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DIVERGENT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS, SIMILAR PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN NIGERIA: AN X-RAY OF ADOPTION OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is one of the key administrative reforms adopted globally to enhance public sector performance. It blends public and private structures towards improved service delivery. This study assessed the effects of Public-Private Partnership on agricultural development with an emphasis on the creation of job opportunities and various challenges in Anambra State. The specific objectives were to ascertain how Public-Private Partnership facilitated employment opportunities in Anambra State and to identify the various hurdles affecting the adoption of Public-Private Partnership for agricultural development in Anambra State. The study was anchored on the Theory of Change. The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey design that enabled the researcher to blend quantitative and qualitative data to elicit relevant and accurate information for the study. The data for the study were sourced from both primary (interview) and secondary sources (journal articles, textbooks, official documents). The thematic method/tool of analysis and descriptive-analytical methods were used to present and analyze data from the interview. It was found that the implementation of Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector in Anambra State has not enhanced employment opportunities, and poor infrastructure, Inadequate involvement of key stakeholders, and lack of proper monitoring are some of the hurdles to Public-Private Partnership adoption towards agricultural development in Anambra State. Premised on the identified challenges, inbuilt monitoring mechanisms, proper involvement of key stakeholders, and revamping of infrastructure were proffered to tackle the identified issues.

Keywords: Public-Private Partnership (PPP), Agricultural Development, Job Creation, and State of Infrastructure, Anambra State.

1 INTRODUCTION

The era of government acting as an octopus in service delivery and public service provisioning is gradually becoming extinct. In many countries, governments at one time or another engage in full or partial ownership and management of some sectors such as health, education, energy, water, agriculture, etc., with the ultimate rationale of efficient and effective service delivery to the citizens. The public sector often could not provide adequate and high-quality services to all citizens and serve remote geographic areas (Macnamara, Moore & Mingote, 2017). Most countries of the world have attempted to correct the hurdles of public sector inefficiency through the reformation of public administration, which is the central machinery towards achieving the state mandates.

Post-1970s reform (New Public Management) efforts aimed at minimizing costs and refocusing public sector activities more functionally. It is also geared towards promoting the role of the market and non-governmental actors both in service provision and in the economy at large. NPM advocates public-private partnership, de-bureaucratization, downsizing or rightsizing of public bureaucracy, etc. All these reforms were designed to improve the efficiency and productivity of public services (Ukwandu & Ijere, 2020). Public-Private Partnership (PPP), which is one of the key elements of New Public Management, represents collaboration, defined by contract, between the public and private sectors (The World Bank, 2022). The partners' contributions complement each other in ways that enable both partners to achieve their goals more efficiently within the given PPP than on their own. It is often deployed in large infrastructural projects that the private partner may finance, plan, or execute (Brock and Kazel, 2022).

Globally, PPPs in the agricultural sector have received attention from scholars, raising important issues concerning the relative benefits of such partnerships. High levels of investment are required to unleash the potential of agriculture for sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries, but low public budgetary allocations, particularly in developing countries, to the sector have slowed growth. This shows the need for PPP in the agricultural sector.

Anambra State is one of the states in Nigeria with the potential for agricultural efficacy, considering the presence of various agricultural practices in different communities and local governments in the state, such as Ayamelum, Anambra East, Anambra West, and Ogbaru, amongst others. Successive administrations of the state have established and adopted divergent agricultural schemes and policies that were in line with the federal government framework. Most of the existing farms were only regional farms under the Anambra State agricultural development projects created then by the Federal Government. These farms were created to enhance agricultural development, such as food security and employment generation within the state and eastern region, but unfortunately, they have not yielded the desired results.

It is observed that poor partnership between the government and private actors is one of the major hindrances to agricultural development in Anambra state, which affects job opportunity creation and food security. This was similarly expressed by the President General of Amawbia Town Union, Chief Godwin Aronu, about the abandonment of the organic fertilizer project in Amawbia, which was initiated in 2006 by former President Obasanjo. The project had the potential to solve the problem of providing organic fertilizer in the southeast and generate approximately 500 million naira in revenue through job creation and by-product marketing (Onuigbo, 2022).

On assumption of office in 2014, Governor Willie Obiano, through the Anambra State Development Plan (ASDP), unfolded a strategy to transform the agricultural sector to ensure food security for the people of Anambra, create employment, including youth employment, and provide the enabling environment to generate a high proportion of the GDP of the State from agriculture through Public-Private Partnership. In a bid to realize this, the state government through the Public-Private Partnership entered into a partnership with Cosched Farms (a subsidiary of Coscharis Group) for commercial rice processing at Igbariam, NOVTEC Farms Ltd for the resuscitation of Anambra State Rice project at Omogho and Ndikelionwu, Lynden Integrated Farm at Igbariam (modern integrated poultry for production of high-quality eggs and poultry meat in the state), ANSG/Joseph Agro Ltd for the rehabilitation of Omor Rice Mill and Irrigated Rice production at Omor and Ufuma (Centre for Community and Rural Development Unizik, 2016). The adoption of the PPP in the agricultural sector through the Anambra State Development Plan raised high expectations among the citizens, considering its positive effects in agriculture, such as employment opportunities, food security, etc. The broad objective is to examine the effects of PPP on agricultural development in Anambra State. The specific objectives are to ascertain how Public-Private Partnership has facilitated employment opportunities in Anambra State and identify various challenges towards the adoption of Public-Private Partnership for agricultural development in Anambra State.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section focuses on the review of literature relevant to the study and the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

2.1 Public-Private Partnership (PPP): An Overview

The obscure nature of the history of Public-private partnership spills over to its definition as well. This is in line with the view of Strickland (2014), who noted that since the development of PPPs in developed countries in the 1990s, there has been a wide variety of standards, legal frameworks, and definitions. The introduction to the International Handbook of PPPs confirmed the controversies in the definition of PPP when it stated that there is a "paradox in what PPP is" (Garg & Garg, 2016). Public-Private Partnership is defined as a contractual arrangement between public institutions and private entities to deliver public goods and services (Pandey et al., 2025). This aids the government and private actors in creating a sustainable collaborative connection in public goods distribution (Wang & Liang, 2019). According to Brock (2021), Public-private partnerships involve collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company that can be used to finance, build, and operate projects, such as public transportation networks, parks, and convention centers. It is a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance (Chaudhary et al. 2025). In describing Public-private partnership as viable for infrastructural development, Augustine (2018) sees PPP as the collaboration between the public and private sectors to provide infrastructure, which was traditionally an exclusive role for the public authority.

Despite the similar and divergent views of various scholars on the concept of Public-Private Partnership (PPP), it can be deduced that PPP is a collaborative arrangement that allows a collective contract between public authorities and private partners to invest in large-scale projects, such as roads, bridges, education, and agriculture, amongst others. The benefits of the collaboration include the sharing of financial burden, innovation, risks, skills, technologies, and knowledge. It is pertinent to note that a Public-Private Partnership can be international, regional, national, and local.

2.2 Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Anambra State

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has been adopted in various sectors in Anambra State with divergent degrees of success and challenges. In housing development, the concept of partnership in the housing delivery system is predicated on the pooling together of resources from the various stakeholders. In Anambra State, PPP is still a new concept, and in the housing sector, a few housing estates have been developed by the Anambra State Housing Development Corporation (ASHDC) in partnership with some private real estate development companies. So far, the numbers of estates under this partnership are as follows: Ngozika Housing Estate, Phase I, Awka, Ngozika Housing Estate, Phase I Extension, Awka, Ngozika Housing Estate, Phase II, Awka, Udoka Housing Estate, Awka, AHOCOL Estate Phase II, Awka, AHOCOL Oganiru Estate, Awka, Niger Bridge Head Housing Estate, Fegge, Onitsha, AHOCOL Inner City Estate, Awka, Liberation Housing Estate, Nawfia/Enugu-Agidi, Hill View Housing Estate, Nkwelle Ezunaka, New Haven Housing Estate, Mgbakwu, etc. (Keke, Emoh & Ogunsina, 2016).

In the education sector, Onyekwelu, (2021) asserted that Public-Private Partnership has a significant effect on the performance of the Anambra State Ministry of Education. This is because the quality of education is likely to improve under the Public-Private Partnership, and there are more financial benefits for the education sector that operates a Public-Private Partnership. As further evidence of this partnership in the education sector, the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) Anambra chapter says they are working with the present administration through the Commissioner of Education in addressing age-long challenges confronting its members (Ofor, 2022).

In the transportation sector, Osadebe (2020) expressed that there have been benefits of Public-Private Partnership in the transportation sector in Anambra State via the establishment of private motor parks such as Northern Route Park A and B, which are located a few steps away from the Seed and Grain Market, Onitsha, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka; partnership with integrated Mass Transit through Public-Private Partnership, arrangement to create jobs through the establishment of UNIZIK's transport sector (Alozie, 2021). The presence of PPP in various sectors in Anambra State, as presented above, shows its relevance and potential as a veritable tool for repositioning and improving the sectors and other sectors in the state towards socio-economic development.

2.3 Empirical Review of Related Studies

Many research studies have been conducted on the adoption of Public-Private Partnership in public service delivery in general and the agricultural sector in particular, in Nigeria and other African states. For instance, Reddy (2026) Conducted a study titled "Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Promoting Agricultural Development in India". This study investigated the effects of an Ag-PPP on India's small-scale common bean producers. These effects are estimated in a multi-treatment situation using a doubly robust difference-in-differences technique. The results showed that the

PPP helped farmers and promoted higher output thanks to targeted initiatives. Productivity, sales volumes, and output marketed were all likely to have increased thanks to the PPP and its interventions. The study suggests that bundled treatments offered by PPPs can reduce market access limitations and increase productivity.

Maru (2026) conducted a study on "Sustainable agricultural industry development and poverty alleviation via Public–Private–Producer Partnership (4P): A Multinational Case Study". The study discusses policy implications for improving the 4P model's effectiveness in poverty alleviation and local economic development, highlighting the importance of better governance structures, financial mechanisms, and market stability. The study combines value chain analysis, Theory of Change mapping, and both qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques were deployed. This study sheds new light on inclusive, justified, and sustainable collaboration mechanisms for participatory agencies and individuals.

Kaupa, Kamuinjo, & Shindume (2022) conducted a study on challenges faced by public-private partnership initiatives in agriculture in Namibia: a case study of the Mashare irrigation scheme in the Kavango region. The study used the Mashare irrigation scheme in the Kavango region as a case study. The study adopted a qualitative research method with an appreciation of the exploratory approach to enhance the robustness of the study. Data were collected through interviews and focus groups and analyzed using thematic techniques. The findings from the study revealed that the key challenge that the PPPs are facing is the rigidity of the lease agreement. The findings from this study also revealed that poor capacity, low motivation of public partners, and delays in the procurement of urgent and strategic items needed for the project, such as pesticides, seeds, and other chemicals, are the other challenges faced in this arrangement.

Ratha and Behera (2025). Conducted a study on "From Policy to Productivity: The Role of PPPs in Transforming Extension Services". This article presents an in-depth examination of PPPs in agricultural extension, highlighting their evolution, diverse implementation models, successes, challenges, and future potential. Through global case studies and theoretical insights, it advocates for institutional innovation and inclusive frameworks to ensure scalability and sustainable agricultural transformation.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Change (ToC) was adopted for this study. The Theory of Change was developed by Weiss and Connell in 1995 in their paper entitled "Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation". It was within the tradition of theory-driven evaluation. Although definitions of ToC vary, it is an approach that describes how a programme brings about specific long-term outcomes through a logical sequence of intermediate outcomes (Breuer, Lee, De-Silva & Lund, 2016). It was made famous by Clark (2004) in her paper entitled: "Deciding the Scope of a Theory of Change". The Theory of Change developed organically, influenced by program evaluation theorists, theories of social change, and the work of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change in the 1990s (Erica, 2016). It is visually represented in a Theory of Change map, which is a graphic representation of the causal pathways through which an intervention is expected to achieve its impact within the constraints of the setting in which it is implemented. Theory of Change has been used to design and evaluate development programs in many different contexts globally. Many evaluation specialists have found out that the Theory of Change is useful as it is a more formative approach; their emphasis from the beginning is on using the Theory of Change for evaluation. Evaluation-focused Theory of Change can be prospective (designed from the beginning of a programme) or retrospective (carried out at the time of the evaluation to understand what has underpinned practices) (Shapiro, 2005).

The basic tenets of the Theory of Change evaluation, as identified by Clark, H. (2004), are outcomes, indicators, rationales, interventions, assumptions, and narrative.

3.1 Application of the theory to the study

Most public administration reforms, such as Public-Private Partnership, are inherently complex, with multiple interacting components such as environmental factors, relevant agencies, stakeholders, data availability, etc. This complexity makes it difficult to evaluate public programmes using traditional experimental designs. Public policy and programme interventions and reform evaluation often rely on ongoing improvement assessment based on the implementation experience (Breuer et al., 2016). The rationale for the adoption of the Theory of Change in this study is its suitability for measuring the progress (outcomes) in the agricultural sector since the adoption of the Public-Private Partnership in Anambra State, Nigeria. The consistent and worrisome reports of food insecurity in various countries of the world, particularly in developing nations, which are mostly linked to the abysmal performance of the agricultural sector, prompted the intervention of different administrative frameworks and reforms, such as Public-Private Partnership.

The mandate of the Public-Private Partnership, which represents the outcomes of the theory of change, is geared towards establishing a collaborative alliance between public and private sectors to implement socio-economic projects such as agriculture that would be difficult or ineffectively implemented by a single sector. These outcomes are in the form of long-term and short-term. However, in the bid to evaluate the effects of the Public-Private Partnership on the performance of the agricultural sector in Anambra State, there is a need to establish observable variables to assess whether improvement was made or not. These variables, which are described as "Indicators" by the Theory of Change, provide stakeholders, evaluators, funders, researchers, and the general populace with a yardstick to ascertain whether an outcome(s) has been achieved. Anambra State Government identified employment opportunities, food security, and improved GDP as key areas of improvement in the agricultural sector through the adoption of PPP. These three areas of improvement (employment opportunities, food security, and improved GDP) represent the indicators of the Theory of Change.

The range of activities associated with Public-Private Partnership, which include technological transfers, financial and human resources collaboration, skills development, etc., is described as interventions by the theory of change. The various forms of intervention are geared towards establishing and achieving much-desired improvement in the agricultural sector in the state.

Through the assessment of the adoption of the Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector in Anambra State, the effects (outcomes) will be established. Every policy or programme implementation is never devoid of intended and unintended hurdles. The challenges and intervening factors that form the rationales and narratives, as indicated in the Theory of Change, will be identified, which will determine the retention, adjustment, or termination of the implementation of PPP in the agricultural sector in the state. Adopting the Theory of Change through evaluation and impact assessment will show evidence of the success or failure of PPP in the sector.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher anchored this study on a descriptive survey design. Both primary and secondary instruments for data collection were deployed. On the part of the primary instrument, interview and personal observation, which are elements of a descriptive survey, availed the researchers with an opportunity to visit the location of agricultural firms under the arrangements of public-private partnership to gather firsthand information. On the other hand, the researcher explored secondary source materials from books, journals, official documents, etc., to assess various studies on Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector in Anambra State and beyond. The researchers chose key informants in various firms under the Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector in Anambra State. The researchers adopted the thematic method/tool of analysis, which is used to present data (usually interviews) in themes for comprehensive and effective discussion and conclusion.

5 DATA PRESENTATION, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Contributions of Public-Private Partnership in the Agricultural Sector in Anambra State towards the creation of employment opportunities

The first objective of the study targeted at ascertaining contributions of agricultural firms under the Public-Private Partnership scheme towards the creation of employment opportunities. To achieve this, key informants from the agro-firms under PPP that were selected for this study were interviewed. The questions and their responses are presented below.

The key informant in the COSCHARIS Farm at Igbariam on their firm's performance towards the creation of job opportunities (direct and indirect) asserted: *"The creation of job opportunities is something that is influenced by many factors. Coshcharis Rice Firm, like other firms that were incorporated into a partnership with the government, had one of its mandates as the creation of job opportunities through the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Precisely here in our firm, the 198 expected direct jobs to be created as indicated in the MOU are not feasible, considering the various challenges we encounter that I discussed with you earlier. Currently, we have 83 employees, including casual employees*. The above views of the key informant clearly expressed a gap in the expected job creation. He linked the inability of the firm to create employment opportunities to the hostile environment of the firm. He identified these environmental hurdles to include insecurity in terms of armed robbery, kidnapping, and inter-communal clashes between Omor and Anaku, which is the location of their rice mill. The threat to life orchestrated by the insecurity impacted the acceptance of workers to reside or work in such a vulnerable environment.

In a similar interview, the key informant at the JOSAN farm stated: "*Our firm started in 2014, though it was officially commissioned in 2017, with the task and mission to boost both paddy rice and milled rice production, both in Anambra State and in Nigeria. On the aspect of job creation, the firm was projected to create 130 direct jobs and 300 indirect jobs. To my assessment as regards job creation, the firm has not been able to live up to the expectation of creating 130 direct jobs. This is because of the level of operation and capacity of the farm. We only have 40 workers here in total*. Having 40 workers out of 130, as indicated in the MOU, for a start is an obvious indication that the firm has performed below average in terms of the creation of direct jobs. Beyond the production of rice, the firm was expected to set up and maintain a massive irrigation scheme and train farmers in modern methods of rice production within the catchment areas such as Omor, Anaku, and Ifite-Ogwari. The key informant asserted that the training exercise started after the commencement of their operation. However, a few local farmers who came for the exercise did not show an encouraging attitude during the training. The key informant opined that farmers were fundamentally discouraged by the lack of finance and equipment to adopt the modern method. They equally expressed a lack of any form of assistance from the government. So, they preferred to continue operating in their local methods despite acknowledging the fact that it limits their quantity and quality of production.

The key informant of LYDEN poultry farm Igbariam, in an in-depth interview, expressed mixed reactions to both direct and indirect jobs created by the firm. He emphasized: *We commenced operations in 2017 with 20 workers as stipulated in the MOU. We have doubled that number in terms of direct jobs. Where I have a challenge is in the aspect of indirect jobs. This is because we supply our products directly to a few distributors who sell to retailers and consumers.* The meeting of 20 workers targets the commencement of the firm as stated in the MOU, or even doubling the number may sound fair on the surface. However, relating such a number to the expectation of the firm to drive the creation of employment opportunities in the state will be a mismatch. The key informant also expressed the difficulty in ascertaining how the firm has achieved the mandate of creating 500 indirect jobs as signed in the MOU with the government. He expressed that the government factored in the retailers, truck drivers, loaders, bikemen, etc., as all indirect jobs. The imprecise nature of these job opportunities makes it difficult to ascertain the extent to which the estimated indirect jobs have been achieved or not. However, the key informant stated from his assessment that the firm's contribution towards the creation of indirect jobs may not have been significantly improved. This is based on the scope of the firm's production and product distribution.

A key informant in the NOVTEC rice farm, in an interview, not only expressed the poor performance of the firm in creating job opportunities but also went further to highlight some underlying factors that contributed to this poor performance. He lamented: *The staff identified two major reasons for the firm's slow job creation: poor management and production. He asserted that poor management directly affected the production level of the firm*. According to him, production has not improved, and that is why you will struggle to see the product in the markets within the state, let alone outside the state. This has direct implications for the number of direct or indirect job opportunities created by the firm. This is because, before you talk about the employment opportunities created by the firm, production must improve massively.

Finding: Implementation of Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector in Anambra State has not significantly enhanced employment opportunities

5.2 Hurdles that affect the implementation of the Public-Private Partnership scheme towards agricultural development in Anambra State

The second Objective of the study aimed at identifying different hurdles that affect the implementation of the Public-Private Partnership scheme towards agricultural development in Anambra State. The views of divergent key informants from relevant stakeholders such as the Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture, Anambra State Investment Promotion and Protection Agency (ANSIPPA), and agricultural firms under a PPP arrangement in the state

The key informant in the Planning, Research, and Statistics Department, Anambra State Ministry of Agriculture, as one of the key stakeholders, expressed that his candid response to the question would be equivalent to what is found in the daily newspapers, irrespective of his position as the head of the Planning, Research, and Statistics Department in the Ministry. He stated: *"This ministry is completely excluded not only in the takeover process but also in their performance assessment report of those agro-firms under PPP. There is an annual document that I will give to you, which is called the agricultural sector performance report. It is an annual report aimed at reporting on projects and programme implementation in the Agricultural sector in the state. But these firms are not part of the report.*

The exclusion of the Ministry of Agriculture, which ought to be one of the key stakeholders in the agricultural affairs of the state, raises serious concerns about the mandate and entire process of the partnership. In expressing the importance of the annual report prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, in which the agro-firms under PPP are not captured, the key informant opined that the report would support not only the annual adjustment of medium-term Agricultural sector budgets and plans but also the sector's expenditure framework and general performance.

To proffer the reason for this exclusion of the ministry from the affairs of the firms under the PPP arrangement, He described it as an "Owners-Politicians Affair". He asserted: "*I observed that every step of the process of PPP arrangement happens directly between the private owners and the Chief Executive (Governor). This is one of the major challenges to transparent and effective implementation because it is more of a political arrangement. That is the reason why the ministry* *has no report of assessment of the firm's performance beyond what we see on the pages of national dailies".* The above-described scenario by the key informant as the "Owners-Politicians Affairs" evidently indicated the rationale for the exclusion of the ministry from the entire process, which has massive implications.

Similarly, the key informant in the PPP unit of Anambra State Investment Promotion and Protection Agency (ANSIPPA) pinpointed the state of infrastructure as one of the key challenges. He expressed: "*From my perspective and knowledge, it is worth mentioning that the state of infrastructure inherited by these firms was a key contributor to their sluggish or delayed commencement of effective operation"*. The state of infrastructural facilities in any sector is a key determinant of the sector's effective performance. This affected the performance of the agro-firms under the Public-Private Partnership in the state because they were handed over some abandoned and dilapidated facilities by the state government. The key informant of PPP in ANSIPPA asserted that the JOSAN rice farm was the former Omor Rice Mill, a project which was established in collaboration with the World Bank and the Old Anambra State Government before it was abandoned. This was handed over to the Anambra State Government in 2010 by the Federal Government. Even though the firm was co-opted into the PPP arrangement by the state government around 2014 or 2015, it was not until 2019 that it commenced full operation. This is because it took the private firm a longer time to resuscitate the farm's facilities.

The key informant at Coscharis Farm gave a holistic view of the different challenges the firm encounters. He stated: "*The state of farm facilities and the cost of its resuscitation, low energy supply, low access to raw materials (paddy), and insecurity are some of the major challenges the firm has been facing*".

The above challenges, as identified by the key informant, do not necessarily differ from what other business ventures suffer in Nigeria. The issue of infrastructural facilities cuts across their entire sectors in Nigeria. He asserted that many facilities were out of shape when we resumed operations. For example, the silo, which is essential equipment for the rice processing plant, has cost us a huge amount of money to fix. The issue of energy supply has been devastating to firms that require a steady supply for operation. The price of diesel, which is the most common alternative to electricity, has increased by over a hundred per cent. The key informant lamented that they are not assured of four hours of electricity a day, which has made us rely on diesel for 90 percent on diesel as a source of our energy. When we commenced operations as a PPP, we bought a liter of diesel at the rate of #380 to #400, but today we buy a liter for #1000. He also pinpointed the cost of importing their major raw material, which is paddy from Kebbi State, as another major challenge. This is because the firm's (Coshcharis) mill at Omor and other rice mills within the neighbouring communities like Anaku Omor, Ifiteokwari, etc., could not ensure 30% of the required paddy. The implication of this to the cost of production is that the cost of bringing one truck that contains 600 bags of paddy from Kebbi State as raw material is the same cost as another rice dealer from Kebbi spends to bring the same truck but 600 bags of finished product to Anambra State. This is the reason why the firm will struggle to compete or sell at the same price as them. The key informant described the issue of insecurity, including armed robbery and kidnapping within the area, and the consistent communal clashes between Omor and Anaku, which have made it difficult for our workers to go to our rice farm, not to mention residing there. He stated: Our electricity armored cable is frequently stolen, which costs us a minimum of four million naira to fix each time. Our workers do not feel safe going to the farm due to communal clashes or armed robbery. This agrees with the lamentation of a key informant of Lyden Poultry Farm who complained that the hostile environment orchestrated by the insecurity has been affecting the firm's performance as well as workers' safety.

Finding: Poor infrastructure, Inadequate involvement of key stakeholders, and lack of proper monitoring are some of the challenges of Public-private partnership adoption towards agricultural development in Anambra State.

6 DISCUSSION

The potency and ability of any firm to create job opportunities depend on various factors like capital, technology, scope of operation, profit, market, etc. Adoption of Public-Private Partnership in Anambra State agricultural sector as a scheme to reposition the sector and create job opportunities, as done in other sectors and parts of the world, is a right step in the right direction.

The agro-firms under PPP, through the Memorandum of Understanding with the government, projected the expected number of jobs to be created. This projection was presumably predicated on the capacity of the firms. However, various statements in the newspapers and media during the inauguration of these firms not only contradict what is contained in the Memorandum of Understanding but also look outrageous and unrealistic. For instance, Governor Willie Obinna at the inauguration of Lynden Farms, which is another agro-firm under the PPP arrangement in the state, said that the facility would produce high-quality eggs and poultry meat to meet the state's food security needs and galvanize local poultry production in collaboration with out-growers across the 21 local government areas of the state. According to him, the project would generate 350000 direct jobs and 150000 indirect jobs, expressing delight that with Lynden Farms, his administration was set to surpass the poultry needs of the state within three years of his administration (Augustine, 2017). Also, Coscharis Farm, which is another agro-firm under the PPP scheme, expressed its potency towards the creation of employment opportunities. The CEO of the firm, Chief Maduka, stated, "Anambra youths are expected to be beneficiaries of these efforts, and most likely that over 3,000 job opportunities would be available (Nwokocha, 2019).

The above statements are quite in contrast to the reality on the ground. Many of these firms struggled to fix the inherited infrastructure, which resulted in a later commencement of operations than expected. Also, the scope of the operation has limited the number of employees needed. The issue of indirect jobs is uncertain because it is difficult to ascertain the number of indirect workers involved in the marketing cycle of these products.

A report by ABS (2019) that JOSAN started to work with tens of thousands (10,000) of farmers in that catchment area still raises the salient question of how many farmers are actually in the area. The key informant of JOSAN rice farm stated that the firm has 46 workers, including casual workers. The farmers who once attended our training programme were not up to 50 on two different occasions.

In the Nigerian agriculture sector, one of the problems confronting agricultural productivity in the country is poor infrastructure. The success of the implementation of the PPP scheme is largely hinged on the state of the infrastructure. This is one of the key hurdles encountered by the various agro-firms captured under PPP in Anambra State. For instance, the old federal government grain reserve was handed over to the Coscharis farm, while JOSAN rice inherited the old Omor rice facilities. These infrastructural facilities were in bad shape before being inherited by the firms, resulting in the firms expending huge time and financial resources in fixing the infrastructure to come up to operational standards. This was confirmed by various key informants of the firms. JOSAN rice firm was expected to empower local farmers with training and inputs on modern agricultural practices within its vicinity. Engaging local farmers in training without corresponding infrastructural facilities will not yield the desired result. As Nigeria makes efforts to ensure that agriculture plays a key role in its quest for revenue diversification through the Public-Private Partnership, stakeholders in the sector have charged the Federal Government to upgrade rural infrastructure to aid agribusiness development in the country and ensure food security (Okojie, 2023).

Inadequate involvement of the key stakeholders is one of the key factors that adversely affect the smooth running of the organizational setup and the realization of organizational goals. Toriola-Coker et al. (2022) expressed their view of the inadequate involvement of key stakeholders in PPP from the aspect of end-users. They stated that most early PPP projects in Nigeria had cases of agitation from end-user stakeholders. This agitation from end-user stakeholders was ascribed to the poor effort on the part of the government to encourage policy enlightenment to citizens before the projects' commencement. Nigeria's PPP can only develop if all end-user stakeholders can be effectively involved in project execution.

The adoption of Public-Private Partnership in any sector with clear mandates through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is not enough. The absence or inadequate monitoring framework will not only result in a waste of resources but also in the complete defeat of the goals and objectives of the partnership. Many scholars have highlighted various aspects of poor monitoring and its effects on PPP in various countries. According to Temulin and Zhang (2021), due to the lack of monitoring mechanisms, PPP could foster unethical practices. Similarly, Nuhu, Mpambije, and Ngussa (2020) highlighted that the monitoring and evaluation of PPP processes had been inadequately conducted in Tanzania because some private partners did not provide information and did not comply with the standards in the PPP. Most of the time, people assume that the government is not effective; however, some private sector partners are not effective either.

A monitoring framework in PPP and any other administrative scheme should be inculcated at the planning stage, clearly stating who to monitor, what to monitor, when to monitor, and who to publish the performance reports. The assessment of the adoption of the Public-Private Partnership in the agricultural sector unearths the lacuna created by poor monitoring. The isolation of relevant institutions that ought to be responsible for the monitoring and publication of performance records of these firms created the room either for the firms to be the judge in their case by publishing their performance records or for politicians to make a mere political speech.

7 CONCLUSION

The agricultural sector in many countries of the world has proven to be a catalyst for meaningful socio-economic growth and development in terms of raw material production, employment opportunities, food security, etc. Anambra state, one of the states in Nigeria rich in agricultural practices. The unsatisfactory performance of the agricultural sector in the state necessitated the adoption of PPP by the state government. PPP, as an administrative reform, has shown its potency in repositioning various sectors globally, including agriculture. However, certain underlying problems in Anambra State, as identified in this study, have negatively affected the effective implementation of PPP in the state. This has made it difficult, if not impossible, for the firms under the Public-Private Partnership to attain their mandates of job creation and food security.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the identified challenges of Public-Private Partnership towards agricultural development in Anambra state, the following recommendations were made:

- **Revamping of Infrastructure**: The state of infrastructure and its attendant effects on national development cannot be overemphasized. The common complaint among the key informants in this study was the state of infrastructure and facilities they inherited or were handed over to them by the government. The resources, both time and finance, expended to fix this infrastructure are one of the key reasons the firms did not take off when expected, and also affected the financial resources that would have been used for production. There is a need for the government to massively invest in infrastructural revitalization, not only in the agricultural sector but in other sectors, to entice the private sector and create an enabling environment for PPP to thrive.
- **Proper Involvement of Key Stakeholders**: Effective stakeholder engagement is instrumental to the attainment of organizational goals. Various stakeholders are saddled with distinct responsibilities. Exclusion or isolation of any key stakeholders will have adverse consequences on the general operation of the organization. Specifically in this study, the exclusion of the Ministry of Agriculture from the entire process of PPP in the agricultural sector in the state showed lapses in terms of performance assessment and documentation.
- **Inbuilt Monitoring Mechanism**: The art of monitoring and evaluation is a fundamental element of management. Monitoring activities should be designed during the planning stage of a programme, project, or policy. This will enhance proper performance evaluation to ascertain whether the stated goals are being achieved, derailed, and their outcomes. It is essential to clearly state which agency should be responsible for the monitoring activities.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

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