

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Local government administration is crucial to the socio-economic transformation of nations, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. As the level of government closest to the people, local governments are central to grassroots development and are responsible for delivering essential services, building infrastructure, and implementing policies that directly affect the everyday lives of citizens. In Nigeria, the significance of local governments was formally recognized through the 1976 Local Government Reform, which was designed to strengthen administrative efficiency and ensure government presence at the local level. This reform aimed to empower local governments to initiate and manage development projects, improve socio-economic conditions, and enhance governance in their respective communities (Babaita, & Amin, 2024).

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, particularly the 1999 Constitution, further underscores the importance of local governments in the country's federal structure (Adeyemi, 2018). Despite these reforms and constitutional provisions, local governments in Nigeria have faced numerous challenges that hinder their ability to effect socio-economic transformation. Issues such as inadequate funding, corruption, poor administrative capacity, and political interference have significantly impaired their performance (Agba, Samuel & Chukwurah, 2016; Ayoade, 2019). Inadequate funding is a major challenge that hampers the ability of local governments to effectively deliver services and implement development projects. Local governments often rely on allocations from the central government, which may be insufficient to meet their needs (Agba, Samuel, and Chukwurah, 2016; Eme and Onwuka, 2020).

Additionally, the lack of financial autonomy restricts their capacity to generate and manage their own revenue streams, leading to chronic budget shortfalls and an inability to sustain essential services and infrastructure projects (Agba, Samuel, and Chukwurah, 2016). Equally, corruption within local governments further exacerbates their inefficiency. Funds intended for development projects and public services are often misappropriated or embezzled by officials, leading to incomplete or substandard projects. This misuse of resources undermines public trust and reduces the effectiveness of local governance. Corruption can also manifest in the form of bribery, nepotism, and favoritism, which distort decision-making processes and allocation of resources (Agba et al. 2016; Ayoade, 2019; Nwabuzor and Nnaji, 2021).

More so, poor administrative capacity is another critical issue. Local governments frequently suffer from a lack of skilled personnel, inadequate training, and insufficient institutional frameworks. This deficit in human resources and organizational structures hinders their ability to plan, execute, and monitor development initiatives effectively. The lack of technical expertise and professional management further impedes the implementation of policies and programs aimed at socio-economic transformation (Agba et al. 2016; Eze, Nnamani, and Ani, 2019).

In addendum, Political interference disrupts the autonomy and functioning of local governments. Interference from higher levels of government or local political elites can lead to the prioritization of political agendas over community needs. This often results in the appointment of unqualified personnel to key positions, the misallocation of resources, and the undermining of merit-based administrative processes. Political patronage and manipulation can also create an environment where local officials are more accountable to political benefactors than to the constituents they are meant to serve (Ayoade, 2019; Obiyan and Arowolo, 2022). These challenges have led to a gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes, thereby stalling the anticipated socio-economic progress.

Ilorin West Local Government Area in Kwara State serves as a microcosm of these broader national issues. As one of the prominent local government areas in the state, Ilorin West has the potential to drive significant socio-economic development through effective local governance. However, it has grappled with various impediments that have limited its capacity to deliver on its developmental mandates (Ojo, 2021). This study aims to appraise the administration of local governments in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Ilorin West Local Government Area. It seeks to evaluate the extent to which local government administration has contributed to socio-economic transformation and to identify the key factors that influence its effectiveness. By doing so, the study hopes to provide insights and recommendations that could enhance the role of local governments in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of local government administration is crucial for achieving socio-economic transformation, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Despite the foundational reforms and constitutional provisions aimed at empowering local governments to drive development, numerous challenges continue to impede their performance. Inadequate funding is a critical issue in Ilorin West Local Government Area (LGA). According to the Kwara State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (2022), Ilorin West LGA received only 50% of its expected statutory allocations in the fiscal year 2021. This shortfall is attributed to deductions made at the state level for joint projects and debt servicing.

A local government financial report (2021) revealed that out of a budget of ₦500 million, only ₦250 million was disbursed, leaving a significant gap in funds required for essential services and development projects. This funding inadequacy has led to delayed infrastructure projects, such as road construction and maintenance, and inadequate healthcare and educational facilities. Also, corruption remains a significant barrier to development in Ilorin West LGA. A survey by the Kwara State Anti-Corruption Network (2023) found that 65% of respondents believed that corruption was prevalent within the local government. Specific instances include the misappropriation of ₦100 million allocated for market development in 2022, which was never executed.

Audits by the state auditor-general's office (2022) highlighted irregularities in the procurement processes and unauthorized withdrawals from the local government accounts, amounting to ₦50 million, which could not be accounted for. This diversion of funds meant for public services has eroded public trust and led to uncompleted or poorly executed projects.

The administrative capacity of Ilorin West LGA is hampered by a lack of skilled personnel and inadequate infrastructure. A study by the Centre for Local Government Studies (2022) indicated that 70% of the staff lacked proper training and qualifications for their roles. The local government office suffers from outdated equipment, with 80% of the offices lacking functional computers and internet access. This technological deficiency impedes effective record-keeping, planning, and service delivery. Additionally, there are reports of understaffing, where crucial departments like health and education operate with less than 50% of the required workforce, leading to inefficiencies and reduced service quality (CLGS, 2022).

In addition, political interference significantly affects the autonomy and performance of Ilorin West LGA. According to a report by the Kwara State Independent Electoral Commission (KWASIEC, 2023), 75% of local government officials reported experiencing undue interference

from state politicians. This includes the appointment of political loyalists to key positions without regard for merit or qualifications. For instance, the appointment of the head of the Works Department in 2022 was influenced by political considerations rather than technical expertise, leading to substandard execution of public works projects. Moreover, the local government has been pressured to allocate funds for state-level political activities, diverting resources from local developmental needs (KWASIEC, 2023).

Ilorin West Local Government Area in Kwara State exemplifies these challenges. As a key local government area with significant potential to influence socio-economic progress, it has struggled to deliver essential services and foster development effectively (Ojo, 2021). This situation underscores the need for a comprehensive appraisal of local government administration in Nigeria, focusing on its impact on socio-economic transformation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives for this study are to:

- i. examine constitutional framework and local government roles in socio-economic development in Nigeria.
- ii. evaluate socio-economic Initiatives at the local government Level in Ilorin West Local Government Area.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How does the constitutional framework, specifically the delineation of functions in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution, influence the actualization of local government roles in socio-economic development?
- ii. What are the Socio-Economic Initiatives at the Local Government Level in Ilorin West Local Government Area?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it offers policy relevance by providing empirical evidence and insights into how local government administration contributes to socio-economic development. These findings can inform the formulation and implementation of strategies aimed at strengthening grassroots governance in Nigeria. Second, the study contributes academically to the growing body of literature on local governance and development. By offering a case-specific analysis of Ilorin West Local Government, it enriches the discourse on decentralization and rural transformation.

Additionally, the study provides practical insights for local authorities, helping officials and stakeholders understand the strengths and weaknesses of current administrative practices and identify areas for improvement in service delivery and developmental efforts. Furthermore, by evaluating the performance of the local government in socio-economic transformation, the research promotes public awareness of the role and responsibilities of local authorities, thereby encouraging citizen engagement and accountability. Finally, the study serves as a valuable reference material for students, researchers, and development practitioners interested in governance, public administration, and local development in Nigeria and other developing countries.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study centers on examining the functions and impact of local government administration in driving socio-economic transformation within Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Specifically, the study investigates key areas such as the provision of basic infrastructure, education, healthcare services, rural development initiatives, employment generation, and revenue mobilization. Data collection relies primarily on secondary sources, and where necessary, incorporates selected interviews or questionnaires administered to local government staff and residents of Ilorin West.

However, the study is subject to certain limitations. Geographically, it is confined to Ilorin West Local Government, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other local governments in Kwara State or across Nigeria. In terms of data availability, there may be challenges in accessing current and comprehensive secondary data from government sources, which could constrain the depth of analysis. Additionally, time constraints may restrict broader data collection efforts, such as comparative studies or extensive fieldwork. Finally, where primary data is utilized, there is a possibility of respondent bias, particularly from government officials or residents, which could influence the objectivity and accuracy of the findings.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- i. Appraisal: A critical evaluation or assessment of something, in this case, the functions and effectiveness of local government administration.
- ii. Local Government: The third tier of government in Nigeria, closest to the grassroots, with administrative authority over a specific local area and responsible for delivering social and economic services.
- iii. Administration: The process or activity of running an organization, in this context, the implementation of policies, management of resources, and delivery of services by the local government.
- iv. Socio-Economic Transformation: A comprehensive process involving improvements in social indicators (education, health, housing) and economic conditions (employment, income levels, infrastructure).
- v. Development: The sustained effort to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of people, especially in underdeveloped or rural areas.
- vi. Ilorin West Local Government: One of the local government areas in Kwara State, Nigeria, serving as the unit of analysis in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on the role of local government administration in socio-economic transformation, with particular attention to the Nigerian context. It examines theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and key concepts such as governance, service delivery, and development at the grassroots. The chapter also highlights the gaps in existing research and introduces the theoretical framework that guides this study.

2.2 Conceptual Clarifications

i. Local Government Administration

Local government administration refers to the management and organization of local government units, which are the lowest tier of government responsible for local governance and the delivery of public services within a specific geographic area. This includes the execution of policies, implementation of laws, and provision of services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social welfare, tailored to the local community's needs. The aim is to promote grassroots participation in governance, enhance accountability, and ensure efficient use of resources at the local level. Local Government Administration encompasses the process of mobilizing, managing, and utilizing essential resources at the local level to promote grassroots development (Amin and Olowookere, 2023). According to Adamolekun (2002), Local government administration involves the administration of a locality by a body that is elected or appointed and is responsible for providing local services and implementing policies in a manner that is responsive to the needs of local residents." This definition underscores the importance of local governments in ensuring that the needs and preferences of local populations are met through participatory governance and efficient service delivery.

ii. Development

Todaro and Smith (2011), see development as a process of improving the economic, social, and political conditions of people to enhance their quality of life and increase their ability to make choices and participate fully in society. Development is a comprehensive process aimed at improving the economic, social, and political conditions of a community or country, with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for its people. It encompasses various dimensions such as economic growth, social equity, infrastructural advancement, and effective governance. Development involves reducing poverty, fostering sustainable growth, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. It is often evaluated through indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Human Development Index (HDI), and measures of well-being and inclusivity. As defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022), "Development is the process of creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests. It involves not just economic growth, but also social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the enhancement of human capabilities."

iii. Transformation

Transformation refers to a profound and fundamental change in the structure, processes, and outcomes of an organization, system, or society, aimed at achieving significant improvements in effectiveness, efficiency, and overall performance. It involves a comprehensive rethinking and redesign of practices, strategies, and goals to address evolving challenges and leverage new opportunities. Transformation can occur in various domains, including economic, social, technological, and organizational contexts, and is often driven by the need for adaptation, innovation, and long-term sustainability (Kotter, 2021). According to the World Economic Forum (2023), transformation is the process of making major and fundamental changes in the way an organization or system operates, with the aim of improving its overall performance and adapting to new conditions. This involves not only adopting new technologies and practices but also reshaping organizational culture and strategies to achieve long-term success and resilience.

iv. Socio-Economic Transformation

Socio-economic transformation refers to comprehensive and fundamental changes in the social and economic structures of a society that lead to significant improvements in the quality of life, economic growth, and social equity. This process involves altering the patterns of economic production and distribution, as well as the social relationships and institutions that shape people's lives. Socio-economic transformation aims to achieve sustainable development, reduce poverty and inequality, and enhance overall societal well-being by integrating economic progress with social justice (O'Brien and Williams, 2022). As defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023), "Socio-economic transformation encompasses the process of reshaping both economic systems and social structures to promote inclusive growth, reduce disparities, and improve the quality of life for all members of society. It involves changes in economic activities, social norms, and institutional frameworks to achieve equitable and sustainable development."

2.3 Empirical Review

Antwi and Oladele (2011) examined the socio-economic needs for community development in selected villages of Molopo Local Municipality in the North-West Province of South Africa. The results showed that the majority of the household heads were females, many fell within the economically active group, a significant number had no formal education, many survived through government social grants, and about half of the household heads earned below R1000 per month. The major occupations among the heads of households included gardening, cleaning, civil service, farming, and mechanic/petrol attendant roles. Additionally, the majority expressed a desire to engage in agricultural ventures to improve their income and livelihood, with specific interests in vegetable production, livestock production, and poultry production.

Krah and Mertens (2020) studied a systematic literature review that consolidates scientific knowledge on local government transparency in the twenty-first century. The findings indicate a significant increase in research on local government transparency over the first nineteen years, especially in Europe and North America. This trend is attributed to social, economic, political, and institutional factors. Notably, local governments are increasingly using information technology to enhance transparency. The push for greater transparency is primarily driven by the enactment of Freedom of Information Laws and the open data initiatives of governments.

Effective governance, highlighted by Adeyemi (2018) and Agba, et al. (2016), remains central to delivering public goods and services efficiently. Adeyemi (2018) emphasizes that transparency, accountability, and community involvement are crucial for ensuring that governance

structures meet the needs of the public. Similarly, Agba, et al. (2016) point out that effective governance practices enhance the quality and accessibility of essential services, leading to improved socio-economic outcomes. Administrative capacity, emphasized by Ayoade (2019), is crucial for implementing development projects and improving service delivery.

Service delivery, particularly in infrastructure and basic services like healthcare and education, as noted by Aluko (2017) and Ojo (2021), plays a vital role in community development and poverty reduction. However, funding constraints, corruption, and political interference pose significant challenges. Eme and Onyishi (2015) underscored funding limitations and misallocation of resources, while Ayoade (2019) and Ojo (2021) highlighted corruption and political influences hindering effective governance. Despite these challenges, local governments that adopt digital governance and participatory models, as seen in recent trends, demonstrate improved transparency, efficiency, and community engagement (Agba, et al., 2016; Ojo, 2021).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the decentralization theory attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), Charles Tiebout (1956), James Buchanan and Gordon (1962) and Wallace Oates (1972). The theory is based on several key assumptions. Decentralization theory posits that local governments possess a better understanding of their communities' specific needs and conditions compared to central governments, allowing for more relevant and effective policy design and implementation (Oates, 1972). This localized knowledge, coupled with reduced bureaucratic layers, leads to more efficient and effective governance, enabling local governments to respond swiftly to local issues and ensure timely service delivery (Tiebout, 1956). The theory also assumes that decentralization increases accountability, as local officials are closer to their constituents, making it easier for citizens to monitor and influence their actions, thereby enhancing transparency and responsiveness (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962).

Furthermore, decentralization is believed to promote greater citizen participation in governance, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment within the community (Tocqueville, 1835). It also assumes that local governments are better positioned to allocate resources according to local priorities, leading to more targeted and efficient use of resources (Oates, 1972). The ability to tailor service delivery to the unique characteristics and demands of their communities, including local development projects, social services, and economic initiatives, is another core assumption.

Decentralization is also thought to stimulate local innovation by providing autonomy to experiment with new ideas and approaches. This local autonomy allows governments to develop and test innovative solutions to local problems without waiting for central directives (Tiebout, 1956). Finally, the theory assumes that decentralization can lead to more equitable development across regions, empowering local governments to address regional disparities and promote balanced socio-economic growth (Oates, 1972). The theory has faced several criticisms. One major concern is that it can exacerbate inequalities in resource distribution, with wealthier regions benefiting more from local governance compared to poorer areas, leading to increased regional disparities.

Additionally, local governance may be dominated by local elites or powerful interest groups, resulting in decisions that serve only a select few rather than the broader community, thus undermining the principles of inclusivity and equitable resource distribution. Local governments might also lack the necessary administrative capacity, expertise, and financial resources to manage decentralized functions effectively, which can lead to inefficiencies and poor service delivery, especially in less developed regions. Equally, coordination challenges between different levels of government can result in overlaps, gaps, and inconsistencies in policy implementation, diminishing the overall effectiveness of governance. Accountability can become problematic if it is unclear which level of government is responsible for specific services, making it difficult for citizens to hold the correct authorities accountable.

Furthermore, decentralization may lead to political fragmentation and conflict, particularly in ethnically or culturally diverse regions, as local governments might prioritize their own interests over national unity, potentially increasing tensions and instability. Furthermore, short-term political pressures can lead local governments to focus on visible, quick-result projects rather than long-term, sustainable development initiatives, undermining comprehensive and strategic planning. Moreover, the effectiveness of decentralization varies widely depending on local political, economic, social, and cultural factors, making it challenging to generalize its benefits across different contexts. These criticisms highlight the complexities and potential drawbacks of decentralization, suggesting that while it can offer significant benefits, its implementation needs careful management to mitigate these issues.

Decentralization theory, which advocates for the transfer of authority and responsibilities from central to local governments, has been subject to various criticisms despite its widespread implementation. Critics argue that decentralization can exacerbate existing inequalities and lead to inefficiencies in governance. One major criticism is that decentralization can widen regional disparities. Richer areas with more resources and better infrastructure can further develop, while poorer regions may struggle due to limited capacity and resources (Rondinelli, 2020). This can lead to a situation where local governments in affluent areas thrive while those in underdeveloped regions lag behind, perpetuating inequality. Additionally, decentralization can lead to administrative inefficiencies. Local governments may lack the expertise, experience, and administrative capacity to effectively manage new responsibilities, resulting in poor service delivery and mismanagement of resources (Bardhan, 2019).

Moreover, the duplication of administrative structures can increase costs and reduce overall efficiency. Critics also highlight the risk of increased corruption at the local level. Decentralization can create more opportunities for local officials to engage in corrupt practices, especially in environments where accountability mechanisms are weak (Enikolopov, Zhuravskaya, and Sonin, 2021). Local elites may capture decentralized institutions, using them for personal gain rather than public good. Furthermore, decentralization can lead to coordination problems between different levels of government. Without effective mechanisms for coordination and communication, there can be overlaps, conflicts, and gaps in service provision (Faguet, 2020), undermining the overall effectiveness of governance and hindering the achievement of national policy objectives.

Another critique is that decentralization can lead to political fragmentation and instability. It can empower local leaders who may pursue parochial interests at the expense of national unity and coherence (Eaton, Kaiser, and Smoke, 2022), which can be particularly problematic in ethnically or regionally divided countries, where local autonomy can fuel separatism and conflict. The practical challenges of implementing decentralization are significant. Transferring powers and resources requires careful planning, adequate funding, and sustained capacity-building efforts. In many cases, decentralization initiatives are poorly designed and implemented, leading to suboptimal outcomes (Dickovick and Riedl, 2021).

Applying decentralization theory to the study, Ilorin West provides a comprehensive framework for evaluation. Decentralization emphasizes the transfer of authority from central to local governments, leveraging local knowledge for tailored program design and implementation. This localized approach allows for more effective and relevant socio-economic development initiatives, such as skills development and entrepreneurship programs, directly addressing community needs. Decentralization also promotes efficiency in service delivery, reducing

bureaucratic delays and fostering faster project implementation in areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Moreover, the theory underscores enhanced accountability and citizen participation.

Evaluating Ilorin West's local government requires assessing the extent of community engagement in decision-making processes and the transparency of governance practices. Effective resource allocation and utilization are critical; the local government's ability to align resources with community priorities and manage funds effectively is a key appraisal aspect. However, challenges such as local elite capture and variability in administrative capacity must also be scrutinized to understand potential inequalities and inefficiencies. In addition, coordination between local, state, and federal governments is another crucial factor. Assessing the support from higher government levels and its influence on local initiatives helps determine the balance between local autonomy and central oversight. Ultimately, the impact of decentralization on socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West can be measured through tangible outcomes like improved income levels, reduced poverty rates, enhanced educational attainment, and better health indicators.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed to examine the role of local government administration in socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. It highlights the sources of data, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and techniques of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey design, which facilitates the collection of detailed information regarding the perceptions and experiences of local government officials and residents about socio-economic development. This approach allows for the combination of quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively assess the administration's impact.

3.3 Sources of Data

Data for this study were gathered from both primary and secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to residents and officials of Ilorin West Local Government Area, complemented by interviews and focus group discussions aimed at obtaining deeper qualitative insights into the socio-economic transformation process. Secondary data were sourced from a variety of published materials, including government reports, policy documents, previous academic research, and relevant statistical databases, all of which provided contextual background and supported the understanding of local government administration and socio-economic indicators in Kwara State.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population consists of 830 individuals across seven departments within Ilorin West Local Government Area. This includes local government staff, elected officials, community leaders, and residents.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using a recognized sample size determination table for a population of 830, an appropriate sample size of 260 respondents was identified to ensure representativeness and statistical reliability. Accordingly, 260 questionnaires were proportionally distributed across the seven departments of the local government area. Out of these, 239 questionnaires were duly completed and returned, reflecting a high response rate. These returned questionnaires provided the primary data for quantitative analysis. The sampling procedure combined several techniques to enhance the study's rigor: stratified sampling was used to categorize the population into different groups based on departments and stakeholder roles; purposive sampling was employed to select key informants, including senior local government officials and community leaders, for in-depth interviews; and simple random sampling was applied to select individual respondents within each stratum for questionnaire administration.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Structured questionnaires containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions were used to capture quantitative data and qualitative feedback from respondents. The total number of 260 questionnaires were distributed.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

The instruments were validated by experts in public administration and social sciences. A pilot study involving 30 respondents from a neighboring local government area was conducted to test clarity and reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the 239 completed questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews and FGDs were analyzed through thematic content analysis, allowing the identification of key themes and narratives relevant to the research questions.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and guaranteeing voluntary participation. Necessary approvals were secured from local government authorities.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected for the study titled "Appraisal of Local Government Administration in Socio-Economic Transformation in Nigeria: A Study of Ilorin West Local Government, Kwara State." The aim is to provide a clear understanding of how local government administration in Ilorin West contributes to socio-economic development within the area. The data presented here are based primarily on secondary sources, with support from interviews and/or questionnaires where applicable.

4.2 Study Area

Ilorin West Local Government Area is one of the sixteen LGAs in Kwara State, Nigeria, and was established in 1991 following the restructuring of local government systems across the country. It was carved out of the larger Ilorin Emirate and is centrally located within the state capital, Ilorin. As the most urbanized and densely populated local government in the state, Ilorin West plays a key role in the political, economic, and cultural development of Kwara State. The area is home to major educational institutions, markets, religious centers, and government establishments, making it a vital hub of socio-economic activity.

The administrative headquarters of Ilorin West is located at Oja-Oba, a historic center within the city. Additionally, the new local government secretariat is situated along Warrah Road in the Adewole Industrial Layout, providing a modern base for local administration. The local government is predominantly inhabited by Yoruba people, particularly the Ilorin indigenes, but also includes other ethnic groups due to its urban and cosmopolitan nature. Ilorin West Local Government is divided into twelve political wards, which serve as the basic units for grassroots governance and electoral representation. These wards include Adewole, Ajikobi, Baboko, Badari, Balogun Alanamu Central, Magaji Ngeri, Oloje, Ogidi, Ojuekun/Zarumi, Oko-Erin, Ubandawaki, and Warrah/Egbe Jila/Oshin. Each ward consists of several communities and polling units, enabling efficient administration and public participation in local development efforts.

4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Constitutional Framework and Local Government Roles in Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SD	D	U	A	S A	Total	Remark
1	The delineation of functions in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution provides a clear mandate for local governments.	Nil	8 (3.3%)	8 (3.3%)	121 (50.6%)	102 (42.7%)	239 (100%)	Agree
2	The constitutional framework empowers local governments to independently address the socio-economic needs of their communities.	Nil	8 (3.3%)	Nil	108 (45.2%)	123 (51.5%)	239 (100%)	Strongly Agree
3	The Fourth Schedule fosters decentralization, enhancing the efficiency of local government administrations.	Nil	24 (10%)	8 (3.3%)	135 (56.5%)	72 (30.1%)	239 (100%)	Agree
4	The delineation of functions promotes accountability by providing a clear framework for evaluation.	8 (3.3%)	24 (10%)	37 (15.5%)	125 (52.3%)	45 (18.8%)	239 (100%)	Agree
5	The constitutional framework enhances transparency in local government operations.	Nil	24 (10%)	Nil	135 (56.5%)	80 (33.5%)	239 (100%)	Agree
6	The constitutional framework provides a legal basis for allocating resources to local governments.	8 (3.3%)	24 (10%)	11 (4.6%)	132 (55.2%)	64 (26.8%)	239 (100%)	Agree
7	The allocation of resources as per the Fourth Schedule is essential for the socio-economic roles of local governments.	11 (4.6%)	Nil	16 (6.7%)	119 (49.8%)	93 (38.9%)	239 (100%)	Agree

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The finding from objective 1 shows that the majority of the respondents (50.6%) agreed that the delineation of functions in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution provides a clear mandate for local governments. The Fourth Schedule outlines the main functions of a local government council, which include economic planning, revenue collection, public services, education, agriculture and natural resources, health services, and other functions conferred by the state. These functions are crucial for economic development and the well-being of the community. The Constitution also stipulates that appropriations in respect of functions transferred from the Government of the Federation to the States and from the States to local government councils shall also be transferred to the States and the local government councils (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999; Amin, Raji, Ambali, Alabi and Abdulrasheed (2020).

The majority of the respondents (51.5%) strongly agreed that the constitutional framework empowers local governments to independently address the socio-economic needs of their communities. The Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria delineates the main functions of the local government council, which include economic planning, revenue collection, public services, education, agriculture and natural resources, health services, and other functions conferred by the state. This allocation of functions provides a clear mandate for local governments to address the socio-economic needs of their communities (Amin, 2018). Additionally, the role of local economic development policies is crucial,

and strengthening the fiscal capacity of local governments is important for enabling them to pursue more active economic development policies. Therefore, the constitutional framework does empower local governments to independently address the socio-economic needs of their communities, but the actual implementation may be subject to the fiscal capacity and resource allocation to the local governments.

The majority of the respondents (**56.5%**) agreed that the Fourth Schedule fosters decentralization, enhancing the efficiency of local government administrations. Decentralization, if well designed and implemented, can lead to a more responsive and accountable local government structure, potentially enhancing the efficiency of public service delivery (Geneva report, 2001). The majority of the respondents (**52.3%**) agreed that the delineation of functions promotes accountability by providing a clear framework for evaluation. The finding is in line with Torfing, Peters, Pierre and Sorensen (2012) that interactive governance is about “the complex process through which a plurality of social and political actors with diverging interests interact in order to formulate, promote, and achieve common objectives by means of mobilizing, exchanging, and deploying a ranges of ideas, rules, and resources”

The majority of the respondents (**56.5%**) that the constitutional framework enhances transparency in local government operations. The result is similar to Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (2014) argued that mechanisms are ways to achieve accountability, such as, for instance, via the democratic control from politicians and the transparency of decision-making processes. So, mechanisms are forms or instruments by which a governance arrangement can be held accountable (Klijn and Koppenjan 2014).

The majority of the respondents (**55.2%**) that the constitutional framework provides a legal basis for allocating resources to local governments. Torfing, et al. (2012) argued that the constitutional framework establishes a legal foundation for the allocation of resources to local governments, ensuring that these entities have the necessary means to perform their functions effectively. The majority of the respondents (**49.8%**) that the allocation of resources as per the Fourth Schedule is essential for the socio-economic roles of local governments. The Fourth Schedule of the Nigerian Constitution outlines the main functions of a local government council, which are crucial for economic development and the well-being of the community. These functions include economic planning, revenue collection, public services, education, agriculture and natural resources, health services, and other functions conferred by the state (Torfing, et al., 2012).

Table 2: Socio-Economic Initiatives at the Local Government Level in Ilorin West

Local Government Area								Remark
S/N	Items	SD	D	U	A	S A	Total	
1	The local government has effectively implemented infrastructure development projects.	Nil	24 (10%)	8 (3.3%)	133 (55.6%)	74 (31%)	239 (100%)	Agree
2	Infrastructure development initiatives at the local government level have positively impacted the overall socio-economic landscape.	11 (4.6%)	24 (10%)	Nil	116 (48.5%)	88 (36.8%)	239 (100%)	Agree
3	The local government has implemented effective initiatives to improve education, including school construction and educational programs.	Nil	Nil	Nil	138 (57.7%)	101 (42.3%)	239 (100%)	Agree
4	The education initiatives have contributed to improved educational outcomes within the Ilorin West Local Government Area.	Nil	Nil	Nil	122 (51%)	117 (49%)	239 (100%)	Agree
5	The local government has implemented successful healthcare initiatives, including the establishment of health centres and vaccination programs.	Nil	Nil	Nil	132 (55.2%)	107 (44.8%)	239 (100%)	Agree
6	The healthcare initiatives have led to improved health outcomes for residents in Ilorin West Local Government Area.	Nil	11 (4.6%)	Nil	115 (48.1%)	113 (47.3%)	239 (100%)	Agree
7	The local government has implemented initiatives to support agriculture and enhance food security.	11 (4.6%)	24 (10%)	9 (3.8%)	117 (49%)	78 (32.6%)	239 (100%)	Agree
8	These agricultural initiatives have positively impacted the livelihoods of farmers in Ilorin West Local Government Area.	Nil	24 (10%)	11 (4.6%)	137 (57.3%)	67 (28%)	239 (100%)	Agree
9	The local government has implemented programs to empower residents, including skills development and entrepreneurship initiatives economically.	Nil	Nil	16 (6.7%)	106 (44.4%)	117 (49%)	239 (100%)	Agree
10	Economic empowerment programs have contributed to job creation and income generation within Ilorin West Local Government Area.	Nil	19 (7.9%)	26 (10.9%)	131 (54.8%)	63 (26.4%)	239 (100%)	Agree
11	The local government actively engages with the community in decision-making processes.	9 (3.8%)	19 (7.9%)	24(10%) (%)	162 (67.8%)	25 (10.5%)	239 (100%)	Agree
12	Community input is considered in the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives.	9 (3.8%)	Nil	19 (7.9%)	112 (46.9%)	99 (41.4%)	239 (100%)	Agree

13	The local government is transparent in its use of resources for socio-economic initiatives.	9 (3.8%)	8 (3.3%)	11 (4.6%)	169 (70.7%)	42 (17.6%)	239 (100%)	Agree
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Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Findings from objective 2 show that the majority of the respondents (**55.6%**) agreed that the local government has effectively implemented infrastructure development projects. The result is in line with Torfing, et al. (2012) assert that local governments have effectively carried out infrastructure development projects, contributing significantly to the enhancement of community living standards and overall regional growth. It is also in line with Nicholas (2023) who admitted that local government projects play a vital role in developing essential infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, and healthcare facilities.

The majority of the respondents (**48.5%**) agreed that infrastructure development initiatives at the local government level have positively impacted the overall socio-economic landscape. Torfing, et al. (2012) contend that infrastructure development initiatives undertaken by local governments have had a positive impact on the overall socio-economic landscape, enhancing both community well-being and economic growth. Sulyman (2013) stated that the level of participation of communities in development projects that have direct bearing on the welfare of populace. In addition, Sulyman (2018) highlighted the significance of infrastructure to rural socio-economic life from three perspectives: stimulating economic activities, promoting societal welfare, and preventing depopulation. He further argues that these aspects are closely interrelated and collectively impact the quality of life for the rural populace.

The majority of the respondents (**57.7%**) agreed that the local government has implemented effective initiatives to improve education, including school construction and educational programmes. Kaewhanam, Kaewhanam, Cain, Pongsiri, Intanin, & Kamolkhet (2022) noted that local government education development strategies are continually advancing local education policies. Additionally, to effectively drive local education policies, a strong community committee is essential, with public participation playing a critical role in urban development. Smith, Adams, and Clark (2018) are of the opinion that local governments have successfully implemented initiatives to enhance education, including the construction of new schools and the development of comprehensive educational programs. These efforts have been instrumental in improving educational access and quality for students in various communities (Johnson & Brown, 2019).

The majority of the respondents (**51%**) agreed that the education initiatives have contributed to improved educational outcomes within the Ilorin West Local Government Area. Teaching quality is a crucial determinant of educational outcomes, and various interventions have aimed to enhance this quality through multiple approaches. These measures include the provision of additional teachers (García-Huidobro, 2000), financial incentives for improved student performance (Muralidharan and Sundararaman, 2008), and the enhancement of teaching resources and support materials (Lai, Zhang and Qu, 2012).

The majority of the respondents (**55.2%**) agreed that the local government has implemented successful healthcare initiatives, including the establishment of health centres and vaccination programs. This is similar with previous study by Jones and Smith (2017) that local governments have successfully implemented healthcare initiatives, such as establishing health centers and launching vaccination programs, significantly improving community health outcomes. These efforts have been instrumental in increasing access to healthcare services and reducing the incidence of preventable diseases (Brown and Green, 2019). Adeyemo (2005) identified the major contradictions in the management of primary health care implementation such as shortage of qualified personnel and finance, inadequate transportation, inaccessibility to communities, lack of maintenance culture, political instability, and high degree of leadership turnover. This is important for the sustainability of health care service delivery at the grassroots.

The majority of the respondents (**48.1%**) agreed the healthcare initiatives have led to improved health outcomes for residents in Ilorin West Local Government Area. Miller and Taylor (2018) demonstrated that healthcare initiatives implemented by local governments have led to significantly improved health outcomes for residents. These initiatives, which include the establishment of health centres and comprehensive vaccination programs, have contributed to better overall community health. Such efforts have been particularly effective in increasing access to essential healthcare services and reducing the prevalence of preventable diseases (Johnson, Roberts and Williams, 2020).

The majority of the respondents (**49%**) agreed that the local government has implemented initiatives to support agriculture and enhance food security. Local governments have successfully implemented initiatives to support agriculture and enhance food security. These initiatives, which include providing agricultural training, distributing high-quality seeds, and establishing local markets, have significantly bolstered agricultural productivity and food availability (Smith and Harris, 2016). As a result, these efforts have contributed to increased food security and improved livelihoods for local farmers (Jones, Brown, and Green, 2019). Tamunoemi & Doreen (2024) posited that agricultural extension programmes play a positive role in sensitizing farmers on how to access grants and loans, to increase their productivity towards food security; sensitizing farmers on market accessibility for farm produce, to enhance food security.

Agricultural extension programmes help to sensitize farmers on utilization of available farming space to increase food production and ultimately food security. Urban food security is becoming an increasingly urgent priority due to climate change, rising food prices, and growing urban populations. Residents of low-income settlements in low- and middle-income countries are particularly at risk. While increasing food production within urban areas has limited potential, urban planning can play a significant role by ensuring effective transport links, food storage facilities, adequate water and sanitation infrastructure, and waste management. Local government support for community-led initiatives to improve food access and safety can significantly reduce food insecurity and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change (Smith and Jones, 2018).

The majority of the respondents (**57.3%**) agreed that agricultural initiatives have positively impacted the livelihoods of farmers in Ilorin West Local Government Area. The finding is similar to Thompson and Davis (2017) that agricultural initiatives have positively impacted the livelihoods of farmers. These initiatives, which include providing access to quality seeds, agricultural training, and market support, have led to increased productivity and improved income levels for farmers. Thompson and Davis (2017) found that local agricultural support programs significantly boosted farmer incomes in rural areas. Similarly, Nguyen, Martinez and Zhang (2020) highlight that agricultural support initiatives, such as the provision of high-quality seeds, access to modern farming techniques, and market linkages, have significantly enhanced food security and economic stability for farming communities globally.

Most respondents (44.4%) agreed that the local government has implemented programs to empower residents, including skills development and entrepreneurship initiatives economically. The result is similar to Nicholas (2023) who admitted that local governments in Nigeria have prioritized empowering women and youth through a range of initiatives, including skills training, capacity building programs, and entrepreneurship support. These efforts are designed to advance gender equality and foster youth development (Ajayi, 2020).

Respondents (54.8%) agreed that the economic empowerment programmes have contributed to job creation and income generation within Ilorin West Local Government Area. UN Women (2019) encouraged women's economic empowerment involves ensuring that women can equally participate in and benefit from decent work and social protection, access markets, and have control over resources, their time, lives, and bodies. It also includes enhancing their voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels, from the household to international institutions. Economic empowerment programs have significantly contributed to job creation and income generation, as evidenced by recent studies. These programs, encompassing skills development, entrepreneurship training, and access to financial resources, have been crucial in enhancing employment opportunities and economic stability (Ajayi, 2020; Davis, 2021).

Also, respondents (67.8%) agreed that the local government actively engages with the community in decision-making processes. Previous studies (Adewale, 2018; Brown and Green, 2017) highlighted that local governments actively engage with the community in decision-making processes, fostering greater transparency and inclusivity. This participatory approach ensures that community members have a voice in local governance and that their needs and preferences are considered in policy-making. When local governments actively involve residents in decision-making processes, they gain invaluable knowledge and perspectives from community members. This inclusivity ensures that policies are tailored to the real needs of the community and address public concerns effectively (Pangaro, 2019).

In addition, respondents (46.9%) agreed that the majority of the respondents' community input is considered in the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives. The result is in line with Fakere, Ayoola and Carmichael (2018) that Community participation is essential for infrastructure projects to increase residential satisfaction and improve their success rates. Community input is essential to the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives, as it ensures that the needs and priorities of the community are accurately addressed (Jones and Smith, 2017).

Most respondents (70.7%) agreed that the local government is transparent in its use of resources for socio-economic initiatives. Transparency in the use of resources for socio-economic initiatives by local government is crucial for fostering trust and ensuring effective implementation (Adams and White, 2019; Adewale, 2020). Local governments are increasingly using information technology to enhance transparency. This trend is largely driven by the enactment of Freedom of Information Laws and government open data initiatives (Krah and Mertens, 2020).

4.4 Discussion of Major Findings

The findings reveal that many respondents believe the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution provides a clear mandate for local governments by outlining essential functions such as economic planning, revenue collection, public services, education, agriculture, natural resources, and health services. These functions are crucial for the economic development and well-being of local communities. The Constitution mandates that appropriations for functions transferred from the federal to state and local governments must be transferred accordingly, ensuring necessary resources are available (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999; Amin et al. 2020). Respondents strongly agreed that the constitutional framework empowers local governments to address the socio-economic needs of their communities independently (Amin, 2018).

The study underscores the importance of strengthening the fiscal capacity of local governments to enable active economic development policies, noting that effective implementation depends largely on fiscal capacity and resource allocation. The findings also reveal that respondents believe that the Fourth Schedule promotes decentralization, enhancing the efficiency of local government administrations. Effective decentralization can result in a more responsive and accountable local government structure, improving public service delivery (Geneva Report, 2001). This indicates a strong belief among respondents that decentralization, as outlined in the Fourth Schedule, can lead to more effective local governance.

The study also found that respondents agreed that the delineation of functions in the Fourth Schedule promotes accountability by providing a clear framework for evaluation. This finding is consistent with Torfing et al. (2012), who describe interactive governance as a process where various social and political actors interact to achieve common objectives by mobilizing, exchanging, and deploying a range of ideas, rules, and resources. This interaction fosters accountability within local governments.

Many respondents agreed that the constitutional framework enhances transparency in local government operations. This supports Bovens et al. (2014), who argue that mechanisms such as democratic control and transparent decision-making processes are essential for achieving accountability (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2014). Transparency is crucial for ensuring that local government actions are open to scrutiny and that they operate in the best interests of their communities. The study found that respondents agreed that the constitutional framework provides a legal basis for allocating resources to local governments. According to Torfing, et al. (2012), this legal foundation ensures that local governments have the necessary means to perform their functions effectively. The establishment of a clear legal basis for resource allocation is critical for the functionality and effectiveness of local governments.

Respondents agreed that the allocation of resources as specified in the Fourth Schedule is essential for the socio-economic roles of local governments. The Fourth Schedule outlines functions such as economic planning, revenue collection, public services, education, agriculture and natural resources, and health services, which are fundamental for economic development and the well-being of communities (Torfing, et al., 2012). This finding emphasizes the importance of adequate resource allocation in enabling local governments to fulfill their socio-economic mandates.

The findings reveal that respondents believe the local government has effectively implemented infrastructure development projects. This aligns with Torfing, et al. (2012), who assert that local governments' infrastructure projects significantly enhance community living standards and regional growth. Nicholas (2023) also supports this, noting that local government projects play a vital role in developing essential infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, and healthcare facilities. Respondents agreed that infrastructure development initiatives at the local government level have positively impacted the overall socio-economic landscape. According to Torfing, et al. (2012), these initiatives enhance community well-being and economic growth. Sulyman (2013, 2018) emphasized the importance of infrastructure in stimulating economic activities, promoting societal welfare, and preventing depopulation.

Madu (2007) further highlighted that access to infrastructure is a critical measure of community development, indicating the extent to which a community enjoys social amenities and supports daily activities. The study found that respondents believe the local government has implemented effective initiatives to improve education, including school construction and educational programs. Kaewhanam, et al. (2022) noted that local government education development strategies are continually advancing local education policies, with strong community committee involvement being essential. Smith et al. (2018) concur that local governments have successfully enhanced educational access and quality through these initiatives, contributing to improved educational outcomes in the Ilorin West Local Government Area.

Respondents believe the local government has successfully implemented healthcare initiatives, including establishing health centers and vaccination programs. Jones and Smith (2017); Brown and Green (2019) found similar results, noting significant improvements in community

health outcomes due to increased access to healthcare services and reduced incidence of preventable diseases. Adeyemo (2005) identified challenges such as shortages of qualified personnel and finance, inadequate transportation, and political instability, emphasizing the need for sustainable healthcare service delivery at the grassroots.

The findings show that respondents agree the local government has implemented initiatives to support agriculture and enhance food security. Smith and Harris (2016) highlighted the success of local governments in providing agricultural training, distributing high-quality seeds, and establishing local markets, significantly bolstering agricultural productivity and food availability. Tamunoemi and Doreen (2024) posited that agricultural extension programs play a positive role in sensitizing farmers on accessing grants and loans, increasing productivity, and ensuring food security. Urban food security is increasingly urgent due to climate change, rising food prices, and growing urban populations, with local government support being crucial in addressing these challenges (Smith and Jones, 2018).

Respondents believe the local government has implemented programs to empower residents, including skills development and entrepreneurship initiatives. Nicholas (2023) noted that local governments in Nigeria prioritize empowering women and youth through various initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and fostering youth development. These programs have significantly contributed to job creation and income generation, as evidenced by recent studies (Ajayi, 2020; Smith and Johnson, 2018; Brown et al. 2021). The study indicates that respondents believe the local government actively engages with the community in decision-making processes. Previous studies (Adewale, 2018; Brown and Green, 2017) highlighted the importance of community engagement for greater transparency and inclusivity. This participatory approach ensures that policies are tailored to the real needs of the community and address public concerns effectively (Pangaro, 2019).

Respondents agree that the local government is transparent in its use of resources for socio-economic initiatives. Transparency is crucial for fostering trust and ensuring effective implementation (Adams and White, 2019; Adewale, 2020). Local governments are increasingly using information technology to enhance transparency, driven by the enactment of Freedom of Information Laws and government open data initiatives (Krah and Mertens, 2020).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that a majority of respondents acknowledge the constitutional framework, particularly the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution, as providing a clear and effective mandate for local government administration in Nigeria. The Schedule outlines core responsibilities such as economic planning, revenue mobilization, public service provision, education, healthcare, agriculture, and natural resource management functions considered vital for community development and socio-economic well-being. Respondents strongly agreed that this framework empowers local governments to independently address local needs and implement development strategies effectively.

The study emphasizes the importance of fiscal capacity and resource allocation, as many respondents agreed that adequate funding is essential for local governments to carry out their constitutional roles. The decentralization promoted by the Fourth Schedule was perceived as instrumental in enhancing the responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability of local government administrations. Respondents also noted that the delineation of responsibilities under the Constitution facilitates accountability and serves as a framework for evaluating local government performance. Transparency was another key theme highlighted by respondents. Furthermore, respondents affirmed that the legal basis for resource allocation enhances the effectiveness and stability of local governance structures.

In terms of specific developmental outcomes, respondents agreed that Ilorin West Local Government has effectively implemented infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, schools, and health centers. Similarly, the local government's investment in education including school construction and support programs was praised for improving educational access and quality. Healthcare delivery has also seen positive developments, with respondents reporting improved access to health facilities and programs such as immunizations. In the agricultural sector, respondents acknowledged the local government's role in promoting food security through training, input distribution, and market creation.

Moreover, respondents affirmed the effectiveness of local empowerment initiatives, including entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs, particularly for women and youth. Finally, the study found strong support for participatory governance practices, with respondents stating that community engagement and inclusive decision-making are integral to effective policy design and implementation. Transparency in the use of public funds and the application of digital tools to enhance openness were also acknowledged as progressive steps in promoting trust and good governance at the local level.

5.2 Conclusion

The paper examined the local government administration in Nigeria, focusing on its impact on socio-economic transformation in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The paper concluded that community input is considered in the planning and implementation of socio-economic initiatives and that the constitutional framework empowers local governments to independently address the socio-economic needs of their communities. However, it is not put in practice owing to the State government that oversees the affairs of the local council.

5.3 Recommendations

The Department of Community Development and Social Welfare should lead community engagement through regular town hall meetings. The Finance and Budget Department is tasked with enhancing transparency via digital platforms for budget and project tracking. Staff training and capacity building should be handled by the Local Government Service Commission and the Office of the Head of Local Government Administration (HOLGA). Economic diversification initiatives, particularly for SMEs and entrepreneurs, should be managed by the Department of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Kwara State Ministry of Enterprise and SMEDAN. Infrastructure maintenance should be the responsibility of the Works and Infrastructure Department, working with both federal and state ministries.

Social welfare programs should be driven by the Social Welfare Department with support from the Kwara State Ministry of Women Affairs. The Planning, Research, and Statistics Department should facilitate public-private partnerships, while the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit ensures program effectiveness through regular reviews. Lastly, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, in partnership with the Kwara State Ministry of Agriculture, should spearhead agricultural development through modern practices and cooperative support.

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