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Impact of Onisere Farm Settlement in Ondo State: Agricultural Development and Socio-Economic Transformation, 1960-2000

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Abstract

The study explores the establishment, activities, and impact of Onisere Farm Settlement in Ondo State, Nigeria, from its inception in 1960 through to the year 2000.The introduction of the Farm Settlement Scheme aimed to address challenges such as limited access to land, lack of infrastructure and inadequate farming knowledge by providing farmers with land, infrastructure, training, and financial support. The study used historical descriptive method of investigation using primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of information were accessed through oral interviews and archival sources. Books, journals, unpublished thesis, newspapers, articles and internet sources make up the Secondary sources of information. The study which examined the Onisere farm settlement's role in agricultural development, and rural livelihood improvement, observed that the farm settlement has made immense contribution to regional and national development.

Keywords: Onisere Farm Settlement, Agriculture, Socio-Economic, Scheme and Development

Introduction

The Nigeria agricultural history is embedded in its political history and can be divided into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in order to provide a better understanding of the agricultural development and agricultural policy formulation over the years. W. H. Clarke explained that the Yoruba people were emphatically an agricultural people and they relied upon the cultivation of soil for the necessities of life.[3] Agriculture served as a vital pillar of Nigeria's economy, supporting the livelihoods of a significant portion of the population and ensuring food security. Recognizing the importance of the agricultural sector, the Federal Government of Nigeria implemented various policies and

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3 S. Whitney, "The Flag of Nigeria," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed November 15, 2023, http://www.britannica.com/topic/flag-of-Nigeria.

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program to stimulate its growth and development. Among these initiatives, the Farm Settlement Scheme stood out as a crucial endeavour aimed at empowering farmers and fostering sustainable agricultural practices throughout the country.

The scheme set forth several objectives to achieve these goals. Firstly, it aims to allocate arable land to farmers, ensuring that they had access to fertile soil for cultivation. By providing farmers with suitable land, the scheme strove to increase their productivity and improve their income potential. Secondly, the Farm Settlement Scheme focused on the development of essential infrastructure in agricultural areas.[4] This included the construction of roads, irrigation systems, electricity net-work, and storage facilities. Improved infrastructure not only enhanced farmers' access to markets but also reduced post-harvest losses and facilitated the efficient transportation of agricultural produce. However, the Farm Settlement Scheme aimed at addressing the financial constraints faced by farmers. Access to affordable credit and financial services was crucial for farmers to invest in agricultural inputs, machinery, and technologies. By facilitating access to finance, the scheme empowered farmers to make necessary investments, leading to increased productivity and improved livelihoods.[5]

Farm Settlement Scheme in Nigeria was influenced by agricultural practices and experiences from Israel. Nigeria has also sought agricultural knowledge and technical assistance from various other countries and international organizations, like Syria and Jordan, to support the development of its agricultural sector. The Nigerian government drew inspiration from Israel's successful agricultural development model, particularly its focus on agricultural settlements known as *Kibbutzim* and *Moshavim.*[6]

Farm Settlement Scheme in Nigeria

The idea of the farm settlement scheme in Nigeria was first initiated by the then Minister of Agricultural, Akin Deko. In 1955, rather than traveling to Sudan to assess the Gezira scheme's viability for adoption in Nigeria, he opted to visit Israel following his reading of a book about land settlement there.[7] Observing the *Moshav* and its integrated rural set-up influenced him to contemplate a comparable scheme for implementation in Nigeria's western region. The execution of the project was entrusted to a Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) team led by an Israeli planner. In addition to its head the team consisted of a farm management economist (Indian), an education and extension expert

4 B. D. Omotola, Transforming Food Systems Through Farm Settlements, Youth and Women Engagement (Joint Planning Board Publications, 2022), 345–350.
5 I. Oji-Okoro, "Analysis of the Contribution of Agricultural Sector on the Nigerian Economic Development," *World Review of Business Research* 1, no. 1 (2011): 191–200.
6David Ehigie Osifo, *Western Nigerian Farm Settlement Schemes* (Margen publications, Lagos, Nigeria, 1964), 14–16.
7 R. Shafto, "What Is a Farm Settlement Scheme?" Available online at https://bizfluent.com/facts6160136-farm-settlement-scheme-.html (2023), 2-3.

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(Scottish), a livestock expert (Australian), an agricultural engineer (British), and a veterinarian (British).[8]

Chief Deko's arrival back to Nigeria lead to Awolowo learning about the model and immediately they launched a five-year development plan (from 1955 to 1960) to enhance a steady rise in income and the general standard of living of the people. To achieve this, the premier and other officials went back to Israel to study its agricultural development scheme, *Moshav*. The report of the study in 1959 birthed the establishment of 20 farm settlements and four institutes across the region with the aim of achieving food sufficiency and to encourage educated young men make a profitable career in farming.[9] Recognizing agriculture as a tool for poverty alleviation and economic sustainability, the programme entails establishment of farm institutes which was to train young school leavers in agricultural practices for two years and then engage them in farming using the knowledge acquired. Government acquired rural lands which were specially reserved for such purpose and are allocated to the participants.

Objectives of the Farm Settlement Scheme in Southwest Nigeria

At the creation of the Farm Settlement Scheme in Nigeria, Awolowo had the following objectives to:

i. provide employment and income opportunities for school leavers,
ii. enhance agricultural productivity by showcasing modern farming techniques,
iii. address the land tenure issue, which hindered agricultural progress for young and women farmers,
iv. make farming appealing and profitable for the youth,
v. demonstrate that well-planned farms run by educated young farmers could offer a comfortable standard of living similar to other professions,
vi. serve as examples for emulation and function as an additional approach to expedite agricultural progress,
vii. boost a consistent increase in income and the overall quality of life, particularly for farming households,
viii. attain self-sufficiency in food production, promote the consumption of nourishing and wholesome foods, and inspire educated young individuals to pursue a lucrative farming career,
ix. establish a connection between agricultural institutes and farm settlements to facilitate the transfer of technology,
x. constructing farm settlements as part of a strategy to modernize conventional agricultural practices and
xi. to prevent rural-urban migration and promote rural development.[10]

Activities in Onisere Farm Settlement

[8] M. O. Ijere, *Challenge of Economic Progress*, Nigerian Outlook, Enugu, Nigeria, 1962, 34-37.
[9] Taiwo Aebulu, "Paradise Lost: Inside Nigeria's Forgotten, Broken Farm Settlements," *The Cable News*, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2023, 1-5.
[10] B. D. Omotola, Transforming Food Systems Through Farm Settlements (Youth and Women Engagement), (Joint Planning Board Publications, 2023), 345-350.

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Onisere Farm Settlement was one of the twenty farm settlements created by the Obafemi Awolowo government which practiced different farming activities. All these settlements were created to produce crops on a large scale. The farm produce cultivated in Onisere Farm Settlement was different from that of Sawonjo Farm Settlement in Ogun State. In Sawonjo Farm Settlement, each farmer was allocated 10 acres to produce maize and cocoa. The crops cultivated in each settlement were dependent on the soil type and the crop not suitable for it as recommended by soil specialist employed by the Government. In Onisere Farm Settlement, each farmers was provided with 10 acres for Palm Oil cultivation, 10 acres for cocoa plantation, 1 acre for growing crops for domestic consumption and then 1 plot at the back of each settlers' buildings. Each farmer was also given 95 point-of-lay pullets' bird for poultry.[11]

S. A. Agboola recorded that of the 20 settlements created in Western Nigeria in 1960, 8 were each below 203 hectares in size, none was as large as 405 hectares and the most extensive of them was Onisere Farm Settlement which occupied a land space of 392 hectares.[12] The activities in Onisere Farm Settlement includes the following; oil palm production, arable farming, cocoa production, poultry farming chapter is going to take each of the crops grown in the settlement and explain the process of production of each crop, starting from the type of farming method that was used during the time and the cultivation process, to the period of harvesting.

Oil Palm Production in Onisere Farm Settlement

Oil palm were a single stem plant and an unbranched monoecious plant, with both male and female flowers in separate inflorescences. The oil palm flowers were bisexual in origin, but in 'males' the stigmas were suppressed. However, in 'females' the stamens were underdeveloped. Each male inflorescence produced a large quantity of pollen of almost 30 g, while female inflorescence had 700 to over 3000 flowers, which were receptive for 36–72 hecto after an thesis (opening and closing of the flower as a result of photosynthesis). The flowers within an inflorescence opened sporadically, taking up to 4 weeks between the initial and the last flushes.[13]

Oil palm could grow to a height of 30–40 meters and live to more than 150 years. It produced about one to four fronds per month.[14] Oil palm had an adventitious root system. The primary roots grew from the base of the stem and branch into secondary, tertiary, and quaternary roots. The last two types of roots were non-lignified and assumed to absorb soil nutrients. Most oil palm roots were found in the top 45 cm of the soils but primary and secondary roots could descend below 2 meters.

[11]Taiwo Asbulu, Paradise Lost: Inside Nigeria's Forgotten, Broken Farm Settlements (The Cable New, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2019), 32–40.
[12] S. A. Agboola, An Agricultural Atlas of Nigeria (Oxford University Press, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1979), 184–187.
[13] Y. Basiron, B.S. Jalani, and K.W. Chan, eds., *Advances in Oil Palm Research*, vol. 1 (Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia, 2000).
[14] Y. Basiron, B.S. Jalani, and K.W. Chan, eds, 2.

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Every part of a Palm tree was very useful, so the farmers did not waste or trash the other parts of the tree when they were done processing the palm oil. Some palm trees produced sap, which was sometimes be tapped and collected. The sap was used to make palm sugar, palm wine (Emu), or distilled into palm liquor.[15] The trunk of the palm tree was also used for construction purposes, such as building houses, furniture, and fences. It was processed into timber for various applications, though they were not as strong as real hard wood like Iroko. The leaves of the palm tree, known as fronds, had multiple uses. They were used for thatching roofs, making baskets, mats, hats, and other woven products. The leaves were be used as a source of fiber for ropes and brushes. The roots of palm trees (Eyin) help anchor the tree in the ground and absorb water and nutrients from the soil. In some cultures, palm tree roots were used for medicinal purposes. They were also used to light up the lanterns and make fire blow better for cooking.[16]

No part of the tree was wasted as every part of it could be useful for one thing or the other. Yemisi Odungbemi, a resident on Onisere Farm Settlement, claimed that after the real work was done, that was, the processing of the oil, workers came together to share the dividend of the other part of the tree. They get what they could from making brooms and baskets, took them to the market and sold.[17]

Arable Crops in Onisere Farm Settlement

The farmers in the settlement farmed a variety of crops, including vegetables, fruits (orange, cashew), root crops (cassava), and cereals (maize). Profitability, appropriateness, and market demand all had an impact on the crops chosen. In its natural habitat, maize was a facultative long-night crop that flowered after a set number of days. In tropical cultivars where the long days at higher latitudes caused the plants to grow so tall that they did not have enough time to develop seed before they were killed by frost, photoperiodicity (and lateness) could be erratic. The extent to which the phytochrome system genetically dictated and controlled the number of days before maize flowers appeared. This was the effect of lengthy nights.

The numerous types of maize had wildly disparate traits. Some types took two months to mature, while others required up to eleven months. The four brown, red, or purple pigments could change the foliage's hue, which ranged from light green to dark green. The length of mature ears ranged from less than 7.5 cm to 50 cm.[18] The majority of the farmers on the property turned the ten acres allotted for arable crops into a maize farm. After they were eventually

[15] K.J. Goh, P.H.C. Ng, C.K. Wong, and S. Arif, "Yield Potential of Oil Palm and Its Attainment in Malaysia," 510–511.
[16] K.J. Goh, P.H.C. Ng, C.K. Wong, and S. Arif, "Yield Potential of Oil Palm and Its Attainment in Malaysia,", 512–514.
[17] Oral Interview with Mrs. Yemisi Odungbemi, Nurse, 39 years old at Settlement Hospital. 23rd August, 2023.

[18] M.A. López-Pereira and M.L. Morris, *Impacts of International Maize Breeding Research in the Developing World* (Mexico, D.F.: CIMMYT, 1994), 234–250.

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harvested, they used the maize to make roasted corn, pap, and maize chow (*tuwo*). They occasionally cooked them and consumed grain.

A perennial shrub that could be harvested in one or two years was cassava. The woody stem of the cassava plant was upright and reached a height of four to five meters. Three to five months after pollination, the cassava tuber matured. The tuber was a spherical capsule with a diameter of 1 to 5 cm and six longitudinal features that resembled wings on the outside. The tuber splits violently to release the three seeds that are stored in the three locules when it is mature and dried. A brittle testa that was primarily grey with black mottling coated the seed. At the micropylar end, there was a sizable 10 caruncle. The ripe seed had a length of 1-2 cm.[19]Cassava was a very popular arable crop in Onisere Farm Settlement, as most of the farmers' wives gathered the harvested cassava tuber and took them to their kitchen to process into garri, a fermented, processed, and fried form of the cassava tuber. They also processed starch from cassava through the fermentation process.

The numerous cashew trees at Onisere Farm Settlement served as evidence that cashew was another widely grown crop there. One of the most often consumed tree nuts comes from cashew plants. Rich in fiber, vitamins, amino acids, and saturated fats, cashew nuts were extremely energizing. The cashew tree yields items such as leaves and stem back. These are utilized in the preparation of regional concoctions (medications) intended to prevent and treat specific illnesses and conditions such as malaria. Furthermore, the stem and branches were used as building blocks to make ship rollers, fishing boats, and furniture that exhibited resistance to termite infestations. In addition, raw cashew apples—a fruit obtained from cashew trees—were ingested. [20]

Orange was one of the most important fruits in the horticulture industry providing both financial and nutritional benefits to farmers. Being a perennial crop with at least 2 years to the first production, intercropping oranges with other annual crops such as maize, beans, soybean, groundnut, banana, and pawpaw, was applicable and encouraged, which most of the farmers did. Most of the orange fruits on the farm were mostly for consumption and also for selling at their open market.[21]

Poultry Farming

Each farmer in Onisere Farm Settlers received 95 point-of-lay birds; they were raised to be in good health and to ensure that the birds that could lay eggs did so every day by taking them to market to guarantee productivity. Following the distribution of 95 point-of-lay chickens to every settler, the settlers made sure the pullets were well-conditioned in order to produce quality eggs. Typically, a

[19] F. I. Nweke, *Processing Potential for Cassava Production Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1994), 23–30.
[20] O. O. Adeigbe and F. O. Olasupo, "A Review on Cashew Research and Production in Nigeria in the Last Four Decades," *Scientific Research and Essays* 10, no. 5 (2015): 196–209.
[21] J. B. D. Robinson and P. H. Hosegood, "Effects of Organic Mulch on Fertility of a Latosolic Coffee Soil in Kenya," *Experimental Agriculture* 1, no. 1 (1965): 67–80, available at http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/.

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village hen weighed between 1.2 and 1.5 kg when it was laid. Clean water and a variety of feed were essential for poultry. They were able to find some of their meal by foraging around the house, depending on the time of year. Frequently, they required an additional supply of nutrients to grow weight and for hens to produce a good number of eggs; in particular, the young chicks required simple supplementary sources like termites, maggots, and balanced meals that were high in protein.[22]Housing was necessary to keep the pullets safe from robbers, predators, and inclement weather (rain, sun, extremely cold winds, and lowering nighttime temperatures). It also served as a haven for broody and egg-laying hens. For both the ease of the poultry farmer and efficient production, an appropriate or comfortable chicken house was essential.[23]

Administrative Structure

At the creation of Onsiere farm settlement, many of the settlers were high school leavers with little or no knowledge of advanced agriculture. They had to undergo training before they were allowed into the settlement. After the two years of training, they were allocated their farming plots and housing for themselves and their respective families. After a visit to the settlement, it was taken to notice that only few of the original settlers were still alive, a total of four elder farmers, all of which were spoken to. Mr. Solomon, one of the first settlers on the farm commented that, when the settlement started, it gave all of them (the original settlers) a bond of community, so they were able to work together and ensure to make the allocated profit that was assigned to them by the government. He further said that though most of them were dead, their children and family still continued to uphold the familiarity of the settlement.[24]
Following the launch of the farm settlement program, Chief Awolowo and Chief Deko, the then-Minister for Agriculture, formed a committee that included Farm Settlement program Officials. The task of selecting farmers who wished to participate in the Farm Settlement Scheme program fell to this committee. Before granting the farmers access to their property and home, they had to verify their credentials and ensure that they had received training. For the first two years of their residency in the community, the FSSO also made sure that each farmer received their monthly allowance. Additionally, they were to provide the farmers with modern fertilizers, infrastructure, seedlings, and a host of other necessities so they could carry out their farming operations with the necessary equipment.[25]

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[22] M. Fisseha, T. Azage, and D. Tadelle, "Indigenous Chicken Production and Marketing Systems in Ethiopia: Characteristics and Opportunities for Market-Oriented Development," *IPMS Improving Productivity and Market Success of Ethiopian Farmers Project Working Paper* 24 Nyrobi, Kenya: ILRI, 2010), 25–34, available at www.chickenpost.com.
[23] M. Fisseha, T. Azage, and D. Tadelle, "Indigenous Chicken Production and Marketing Systems in Ethiopia: Characteristics and Opportunities for Market-Oriented Development," 26.
[24] Oral Interview with Mr. Solomon, Farmer, 79 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.
[25]S. A. Agboola, An Agricultural Atlas of Nigeria (Oxford University Press, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1979), 184–187.

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Even though this committee performed admirably for the most of the first ten years after the settlement was established, they were forced to cease operations in 1967 when the Nigerian Civil War broke out. According to Mr. Johnson Oludare, one of the initial settlers, who testified in favor of that during the interview, the settlers were mostly left on their own following the Civil War because it had a significant impact on them. The reason for this was because, at the time, the sole route in Nigeria from Ondo to Benin ran through the Onisere Farm Settlement. Subsequently, the residents were forced to flee for their lives and seek refuge, while the Biafra forces used the settlement as a base. He stated that after the war ended in 1970, when they all returned to the settlement, the committee had essentially ceased to function. As a result, each of them had to figure out how to improve their lot in life.[26] The military government made no effort to ensure that the farm settlement program would continue.

Onisere farm settlement was impacted by the termination of the FSSO's operations in the same way as every other settlement in the Western region, but it recovered swiftly by forming two groups among itself so that each farmer could discuss issues that were bothering them and possible solutions. Egbe Omo Ondo and Egbe Omo Idanre were the names of these two groupings. Because there were two main groups of people living in the Onisere agricultural community in Idanre, Ondo—the Ondo and the Idanre people—each of them established a group to take care of the needs of its members.[27]

Two groups—Egbe Omo Ondo and Egbe Omo Idanre—were brought into existence by the demands of the farmers residing in the settlement. The two separate groups on the settlement came to the agreement to carter for the needs of their people and ever since they were founded, they continually strived and were still in existence as at 2000. Every month, Egbe Omo Ondo and Egbe Omo Idanre have a regular gathering when they all get together to talk. The participation of women is crucial to the smooth operation of Egbe Omo Ondo and Egbe Omo Idanre monthly meetings. The women are in responsible of making sure the meeting location was appropriately maintained and also preparing food for the men while they discuss. Since the people of Ondo are well-known for their love of mashed yam, the ladies prepare this dish at every monthly gathering together with melon soup, also known as *egusi* soup in Yoruba. In addition to serving the soldiers, they occasionally provide them with dance and singing. The fact that there were no female settlers illustrated the discrimination against women even in the latter part of the 20th century.

The Impact of Onisere Farm Settlement

Onisere Farm Settlement since its creation in 1960 underwent nascent growth. Some of the impact were positive while others negative but the continuous existence of the settlement means it prevailed against all odds. There are economic and social impact of the settlement in Ondo state.

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[26] Oral Interview with Mr. Johnson Oludare, Farmer, 80 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.
[27] Oral Interview with Pa Felix, Farmer, 82 years old and Chief Phillip, Farmer, 83 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.

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Social Impact

At the initial establishment of the settlement, several initiatives were created to ensure the good living of the farmers. Some of these initiatives included the establishment of a public school, a community hall, a health center, a post office and a market.[28] Onisere farm settlement has one public school for all the children of the settlers; it consisted of a headmaster, who regulated and ensured the proper functioning of the elementary and high schools, teachers, a head of staff, and a cleaner. By the end of the Nigerian Civil War, the school had been destroyed. The farmers returned to the farm; the children could not go to school. Eventually, all the farmers came together to build another school where the children were able to learn again. Even after the new building was established, the school still lacked teachers for their students. A community hall was provided for the farmers to hold meetings among themselves, but at the invasion during the war, this building was just destroyed, and due to a lack of resources, no other building was created to replace it, so the farmers held their meetings under a tree during cool weather.[29]

The health center created for emergency purposes at the settlement was staffed by a doctor, a nurse, and a midwife who engaged in the care sector. The doctor also supervised the clinics in the village. The health center included a maternity center, an emergency ward, and a vaccination program. The first hospital in the settlement was destroyed by the war, but with the intervention of the government, a new hospital was built at the urgent need of the people. Despite the improvement in medical facilities, however, the settlement nurse, Yemisi Odungbemi, complained of a lack of major equipment in the hospital, and as such, major illnesses and pregnant women were taken to the nearest general hospital in town, which was 20 kilometers away. Due to this, many deaths and stillbirths were recorded in the settlement.[30] A post office was also provided for the settlement for those who wanted to send and receive messages to other places and to receive whatever order the government was sending to the farmers; however, the post office has stopped operating.

During one of their monthly Omo Egbe Ondo meetings on August 23rd, 2023, many settlers emphasized that a significant advantage of the farm settlement, which has compelled successive governments to maintain the policy, is its ability to provide employment opportunities directly or indirectly. Others highlighted increased food production as the primary advantage. They explained that the farm settlement effectively engaged numerous unemployed youths in farming and provided livelihoods for people in related sectors.[31]

[28] Oral Interview with Mr. Solomon, Farmer, 79 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.
[29] Oral Interview with Mr. Solomon, Farmer, 79 years old…23rd August 2023.
[30] Oral Interview with Mrs. Yemisi Odungbemi, Nurse, 39 years old at Settlement Hospital. 23rd August 2023.
[31] Oral Interview with Mr. Johnson Oludare, Farmer, 80 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.

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Christianity was the major religion in the settlement. Many Christian activities in the settlement started not long after it was created. It started as evangelism, and then some of them built a permanent base in the settlement. Some of the churches in the settlement are Cherubim and Seraphim that were built in the 1960s, Christ Apostolic Church established in the 1970s, The Islamic religion did not have as much breakthrough as Christianity in the settlement, as there was no mosque in the settlement or any worshippers. Indigenous Traditional Religion, though not as popular as Christianity, was also another prominent religion in the settlement. As citizens of Ondo, who were known for their worship of Ogun, they practiced this religion. The rate at which Indigenous Traditional Religion was practiced had, however, reduced over the years due to the conversion of many settlers to Christianity.[32]

Economic Linkages

When asked about the output and production capacity of the farm settlements, all respondents agreed that the farm settlement, through its activities, has been able to increase the production of food in Ondo State, particularly in the production of palm oil. Solomon Adegboyega said that a good year in the settlement consisted of having good soil fertility, good climate conditions, good management, and modern seedlings. On average, a well-maintained oil plantation produced around 4-6 metric tons of palm oil per hectare per year with the seedlings provided to the farmers. So, for the 10-hectare oil plantation provided to them with a good harvest, they yielded 40–60 metric tons of palm oil per year.[33]This enabled Ondo State to be very buoyant and blessed with palm oil.

The two most popular group in the settlement, namely Egbe Omo Ondo and Egbe Omo Idanre also served as cooperative societies for their members. Every yearly produce and harvest was coordinated by this cooperative groups. They took all the tons of oil palm and cocoa beans to middlemen who bought from them. The middlemen took measures to store the cocoa beans in clean sacks and stacked them in dry stores devoid of leaking roofs. Much cocoa was recorded spoilt every year by the careless and unscrupulous middlemen, so they were given a guide on how to avoid damage of the cocoa beans before export. They were told to sell the cocoa beans bought from farmers as soon as possible. The cocoa was not kept for too long before being exported overseas. They were also to use clean bags which had not been used for defected cocoa, maize, or other foodstuffs. They are also not to mix defected beans with good ones to prevent returns from export firms.[34]

Most farmers mentioned that they rarely needed to purchase food from the market, as they had abundant farm products to feed their families and share with extended families and friends. They focused primarily on staple foods such as maize, yam, cocoyam, and cassava, addressing food scarcity concerns. Some

[32] Oral Interview with Pa Felix, Farmer, 82 years old and Chief Phillip, Farmer, 83 years old at Onisere Farm Settlement. 23rd August 2023.
[33] Oral Interview with Mr. Solomon, Farmer, 79 years old... 23rd August 2023.
[34] National Archives Ibadan, Ife Prof.1/2638: Production and control of Cocoa, 30-32.

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farmers reported selling surplus products to manufacturing industries that rely on farm produce as raw materials.[35] Additionally, farmers with larger-scale operations revealed that multiple manufacturing industries had approached them for partnerships and financial support.

Summary

Onisere Farm Settlement stood as a testament to the visionary leadership and agricultural foresight of Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of the Western Region of Nigeria. The farm settlement was built by Samuel Akintola who succeeded Obafemi Awolowo as the Premier of the Western Region in Nigeria. Initiated as part of a comprehensive youth empowerment programme, the settlement aimed to equip young men aged between 18 years old and 24 years old with the skills and resources needed to become successful entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. Through rigorous training at Agricultural Training Schools in Shasha and Ilesa, participants were immersed in the principles of farm management, poultry keeping, and other essential agricultural practices. Upon graduation, each farmer was provided with a significant allocation of land and resources, including 10 acres for cocoa and oil palm plantations, 10 acres for arable farming, and 95 point-of-lay pullets for poultry. Additionally, the provision of 2-bedroom mini flats in 1962 served as a foundational support system, enabling these budding entrepreneurs to kick-start their farming ventures with stability and security.

The impact of Onisere Farm Settlement extended beyond its immediate beneficiaries, as similar projects were established by Awolowo across the Western Region. These initiatives aimed to harness the agricultural potential of various communities, focusing on cash crops such as cocoa, rubber, and cashew, as well as dual-crop systems like those implemented in Onisere. The success of Onisere Farm Settlement can be attributed to its diversified farming activities, which encompassed a wide range of crops and livestock. From the hybrid palm plantation that yielded high-quality oil palm within a remarkably short timeframe to the cultivation of cereals, root crops, vegetables, and fruits, the settlement thrived through market-driven decision-making and adaptability to local conditions. Livestock farming, particularly poultry rearing, further enriched the economic landscape of the settlement by providing additional income streams and opportunities for value addition through products like eggs and meat. This diversification not only enhanced the financial resilience of the farmers but also contributed to the overall sustainability and viability of the settlement's agricultural model.

[35] D. Olatunbosun. Western Nigerian Farm Settlement: *An Appraisal. The Journal of Developing Areas,* (1971) Vol 5 no.3, 417- 428.

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