded married women cannot exercise their right to vote personally but by the husband. Further, women in Niger have suffered and continued to suffer from armed conflict between agriculturists and pastoralists in various parts of the country. One of the brutal conflicts of this kind, nationally referred to as 'le drama de toda in maradi' occurred in October 1991 and caused the death of 103 people, of whom 70 were women¹⁷. So, there is a need for equal protection and opportunity in the sphere of economic sector along with the political

¹⁵ Ousseinia Alidov (2003), "Niger", in Trippi, Aili Mari, (ed.), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Women's Issues Worldwide—Sub Sahara Africa*, Greenwood Press, Westport, p. 299.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 308.

and social which would empower women. Women can contribute a lot in providing food security which has been overlooked by the policy maker. An important finding of research in recent years is that women invest more than men in household security. This is despite the fact that the income earned by women tends to be quite low; find a study of Ethiopia. Thus, inspite of their central contribution to food security, women farmer are tend to be underestimated and overlooked in development strategies. By contrast, the food that male farmer produce for the market does not contribute to the household food sufficiency but the pockets of urban elites. The policymakers thus, seems to be more aware of only the statistic and do not fully appreciate the role of women¹⁸.

To Jacques Diouf, Director-General, FAO who has, appreciated the role of women has said that there will be no food security without rural women. So, there is need for reviving gender equality which is not only morally right but also for economic development.

4.5 Implications of Niger-Nigeria boundary;

The colonial partition of Hausaland into Niger and Nigeria zone set the motion of institutional changes which has been intensified by the respective governments. Several developments have occurred along the 1500 kilometres frontier in the last two decades which has its implications with respect to foodstuff. Since the pre-colonial times, there has been a tendency among Nigerien during the period of bad rains and drought affecting crops and livestock to move toward Southern part from north in search of livelihood as most of them provides manpower in the northern Nigeria to sustain their life. Moreover, northern Nigeria provides market for livestock in the normal times too. So, the Niger-Nigeria boundary has its far-reaching significance in the economy of Niger as it provides means of subsistence. On account of limited road networks linking the two colonies, there were relatively few official border crossing stations. It must be noted that smuggling dominated to be a major activity as the border remains to be porous and patrolling haphazard. Skirting custom duties, unofficial traders brought petroleum and farm-chemical products into Niger and

¹⁸ Madeley, John (2002), *Food for all-the need for a new agriculture*, University press Ltd. Bangladesh, p. 93.

livestock into Nigeria with grains constituting an important commodity of supposedly illicit cross-border trade.

In political front, the relation between two countries is more dynamic. Nigeria by not allowing Hausa based Sawaba party for asylum in 1960s who were carrying out violent resistance to Diiori government has played an important part in developing cordial relations. A Nigerien-Nigerian Joint Commissions (NNJC) was formed in 1971 to convene periodically meetings on road transport, (1977 industrial and agro-industrial projects, (1978); culture and education (1984)¹⁹. However, things changed with the *coup d etat* that toppled President Shagari on December 1983 resulting in the closure of border with Niger Republic with the view to change the Nigerian currency and check smuggling of petroleum and food stuff. In 1985, situation got further deteriorated when Buhari ordered mass expulsion of one lakh Nigerien which had negative impact on the Niger economy already been struck by shortage of food and drought in the early 1980s. However, the economic dependency and social obligations compelled Fulani and Hausa to risk crossing the border which was marked by unusual flow of grains and raw food smuggling into Niger from Nigeria. This reverse pattern is described by dama-dama. Finally, official border was re-opened in 1986 which came as a great relief to local inhabitant with the initiative to construct road between Yardaje and Yekuwa. In 1989, the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria was created which convened trans-border workshop bringing together traditional rulers, policymakers, administrators and academicians who visualized border not as battle lines but as bridge to achieve regional integration and co-operation. The workshop identified eight main problem areas and proposed seventeen specific recommendations. At its 20th session in 1990, the NNJC was galvanized to seek ways of implementing outstanding co-operative agreements in the realm of cultural exchange, health, trade, information, justice and its most recurrent theme-the desertification control²⁰.

In 1990s, the issues that govern the Niger-Nigeria boundary were security and ecological threat. Its official met on the issue of armed banditry and other crimes

¹⁹ Miles, William F.S (2005), Development, not division: Local versus external, Perceptions of the Niger-Nigeria boundary, *The Journal of modern African studies*, Vol.43, No.2, p. 301.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 302.

along their common boundary and pledged to curb crimes by anti-crime border patrol and borderline tour. Moreover 9/11th had its impact on the long and porous border of the Sahel nation by being preoccupied by counter-terrorism which led to the establishment of provisional immigration station on the road between Yardaje and Yekuwa in 2002. It aimed to provide security and checking people of dubious character and smugglers.

Moreover, Islamic fundamentalism of indigenous nature too, has its bearing on Nigerien-Nigerian borderline comedies. In 1991, Shari'a law was adapted in 12 northern states of Nigeria to eliminate social evils which subsequently outlawed activities such as drinking, prostitution and gambling in addition to less controversial practices as praise singing and integration of the sexes in public places. This resulted in closure of bars, brothels and informal casinos in Nigeria, the same being established in Niger. Niger's secular political orientation amounts to economic comparative advantages which financially benefited traditional and political elites in government having pronounced effect on southern Niger.

The implementation of Shari'a changes the cross-border dynamics of relation between two countries. Nigerian who sought to access alcohol and prostitute were obliged to travel across the border to Niger which created demand to be supplied. Though the indigenous Hausa in Niger and Nigeria showed their common religion and strong cultural traditions, Nigerien Hausa and other dominant Muslims ethnic groups as the Songhay were willing to accommodate that which their Nigerian counterparts would not²¹. Parallel trade has flourished across the Niger-Nigeria border due to the fact that legal exports on one side of the border sometimes become illegal on the other side of the border. Traditional chiefs partially benefited from the arrival of bar owners and prostitute's called 'bakis' as they were able to lend their house to them. Moreover, the presence of bakis created the need for water, masons, and food preparers giving dramatic rise in the employment opportunity. All of the economic opportunities resulted in what most of the villagers referred to in Hausa as 'cinnabar' i.e. move ahead and figuratively as to progress or to develop. The entire Nigerien was

²¹ Kirwin, Matt (2005), The political and economic effects of Nigerien Shari'a on southern Niger, *Review of African political economy*, Vol.32, No.104/5, p. 408.

satisfied with the new changes as it created opportunity for employment but infrastructure remained underdeveloped. It gave new dimension to the seasonal migrants who used to travel other countries in search of livelihood. Thus, Niger-Nigeria border has far-reaching implications in the food security of Niger. So, sound border policies should be formulated which could promote free trade between the two countries providing an opportunity to overcome the economic crisis.

4.6 Role of non governmental organizations in the food crisis of Niger:

The formulation and implementation of economic and social policies has been entrusted to two fundamental institutions- the market and the state. However, the area where neither the market nor the state can produce satisfactory results has created the need to resort to a third key institutions commonly known as civil society. The comparative advantage of non governmental organizations (NGO's) lies on the one hand, in the affinity that can develop among market, state and grassroots communities by their proximity to the recipient population groups and on the other hand their readiness to ensure that results from the developing activities are sustained after the project has closed.

The policy of Nigerien government which had given legal, administrative and fiscal framework for NGOs incentives came finally in 1984 with an enactment of law. The state decided to grant tax preference to NGO's which consisted in subsidies and tax exemptions. This phase marked the emergence of NGO's in Niger. The second phase involves period of consultation and effective involvement of NGO's in development strategies. They became active partner in the developmental programmes as they participate in international negotiations and conferences beside government delegations.

Africare and Oxfam are the common name of NGO's engaged in Niger's food aid management. Africare was established in 1970 in response to famine in Niger and has since been one of the largest American non government organizations working in Africa²². Oxfam, on the other hand works closely with local partner *Association to Revive Herding in Niger* (AREN) whose long-term experience of working animal

²² Accessed on 9th January, 2006, URL: www.africare.org/at-work/niger/index.html.

breeding communities in some of Niger's remotest zones greatly helped to locate beneficiary communities and to understand their needs²³. Programme activities centered on an innovative voucher for work scheme, but also included de-stocking, seed fairs, the subsidies sell of animal feed and emergency preparedness training. It continues to carry out food for work activities to enable the most vulnerable people, to have access to food, especially during the difficult hunger period from May to October. However, the programme also aims to help those pastoral and agro-pastoral households most affected by the food crisis to rebuild their assets, and to develop local resources and capacity to reduce the impact of the future crises.

However, it must be pointed out that the rapid expansion of staff of the NGO's in Niger had overshadowed an important qualitative dimension in as much as barely a quarter of established organizations are considered operational because of lack of institutional and organizational capacity

NGO's are increasing in large part as an emanation of the state elites as majority of them appears to be operated by moonlighting civil servants and ex-ministers of cabinet. NGO's are mostly marked by low-level of institutionalization, small size and with no mechanism of accountability seems to serve the interests of corrupt state officials. In 1998, one donor took to court nine of twelve NGO's charging them for mis-appropriation of funds. Most donors appeared to be willing to countenance abuses, however, which they often justify as due to low capacity and institutional immaturity²⁴. The members of political elite receiving state support for the NGO's funded by donors utilizes aid to serve its own purpose rather than mitigating food crisis. Therefore, the need for accountability on the part of NGO's is must to check the ongoing corruption of food aid NGO's to overcome the crisis. However, the role that NGO's plays cannot be undermined. The presence of early warning system could facilitate NGO's to take a priori action to combat the food crisis. So, for the effective performance of the NGO's, there is a need for a mechanism which could ensure accountability and transparency.

²³ Accessed on 28th January, 2006, URL: www.oxfam.org/en/search/searchabletext=niger.html.

²⁴ Van de Walle, Nicholas (2001), *African economies and the politics of permanent crisis-1979-1999*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.165.

4.7 Role of Regional and Continental Organization in Attaining Niger's Food Self-Sufficiency:

4.7.1 Regional Level:

Africa, in order to overcome the crisis permanently, they must have solid common ground and cooperation, as individually the countries are too weak either in population or purchasing power. Interdependence is a sign of maturity and cooperation is essential for survival. This can be located in the spirit of Abuja treaty establishing the Africa Economic Community (AEC).

In West Africa, the need to address food security issues at regional level was crystallized by the drought that has ravaged the Sudan-Sahelian region since 1969 had led to the creation of the Permanent Inter State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), whose role is to research food security and combat the effects of drought. Similarly, in the mid 1970s within the context of serious drought, several member countries of the organization for economic cooperation and development, (OECD), and organization to which the club is attached, in partnership with Sahelian countries, created the friends of the Sahel Club. The aim was to establish a forum for the international community to discuss and encourage strong support for the region. As from the 1980s, the Sahelian countries and their development partners have made tremendous effort to prevent food crisis while setting up prevention strategies which are based largely on information and early warning systems. Furthermore, in order to avoid the harmful affects of food aid on agricultural production in countries in the region, the Sahel and West African club member countries have jointly decided with the CILSS member countries to establish a *'food aid charter'* aiming to assure a better management of aid flows. In 2001, governing board decided to expand the Club's geographical coverage encompassing the 15 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), countries plus Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon. The club then became the Sahel and West Africa club (SAWC). The club works in network with West African partners representing governments and all civil society actors in close collaboration with development partners of West Africa as well as international organizations; at the continental level , with the African union(AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development(NEPAD) initiative and at regional level with

the ECOWAS and the CILSS²⁵. Recent initiatives undertaken by the club to ensure food security are -

- Complementary tools integrating cereal market dynamics into the analytical and decision-making process (2001-02).
- An information and exchange meeting on the impact of the desert locust outbreak and its consequences (2004).
- Retrospective and spatial analyses of vulnerable Sahelian zones.
- The medium and long-term challenges of food security in West Africa' to be initiated in collaboration with the CILSS and ECOWAS in October, 2006.

ECOWAS, the other regional organization in West Africa is also engaged in ensuring food security of the region. Initially of 16 countries was formed in 1975. It was founded to achieve 'collective self-sufficiency' for the member states by means of economic and monetary union creating a single large trading blocs. ECOWAS is one of the pillars of the AEC. With a participatory approach, Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) aims at assisting member countries to increase their food production and productivity on economically and environmentally sustainable basis and to improve food accessibility for vulnerable populations. The focus is on raising the productivity of the small farmers, thereby improving their household food security while at the same time contributing to local and national food security. Phase I of the SPFS which started in 1995 in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, Mauritania and Senegal is now operational in all ECOWAS member countries except Sierra Leone which is under formulation²⁶.

As an initiative, South -South cooperation (SSC) started in 1996 and now well established in 10 ECOWAS member countries. Since 1996, 241 experts and technicians in different fields of expertise have been involved in field training of local technician and farmers. The objective of the SSC is to stimulate innovation and to transfer simple low-cost technologies among the countries. The encouraging result of the SPFS in its early stages has led governments including Mauritania, Guinea, Niger

²⁵ Accessed on 26th March, 2006, URL: www.oecd.org/sah/, paper on regional conference on (The agriculture and fod situation in West Africa) Accara, 20th September 2005.

²⁶ Accessed on 28th January, 2006, URL: www.ecowas.int/spfs/html.

and Senegal, to extend the coverage of the programme with funding from national resources. At farmer level, the simple low-cost technologies in use during phase 1 have contributed to significant increases in crop production and yields at many sites.

One of the significant initiatives undertaken by ECOWAS is to ensure free movement of people in the region which could be a great relief for the people especially, Nigerien. This could be very handy at the time of drought and locust as it can ensure human security.

4.7.2 Continental Level;

The early response to the African food crisis was the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN) launched as the strategy of Organization of African Unity (OAU). These started from the premise that, given the limited size and capacity of the private sector, the states had to take on the dominant role in development. Thus government's drew up comprehensive five years plans ,invested in large state-run basic industries and market structures, and enacted pervasive regulations to control prices, restrict trade, and allocate credit and foreign exchange, all carried out with the donor support. Publicly funded programs in support of agricultural research and extension, fertilizer supply, export production and marketing, and food distribution were the essential components of this approach²⁷. AFPLAN and LPA, though, had excellent strategies and programs for food and nutrition security, the implementation of programmes is highly questionable given the agricultural performance. It is argued that the past neglect of food production, the slowness with which some countries implemented the plans and resolutions, or their incapacity to do so, contributed to the poor result of the various initiatives. OAU blamed the failure to the inadequate monitoring of the efforts that had its impact on achieving objectives of AFPLAN and LPA.

African leaders in order to overcome the permanent crises had recently in September 1999 in Sirte, Libya assembled to search for paradigm shift in the ways Africa conducts its affairs. The African leaders formally adopted the vision, principles, objectives, goals and priorities outlined in the NEPAD document at the

²⁷ Accessed on 12th April, 2006, URL: www.ifpri.org/pubs/g124/v124/app04.pdf.

OAU summit in Lusaka in 2001. The new initiative aimed to build on the Comprehensive Development Framework and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper CDF-PRSP process and amalgates African initiative and ownership of the development process with neo-liberal concepts. By endorsing NEPAD's policy, African leaders jointly accepted responsibility for eradicating poverty and placing their countries, both individually and collectively, on the path of sustainable development and growth²⁸. No doubt, the goals have been proclaimed in every strategy that African leaders have designed or adapted with the aims of resolving the food crisis and reversing the effects of poverty. The significance of NEPAD lies on the high recognition of the goal by the African leaders as the LPA and initiatives of the past did not have the benefits of such strong political leadership in their implementation phase.

With the transformation of the OAU to African Union (AU) it is expected that AU would play decisive role as it is redesigned to overcome to cope with the complex situations. The Nigerien government has been assisted by AU who provided US\$ 1 million from its emergency food aid in the recent year. Collecting this assistance, the Nigerien government managed to setup food stocks, subsidy of grains, grain banks in collaboration with village women and food for work scheme. Moreover, the AU has undertaken several initiatives that could assist in overcoming the food insecurity by operating environmental monitoring system in link to FAO's global information and early warning system with direct linkage to national and sub regional organizations in Africa. The African agricultural research community under the leadership of Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is keen on developing innovative technologies or package that would respond directly to foods insecurity as well as advice governments in creating enabling environment and prevent natural calamities to further lower agricultural productivity and reduce the buying power of the small owners and pastoralist. These schemes can be long-term measures to overcome food crisis in the continent

Though, number of initiatives has been undertaken to ensure food security in West Africa/Sahel region since the late Sixties, the rate of transformation of policies

²⁸ *ibid.*

into implementation is very low. The reason for failure in implementation may be linked to the lack of political will and resources with inadequate monitoring, organizational constraints and internal differences among the member countries. Therefore, there is indeed, a lesson to be learned from the past initiative conceived by African leaders. So, in order to have common understanding there is a need for mutual understanding among African leaders to sort out their differences and to have a compromise view giving high priorities to the food security.

4.8 Role of food aid donor's agencies in Niger:

Food aid plays an important role in feeding the poor, saving lives in emergencies and enabling countries to achieve economic growth and greater social equity. Countries with overall food trade deficit and with unemployment problem can do well with food aid for developmental purposes. The need for employment growth especially through labour using techniques fits well with the prescription that food aid be integrated with financial resources and used where disincentives are avoided, such as "food for work" projects. Food aid, therefore, should be oriented towards the objectives of eventually eradicating hunger and poverty to help countries and people to achieve self sufficiency and enable people to feed them. The first well-documented food aid gesture was that of the USA in providing emergency aid to earthquake victims in Venezuela in 1812, for which Congress passed the act for the relief of the citizens of Venezuela authorizing the President to purchase goods to the value of \$US 50,000²⁹. However, Britain was one of the pioneers in providing food aid in the colonial period. With this, an attempt has been made to look at the role of donor's in Niger food crises.

4.8.1 Role of US in Niger's food crisis;

The legal and institutional basis of food aid provisions in US was finally formalized in 1954. It provided around \$44 billion in food aid to every quarter of the developing world since it formalized food aid provisions. Though, its share in the provision of global food aid has fallen but it provides half of the cereals food aid and just under half of all non-cereal food aid in the late 1980s. It was the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, being popularly known as PL 480

²⁹ Singer, Hans, Wood, John, and Jennings, Tony (1987), *Food Aid: the challenges and opportunities*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 17.

which was institutionalize and provided legal framework of US food aid. PL 480 marked a recognition that the paradox of US surplus food production alongside hunger and malnutrition in the world could no longer be considered to be isolated.

In mid 1970s as a response to the Sahelian drought, the US mounted its first significant aid effort in Niger as part of its "relief and rehabilitation" effort triggered by Congressional Black Caucus concern over the toll in human lives³⁰. However, US even with the impetus given by USAID in the mid 1970s, bilateral involvement in Niger remained marginal, never amounting 5% of Niger's total aid receipts.

In 1990s, with the collapse of Soviet Union, and the US dispute with Libya being reduced to a regional conflict, the aid and assistance become difficult for Niger. The State Department had expressed little concern about how US interest might be affected by the current Saharan Tuareg rebellion in Niger , while a few years ago in a bipolar world it might have been linked to Libyan or radical Arab aspirations for the region. Further, US adapting a public position of linking its assistance to progress in democratization and better governance, and progress in economic policy reform, the aid decline sharply as Niger on neither score has ranked very high³¹. This has very adversely affected Niger as it was a period of political instability and *coup d etat* .

The aid policy, however, has undergone changed with the time. Now, US aid is related to combating terrorism after 9/11th. Niger took advantage of the situation by enlisting support to the US war against terrorism which resulted in wide protest against government by Islamic groups .Thus, the aid policies of US is governed by its own national interest and not on humanitarian ground. America's the latest response to the food crisis in Niger is part of an existing effort that focuses on regional solutions to development issues in the sahel region of Africa .The recent announcement of\$7.5 million more in food aid to Niger by the US agency for international development (USAID) is related to a larger American programme—the West Africa Regional Program (WARP), worth \$40 million—designed to focus on regional development of the continent. The WARP initiative is run by USAID, which

³⁰ Charlik, Robert B. (1994), "Niger", in Shaw, Timothy and Okolo, Julius Emeka (ed.), *The political economy of foreign policy in ECOWAS*, St. Martin's Press Ltd., Great Britain, p.113.

³¹ *ibid.* p. 119.

has provided more than \$127 million in overall assistance in 2005 to help improve the lives of the people in the Sahel, according to USAID press release. WARP reflects the US policy of working through regional organizations in Africa as much as possible to foster home-grown development partnership³². About \$133.9 million in US food aid has already been provided in 2005 for the 65 million people in the Sahel which extends from West Africa to Chad and Sudan. Niger alone has already received \$18.9 million in aid³³. Thus, there has been fluctuation in the US food aid which seems to be more political in nature.

4.8.2 Role of French and European Commission in Niger;

French play a very important role as donor agencies in Africa. French being the only former colonial power that maintained and expanded its presence throughout the continent, referred to as “Francophone Africa”. The evolution of French overseas development assistance (ODA) towards Francophone Africa during the cold war was driven by cultural, economic and security interests. French determination to preserve and strengthen the Francophonie is best demonstrated by the regular Franco African summits attended by the President of France and Francophone Africa. They have been described as the centerpiece of Franco African culture relations, most notably in terms of their ‘familial character’ and the permanent tête-à-tête maintained between the French President and each of the Francophone Africa heads of state.³⁴ During the postcolonial period, France acted as a reserver whenever it was facing any crisis and became one of the important donors in providing foreign assistance. Though, French aid was channeled in the name of the European Commission (EC), it still plays an important part which can be analyzed by the role in Niger

In Niger, the Gaullist conception of the French community prevailed with the cooperation agreement seeking to establish economic, financial and other matters of mutual interest. France, under this agreement concluded separate agreements on trade, fiscal and monetary matters, aid, and education, strategic and military cooperation. The dependency of Niger to France continued in the postcolonial period as Nigerien

³² Access on 16th February, URL: www.usunrome.usmission.gov.

³³ Access on 16th February, URL: www.usaid.gov -frontlines from the American people, September 2005 p. 1.

³⁴ Schraeder, Peter J. (1995), foreign assistance in Francophone Africa, *The Journal of modern African studies*, Vol.33, No.4, p. 542.

economy needed both French market and capital. French purchased about 60 per cent of Niger's exports including, in the 1960s, the vast majority of its groundnut crop, and in the 1970s and 1980s over 80 per cent of its uranium production. It has also supplied 35-45 per cent of Niger's total imports³⁵. France, also traditionally supplied the lion's share of public assistance to Niger, both in technical assistance and in project budgetary aid. Overall, aid to Niger amounted to between 45 and 75 per cent of Niger's total national budget in the period from 1975 to 1981.

During the 1970s, the relations between France and Niger was not quite smooth, leading to the most serious blow to Niger's financial situations, in terms both of aid and investment, has come with the French taking a hard look at their African commitments in 1990s. Yet, French public assistance to Niger accounted about 25 percent of Niger's total 1990 aid receipts of \$ 357million³⁶. Niger also benefited from France support indirectly through its support for programme assistance European Development Fund (EDF) and commodity support. Thus, France still continued to be a major donor agency in Niger individually and also through EU.

However, European Community is second-largest source of food aid in the world. The European Commission (EC) provided first food aid in 1968 after being signatory to the first food aid convention in 1967 which was held at the initiative of the US. The US wanted that the rest of the developed world to be the burden sharer of food aid. The EC and its member states, as a signatory of every food aid convention since 1967, have collectively pledged the second-largest minimum annual contribution. The community has also pledged resources to the World Food Programme (WFP) regularly since 1968, and has been a consistent contributor to the international emergency food reserves. It also channels food aid through other UN organizations, the international committee of the Red Cross, the league of Red Cross societies and NGOs normally registered in its member states. NGO-EC cooperation involves a number of organizations and the developing countries. EC guidelines for NGO include food aid to food deficit countries and priority to rural development particularly to promote food self-sufficiency programme and social welfare projects.

³⁵ Charlik, Robert B. (1994), "Niger", in Shaw, Timothy and Okolo, Julius Emeka (ed.), *The political economy of foreign policy in ECOWAS*, St. Martin's Press Ltd., Great Britain, p. 109.

³⁶ *ibid.* p.118.

A coordinating body for NGO in EC member states, known as EuronAid established in 1980 to provide logistical and financial services to NGOs issuing EC aid in their relief, allotment and programmes. The association of European and European colonies can be traced back to the Treaty of Rome, 1957 which was based on the model designed and applied by the France. The model was reinforced in the Yaounde conventions of 1963 and 1969 which provided the basic framework for trade and aid which subsequently institutionalized in four Lome conventions of 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990. A scheme of international development cooperation linking the African, Carribean and Pacific (ACP) countries as a group to Europe Union were established by the Lome convention in 1975. The fourth convention was revised in 1994-95 and clause was added which allowed the EU to suspend co-operation with any ACP country lacking compliance with democracy or a human rights clause including punitive conditionality.

Further, European Parliament has expressed the urgency of addressing the immediate situation and believed that ending the cycle of deprivation in Niger and across the Sahel was a long-term challenge requiring massive investment and a genuine commitment to eradicating hunger. Parliament called for priority to be given to prevention, by reducing dependence on rainfall owing to its irregularity, developing irrigation-based agriculture, increasing food productivity and boosting the capacity of local cereal reserves³⁷. Thus, European commissions are playing a very vital role in ensuring food security in Niger.

4.8.3 Other aid donors:

Libya plays an important role as food aid donor in Niger. However, the relations with Libya got soared over the issue of Libyan claims on Nigerien uranium and its support for rebel movement targeted at Niger. However, at the time, of 1980s food crisis apart from Libya, Islamic solidarity and the Arab card were becoming too difficult and dangerous for Nigerian leaders to manage³⁸. In 21st century, Kuwait proved to be Niger's reliable donor partner. In 2004, Kuwait has provided financial aid with CFA F 257m (US \$485,445) to Niger to purchase cereals locally for West

³⁷ <http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/200509/p106039.html>

³⁸ Charlik ,Robert B. (1994), "Niger", in Shaw, Timothy and Okolo, Julius Emeka (ed.), *The political economy of foreign policy in ECOWAS*, St. Martin's Press Ltd., Great Britain, p. 116.

African nation's needy population³⁹. In Niger, however, there is no consistency in the flow of aid and assistance.

4.8.4 Role of multilateral aid organization in Niger:

The origin of multilateral food aid is rooted in 1943 meeting at Hotsprings, Virginia convened by US President Franklin Roosevelt in which the foundation for creation of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was laid. An agreement was signed for creation of UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in Washington D.C. The UNRRA was the first multilateral agency to deal with food Aid and to attempt international cooperation to prevent a famine. The multilateral food Aid was put to an end in 1949 as UNRRA was terminated until the foundation of the World Food Programme (WFP) in 1963. The WFP was set up on an experimental basis for an initial period of three years which was successful and its operation finally being approved in 1965, it became pioneer and most important multilateral food aid organization.

The multilateral organization engaged in Niger is the World Bank, the IMF and the UN agencies– United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP), United Nation International Children's Emergency Funds (UNICEF), FAO, and WFP etc. They are playing important role in funding and distributing food aid in Niger. This multilateral agency participates in the Food Crisis Prevention and Mitigation Mechanism (DNP-GCA), the national coordinating body for all partners' activity in food security of Niger. The partner to the DNP-GCA assists by providing contribution in support of the mechanism. FAO conducted in collaboration of CILSS and WFP survey on food security in Niger. It was evident from the survey that the most vulnerable zones of Niger is agro-pastoral strip characterizing food crisis as:

- Rapid increase in cereal price immediately following the harvest;
- Unavailability of local food commodities;
- Human consumption of cereal seeds;
- Drop in the price of small livestock;
- Massive early departure of migrants, especially male labourers from village;

³⁹ Jan 16th -Feb 15th (2004), Economic Aid Niger, *Africa Research Bulletin-economic, Financial and technical*, black and publishing Ltd., p.15957.

- Early transhumance of herders leading to increased herders- farmers conflicts⁴⁰.

The WFP/ Helen Keller International (HKI) nutritional survey indicate alarming unusually high overall rates of acute mal-nutrition (13.4%), including 2.5% severe malnutrition in the regions of Maradi and Zinder. It indicated about 60.2% of children suffering of long-term nutritional situations⁴¹. In response to the situation, WFP and UNICEF have reinforced their activities in the field of malnutrition by supporting-

- Medecins Sans Frontiers(MSF)a new therapeutic feeding centres opened throughout the country,
- Other non-governmental partners activities and
- National health structures.

WFP, further revised its distribution plans and approved emergency operation to reach 400,000 beneficiaries with 6,562million tons of food commodities for a total cost of US\$ 3.6m. FAO provided the government of Niger with US\$ 360,000 from regular resources for livestock fodder and an additional US\$ 80,000 from funds raised for the purchase of garden vegetables seeds and livestock fodder⁴². Thus, the international organizations are playing an important role not only by providing aid but also launching projects and survey in Niger

The World Bank and the IMF, the two financial institutions engaged in Niger to assist in the long-term development to ensure sustainability. The financial institutions are working hard in recent years to address the need of Nigerien. IMF policy advice to Niger draws largely on Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) outlined by the Nigerien authorities in 2002 after consultation with the country's civil society. Since 2000, IMF financial support to Niger under Poverty Reduction and growth Facility has totaled \$88million⁴³. Moreover, in December 2000, Niger qualified for enhanced debt relief under the IMF programme for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). Total relief from all of Niger's creditors is worth about\$890million,

⁴⁰ Accessed on, 24th Oct, 2005, URL: www.Africafocus.org/doc05/nig0507.php

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Aug 15 (2005), IMF join the Niger relief effort, *IMF survey*, p235.

corresponding to about \$520million in net present value terms, which is equivalent to 53.5%of Niger's total debt outstanding as of 2000⁴⁴.

The World Bank has responded swiftly to the food crisis in Niger by making funds available for emergency food aid for the people on the brink of starvation. The World Bank has financed through the Locust Emergency Project. The World Bank has obligated funds totaling US\$ 428,000 to improve seed distribution activities in the upcoming agricultural season through its African Emergency Locusts Project⁴⁵. In addition to that, the Bank is using \$180,000 from a community driven development project in Niger to buy cereals. Thus, the World Bank has undertaken number of projects to attend self-sufficiency and sustainable agricultural development.

These food aid agencies are not free from limitations. Though the agencies call for contribution and assistance to food deficit countries, its appeal are internally structured under the clutches of Western countries. These agencies carry forward the inherent political and economic interests of the donor countries. So goodwill on the part of the donor agencies is missing.

Food aid distributed through food for work programme, mother child health clinic and school feeding are all plagued with serious problems that calls in question their value both to the poor and as a tool of development. In many sub Sahara Africa countries the assets produced under food for work project accrue to the land owners, not to land less labourers who work on them. Food aid also lent itself to serious abuse within the recipient countries. It has provided a source of enrichment for corrupt elites who somehow manage to spirit away an appalling amount of the food intended for the hungry, and who cheat relief organizations by charging exorbitant sums for transportation and storage⁴⁶. Politicians have also taken advantage of assistance programs by misappropriating the food aid for its own personal gains. Moreover, there is an allegation on the part of Nigerien government that outside world has not been generous in its aid and assistance programme directed toward food crisis. However in 2005, it was certainly difficult for the UN WFP to raise extra funds to

⁴⁴ Accessed on, 24th March, 2005, URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/niger>.

⁴⁵ Accessed on, 24th December, 2005, URL:<http://africafocus.org/docs05/nig0507.php>.

⁴⁶ Lofchie, Michael and Commins, Stephen k. (1982), Food deficit and agricultural policy in tropical Africa, in *The Journal of modern African studies*, Vol. 20, No.1, p. 20.

purchase additional food for Niger when the country's own President had for so long denied existence of food crisis. Thus, the problem of food crisis seems to be more political in nature subject to personal and donor interests. The ultimate irony of food assistance programs lie on the fact that there are often foodstuffs available in other districts which are typically prevented from reaching the needy areas by lack of administrative capacity, and by the inadequacies in infrastructure and marketing mechanism. So, apart from policies, the political will is must for addressing the problem of food crisis in Niger.

Challenges of food security in Niger in the 21st century;

With the improvement in overall growth of other developing countries, Africa is still experiencing negative growth rate especially in West Africa. Since 1980s, international financial institutions (IFIs) have been lending money to African countries on the basis that they accept conditionality which will help them pay back the loans. It seems to IFIs that one size fits all solutions in aid dependent African countries. In response to the criticisms, the IFI's announced in 1999 that these SAPs would be replaced by PRSP. Under the new framework, the IFI's trumpets their enthusiasm for 'country ownership'. They argue, build ownership because rather than the IFI's, imposing policies, countries are supposed to write their own three years National development plans, which details macroeconomic policies, government spending targets and also social development programmes. Furthermore, to meet the change that imposing condition is undemocratic the IFI's now insist that other stakeholders such as NGO's, unions and business, rather than just government are to be involved in writing the plans. Northern NGO's and by bilateral donors initially welcomed PRSPs as a means to reverse power relationship between the donors and governments, between citizens and states, and between North and South⁴⁷. However, the experience of PRSP's is quite gloomy as the programme has narrowly defined agendas established by government in advance with discussion within defined constraints and domination of participatory process mainly by urban, professional groups, humanitarian NGO's and their umbrella bodies. This process excludes civil societies, rural based peasants groups, trade unions etc.

⁴⁷ Frasers, Alastair (2005), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; Now who calls the shoots, *Review of African political economy*, Vol.32, No.104/5, p. 317.

There is also growing suspicion on the do-gooders as all-times they speak with high expectation. This expectation was dubious. In case of debt relief, G-8 has taken initiative for launching 'modern Marshall plan' for highly debted countries which seems to be questionable as Nigerian pay back over US\$3 billion to Britain alone, a figure more than the total aid budget of Britain in the same year. The WTO meeting in Hong Kong made no significant impact on the African countries as the issues and decisions were delayed for yet another round of negotiations between the cats and mice of the global economy. The cat will not give up their right to eat the mice while the mice have to do everything to escape being grobbled up⁴⁸. Moreover, the existing African NGO's are donor driven proving to be incapable of doing on their own capacities. So there is need to develop alternative to Northern market which is possible only through greater South South Co-operation on economic issues. Greater South-South Trade will further strengthen Soutern alliance in the WTO which at present is more political in nature.

In international contexts, UN has implemented UN' Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in 2000 to halves poverty by 2015. But, the mid review of the MDGs reveals very pessimistic picture to achieve the target. So, there is need for change in the approach of policy implementations focused by international community. Therefore, the AU, ECOWAS and the other regional organizations has to play a vital role in co-operation with international community for ensuring food security through special programmes. It is only through, Africa's own initiative that real economic self-sufficiency can be achieved.

In Niger, rural development has been a major policy concern for the past 40 years. But it has failed to make any deep impact. So, mere formulation of rural development programmes is not going to make any headway towards economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, there is a need for political will and active people's participation in the formulation and implementation of the policies through various supporting agencies. The medium and long-term strategies have to be geared towards improving food production and financial developmental assistance is to be provided which would facilitate the credit granting, decentralized financial system and local

⁴⁸ Raheem, Tajudeen Abdul (2006), Bye to all B stars of global pornography of poverty, Blair, Brown, Bob and Bono, *Review of African political economy*, Vol.33, No.10 7, March, p. 157.

savings that have to be complemented by financial system devoted to bring industry into rural areas including the Agro-processing industry. So, sound policy of governance is required to ensure right to food to all.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The study of politics of food crisis in Niger establishes a close link between politics and the ongoing crisis that traces its origin from the colonial period. The colonial power by partitioning the continent has restricted the movement of the people who in the pre-colonial times responded to the food crisis by migrating to other areas in order to ensure their entitlement to food. This process of drought/recovery cycle was particularly hampered by the invasion of colonial powers. In Niger, the French adopted the policy of assimilation to assimilate Africans into the French culture, education etc. and to accept them as partners in government to establish a Greater France. However, in practice only a few were assimilated and qualified for French citizenship. The policy of France, in other-words was to dominate the Blacks. So, the administrative setup that developed was unitary in nature as Governor General acted on his own initiative resulting in undue centralisation and exclusion of Africans at the level of policy making.

Similarly, the Nigerien was also dominated in the economic field. In economic sphere, with establishment of the French rule, export cash crop production was introduced. To which, groundnut continued to be the mainstay of Niger's economy even in the postcolonial period. It was provided with all sorts of agricultural extension services at the great cost of local food crops. The French rule was further marked by extensive use of forced labour, requisitioning of huge quantities of millet, increased tax burden and sanctions. There were even forceful requisitioning of millet and animals to maintain garrisons. Thus, the food shortage tends to be the obvious result of such harsh and repressive policy of the French. There were several reports of huge losses of human lives and properties in the food crisis of 1913-15 and 1931-32. However, no relief measures were undertaken in response to the grave situation. Though the food crisis of 1931-32 had received some notice, it showed the same results. Measures such as *societies indigènes de prévoyance* to combat locust was initiated with *Fonds d' Investissement Pour le Developpement Economique et Social* (FIDES). These measures rather than addressing food insecurity had widened the gap between town and countryside and limited its facilities to expatriate.

With the attainment of independence, the colonial legacy in Nigerien economy continued as the same pattern of the export cash crop plantation followed at the cost of food crop production. Further, the impact of French colonial rule can be seen in the ethnic front also. Zerma/Songhay being the more receptive to France influence than Hausa, Fulani and Tuaregs benefited from the colonial rule. They proved to be potential allies of France resulting in political empowerment of the Zerma/Songhay communities. They dominated the political scene from 1960 to 1991. During the period, other ethnic groups were not represented in the governing body. Niger, thus, continued to be victim of sub imperialism of the Zerma/Songhay in the sense that the government pursued the same policy of the French by sterilising all political activities to silence the voice of the average Nigerien. This had led to the dissatisfaction of other ethnic groups resulting in ethnic and regional tensions, which had direct bearing in the food production of Niger.

The policy initiated by the successive governments to involve rural communities tended to fail as Himani Diori initiated 'Mobilisations for Development' and Kountche's *Société de Développement* were all designed on paper to involve rural participation in the country's policymaking. But, in reality there were no genuine decentralisation. The body/ institution designed to promote the participation were the representative of rural elites, urban residents, merchants, building contractors etc. In 1990s, further as the period was marked by political instability, protests, strikes, ethnic conflicts etc, no genuine measures were undertaken to promote economic development for ensuring food security. The infrastructure was underdeveloped which hampered the mobilisation of goods and food aid limited to urban areas and also the marketing of the local grown crops. Though, after 1999 political stability has been established, there were number of strikes and protests against the economic policies of the Tandja Government. There were reports of ban on freedom of press and association with the violation of human rights. The present government seems to be more sensitive to the problem of international terrorism than to the food crisis. The food crisis of 2005 worsen when Tandja denied of anticipating any such crisis making international organisations difficult to raise fund with a view not to disrupt market under the pressure of traders. Thus, the government of Niger is less inclined towards addressing the problem of food crisis and rural development.

After Sahelian disaster of 1968- 74, Niger got entangled in the economic crisis. As a response to the economic crisis Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced as a measure for recovery. However, SAP has further deepened the problem of food crisis as it resulted in user fee for all the welfare activities previously undertaken by the government. International Monetary Fund (IMF) also bears the responsibility in pushing for the expansion of Value Added Tax (VAT) in the country, which has already been struck by crisis. The failure of SAP, on the other hand, has been attributed to the existence of the customary land system by the donor agencies. Though, attempt has been made by government to introduce private ownership of land in the form of Rural Code, the land tenure system in Niger is marked by conflict between two sets of law- customary and state law. The provision has been made under the Rural Code for the settlement of dispute of the land tenure system. But it has failed due to inadequate powers in the hands of authorities. Moreover, there is an ever increasing danger for the misuse of these lands by multi-national corporations, if private ownership is introduced.

Though, Nigerien women undertake all the hard works from child bearing to assisting the husband in the fieldwork, they were the worst sufferers of the existing social system. The social system is marked by a patriarchal character as they have no say in the system of governance. They were also denied access to adequate technical and business training as well as the agricultural loans. Apart from it, the greatest deprivation that Nigerien women come across is their denial of equal access to natural resources which has directly impeded their right to food. SAP has also increased their suffering as they are discriminated in the local market and wages as compared to men.

There are number of national, regional and international organizations engaged in Niger to aid and assist in the food crisis. But the NGOs operating in Niger are controlled by the state elite, civil servants and the cabinet ministers making it difficult for the fair performance of the organizations. In the regional level the commitment of the countries are highly questionable as in the case of Niger and Nigeria. Moreover, the donor agencies responses to the crisis are reported to be very slow and are controlled by big brothers (Western Powers). Apart from it, perhaps more serious is the recurrence of a particularly nasty problem, namely the

embezzlement of foreign aid by members of the country's political and commercial elites. Thus, there is a close relationship between the politics and food crisis in Niger.

Though, political stability has been established in Niger, it has a long way to go as there is need for institutional building of political structures with genuine representation of different sections of people. Different programmes and schemes are to be initiated and implemented by involving different stake holders for the successful accomplishment of the projects. Infrastructure in the rural areas is to be improved to ensure disburse of food aid and for marketing of local products. The participatory democratic government is the ideal political set up that tends to ensure food security. Accountability, transparency and responsive government should be the ideal trait for the governance of the country. But, the ultimate test of government lies with the deliverance of public goods and establishment of the rule of law. As Niger being the country, where agriculture is the sole source of livelihood, any decline in agricultural production leads to fall in purchasing power. So, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Nigerien Government to ensure entitlement to food.

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