

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE SHONGA FARM, KWARA STATE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: This paper examines the contributions of public-Private partnership in Agriculture to grassroots development with emphasis on Shonga Farms' experience. The curiosity to conduct the study was predicated on the need to determine the viability of commercializing agriculture in developing country like Nigeria. The main objectives of the study are to evaluate the contributions of Shonga Farms to rural development in food supply, income generation, infrastructural development and employment generation in Shonga communities of Kwara State. In efforts toward achieving the above objectives, stakeholder's theory was adopted as a theoretical underpinning for the paper. Methodologically, the paper adopted a survey research design for data collection. Out of 204 questionnaire administered to selected respondents, 183 were completed and returned properly. Subsequently, descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were adopted for the analysis of research questions and test of hypotheses. The findings of the study reveal that Shonga Farm has significantly increased the capacity of employment generation, food production, income generation and infrastructural development in Shonga community. However, the inability to complete Kanji Dam irrigation project made it difficult for the company to farm during the dry seasons. Overall, the study recommended for a reduction in the high rate of tariff on imported farm equipment and inputs in order to enable Shonga Farms procure high quality inputs such as: seeds, fertilizers, herbicides and machineries. The Central Bank of Nigeria and Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank should come to the aid of Shonga Farm by ensuring speedy completion of Kanji Dam irrigation project to encourage all round farming throughout the year.

Keywords: Agriculture; Development; Grassroots; Public-Private; Shonga; Stakeholders

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1. Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa with a population of 154.7 million, accounting for 18 percent of the Continent's total population (World Bank, 2011). Prior to the oil boom of the early 1970s, the country was one of the world's leading producers of cocoa, palm oil and palm kernel, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, hides and skins. Moreover, the agricultural sector contributed over 60 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 70 percent of exports and 95 percent of food needs. However, with the discovery of oil and its commercial exploitation, the agricultural sector was neglected, which resulted in a decline in both productivity and growth of the sector. Despite this downturn, agriculture remains dominant in Nigerian economic growth, contributing almost 42 percent to GDP and employing around 70 percent of its workforce (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

The beginning of the Obasanjo Administration in 1999 marked the emergence of extensive network of regional investment agreements that sought to promote and protect foreign industrialists investing in Nigeria. After the ejection of the white farmers from Zimbabwe by Zimbabwean leader in 2001, the Nigeria Federal government entered into negotiation with these commercial white farmers and agricultural experts. Some of them visited the country and identified Nigeria as a favorable place for investment in large scale integrated farming. The Governor of Kwara State demonstrated his administration's readiness to benefit from the negotiations by inviting Zimbabwean farmers to the state (Aremu, 2005).

The farmers were invited and encouraged by the Governor to acquire any part of the 17 communities in Shonga District for cultivation. The Zimbabwean farmers settled in Shonga District about 110 kilometers north of Ilorin, the Kwara State capital. Kwara State has a cultivable area representing 75.3% of total land area, which has been found suitable for almost all forms of food crops. However, only about 11% of this was being cultivated by small farm holders, with an average farm size ranging between 1-2 hectares (Saraki, 2008). Government efforts towards boosting agricultural production in the past did not yield much positive results as agricultural production in the state is still largely subsistence.

The State Government also signed a N2.5 billion Equity Participation Agreement with these foreign farmers in 2007. The farmers were registered as Shonga Farm Holdings Nigeria Limited. Under the agreement, a consortium of five leading banks in the country offered to provide a N1billion equity participation contribution and 1.5 billion as loan to the 13 New Nigerian farmers to develop their farms in Shonga.

These banks are: Platinum Habib Bank Plc, Guarantee Trust Bank Plc, First Inland Bank Plc, Intercontinental Bank Plc, and First Bank of Nigeria (Saraki, 2008).

As the largest commercial enterprise in Nigeria, the commercial farmers are also believed to be capable of addressing the problem of processing and preservation of agricultural produce that have plagued this sector for ages. It is further believed that the project will be a source of technology transfer through the use of modern techniques of farming (Kwara State, 2008). It is against this background that this paper examined the contributions of Public-Private Partnership in agriculture to rural development in Kwara State, using Shonga Farm as a case study.

2. Statement of Problem

Sequel to the attainment of independence in 1960, agriculture was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy through the provision of food for its citizens, raw materials for industries and employment generation for about 70% of her population. However, the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1958 led to the neglect of agriculture despite government huge investment in the sector. In view of this, private sector participation in Nigeria's agricultural sector has over the years been negatively affected by the distorting influence of the direct public sector's involvement in agriculture. Meanwhile, the various ways in which the government intended to tackle agricultural development problem diminished the incentives for private sector participation.

It is quite disheartening that laudable and result-oriented programmes such as; the operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, National Accelerated Food Product Programme, River Basin Development Authority, Agricultural Development Project, National Directorate of Employment, Directorates of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure, Better Life for Rural Women, Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Banks failed to address the problem of food insecurity in Nigeria. This is not unconnected with the fact that government policies had not encouraged large scale investment in corporate agriculture; rather it has only favored official funding of agricultural programs creating loopholes for mismanagement of huge agricultural resources and wastages.

The failure of government policies towards addressing the problem of food insecurity, high rate of unemployment, low income generation capacity, lack of basic infrastructures and the use of crude implements for agricultural production in rural communities led to mass exodus of working population to urban centers in search

of greener pastures. Efforts to reverse the above ugly trends led to a paradigm shift from traditional public administration to new public management. In other words, government decided to embrace Public-Private Partnership as a way of encouraging mechanized agriculture in rural areas. The adoption of Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) in agricultural sector in Nigeria is still a novel idea. This is so because, only few States of the Federation have embraced PPPs as a means of ensuring food security and rural development. The reason for the inability of some States to embrace the opportunities offered by PPPs may not be unconnected with lack of enabling environment for private investment in agriculture. For instance, the cost of agricultural inputs such as; fertilizers, pesticides, seedlings and irrigational facilities have been on the increase. Also, the inconsistency in rainfall pattern across the country and unpopular government policies on agriculture may be responsible for such apprehensions.

The then Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Bukola Saraki in a bid to revitalize the agricultural sector in Kwara State instituted the Back-to-Farm Project in 2005. This project was meant to encourage commercial agriculture in the state. The government cleared large hectares of land, procured agricultural inputs like fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides, and distributed lands to farmers. The Back-to-Farm project recorded 14 percent success, for various reasons, ranging from inadequate commercial farming experience on the part of the farmers to lackadaisical attitude on the part of targeted youth (*Siaka, 2011*).

Subsequently, signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Kwara State Government and Zimbabwe white farmers led to the establishment of Shonga Farm. However, a glance at the profile of Shonga Farm revealed that less than 60% of the objectives of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of food production, employment/income generation and provision of basic infrastructures to Shonga community of Kwara State have been achieved. This is not unconnected with the inability of the company to procure the irrigation facilities capable of encouraging farming activities all year round. Also, the continuous increase in the cost of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, machinery, insecticide, pesticide, etc has made it difficult if not impossible for Shonga Farm to meet its expected target. Apart from the above challenges, the high rate of interest being charged on loan and short term period of maturity on loan facilities made it difficult for Shonga Farm to increase its production capacity. To examine the contributions of Public-Private Partnership in agriculture to rural development in Shonga community, the following questions are pertinent:

- i. To what extent has Shonga Farm Holding encouraged food security and rural development in Shonga, Edu LGA of Kwara State?
- ii. How significant is the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of income generation in Shonga community of Kwara State?
- iii. To what extent has Shonga Farm Holding contributed in the area of employment generation in Shonga community of Kwara State?
- iv. How significant is the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the provision of infrastructural facilities that could lead to rural development?

3. Objectives of the Paper

The objectives of this paper are to:

- i. Determine the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has encouraged food security and rural development in Shonga community of Kwara State;
- ii. Investigate the significance of income generation by Shonga Farm Holding to rural community of Shonga;
- iii. Ascertain the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has generated employment opportunities in Shonga community of Kwara State;
- iv. Examine the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the provision of infrastructural facilities toward the encouragement of rural development in Shonga community of Kwara State.

3.1. Statement of Hypotheses

In order to achieve the objectives of this paper, the following hypotheses were developed:

- i. There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has contributed in the area of food supply to Shonga community of Kwara State;
- ii. There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of income generation in Shonga community of Kwara State;

iii. There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has contributed to employment generation in Shonga community of Kwara State;

iv. There is no significance difference in the opinion of respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the provision of infrastructural facilities that could lead to rural development.

4. Conceptual Analysis

There is no one single or succinct definition of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Precisely defining PPP is challenging because by scenery it is a relative concept, responding to the institutional, legal, venture and public procurement settings of different authorities, also considering the contextual nature of individual agreements. According to Wang, Xiong, Wu & Zhu (2018), PPP refers to a robust multifaceted collaboration between public and private sectors for the purpose of providing infrastructure and render services to the general public. By implications, both the public and private sectors usually bear accompanied risks and benefits in order to achieve common goals. For the purpose of this paper, PPP refers to joint efforts between the government and private operators for the purpose of creating values in order to meet identified needs in a given society.

On the other hand, rural development has been described in different ways by different authors, depending on the discipline or line of thought of the individual concerned. This is because the subject of rural development is multidisciplinary and the definition of such author will depend on the area where he/she focuses attention. Being that as it, all definitions have a central theme, which is "improvement of living conditions of the rural people". What the different definitions did was to lay emphasis on the process of getting the central objective of rural development achieved. For instance, the Decree No.4 of 1986 establishing the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) conceived rural development as a process through which rural needs are identified, human and material resources are mobilized and harnessed to meet the needs of people such as; food, road, electricity, water and basic amenities and also to improve political participation and social and economic self reliance in the society or community. By implication, rural development is usually an initiative of government aimed at improving the standard of living of average citizens through the mobilization of human and material resources.

Similarly, the United Nations (1977) conceives rural development as a strategy designed to transform rural life by extending to the masses of the rural population the benefits of economic and social progress. For the purpose of this paper, rural development is a multidimensional process which aims at implementing policies and programme towards the improvement in the quality of life of the people at the grassroots level.

5. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Keynesian approach as a theoretical underpinning due to its applicability on issues regarding public-private partnership in agriculture and rural development. Under this theory, the private sector is the mover of the economy while the role of the state is restricted to the maintenance of law and order, and the creation of the necessary institutions for the functioning of the market. In his appraisal of the conservative thesis, Vernon (1987) notes that the theory is not a “blanket rejection of government”, rather, it is a theory which credits the public sector with some crucial roles which reinforce the effectiveness of commerce in the economy. However, in his arguments against government involvement in the production and management of economic activities, particularly in developing countries, Friedman (1962) stresses the following issues: slowness of government bureaucracy; difficulties in controlling huge public organization; inefficiencies which political considerations can breed and also the lapses associated with the framework of the public sector; and the difficulties of assessing public programmes. These arguments, coupled with the emergence of growth theories (Harrod-Domar, “the big push”, “unbalanced growth”, etc.) within the framework of developing countries, encourage the quest for government intervention in economic activities (Obadan and Ayodele, 1998). The classical theory has been criticized by Keynes (1930) for being unrealistic and incapable of providing a cure to the economic ills of the society. However, the ability of ensuring efficiency, effectiveness in service delivery through prudent management of resources makes the private sector driven economy attractive.

In view of foregoing argument against the market system, the liberal thesis proposes the intervention of government through the establishment of public enterprises to produce essential goods and services under strict regulatory devices such as; private activity regulation, the subsidization policy and strict ministerial control. Galbraith (1978) recounts the limitations of the price system which can only be overcome effectively when government intervenes in economic activities. Against the

background of the global economic recession of the 1980s, coupled with the precariousness of the fiscal postures of most developing countries, these countries experienced financial difficulties in retaining the mechanisms for maintaining the large public enterprises sector economy. This development led to the ascendancy of the market forces-based economic orthodoxy. In this regard, the economic paradigm of the second half of the 1980s emphasized a return to Adam Smith's private sector-dominated economy, but in a somewhat refined neo-liberal fashion (Obadan and Ayodele, 1998).

The neo-liberal theory sees government or the public sector as constituting a big barrier to economic development in recent times. In most cases, the liberals argue that government's intervention results in failure- the very problem which government intervention was required to correct. Thus, this theory currently advocates increasing reliance on market economy through public-private partnership arrangement. Given the tenets of this theory, it can be rightly perceived as forming the basis of the World Bank/IMF endorsed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) which many developing countries in serious economic crisis like Nigeria have adopted. By these assumptions, the neo-liberal theory blames the economic woes of the country on the public sector. It therefore, emphasizes the need to replace the public sector with private sector in the economic development processes. Under this theory, the public sector is expected to play supportive roles in the economic development process. This paradigm shift has been tagged, "governance-led development theory" and its central theme is that good governance provides the lead in the development process (Ekpo, 1997).

The Keynesian theory, it is applicable to this study since its major postulations encourage synergy between the public and private sectors in form of Public-Private Partnership. For instance government needs to provide enabling environment for a private sector driven economy while the private sector on the other hand is charged with the responsibility of managing public-private partnership investment.

6. Methodology of the Paper

This study adopted a survey research design as a procedure for data collection, analysis and interpretation. This became necessary in order to obtain information from respondents in their natural setting on issue regarding the effect of Public-Private Partnership on rural development in Kwara State, using Shonga Farm as a case study. To this end, structured questionnaire and interview were administered

to selected respondents in order to determine the relationship existing between PPP in agriculture and rural development.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 2,057. It is made up of the; Staff of Shonga Farm, commercial farmers, government Officials, local farmers and Village Heads. The breakdown of the research population is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Population of the Study

Categories	Population
Commercial Farmer	13
Local Farmers	1,990
Gov. Official	26
Staff of Shonga Farm	13
Village Heads	15
Total	2, 057

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The results in table 1 above show that 0.6% of the research populations are Staff of Shonga Farm responsible for the daily running of the enterprise. In the same vein, 0.6% of the people are the commercial farmers who came from Zimbabwe to sign MoU with Kwara State government. The results equally demonstrated that 0.5 of the population are government Officials from Kwara State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Similarly, the table demonstrated that 97.6% of the inhabitants are residents of Shong Districts who are the direct beneficiaries of the activities of Shonga Farm. Lastly, the remaining, 0.7 are the Village Heads who resides within the 15 communities in Shonga District.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling techniques was adopted for this study in order to select the group of population who are in the best position offer valid information regarding the subject matter of this research. This is so because, the group of population who can provide answers to the research questions are the stakeholders who came together to set up Shonga Farm Holding Company and those who are the direct beneficiaries of its activities. Thus, including the people that have knowledge of the day-day running of the public private partnership in agriculture would go a long way in achieving the purpose of the study.

Table 2. Sample Size

Designation	Sample Size
Commercial Farmer	13
Local Farmer	138
Gov. Official	25
Staff of Shonga Farm	13
Village Heads	15
Total	204

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 2 above demonstrates the sample size of respondents. Commercial farmers are 13, Local farmers are 138, government officials are 25, the staff of Shonga Farm are 13 while the Village Heads are 15 in number.

Table 3. Analysis of Administered and Returned Questionnaire

Designation	Administered Questionnaires	Returned Questionnaires
Commercial Farmer	13	13
Local Farmer	138	125
Gov. Official	25	19
Staff of Shonga Farm	13	11
Village Heads	15	15
Total	204(100%)	183 (91%)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 3 above shows that all the 13 commercial farmers returned their questionnaire. This is not unconnected with the fact that the commercial farmers are always accessible to the general public. In the case of local farmers 125 were returned out of 138 questionnaires administered to them. This is so because, most of the local farmers are not readily available since they are equally engaged in other commercial ventures such as; buying and selling, shoe making, tailoring and teaching. On the part of government Officials, 19 out 25 administered questionnaires were returned appropriately since some of them are engaged in out of station assignment which makes not to be readily available. On issue regarding the Staff of Shonga Farm, 11 out 13 administered questionnaires were returned since few of them went on special assignment. However, all the 15 Village Heads returned administered questionnaires appropriately since they are within reach.

7. Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Educational Background

Educational Background	Frequency	% Scores
First school leaver	72	39.3%
O/Level	18	9.8%
OND/NCE	47	25.7%
HND/Degree	36	19.7%
M.Sc	8	4.4%
Ph.D	2	1.1%
Total	183	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2017

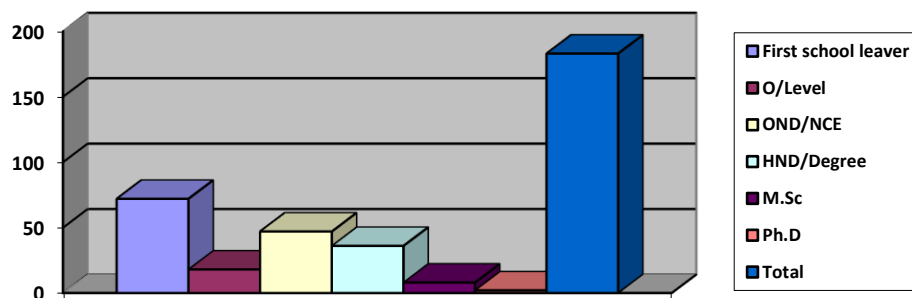
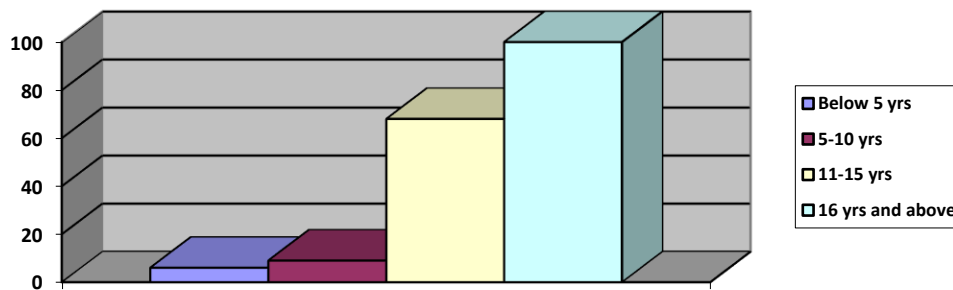


Figure 1. Bar chart of Respondents by Educational Background

The result in table 4 and fig.1 above exhibited the educational qualification of respondents. Accordingly, 72 (39.3%) are primary school leavers, 18 (9.8%) obtained ordinary level certificate, 47 (25.7%) possessed OND/NCE result, 36 (19.7%) bagged HND/Degree qualifications, 8 (4.4%) acquired M.Sc certificate while the remaining 2 (1.1) are Ph.D holders. By and larger, the respondents who obtained primary school leaving certificate secured the highest scores in the entire distribution. This is not unconnected with the fact that the majority of the residents in Shonga could not go to higher institutions due to circumstances beyond their control. Nevertheless, efforts were made to reach out to the few highly educated residents of the community order to ensured balance opinion across board.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Year Spent in Shonga

Year Spent in Shonga	Frequency	% Score
Below 5 yrs	6	3.3%
5-10 yrs	9	4.9%
11-15 yrs	68	37.2%
16 yrs and above	100	54.6%
Total	183	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2017**Figure 1. Bar chart of Respondents by Years Spent in Shonga Communities**

The result in table 5 and figure 2 above demonstrated the number of years spent in Shonga Farm by member of the community. Statistically, 3.3% have spent below 5 years, 4.9% have spent between 5-10 years, 37.2% have spent between 11-15years, and 54.6% have spent above 16 years.

Analysis of Research Questionnaire

The analysis of the research questions as contained in section B-E of the questionnaires is represented in the following tables. The result is based on conversion of frequency scores to simple percentages.

Table 6. Mean Scores on the role of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of Food Supply to Shonga Community in Kwara State

S/NO	Statements	Commercial Farmers	Local Farmers	Government Officer	Staff of Shonga Farm	Village heads	Sectional mean
		Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	\bar{X}
8	The output of staple food has increased since the commencement of commercial farming in Shonga Communities	4.7692	4.7440	4.9474	4.6364	4.8000	4.7794
9	Residence of Shonga community can afford three (3) square meal a day due to the setting up of shonga Farm.	4.2308	4.2720	4.1053	4.2727	4.0667	4.1895
10	Prices of food items in shonga communities is relatively low due to the activities of Shonga Farm	4.4615	4.4720	4.4211	4.6364	4.2000	4.4382
11	Farming activities of Shonga Farm include; mixed, dairy and poultry farming	4.4615	4.4400	4.4737	4.5455	4.5333	4.4908
12	The quality of food items been supplies to shonga communities by Shonga Farm is of high standard	4.2308	4.4080	4.4211	4.2727	4.2667	4.3199
13	Food produced by Shonga Farms are being sold to the people residing in local	4.6923	4.5200	4.3158	4.6364	4.3333	4.4995
	Sectional Mean	4.4744	4.4760	4.4562	4.5000	4.3667	4.5447

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 6 above analyzed the role of Shonga Farm Holding in food supply to Shonga Community of Kwara State. The breakdown of the entire score indicated that the larger number of the research population agreed with the statement that the output of staple food has increased since the commencement of commercial farming in Shonga Communities with the sectional mean of 4.7794. In the same view, the respondents subscribed to the view that residence of Shonga community can afford three (3) square meal a day due to the setting up of shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.1895. Similarly, the majority of the sampled population agreed that the prices of food items in shonga communities is relatively low due to the activities of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.4382. Likewise, the larger percentage of the respondents supported the opinion that Farming activities of Shonga Farm include; mixed, dairy and poultry farming with sectional mean of 4.4908. Equally, the majority of the research population alluded to the view that the quality of food items been supplies to shonga communities by Shonga Farm is of high standard with sectional mean of 4.3199 while the remaining respondents agreed with the statement that food produced by Shonga Farms are being sold to the people residing in local communities with sectional mean of 4.4995.

Table 7. Mean Scores on the role of Shonga Farm Holding in Income Generation to Shonga Community of Kwara State

S/N o	Statements	Commercial Farmers	Local Farmers	Government Officer	Staff of Shonga Farm	Village heads	Sectional Mean
		Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	\bar{X}
14	The level of household income generation capacity has increased as a result of the setting up of commercial agriculture in Shonga communities.	4.5385	4.6480	4.4737	4.9091	4.4000	4.594
15	The majority of households have adequate fund to meet their basic needs due to the setting up of commercial farming in Shonga communities	4.3077	4.1680	4.0000	4.1818	3.9333	4.118
16	Income generation ventures have been set up as a result of the coming of Shonga Farm	4.6154	4.4720	4.4737	4.4545	4.3333	4.470

17	Proceed from the sale of agricultural produce is a major source of income to members of Shonga communities.	4.4615	4.4480	4.4737	4.4545	4.4000	4.448
18	The income level of residence in Shonga community is high due to the activities of Shonga Farm	4.5385	4.5280	4.6316	4.5455	4.4000	4.529
	Sectional Mean	4.4923	4.4528	4.4105	4.5091	4.2933	4.316

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 7 above focused on issue regarding the role of Shonga Farm Holding in income generation to Shonga Community of Kwara State. In response to the preceding research questions on the above named subject matter, the majority of the respondents agreed with the opinion that the level of household income generation capacity has increased as a result of the setting up of commercial agriculture in Shonga communities with sectional mean of 4.594. Furthermore, the respondents equally supported the view that the majority of households have adequate fund to meet their basic needs due to the setting up of commercial farming in Shonga communities with sectional mean of 4.118. Subsequently, the research population equally subscribed to the opinion that income generating ventures have been set up as a result of the coming of Shonga Farm in the community with sectional mean of 4.470. Similarly, most of the research population agreed with the statement that proceeds from the sale of agricultural produce is a major source of income to members of Shonga communities with sectional mean of 4.448. Above all, the larger percentage of sampled population believed that the income level of residence in Shonga community is high due to the activities of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.529.

Table 8. Mean Scores on the role of Shonga Farm Holding in Employment Generation for Shonga Community of Kwara State

S/No	Statement	Commercial Farmers	Local Farmers	Government Officials	Staff of Shonga Farm	Village heads	Sectional Mean
		Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	Mean Scores	\bar{X}
19	Shonga Farm has met the target set for employment generation in Shonga communities	4.5385	4.4960	4.5263	4.0909	4.7333	4.477
20	The number people who secured gainful employment as result of the setting up of Shonga farm are quite substantial	4.3846	4.3680	4.4737	4.5455	4.2000	4.394
21	The rate of unemployment in Shonga communities has reduced due to the setting up of Shonga Farm	4.5385	4.4000	4.3684	4.4545	4.5333	4.459
22	The people in Shonga communities have become employers of labour as a result of exposure to business opportunities by Shonga Farm	4.6923	4.5600	4.5263	4.6364	4.2667	4.536
	Sectional Mean	4.5385	4.4560	4.5053	4.4318	4.4333	4.4665

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 8 above demonstrated the opinion of respondents on issues regarding the role of Shonga Farm Holding in employment generation for Shonga community of Kwara State. Being that as is it may, the result obtained from the preceding questions indicated that the larger number of sampled population agreed with the opinion that Shonga Farm has met the target set for employment generation in Shonga communities with sectional mean of 4.477. In the same vein, the majority of the respondents bought the idea that the number people who secured gainful employment as result of the setting up of Shonga farm are quite substantial with sectional mean of 4.394. Subsequently, the larger percentage of the research population agreed with the view that the rate of unemployment in Shonga communities has reduced due to the setting up of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.459. Lastly, the respondents equally accepted the view that the people in Shonga

communities have become employers of labour as a result of exposure to business opportunities by Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.536.

Table 9. Mean Scores on the role of Shonga Farm Holding in the Provision of Infrastructural Facilities to Shonga Community of Kwara State

	Statement	Commercial Farmers	Local Farmers	Government Officer	Staff of Shonga Farm	Village heads	Sectional Mean
		Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Score	
23	All the communities in Shonga have access to electricity courtesy of Shonga Farm	4.3846	4.5280	4.6316	4.2727	4.9333	4.5500
24	There are good road networks in Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm	4.3077	4.2640	4.3158	4.3636	4.0667	4.2636
25	There is adequate water supply to Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm	4.5385	4.4400	4.4737	4.4545	4.3333	4.4479
26	There is effective health care delivery in Shonga community due to the setting up of Shonga Farm in the area	4.6154	4.4880	4.5263	4.3636	4.2667	4.4520
27	Qualitative education is provided for Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm	4.5385	4.6640	4.4211	4.7273	4.5333	4.5768
	Sectional Mean	4.47694	4.4768	4.4737	4.4363	4.4266	4.4581

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in table 9 above addressed issues regarding the role of Shonga Farm Holding in the provision of infrastructural facilities to Shonga Community of Kwara State. Subsequently, the analysis of the follow-up questions demonstrated that the majority of the respondents agreed with the view that all the communities in Shonga have access to electricity courtesy of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.5500. Also, the larger proportion of sampled population accepted the opinion that there are good road networks in Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.2636. In a related development, the majority of the respondent

supported the view that there is adequate water supply to Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.4479. Similarly, most of the research population believed that there is effective health care delivery in Shonga community due to the setting up of Shonga Farm in the area with sectional mean of 4.4520. On the whole, larger number of sampled population were of the opinion that qualitative education is provided for Shonga communities courtesy of Shonga Farm with sectional mean of 4.5768.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has contributed in the area of food supply to Shonga communities of Kwara State

ANOVA

Observation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	472.485	26	18.172	69.943	.000
Within Groups	84.182	324	.260		
Total	556.667	350			

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The study concluded that; there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the extent to which Shonga Farm Holding has contributed in the area of food supply to Shonga communities of Kwara State at 5% significance level.

Hypothesis Two

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm holding in the area of income generation to Shonga communities of Kwara State

ANOVA

Observation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	684.496	26	26.327	90.470	.000
Within Groups	94.184	324	.291		
Total	556.667	350			

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The study concluded that; there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of

Shonga Farm Holding in the area of income generation in Shonga communities of Kwara State at 5% significance level.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of employment generation to Shonga communities of Kwara State

ANOVA

Observation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	967.783	26	37.222	139.932	.000
Within Groups	86.184	324	0.266		
Total	576.779	350			

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected. The study concluded that; there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the area of employment generation to Shonga communities of Kwara State.

Hypothesis Four

H₀: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the provision of infrastructural facilities to shonga communities of Kwara State

ANOVA

Observation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	573.485	26	22.057	76.059	.000
Within Groups	94.182	324	.290		
Total	576.867	350			

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected. The study concluded that; there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the contribution of Shonga Farm Holding in the provisions of infrastructural facilities to Shonga communities of Kwara State.

7. Findings of the Paper

The outcome of this study empirically demonstrated the contributions of Shonga Farm Holding Limited to the development of Shonga communities in the area of food supply, income generation, employment generation and infrastructural development.

In the area of food production and supply, the poultry farm has a total capacity to raise 160,000 birds on weekly basis. It has a fully automated modern abattoir to dress 5,000 birds daily. The entire farm up to production is all fully integrated both back and forward. The farmers produce feeds for the birds on the farm. The farmers grow both the soya beans and maize required for the production of the feeds. At the dairy section of the SFH, are four farmers with combined cattle herds of about 2,000. These cattle are tagged New Jersey Breed. These cows are specially bred for milk production in high quantity. For now the dairy produces fresh milk from which Yogurts are made. The local farmers equally benefit from the methods of modern farming, especially in cassava planting. The cassava hectarage among the local farmers have remarkably increased due to the assurance of readymade market for them. Specifically, Cassava production increased between 35-45 tons, maize production increased from 1-3 ton per hectares. In-fact, the introduction of pioneer seed by Shonga Farm Holding made the production of maize to increase to 5 tons per hectares. Other food crops include: Soya beans and banana.

In the area of income generation, Shonga Farm Holding bought farm produce amounting to N520 million from local farmers in 2014. Apart from the income generated through the above channel, the act of buying and selling has also increased. Income is generated by vulcanizes, bricklayers, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, rewires, architects, drivers and painters who walk in the factory as service providers. Most local communities have bought motorcycles, pickup van and houses as a result of increase in income generation. This was made possible since members of local communities in Shonga are given higher preference in the area of supply of materials, rendering of services and marketing activities by the commercial farmers.

In the area of employment generation, commercial agriculture has substantially increased the demand for labour that should generate a significant income multiplier effect on the local economy. The size of direct employment on the farms is close to 3000 at peak period. Except for the farm managers who came from Zimbabwe, most of the workers are from the local communities and amongst them are a few return-migrants, lured back by the prospect of a steady job on the farms. There is also a number of artisans and technicians who provide services on the farms and in the homes of the farmers for a fee. Some of these reside in Shonga town and surrounding villages while others come from as far away as Ilorin.

In terms of infrastructural development, Higad Health plan made provision for patients to pay a token of N100 and enjoy free health care for one year. This was

done in collaboration with Netherland government. Also, 1% of the gross profit of the firm is set aside for the provision of social programme in the community. Primary and secondary schools increased due to the coming of Shonga Farm Holding. Only one secondary school was built before the coming of commercial farmers. There was equally a diversion of fider road from Ogudu by Shonga Farm. Also, all the communities in Shonga were connected to the national grid. The electricity is used for milking of cow twice a day, warming poultry pets, pumping of water from borehole, food processing and preservation, hatching, etc. Also, telecommunication network providers such as; MTN, Etizelat and Airtel came to the area as a result of the coming of Shonga Farm (Ionescu 1982).

8. Conclusion

Agriculture was the main stay of Nigeria's economy by the attainment of independent in 1960. Subsequently, the discovery of oil in commercial quantity made successive government to abandon agriculture. Since then, all efforts to diversify the economy of Nigeria from oil to agriculture have not yielded any positive result. This is unconnected with the use of crude implements for farming by local farmers. Therefore, the desire of Kwara State government to embrace the idea of Public-Private partnership in agriculture has made it possible for both local and commercial farmers to have access to finance, farm inputs, and machinery as at when due. This initiative is a wake-up call to other States of the federation in order to encourage self-sufficiency in food production.

Shonga Farms has attracted investments of more than N3 billion in loans and equity from five major banks in Nigeria. This has boosted economic activities in Kwara State. Shonga Farms has provided many employment opportunities for local farmers. Over 4 000 people are employed by a mere 13 commercial farmers at the pick of every farming season. Through the project, Kwara state has led the way in Nigeria's quest for an alternative development framework by changing the country's reliance on imported food such as poultry, milk and milk products.

Moreover, six extension agents are attached to the area with each managing less than 1 000 farmers to help transfer technology to local farmers. To date, the Shonga Farms concept is already showing positive results so that future expectations for its continued success are high. Shonga Farms has generated a N3 million investment for social and infrastructural benefits such as improved road networks, while schools and drinking-water have been provided for the communities.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations are considered fundamental toward the encouragement of improved contributions of Shonga Farm Holding to the development of Shonga communities in the area of food production, employment/income generation and infrastructural development:

Foremost, the Federal government should as a matter of urgency reduce the high rate of tariff on imported farm equipment and inputs in order to enable Shonga farm procure high quality inputs such as; seeds, fertilizers and herbicides and machineries. Also, the cost of locally produced agricultural inputs should be within the reach of average farmers by removing the barriers created by middlemen.

Secondly, the Federal Government should come to the aid of the farm in procuring irrigation facilities which will enable Shonga Farm Holding to engage in farming activities all-year- round planting. The reason for sitting Shonga Farm close to river Niger was to encourage irrigation farming but the inability to obtain the N5 Billion fund for the irrigation project has been a major obstacle towards increasing the capacity of the farm. The farm has been relying on rainfall, which is susceptible to weather variability; by extension this has impacted negatively on food production, income generation, infrastructure development and employment generation.

Thirdly, in western world, a loan facility for farmers is at the average of 2% interest rates on the principal. Therefore, the Central Bank and other agricultural banks should as a matter of urgency offer loan facilities to Shonga Farm on lower interest rates to enable the Company procure all the necessary farm inputs and machinery for the next farming season. This will go a long way in boosting food production, income generation, infrastructure development and employment generation to the host communities.

Fourthly, there is need for more collaborative efforts between the commercial farmers and local farmers in Shonga community in order to encourage the production of high yield crops, improved farming techniques and investment opportunities. This will go a long way in boosting capacity of local farmer in the area of food production. (Ionescu, 1982).

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