

Impact of Social Policy Programmes (N-Power) on Youth Development, In Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the impact of social policy programmes (N Power) on youth development in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the impact of Social policy programmes (the N power) scheme in employment generation, economic wellbeing and job skills enhancement of youth. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample four hundred respondents and the data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics. The results of the study revealed that N-power scheme create job opportunities, curtail incidence of poverty, training of youth as all the items were accepted. The programme improved living standard among youth as all the items were accepted by the respondents and the most common N-power programme is N-power teach. The scheme face challenges of supervision, delay in payment of stipulated allowance and attitudes of some volunteer. The study concluded that the programme meant to provide employment to unemployed youth but faced some challenges for the youth to fully benefit from the scheme. It was recommended that government should provide skills acquisition Centre, adequately funded, equipped and due attention should be given at all levels to serve as a hub for massive employment generation, ramp up pressures on state governments to absorb some of the volunteers who happened to be in good records, give incentive to both staff and volunteer of the programme and Local Government Areas should have office access to the National investment Headquarters at Abuja for complain, and for regular supervision.

Keywords: N-Power, social policy, programmes, youth and development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is the most dangerous evil bedevilling the Nigeria youths today. Reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2005) shows how the “population in unemployment has maintain a steady increase from 17.7 million in 1988 to 66.7 million in 2004.” In 2010, the national Bureau of Statistics reported that 60.9%of Nigerians were unemployed.). To corroborate this assertion, the national Bureau of Statistics in the 2012 National Baseline Survey, posits that more than half of the Nigerian youths population in the country are unemployed.

N-Power programme is a youth empowerment scheme sponsored by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing

a structure for large-scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. N-Power aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. N-Power is designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35. The modular programmes under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work.

However, Nigeria, a country with an estimated population of 170 million people (NBS, 2018) is well endowed with abundant human and natural resources and a favourable geographical location in the world map. The current global financial crisis has impacted negatively on the macro and micro levels of the economy of Nigeria. As at present, the situation has poses serious threats and challenges to both government and well-meaning citizens. Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems which include youth unemployment, high rate of poverty, conflict and diseases, insincerity, over-depending in foreign goods, low economic growth and development, lack of capacity and skills needed to move the economy forward and urbanization. Unemployment has become a major problem bedevilling the lives of Nigerian

Youth causing frustration, dejection and depending on family members and friends. The high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country (Ajufo, 2013). More than half of the Nigerian population is under the age of 30 according to the National Population Commission (2013).

According to Ossal and Nwalado (2012) the need for empowerment programmes started emerging in the mid-1980s, when there were political instability and inconsistencies in the socio-economic policies of successive government, high level of unemployment, large scale lay off of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjusted policies and bad economic trends. In the face of these challenges there was no encouragement from the federal government for public and private investors to embark on empowerment activities. These situations pose great

challenges to the very existence of individuals and the national development. To salvage these situations there is need for the training of educated youths who can function effectively in their society in which they live in terms of self-employment and self-reliant which N-Power programme can provide. Based upon this premise, the study examined N-Power programme as a veritable tool for youth empowerment in Nigeria.

Nigeria faces a number of challenges that can only be met if she has innovative, well-educated, and willing to be trained citizens who, whatever their walks of life, have the spirit and inquisitiveness to think in new ways, and the courage to meet and adapt to the challenges facing them. At same time, given the current socio-economic and political stance of the country, a thriving economy would require a greater number of young people who are willing and able to be trained; who can launch and successfully develop their own commercial or social ventures, and who will become innovators in the wider organisations in which they work. It is a common experience that many graduates from the Nigerian universities find it difficult to get employment every year.

This is partly due to the curricula of the universities and other tertiary institutions which lay emphasis on training for white-collar jobs (Osibanjo, 2006). The socioeconomic situation in Nigeria poses serious threats and challenges to both government and wellbeing of citizens of the nation as a whole. The unemployment problems further call for different strategies and actions for it to be ameliorated. N-Power programme has been embraced by almost all the Nigerian youths and its capabilities and efficacy in springing up economies is not in doubt. It is believed that refocusing N-Power programme will immensely contribute in developing the spirit and culture of empowerment, in country N-Power programme is essential not only to shape the mind-sets of young people but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are central to developing an empowerment culture.

N-Power programme provides unemployed youth's motivation, knowledge, and skills essential for launching a successful venture company (Cho, 2017). Developing mind-sets, generic attributes and skills that are the foundations of N-Power can be achieved through indoctrination from an early stage; that is, if it is incorporated into the national system with the seriousness it deserves. Because employment is key to shaping young people's attitudes, skills and culture, it is vital that N-Power programme is addressed from an early stage and up into level of sustainability. N-Power programme should be available to all unemployed regardless of major courses and choice of studies to enhance competitive advantage, not only for students but the societies and nations where they are involved.

The relationship between empowerment and development has been established, such that empowerment is now internationally accepted as a key development index. The importance of empowerment cannot be overemphasized; it is a fundamental human right, hence, the need for incorporating

N-Power programme in the unemployment alleviated system. In line with the above, this study is focused under the following heading: conceptual framework, importance of N-Power programme, need for N-Power programme, rationale for fostering N-Power programme and its achievements as well as problems for effective implementation of N-Power programme in Nigeria.

The Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari designed and implemented the on-going National Social Investment Scheme (NSIP) as strategy for combating poverty and unemployment. The NSIP scheme was created to enable citizens exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment as earlier mentioned through capacity building, investment and direct financial support. the programme consists of four major components include the Job Creation and Youth Empowerment (N- Power), National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). NSIP generally aimed at increasing the poor and vulnerable household with access income/livelihood by providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shock.

The N-Power scheme specifically is the employability and enhancement programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria, aimed at imbibing the learn- work enterprise culture in youth between the ages 18-34 (N-SIP 2018). The programme is available for graduate and non-graduates. The graduate's category is further divided into three areas namely, the N –Teach, N –Health and N – Agro. For the non – graduates category, N – Build Scheme is geared towards equipping its beneficiaries with necessary and meaningful skills to be self-employed. Based on the forgoing, this paper is limited to the N – Power scheme with a view to accessing its impact in ameliorating youth employment and poverty respectively. Poverty and unemployment remains one of the biggest social problems in Nigeria today. Available data from NBS (2018) shows that more than half of Nigerians population is currently living in poverty and remain a worrisome phenomenon demanding urgent national attention. This is not unconnected to the fact that the poverty rate continues and had remain unabated in society which gives room for other social vices such as armed robbery, burglary, kidnaping, militancy, human trafficking, prostitution among others. Olajide and Diah (2017) asserted that insecurity in Nigeria can be linked with growing poverty rate.

To tackle this problem, successive government has implemented a range of measures, including NAPEP, SURE-P and currently the NSIP initiative. The NSIP initiative tried to addresses such social problems such as curbing poverty, unemployment yet proved abortive. The N-power initiative which is the job creation component of the policy aims at reducing poverty and unemployment and is targeted at the Nigerian youth. However creating a policy and its implementation to achieve set goals appear to be mutually

exclusive in the Nigeria context as efforts by successive governments to contain the excruciating poverty and monumental unemployment initiatives geared toward alleviating the precarious situation surrounding the Nigerian youths in a bid to enhance the quality of life have been ended in fiasco as a consequence of abysmal and porous implementation of the said programmes.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment remains one of the biggest social problems in Nigeria today. Available data from NBS (2010) shows that more than half of Nigerians population is currently living in poverty And remain a worrisome phenomenon demanding urgent national attention. This is not unconnected to the fact that the poverty rate continues And had remain unabated in society which gives room for other social vices such as armed robbery, burglary etc as corroborated by Olajide and Diah (2017) reports which there asserted that insecurity in Nigeria can be linked with growing poverty rate.

To tackle this problem, successive government has implemented a range of measures, including NAPEP, SURE-P and currently the NSIP initiative. The NSIP initiative addresses a range of social problems such as curbing , unemployment and increasing school enrolment. The N-power initiative which is the job creation component of the policy aims at reducing unemployment and is targeted at the Nigerian youth. However creating a policy and its implementation to achieve set goals appear to be mutually exclusive in the Nigeria context as efforts by successive governments geared toward alleviating the precarious situation surrounding the Nigerian youths in a bid to enhance the quality of life have been ended in fiasco as a consequence of abysmal and porous implementation of the said programmes. Many researches have been carried out on the way forward to reduce unemployment level and poverty rate but none have been done on how N-power reduces the mentioned phenomena in the study area. The study therefore, examine the impact of the scheme as little or none of the study was conducted on the programme in the study area, hence, the intended aim was to assess the impact of the N-power scheme in three salient areas via employment generation, economic well-being and skills/job enhancement, which the study intend

to fill up. The specific objectives include assessing the impact of N - Power scheme on skill-job enhancement, determining the impact of N-Power schemes on the economic wellbeing of beneficiaries, identifying various categories of N-Power programmes that the youth enrol, identify problems associated with N-Power programme and proffer possible solutions to the problems identified.

II. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Hong local government was created on the 16th day of June, 1989 by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. Hong Local Government is one of the largest local Government in Adamawa state with land mass of 2,419km² with the population of 226,100 people (NBS, 2016). It is geographically located at latitude 20° 40' to 30°00' east and longitude 10°00' to 10° 3' north. Sharing local boundary with Gombi local government area to the west and Mubi local government to the east and Askira Uba local government (Borno state) to the north.

Source of Data

Primary data was used for the study which were obtained by the used of structured questionnaire.

Sampling Technique

A purposive and simple random technique were adopted to sample the respondents in each of the seven Districts. A proportionate of 40% of the total volunteers in each District was used as representative sample of the population. A sample of four hundred respondents was selected for the study.

Technique of Data Analysis

Data ascertained were analysed using of descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentage was used to analyse various N-power programme scheme and solutions to the problems associated with the N-power programme.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of N-Power Programme

Table 1: The Impact of N - Power Scheme on Skill-Job Enhancement in the Study Area

S/No	Items	SA	A	U	SD	D	Mean	Remarks
1	The programme create job opportunities for teeming youth	362	33	02	01	02	4.88	Accepted
2	With the establishment of the programme it has reduce unemployment	236	136	01	01	26	4.39	Accepted
3	Introduction of the programme help to curtail the incidence of poverty	180	160	11	09	40	4.08	Accepted
4	Necessary thing to be done to improve the lives is by creating more jobs opportunities for youth	284	108	04	03	01	4.68	Accepted
5	Necessary thing to be done to improve the lives is by advance	228	132	12	04	12	4.31	Accepted

	training and enlightenment to youth							
6	Necessary thing to be done to improve the lives is by other means rather than the aforementioned	176	148	52	04	20	4.14	Accepted
7	programme performance is to the yearnings and aspiration of the masses	164	156	40	32	04	4.08	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In Table 1 it shows the N-power scheme create job opportunities, reduces unemployment, curtail incidence of poverty, training of youth, improves live and yearning aspiration among masses as opined by the respondents where all the items were accepted. This clearly indicated that N-Power scheme create skill-jobs to youths in the study area.

Table 2: The Impact of N-Power Schemes on Economic Wellbeing of Beneficiaries in the Study Area.

S/No	Items	SA	A	U	SD	D	Mean	Remark
8	The programme improved living standard of youth	252	132	11	01	4	4.56	Accepted
9	It has reduces the rate of conflict among youth	200	152	16	20	12	4.27	Accepted
10	It has increases the purchasing power of youth	200	160	20	8	12	4.32	Accepted
11	It resulted to accumulation of wealth by youth	100	132	16	116	36	3.36	Accepted
12	It has led to youth to invest in different business enterprises	192	152	24	8	24	4.2	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 shows the programme of N-power improved living standard, reduces conflict, increases purchasing power, accumulation of wealth and lead to high investment in business enterprises among youth as all the items were accepted by the respondents. This shows the programme induces economic wellbeing of beneficiaries in the study area.

Programmes of N-Power

Table 3: Various Programmes of N-Power that Youth Enrol in the Study Area

S/No	Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
1	N-Teach	270	67.50
2	N- Power Agric	52	13.00
3	N-power Tax	40	10.00

4	N-power Health	36	09.00
5	Others	02	00.50
Total		400	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 disclosed predominant (67.5%) of youths enrol in N-power teach programme, followed N- Power Agric (13%), N-power Tax (10%), N -power Health (9%) and others (0.5%) which is the least. This shows the most common N-power programme that the youths enrol in the study area is N-power teach. This could be due to their educational achievement ascertained by the youth that enable them to join.

Problems of N-Power Programme

Table 4: Problems Associated with the Programme

S/No	Items	SA	A	U	SD	D	Mean	Remark
13	The programme lacks thorough supervision	212	112	28	28	20	4.17	Accepted
14	Delay in payment of stipulated allowance	212	88	32	32	40	4.03	Accepted
15	Poor coordination by the committee	200	112	180	28	40	5.21	Accepted
16	Lack of incentive to volunteers	200	140	28	12	20	4.22	Accepted
17	Attitudes of some volunteer	228	112	32	20	8	4.33	Accepted
	Some of the programmes as volunteers for agric are ideal.	220	144	16	8	16	4.39	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In Table 4 it shows the N-power scheme is associated with problems such as lacks thorough supervision, delay in payment of stipulated allowance, poor coordination by the committee, lack of incentive to volunteers, attitudes of some volunteer, lack of specified field of work especially teachers some work in primary schools while others works in secondary schools and some of the programmes as volunteers for agric are ideal as opined by the respondents where all the items were accepted. This clearly indicated that N-Power

scheme faces tremendous challenges as disclosed by the respondents in the study area.

Solutions to the Problems of N-Power Programme

Table 5: Solutions to the problems of N-Power

S/No	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1	Regular supervision	307	32.45
2	Payment of allowances in time	234	24.73
3	Each Local Government Area should have office access to the Headquarter office at Abuja for complain	386	40.80
4	Provision of permanent and pensionable employment to volunteer that complete the duration of two years	389	41.12
5	Others	16	1.69
Total		946*	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021 *Multiple Responses

Table 5 disclosed that provision of permanent and pensionable employment to volunteer that complete the duration of two years, each Local Government Area should have office access to the Headquarter at Abuja for complain, regular supervision, Payment of allowances in time among others opined by 41.12%, 40.80%, 32.45%, 24.73% and 1.69% of the respondents respectively as the key factors to be used to curtail such challenges face by the scheme and its volunteers.

IV. SUMMARY

This study investigated youth perception of N-Power Social Investment Programme for empowerment. The study stems from the fact that unemployment among Nigerian youth is alarming based on the available statistics. Politicians, scholars and the governments have consistently echoed the consequences of youth unemployment in the country. The absence of youth empowerment in Nigeria usually have resulted to unwanted vices such as youth militancy, Communal crises, the deadly Boko Haram in Northern part of Nigeria upsetting the seemingly peaceful and stable political situation, incessant violent political thuggery, arm banditry and trafficking.

Though, past and present governments have introduced different youth empowerment programme, but the reality on ground shows that youth unemployment in the country is in the increase. Therefore, the government introduced N-Power as one of the Social Investment Programmes for empowerment aimed at reducing youth unemployment in the country.

Generally, the findings of this study shows that predominantly most of the respondents age ranges between 18-30 years were engage in the programme more than those whose age range between 31-50 years which only constitutes small percentage. This clearly shows that the volunteers are at youthful age and are active. It also shows that majority of the respondents are male while, female constitutes small percentage this signifies that male dominated in participating in the N- power programmes. This may be due to the population of male is higher than that of female in the study area. The finding also shows that most of the respondents are single while, married once constitutes small per cent this indicates most of the volunteers are single as they cannot afford to marry with condition of unemployment

The findings also shows that youth are motivated to enrolled in N-Power because they are unemployed, seeks for source of Income, derivation of monetary benefit, self-development and lack of job opportunities. The study found that N-Power social intervention programme in Hong has enhanced youth skill acquisition and development such as help youth in saving their income thereby making youth to engage in business and even help some youth to have their own personal house through contribution and also self-sustenance Therefore, the programme has immensely empowered the youth.

V. CONCLUSION

The study set out to assess the impact of N-power scheme programme meant to provide employment for the teaming unemployed youth in Nigeria. The study found that previous youth empowerment strategies adopted were not very effective for job creation and youth empowerment. The major generalization that could be inferred from this study is that Nigerian Youth participating in the N-Power scheme finds the scheme effective in empowering them, reducing unemployment, poverty, crime and enhancing their skills.

However, N-Power has some challenges that are limiting some beneficiaries from benefiting fully from the scheme. The issue of insufficient information and poor management has resulted to the non-payment of some beneficiaries. Also, beneficiaries lament of the short life span of the programme; which is just two years.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, I recommend the following :-

- i. Skills acquisition/development centers should be adequately funded, equipped and be given the due attention by government at all levels in order to serve as a hub for massive employment generation.
- ii. Government should ramp up pressures on state governments to absorb some of the volunteers who happened to be in good records.

- iii. Local Government Areas should have office access to the National investment Headquarters at Abuja for complain, and for regular supervision.
- iv. Government should be given incentive to both staff and volunteer of the programme. And also encourage women participation in to the programme.

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