

**ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION. A CASE STUDY OF
N-POWER PROGRAMME OF PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI (2018-
2022)**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been read and approved by the undersigned on behalf of the Department of Public Administration, Institute of Finance and Management (IFMS), Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin as meeting the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Public Administration.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for His guidance, wisdom, and strength throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of Poverty has been a huge social pressure to Nigeria. Pre- and post-independence records have always suggested that majority of the people live below poverty line, prompting various governments of Nigeria to introduce a number of schemes and programmes in an attempt to ameliorate the situation. The apparent failure of the various efforts and the resultant citizen discontent led to the creation, in 2001 of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in the various states of the federation with the core mandate of poverty eradication using its four schemes: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), and National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). This study evaluated the activities of NAPEP and its impact towards poverty eradication under President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration of 2018-2022. For the Methodology of this research, both Primary and Secondary data were utilized. Primary data were collected through questionnaires. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were administered. While secondary data were collected from relevant texts, journal articles, official reports, newspapers and magazines. The quantitative data generated were presented and analyzed using table of frequency distribution and simple percentage. The study therefore recommends that the authorities concerned should promote rural development through N-Power programmes. Also, government at all levels should reactivate moribund industries and enterprises and expand the horizon of N-Power programmes in that direction.

Keywords: *poverty, unemployment, N-power, Youth, Development, Eradiation, Programme*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Poverty has been in existence for a long time but relative to time, place and individual because what a particular society consider as poverty may not be necessary it in another society. But in a general sense Island poverty is that which exist in the midst of plenty such as Nigeria according to the World Bank (2006). However, since Poverty is considered by many individuals as lack of access to basic needs/goods it is essentially economic or consumption-oriented. Thus, the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society, incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services. Basic goods as used here include; food, shelter, water, healthcare, access to productive resources including education, working skill and tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions.

The problems of youth unemployment and youth poverty has attracted a lot of global concern and has become key discuss in shaping sub-national, national, regional, continental economic and social investment policies. In fact, the twin problems of youth unemployment and youth poverty have assumed dangerous proportions around the world, with developing nations mostly affected. With a rapidly growing global youth population, the prevalence of youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth has become unacceptable. The Independent Evaluation Group (2013) reinforced this view that youth employment is a major concern for many countries because of the negative effects on the

welfare of young people, and its adverse effects on economic performance and social stability.

Successive Nigerian governments have had to contend with this hydra-headed challenge which appears to have high casualties across age and gender brackets. The magnitude of poverty in Nigeria is worrisome. The UNDP has classified the country as 141 poorest nations on human development index. In its report, Nigeria is considered one of the 20 poorest countries in the world with 70% of the population classified as poor and 54.4% living in absolute poverty (UNDP HDI, 2006; Ekugo 2006).

To tackle this problem, successive government has implemented a range of measures, including NAPEP, SURE-P and currently the N-power scheme. The NSIP initiative addresses a range of social problems such as curbing poverty, unemployment and increasing school enrolment. The N-power initiative which is the job creation component of the policy aims at reducing poverty and unemployment and it is targeted at the Nigerian youths.

The N-power is one of the social intervention schemes initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. It was designed to help provide job creation and empowerment for young Nigerians to acquire and develop life-long skills to become solution providers in their communities and to become players in the domestic and global markets. N-Power aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. N-Power is an employability and enhancement program of the Federal Government of Nigeria, aimed at imbibing the learn-

work entrepreneurship culture in youth between the ages of 18-35. Applications are done online to create a level playing field for everyone and determine which applicants' details would enable selection and direct payment through the bank accounts and BVN submitted. The modular programs under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Federal Government of Nigeria [FGN], 2018).

One needs to meet the minimum requirements (if any) for the respective programme. Generally, selection is based: On one's expression of a genuine interest in whichever area you decide; passing the relevant tests; willingness to push beyond comfort zone; and ability to show a flair to develop all the skills you need to be the best you can be (Aderonmu, 2017). While there are fixed requirements along the way, we will be relying on you to take ownership of the process and take the lead in shaping your route, by making the most of the training that you will receive. For the purposes of N-Power, Graduate means any post-tertiary qualification including an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or as may be specified by the programme (Obadan, 2000). The key N-Power Programmes include: N-Power Agro, N-Power Tax, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Health, NPower Teach, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software.

By introducing N-Power, the Federal Government provides a structure not only for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development; but also utilizing a large volunteer workforce to fix some of the problems in public services and stimulating larger

economy. Besides, N-Power is also a tool for diversifying the economy. Particularly, N-Power Agro provides not only the means to apply knowledge and science to our farming practices, but also to gather data for effective planning. With the Non-Graduate category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build), young Nigerians are trained to build a knowledge economy equipped with world-class skills and certification to become relevant in the domestic and global markets. N-Power also focuses on providing our non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood (FGN, 2018).

N-Power is a scheme under the National Social Investments Programme of the Nigerian Federal Government geared towards graduates job creation; poverty alleviation and empowerment initiatives through volunteering services. The programme is available for graduate and non-graduates. It is aimed at inculcating in Nigerian youths the learn-work entrepreneurship culture between the ages of 18-35 (FGN 2018). According to (2018), the goals of the programme include; reducing the rate of caber unemployment in the country, facilitating the transfer of entrepreneurial, technical skills and employability ability and bringing solution to active public service and government diversification policy. 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 research is limited to the N–Power scheme with a view of assessing its impact

in ameliorating youth unemployment, mitigating the high incidence of poverty and skill acquisition respectively”.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It has been known in Nigeria that every government embarks on one form of poverty reduction strategy or the other. However, what has remained unanswered is the extent to which these Programme have impacted on the poor – the target population. Recent studies on the subject poverty and its reduction agencies as well as Programme indicate that considerable gap exists between the target objective – alleviating or eradicating poverty – and achievement. It seems that the efforts of various governments are ineffective and therefore not much has been done to actualize the benefits. For poverty reduction agencies, their results do not seem to justify the huge financial allocations to them. Poor people’s perceptions of formal poverty reduction institutions are largely that of ineffectiveness and irrelevance in their lives as government poverty reduction activities contribute little in their struggles to survive and rarely help them to escape poverty.

Today, our streets are filled with men, women and even children fronting for their parents in begging for money and even food. The poor who operate behind the scene have taken to armed robbery, gambling, 419 and cheating in their offices. Everybody seems poor. Many families cannot afford one good meal in a day. Children are withdrawn from schools. Families resort to herbal medicine for treatment each time a member of the family falls sick. There is massive unemployment from peasant to university graduates. There is corruption even in high places. There are religious riots and ethnic clashes to contend with

trouble here and there. This study is aimed at assessing prospects and challenges in the implementation of N-Power on poverty reduction among beneficiaries in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the effect of the N-power scheme on Youth Empowerment in randomized manner. The specific objectives are to;

1. To examine the effect of the N-Power scheme on youth's self-reliance in Nigeria.
2. To assess the role of the N-Power scheme in skills acquisition among the youths in Nigeria
3. To identify the impact of the N-Power scheme on the income status of youths in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions;

1. How has the N-power scheme affected the income status of youths in Nigeria?
2. How does N-Power help in skill acquisition among its youths in Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

1. There is significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and the income status of beneficiaries in Nigeria.
2. There is significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and self-reliance of the beneficiaries in Nigeria.
3. There is significant relationship in income generation amongst the youths through N-Power programme.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1. This research effort stands as a guild toward pin-pointing realities that governs N-power as an empowerment programme in Nigeria.
2. It will stand as point of reference and predictions to students and scholars in the field politics and governance on the issue of poverty alleviation
3. Significantly this study can as well help in fore-casting and predicting series of upcoming poverty alleviation programmes that will critically reduce the rate of unemployment in our domain.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study will be restricted in scope of analysis to the geographical entity known as Nigeria as a unit of analysis for the purpose of convenience and clarity.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

- a) Time:** The time frame allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study.
- b) Institutional Policy in term of Privacy:** Limited access to the selected sample makes it difficult to get all the necessary and required information concerning the programme (N-Power)
- c) Availability of Research Material:** The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Youth:

Youth is the time of life between childhood and adulthood (maturity). Youths are also regarded as those persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years(Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

Poverty

Poverty has been defined as the inability to attain a minimum standard of living (World Development Report, 1990).

Unemployment

This is a situation in which a willing and able body man is unable to find a suitable job suit his daily requirements

N-power

N-power is a National Social Investment Programme initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed specifically to create job for teeming population of unemployed youth in Nigeria through human capital development. It is a Programme is a community-sourced solution to the nation's under-developed public services like education, healthcare, and civic engagement (NPower, 2017).

Empowerment

Ekanem (2004) views empowerment as a means to extend the benefits of socioeconomic and political development in the economy to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas.

Self-Reliance:

This is the ability to do things and make decisions by yourself, without needing other people to help you. It is been self-sustain and independence of others. There exists a significant impact between empowerment scheme and the self-reliant of beneficiaries.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Preamble

This chapter has attempted to review relevant literature in the course of this research. The essence of literature review is to ascertain and utilize relevant and major work of scholars in an area of study and also provide indications about existing gaps that needed to be filled. In this regard, this review has tried to look at the major developments in the area of poverty with particular reference to: concepts and measurement, theories, causes and effects. The review enabled the work to be properly focused and tailored towards complementing existing body of knowledge.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

The concept of poverty like any other concept in social sciences has not lent credence to a universal acceptable definition. A major remains the fact that the manner at which an individual person or state may be poor or short of social necessity differs. But for the sake of this research, effort shall be made reckoning youth poverty in Nigeria in respect of the available literatures.

Generally, the available statistics on the incidence of poverty in Nigeria revealed certain characteristics. This includes the fact that a majority of the poor in Nigeria reside in the rural areas; that squalid livelihood is more prevalent in the Northern side of Nigeria than the South; and lastly, that though there exist disparity in the poverty rates between North and South/ rural and urban areas, the urban slums dwellers are the most deprived group in

the country. In summary, poverty in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors which includes unstable political history, government corruption and mismanagement, lack of coherent policies formulation, implementation evaluation, over dependent on oil, poor infrastructures, among others. Over the years, government has reacted strongly to the rising poverty trends in the country.

2.2. Concept of Poverty

Lawal and Hassan (2012) noted that the concept of poverty remains controversial both conceptually and in practical measurement. Poverty has been in existence for a long time but relative to time, place and individual because what a particular society consider as poverty may not be necessary in another society. But in a general sense poverty is that which exist in the midst of plenty such as Nigeria according to the World Bank (2006). However, since Poverty is considered by many individuals as lack of access to basic needs/goods it is essentially economic or consumption-oriented. Thus, the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society, incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services. Basic goods as used here include; food, shelter, water, healthcare, access to productive resources including education, working skill and tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions.

Ravallion and Bidami (1994:5) refer to poverty as a lack of command over basic consumption needs that is, a situation of inadequate level of consumption, giving rise to insufficient food, clothing and shelter. Poverty has also been defined as the inability to

attain a minimum standard of living (World Development Report, 1990). Okoro and Bassey (2018) stated that several poverty reduction approaches have been formulated and implemented all with the objective or attempts geared towards arresting the beleaguered poverty situation in the country. From 1999 till date, some of the poverty reduction measures include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), SURE- P, N-SIP. Despite the litanies of programmes on poverty reduction in Nigeria, it has been observed that the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is exacerbating rather than ameliorated and this waved hand to re-strategizing (Kayode, Arome & Anyio, 2016).

The magnitude of poverty in Nigeria is worrisome, UNDP (United Nations Development programme) has classified the country as 141 poorest nations on human development index. In its report, Nigeria is considered one of the 20 poorest countries in the world with 70% of the population classified as poor and 54.4% living in absolute poverty (UNDPHDI, 2006; Ekugo 2006). Recent studies have revealed that the various campaigns against poverty are yet to record any meaningful success. The UNDP report (2010) covering a period of 2000-2008 indicates that 64.4% of Nigerians live below poverty line, while the country occupies 142nd position out of 147 countries in human development index.

Available evidence shows that poverty has been a serious problem confronting Nigeria since independence in 1960. The poverty level in the country was about 15%, and by 1980 it had reached 28.1%. In 1985, the poverty level was 46.3%, but dropped to 42.7% in 1992. As Ugo and Ukpere (2009) have noted, with the termination of the democratic process by the military government, the poverty level rose to 43.6% in 1995. A year after, about 65%

of the population was below poverty line, that is, about 67.1 million Nigerians. In 1999 and 2000, UN Development Report revealed that Nigeria had degenerated further as 87% of the population was below poverty line and the country rated 154th on the world's Marginal Poverty Index out of 172 countries (Ekpu 2004).

According to the Statistician General of the Federation, Dr. Yemi Kale, poverty in Nigeria is rising with almost 100 million people living on less than \$1 a day despite strong growth (Subair, Vanguard, February 13:2012). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) boss said that the percentage of Nigerians living in absolute poverty – those who can afford only the bare essentials of food, shelter and clothing – rose to 60.9 per cent in 2010, compared with 54.7 percent in 2004.

2.3 Concept of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment can be said to be a situation where too many young people are chasing too few jobs. The severity ranges from one system to another, depending on their individual approaches to ensure job availability. Patterson et al (2006) describes youth unemployment as a situation where people who are well and capable of working are unable to find suitable and paid employment. According to the United Nations youth unemployment is the unemployment of young people between 15 and 24 years old (en.wikipedia). Eme and Eme (2012) agree that there is a link among unemployment rates, poverty levels and welfare challenges in an economy.

Umo (2012:3) observed that poverty and high unemployment rates among youths have grown to be endemic universal problems that deserved considerable attention and

resources. According to him youth unemployment accounted for 75percent of the 202million unemployed people in the world. In his opinion there is need for adequate involvement and empowerment of the youths in other to get an economy on a firm footing. Umo advocated job creation in both the private and public sectors. According to him for the economy to grow government and its agencies must encourage private initiative and innovation and increase the attractiveness of the private sector to the youths.

2.4. Concept of Empowerment

Per-Anders (2008) defined empowerment as an increase in the person's control over the determinants of their quality of life, through (necessarily) an increase in either health (e.g., through self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy), or knowledge (self-knowledge, consciousness-raising, skills development, competence), or freedom (negative or positive). According to the World Bank Report of 1975, empowerment is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people while disempowered includes the rural poor.

Ekanem (2004) views empowerment as a means to extend the benefits of socioeconomic and political development in the economy to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas.

2.5. Concept of Youth Empowerment

According to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), 2006 – 2015, developed through wide-consultation with key stakeholders in all regions of the Commonwealth, youth empowerment is to empower, engage and create value so that

young women and men can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families and countries and to their own fulfillment. Enyioko (2006) also identified the following dimensions of youth empowerment: Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of these actions.

Report on Work and Productivity, 2018). Many young people are not productive and have been reduced to small traders and smugglers; in many cases, the growing phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and child labor can be attributed to poverty and youth unemployment. For some who may find a way out of the country to work in other countries, their departure has contributed to depleting the quality of the country's human capital resources (Oviawe, 2015). This study is a wake-up call to the relevant authorities to consider improving the Sure-P and N-Power programs to address the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. There are so many programmes and schemes organized by different regimes in Nigeria such as during the regime of President Osegun Aremu Obasanjo initiated the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) which was established in 2010 as the primary agency of the federal government to eradicate extreme hunger, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

In 2011, the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme - (SURE -P) was birthed by the government led by president Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan's social intervention scheme aimed at providing employments for unemployed graduates through

internship programs. The Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari “designed and implemented the current National Social Investments Programme (N-SIP) as strategy for combating poverty and unemployment. The N-SIP scheme was created to enable citizens exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment through capacity building, investment and direct financial support (Abin, 2018). 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), (Abin, 2018).

Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the directions of others. The enabling conditions according to Aderonmu (2017) fall into four broad categories: an economic and social base, political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information and skills; and a positive value system”.

2.6. Concept of N-Power

N-Power is an integrative program of the National Social Investment Program of the Federal Government of Nigeria that provides a platform where most Nigerians can gain employment, access skills acquisition and development. At this time, however, the initial modular programs in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18

and 35. It is a paid volunteering program for a two-year duration. In the specifications of the program, graduates are required to undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power beneficiaries were entitled to computer devices that contained information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-power is a National Social Investment Programme initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed specifically to create job for teeming population of unemployed youth in Nigeria through human capital development. In essence, one of the objectives of the programme was to boost the human capital of the Nigerian labour force (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). The human capital boost appears to be in area of youth employment which was intended to be addressed through youth empowerment. Youth empowerment was to be ensured through skill acquisition and development of youth in critical sectors such as education, health and agriculture. The core objective of the programme seem to hinge on skills acquisition and development of the Nigerian youth, both educated and non-educated, who had minimal hope of securing jobs, even at the minimum level needed to survive or raise a family (Okoro and Bassey, 2018; N-Power Information Guide 2017). In addition, the programme was designed to fill the unemployment gaps in the teaching profession in primary schools and to assist in taking basic education to children in remote areas, especially the marginalized communities. Furthermore, the programme was also created to provide manpower to primary health care

centers in communities that appear to be under staffed while also providing manpower in the area of agricultural business (Okoro and Bassey, 2018).

2.7. Specializations in N-Power as a Developmental Programme

The program is divided into the following categories;

- a. Education:** There is a growing dearth of qualified teachers in Nigerian public schools. The N-Power Teach programme helps fill this gap to improve the quality of basic education in Nigerian basic schools. According to Akujuru & Enyioko (2019), volunteers are deployed as teacher assistants in primary schools where they engage with students to foster relationships and build confidence while supporting their educational development. In addition, these volunteers bring education solutions to underserved communities, helping the most marginalized members of their communities to get access to the education they need to participate in the modern workforce. As part of this programme volunteers help implement STEM programmes in primary schools with a particular focus on computer science, engineering, applied mathematics, and other tech information knowledge (Bennel, 2017).
- b. Volunteer Corps:** The establishment of N-Power Volunteer Corps by the Buhari Government is to provide young graduates of tertiary institutions a two-year paid programme of temporary employment. The successful graduates are saddled with the responsibilities of addressing public service challenges in their immediate communities. These services are in the forms of providing teaching, instructional

and advisory solutions in four important areas of economic development (Odey & Sambe, 2019).

- c. Health:** The N-Power Health Programme deploys volunteers to help improve and provide preventive health care in their communities to vulnerable members of the society, including pregnant women and children. By increasing access to basic health services in underserved communities, the N-Power Health Programme serves the double purpose of increasing the overall well-being of millions of citizens and supporting the development of healthcare infrastructure with community-based solutions (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2019).
- d. Agriculture:** N-Power Agro is the programme designed to provide services to farmers across the country. Part of the focus is to support the development of efficient farming techniques and practices to maximize productivity in the agricultural sector. The other side of the programme provides technological and institutional development to farming communities in rural areas, places where the public service sector is particularly underrepresented. By creating a stronger link between rural and urban communities and centralizing the knowledge base while incorporating local knowledge and practices, the NPower Agro programme is built to link the diverse communities of Nigeria while promoting a modern economy (Odey & Sambe, 2019).

2.7.2. Qualifications Required for the Graduate's Category

Qualifications needed for the graduate's category are as follow:

The N-Power Tech is open to all graduates from tertiary institutions include colleges of education, polytechnics, and equivalents. While N-power Health post qualification is in any of the following courses; Community Health Extension, Nursing, Midwifery, Medical Laboratory Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Medical Records, Health Education, Environmental Health Technology, Microbiology, Biochemistry and Agricultural Science, JCHEW, SCHEW, NABTEB, Ordinary National Diploma, B. Technology, B.Sc., and other allied disciplines. And that of N-Power Agro post-tertiary qualifications are Higher National Diploma, Ordinary National Diploma in Nutrition, Agricultural Sciences, Crop Sciences, Food Science and Technology, and other related disciplines.

2.8. Missions and Visions of N-power

Missions and Visions of the program are:

- a. To develop a qualitative system for the transfer of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills.
- b. To create an ecosystem of solutions for ailing public services and government diversification policies.
- d. To develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy.
- c. To intervene and directly improve the livelihood of a critical mass of young unemployed Nigerians.

2.8.2. Dimensions of Empowerment Scheme

a. Empowerment Scheme and income status of Beneficiaries

Income status refers to the position of a person or household concerning a low income line. It is the economic status or net value of a person or household.

There is a great relationship between empowerment schemes and income status of beneficiaries. According to Ifatimehin, Balami, and Sidi (2016), the Keke Napep scheme has improved the income status of its beneficiaries in Gombe. Even Ohize and Adamu (2009) said, the Youth Empowerment Scheme practiced in Niger State has tremendously contributed to the upliftment of the economic status of the participating youths in Niger state.

b. Empowerment Scheme and Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is the ability to do things and make decisions by yourself, without needing other people to help you. It is been self-sustain and independence of others. There exists a significant impact between empowerment scheme and the self-reliant of beneficiaries.

Self-reliance is the social and economic ability of an individual, household or community to meet basic needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health, and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a program approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern (PoC), and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian or external assistance. Livelihood programming should assist refugees in becoming self-reliant.

c. Empowerment Scheme and Skills Acquisition

Skills acquisition has been described by many as the recipe for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for employment, thereby creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation while instilling self- sufficiency and reliance (Isaac, 2011).

2.8.3. Synergy between Empowerment and Development

This 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). 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.

2.9. Empirical Literature

Many studies have been conducted on the aspect of skills acquisition and unemployment. Bashir, John, and Mbagi, (2017) investigated on Skills Acquisition Programmes (TSAP) and its implications on job creation. They submit that unemployment is a national catastrophe that can be tackled with sustained efforts geared towards providing young people with requisite knowledge, skills and conducive environment to develop. These could be achieved through the Technical Skills Acquisition Programmes which is capable of providing means of livelihood, help in poverty reduction and mass employment of youth and promotes entrepreneurship.

They recommend provision of legal framework and national policy for combating unemployment, adequate budgetary provision for Technical Education, political and economic stability and access to flexible financial services. Ekong and Ekong (2016) in their study investigated how unemployment problem is tackled through skills acquisition by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in many states. They used both secondary and primary data from secondary sources for the period 1987 to 2012. They found that positive link exists between skills acquisition by NDE and unemployment reduction in many states even though without daunting challenges. They recommend more spread of NDE training centres to all the Local Government Areas in the state for more benefits to be realized.

Amadi and Abdullah (2012), in their study on perception of capacity building among youths involved in vocational skills development reported a greater percentage of the sampled youth reported high and moderate levels of their capacity building: implying that the vocational skills acquisition and development was a successful scheme. They however recommended that the constraints that impede the success of the scheme be addressed by policy makers to make the outcome of the skills training more successful. Ogunlela (2012) explore the impact of National Directorate of Employment Programmes on graduate employment and unemployment in Kaduna State of Nigeria, using both secondary data as well as oral interview. He found out that the impact of NDE on graduate employment in Kaduna State has not been particularly positive and much still needs to be done. Only modest achievement in the area of generation of graduate employment has so far been

recorded, calling for a thorough reappraisal of its programme in order to overhaul the system.

Ogundele, Akingbade, and Akinlabi (2012) reported that the contribution of Skill Acquisition and training on unemployment reduction through youth empowerment and social welfare service improvement will be much significant if encouraged at all the level in the state especially at local and community level. This position approximate Ohize and Muhammed (2009), who opined that nongovernment organization, can play a vital role in Training and Skill Acquisition. Such can be attributed to Youth Empowerment Scheme which has been noted to be proactive in enhancing economic uplift of the youths by providing them with vocational skills and counselling services aimed at reorienting their attitudes towards self and social development (Ekong and Ekong, 2016).

On Non-formal Education Programmes and Poverty Reduction among Young Adults in Southern District of Cross River State, Akpama et al. (2011) observed that acquisition of vocational skills lead to a significant reduction of poverty among young adults who participated on skills acquisition programmes. Entrepreneurial studies are interdisciplinary training that focuses on the tools needed to start a new business or vocation. They recommend that since Nigeria is fast becoming a predominantly youthful society with high rate of unemployment, it requires training the youth in entrepreneurship skills in technical vocational education and training to tackle unemployment which has reached alarming proportions.

Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) in their study on entrepreneurial education and training for job creation remarked that when youths are empowered through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, there is the possibility that they will use the skills to create new avenues for wealth. Empowering the youth to set up businesses involves proper acquisition of skills through education and training. Such acquisition opens one's eyes to forecast business opportunities using appropriate entrepreneurship skills.

In their study on strategies to combat youth unemployment and marginalization in Anglophone Africa, Kanyenze, Mhone, and Sparreboom (2000) emphasises that trainings in vocational and technical skills will reduce youth marginalization in Anglophone Africa. In the survey of six Anglophone countries of Africa including Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, they found that these countries have instituted various programmes of skills acquisition but unemployment is still on the rise. They, therefore suggest that youth unemployment should not be seen as an incidental or special anomaly of an otherwise employment friendly environment, but as a manifestation of the overall structural problem that affects adults as well as youths. Therefore, the point in contention is that policies aimed at enhancing the welfare and employability of youths should preferably be undertaken in the broader context of policies aimed at enhancing the overall labor absorption capacity of African economies.

Ezeji and Okorie (1999) while stressing the importance of skills acquisition in national growth, emphatically contended that ‘‘Nigeria’s social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials,

machineries and equipment”. It is only with skilled men that materials can be harnessed, manipulated and transformed into products. With quality skills acquisition programmes, countries like America, Britain, Germany and Japan have rehabilitated drug addicts, school dropouts and several destitute who eventually contributed meaningfully to the economy and the development of high volume of productivity in their countries.

2.9.2. Theoretical Framework

The study will review the following theory, Elite theory in relation to the topic under discussion.

Elite theory

The study is anchored on elite theory, which is of the view that political power resides in a few in the society while majority are led. Elites, according to the proponents of the theory Gaetano (1939), Michels (1942) have features as wealth, intelligence, special skills, moral character, and hosts of others. The theory holds the view that the society is made of two classes the higher stratum, the elite which is further divided into the ruling class or governing and non-governing elite, and a lower stratum or non-elite. The connection of this theory to explaining effect of (N-power) on income generation and welfare of beneficiaries who happens to be youths essentially lies within the context of the role of elites in policy making.

Policy makers in their own rights, are elites. Incidentally, they often tend to reflect their values and preferences as they formulate policies. Corroborating this view, Ayinde (2008), averred that “it is only a matter of coincidence if the policy decisions of the elite reflect the

interests of the masses”, as they sometime do. For instance in Nigeria, the N-power Scheme to a reasonable extent has reflected interests of the beneficiaries but to a reasonable extent again has not been able to ameliorate poverty off the shore of our dear nation’s administrative coast. And that is the significant reason why our research and analysis shall be conducted in order to ascertain the effectiveness on this program on poverty situation of the youths.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The central concern of this chapter is the analysis of the instruments and methodology employed in the course of data collection for this research work. Such instrument would enable an assessment of the reliability and validity of data as well as the inference drawn from them. In lieu of this, questionnaire will drafted out for 340 respondents selected as sample in respect of people that has benefited or might be benefiting under the N-power initiative. Based on this understanding, this chapter is composed of research design, study area; method of data collection, population of the study; sample size and sampling plan and method of data analysis respectively.

3.2 Research Design

A research design according to Somarita (1997) is seen as plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain a reply or answer to a research question and to control the variance the choice of a research design in any investigation is determined by the purpose of the study and type and nature of problem to be investigated. The study uses a descriptive survey. The rationale behind using this survey method is to enable the researcher report things, situations the way they are. That is why Cohen and Manion (1980) maintained that historical research is concerned with conditions that exist, practice that prevails in the past, beliefs, point of view and attitude. It also states that historical or descriptive research design specifically deals with who and what to be done. A common

feature of an historical descriptive research is to assess people attitude, or opinion towards situations. In this chapter, we would highlight the various techniques and methods used for the collection and analysis.

Descriptive research is concern with the truth of investigation of the contemporary issued and event i.e. it is a set of gather data analysis summarize and interpreted together with certain line of thought for the pursuit of specific purpose or study. Issues discussed include the population of the study, sampling technique, the method of data presentation and analysis.

3.3 Area of the Study

This research work is based on “An assessment of the role of N-power program in poverty alleviation. a case study of Muhammadu Buhari’s Administration (2019-2022). The researcher restricted this work to Nigerian youths to affect a valid and authentic result.

3.4 Population of the Study

Silver Throne (2002) defined population as the totality of any group, persons, objects which is defined by some attributes i.e. population of any group of beings. The researcher has focused attention on, and chosen at approved topic of study. For the purpose of this study, a randomized sample population of 340 shall be cast.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Stratified sampling was adopted for this research work. The purpose of stratification of the population into subgroups or subsets is due to the heterogeneous nature of the entire population. The sample of this study is drawn from the population of the study, i.e. some

academicians and professionals in the field of Public administration, politician and economist who are familiar with the revenue allocation formula. During the cause of distributing the questionnaire, the population (which is the universal set to objective) were given questionnaire, the sampling were randomly selected from each subpopulation were proved very useful; for comparison the random sampling was employed in because, here every member of the parent population has an equal probability of been selected, this means in effect that no member is deliberately omitted except by chance.

Ndagi (1999) is of the opinion that sample is the limited number of elements selected from a population that will be the representative of that population. There are various opinions by different scholars as to the issue of determination of samples.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (0.05)^2}$$

Where:

“n” = sample size

“N” = population size

“e” = level of precision (0.05)

$$N = \frac{360}{1 + 360 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{360}{1 + 360 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{360}{1 + 360 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1 + 0.9}{1.9} \times 360 = 189 \quad n \approx 190$$

3.6 Sources of Data Collection

Data collection of this study was through primary and secondary Data. In the primary data collection, the researcher used written questionnaires together information from respondents. This technique is preferred to the observation and experimental technique because of the difficulties inherent in them, matching the importance of human resources for economic growth and development. In secondary data collection techniques, focused on extensive and length review of periodicals, journals, textbooks, interact and other publications gotten from and on youth poverty cases in Nigeria. These articles are assumed to be more relevant to this research.

3.7 Instrument used for Data Collection

Owing to the area covered by the study, questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. Data was also collected from publication of education, resources centre, Industrial Training Fund, National Directorate of Employment, newspaper, magazine, home records available at the selected organization and existing literatures in the field of human resources.

3.8 Validity of the Instrument

Osondu (2004) defined validity as the procedure adopted in ensuring that the instrument used had measured what it was designed to measure. It is important to establish and report one form of validity or the other for the instrument so as to enhance the strength of the work. The researcher employed the pilot test techniques in order to establish the validity of the instrument. That is to say the validity of the questionnaire is traced to the reaction gotten from the people that responded.

3.9 Reliability of the Instrument

Osondu (2004) said that reliability concerns the consistency with which an instrument measures whatever it measures. The test and retest process is used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the study can be traced to the response and result given by the 20 (twenty) persons and supportive literature by community development and importance. Test-retest is a process of retesting an already analyzed data in order to examine the reliability of the data or research.

3.10 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The method of data presentation and analysis employed by the research was through the use of simple percentages due to the fact that the research is a quantitative one. Data analysis formula used:
$$\frac{N}{100} \times 100 = \text{percentage}$$
 where N = Number of respondents

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analysis.

4.2 Data analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 190 (one hundred and ninety) questionnaires were distributed and 180 (one hundred and eighty) questionnaires were appropriately filled and returned.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Gender Analysis

Gender Analysis	Frequency	Percentage
Female	86	48%
Male	94	52%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 1 above represents the breakdown of gender analysis of respondents. A total of 180 respondents were surveyed, comprising 94 Male, representing 48% and 86 Females representing 52%.

Table 2: Age Groupings/Range

Age Groupings/Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-22	36	20%
23-27	68	38%
28-31	45	25%
32-35	31	17%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **Table 2**, the age range of respondents is presented here with those respondents between ages 18-22 constituting 20%, those between 23-27 years 38%, 28-31 respondents 25%, and ages 32-35 totaling 17%.

Table 3: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	59	32.5%
Married	112	62.5%
Married but living apart	9	5%
Divorced	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 3 represents the breakdown of marital status of respondents, with single respondents representing 59 or 32.5%, married stood at 112 with 62.5%, 9 respondents were separated with 5%, and no respondents claimed to be divorced.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Non – Graduate	77	42.5%
Graduate	103	57.5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 4 represents the two categories of N-Power programme of both non-graduate and graduate category that constitute the main focus of this research undertaking. A total of 77 non-graduates representing 42.5% were surveyed while 103 tertiary institutions graduates representing 57.5% were surveyed.

Table 5: Location

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	125	69.4%
Rural	55	30.6%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In the above **Table 4.5** it is shown that 125 or 69.4% of our respondents are from the city/urban area while 55 or 30.6% of the respondents are from rural area. This clarifies that most of our respondents are from urban area where most of government activities are visible and can easily be quantified in line with the topic under discussion.

APPENDIX B

EMPIRICAL DATA OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The presentations of the findings of the questionnaires are presented here.

Table 6: It was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45	25%
Agree	77	43%
Undecided	22	12%
Disagree	27	15%
Strongly Disagree	9	5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In the analysis from **Table 6** above, 25% strongly agree that it was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power; whilst 43% agreed. 12% of respondents were undecided. 15% disagreed with the statement, while 5% strongly disagreed. The result suggests that it was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power.

Table 7: I offered inducement in cash/kind to an N-Power official before I was enlisted on N-Power programme

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	0	0%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	180	100%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **table 7** above, all respondents, representing 100% submitted that they do not offer any form of inducement either cash or kind to any N-Power official before they were enlisted

on the programme. This thus suggests the level of transparency of the N-Power programme in selecting its beneficiaries.

Table 8: I offered cash tips or kind to N-Power official to facilitate funds disbursement to me on a regular basis

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	0	0%
Undecided	13	7.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	167	92.5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Form the analysis from **Table 8** above, a total of 92.5% strongly disagree to offering cash tips or kind to any N-Power official to facilitate funds disbursement to them. 7.5% were undecided. This is an indication of level of transparency and ease of administration of the N-Power programme.

Table 9: N-Power has contributed positively to youth employment

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	95	52.5%
Agree	72	40%
Undecided	4	2.5%
Disagree	9	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **Table 9** above, a total of 95 respondents, representing 52.5% strongly agreed that N-Power had contributed positively to youth employment; whilst 40% agreed. 2.5% were undecided and 5% disagreed. In aggregate, the results suggest that N-Power has contributed positively to youth employment.

Table 10: N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship by providing them with capital financing and appropriate training

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	63	35%
Agree	90	50%
Undecided	9	5%
Disagree	18	10%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

From the analysis in **Table 10** above, 35% confirmed and strongly agreed that N-Power contributes to enhancing youth entrepreneurship with capital provision and appropriate training. 50% respondents also agreed, while 5% were undecided. 10% respondents disagreed, whilst no respondents strongly disagreed. The analysis thus suggests that majority of respondents are of the opinion that N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship.

Table 11: N-Power supports youths to start their own business and become self-reliant

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	30%
Agree	108	60%
Undecided	5	2.5%
Disagree	13	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Analysis of respondents in **Table 11** above suggests that N-Power support the youths to start their own business and become self-reliant, as 30% strongly agreed, and 60% agreed. Five respondent were undecided representing 2.5% and 7.5% disagreed. It can therefore be deduced that N-Power support the youths to start their own business and become self-reliant.

Table 12: Youths are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements and attachments to public corporations

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	95	52.5%
Agree	58	32.5%
Undecided	18	10%
Disagree	9	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **table 12** above, 52.5% of respondents strongly agreed that youths are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements in public corporations, while 32.5% also agreed in a similar vein. 10% respondents were undecided and 5% respondents disagreed. No respondent strongly disagreed. This is an indication that N- power is facilitating youth employment with public corporations and government agencies.

Table 13: N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	30%
Agree	86	47.5%
Undecided	9	5%
Disagree	13	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	18	10%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

From the analysis from **Table 13** above, 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment, while 47.5% agreed also agreed. 5% were undecided while 7.5% disagreed. A total of 10% respondents strongly disagreed. Overall, the results indicated that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment.

Table 14: N-Power is making youth to be economically empowered

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	22.5%
Agree	63	35%
Undecided	27	15%
Disagree	31	17.5%
Strongly Disagree	18	10%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Analysis from **Table 14** above suggest that 22.5% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power is empowering the youths economically, whilst 35% also were also in agreement. 15% of respondents were undecided, 17.5% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed.

Table 15: N-Power is positively impacting the economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	77	42.5%
Agree	67	37.5%
Undecided	18	10%
Disagree	14	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **table 15** above, 42.5 % or respondents and 37.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that N-Power is positively impacting the economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries, whilst 10% were undecided. Also, 7.5% of respondents and 2.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Nevertheless, the results from the analysis suggest that N-Power is positively impacting both economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries.

Table 16: N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	30%
Agree	86	47.5%
Undecided	4	2.5%
Disagree	23	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	13	7.5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Table 16 shows that 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries whilst 47.5% agreed. 2.5% respondents were undecided, 12.5% disagreed, and 7.5% strongly disagreed. This results thus suggests that majority of respondents are of the opinion that N-Power is contributing to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries.

Table 17: N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45	25%
Agree	95	52.5%
Undecided	13	7.5%
Disagree	23	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **Table 17** above, 25% strongly agreed that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries, whilst 52.5% also agreed. 3.5% were undecided, 12.5% disagreed, and

2.5% strongly disagreed. The results indicate that majority of respondents held the view that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries.

Table 18: Youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	63	35%
Agree	108	60%
Undecided	9	5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **Table 18** above, 35% of respondents strongly agreed that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power, while 60% also agreed. 5% of respondents were undecided. No respondent neither disagreed nor strongly disagreed. Hence, the results suggest that majority of respondents share the common opinion that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power.

Table 19: N-Power should be broadened and sustained as a critical social investment programme

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	30%
Agree	95	52.5%
Undecided	13	7.5%
Disagree	9	5%
Strongly Disagree	9	5%
Total	180	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

In **Table 19** above, 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power should be broadened and sustained as a social investment programme, whilst 52.5% also agreed. 7.5% of respondents were undecided, and 5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Overall, the results suggest that majority of respondents canvassed for the broadening and sustenance of N-Power as a critical social investment programme.

4.3 Analysis and Discussion of Empirical Findings

Empirical research is based on observed and measured events that derive its knowledge from actual experience rather than from a particular theory. The main rationale for empirical findings has become increasingly important in today's world. Therefore, the need to validate the hypothesis and contribute to existing human knowledge in particular fields cannot be overemphasized.

As seen in table 9, those who strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power programme has contributed positively to youth employment are 52.5% and 40% respectively. This

indicates that majority of the N-Power beneficiaries affirmed that the N-Power programme has had positive impact on youth employment. A similar occurrence was shown in table 12 where 52.5% strongly-agreed and 32.5% agreed that youth beneficiaries of the N-Power are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements and attachments to public institutions. This was further justified in table 13 where 30% strongly-agreed and 47.5% agreed that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment situations. In table 18, 35% and 60% of respondents' strongly-agreed and agreed that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power programme.

In table 16, 30% and 47.5% respectively strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries. Table 17 portrayed the percentage of N-Power beneficiaries who affirmed that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries, where 25% of respondents strongly-agreed and 52.5% agreed with the statement. Also, as seen in table 10, 35% strongly-agreed and 50% of the respondents agreed that N-Power has contributed to enhancing youth entrepreneurship by providing them with appropriate training and capital for them to start their own businesses. Similarly in table 11, 30% and 60% of respondents strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power is supporting youths to start their own business and become self-reliant.

Responses from Question 20 and 21 shall be further utilized in drafting conclusion and recommendations in the next chapter respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary, conclusions drawn and policy recommendations proposed for this research.

5.2 Summary

This chapter encompasses the summary as well as conclusion, and recommendations. This study has carefully examined the relevant theories and concepts of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth, and social exclusion, as it affects the youths. However, adequate emphasis has also been made to highlight the problems of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, and its socioeconomic and security implications. Globally, youth unemployment and poverty has become very disturbing, reference to Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria in particular.

In recognition of this, the UN World Youth Report (2013) affirmed that developing countries are home to 87 per cent of the world's youth population who are often under-employed and are working in the informal economy under poor conditions. Therefore, UN World Youth Report (2013) stated that the challenge is for these countries to create new employment opportunities for young people and also improve the quality of jobs available to them.

Therefore, to underscore and explain these circumstances, the theories of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion were considered. Studies by the

International Labour Office (2003, 41) defines unemployment to comprise “all persons within the age limits specified for measuring the economically active population, who during the reference period were without work are not in paid employment or self-employment as specified by the international definition of employment, currently available for work either for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and seeking work and had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment”. Similarly, Emeka (2011, 361) described “youth unemployment as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any”;

Also, Tella et al., (2019, 4) established a relationship between poverty and unemployment, arguing that “poverty reduction depends on the strength of each link between poverty and employment”.

Tella et al., (2019, 4) further stated that “the hallmark of poverty in Nigeria is the high level of unemployment”, thus establishing a casual relationship between poverty and unemployment. In the same vein, Tella et al., (2019, 2) described inclusive growth as “a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them”. Ali & Zhuang (2007, 10) defines inclusive growth to mean “growth with equal opportunities, with focus on creating opportunities and making the opportunities accessible to all; as growth is therefore inclusive when it allows all members of a society to participate in and contribute to the growth process on an equal basis regardless of their

individual circumstances”. Whilst Brian (1998, 5) argues that social exclusion “is no more than a relabeling of what used to be called poverty”.

However, in view of the foregoing, this research also explains the importance of social investment programme. Saleh (2019, 205) describes the aim of social investment programs as “granting youths the power to perform their duties and create change, teaching them about their ability to control their lives and change society to inculcate a sense of value”. Therefore, social investment programme is an important tool for addressing the persistent problems of youth unemployment and poverty, as well as inclusive growth and social exclusion.

Social investment programme provides social support to its beneficiaries, enabling them to participate in normal course of life. One key social investment programme deployed by the government in addressing the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion is the N-Power programme. The N-Power programme was conceived by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a social scheme to cover both graduates and non-graduate youths of between the age brackets of 18-35 years.

Thus, the outcome of the research established that N-Power programme has been fairly successful in addressing youth unemployment and poverty under President Mohammadu Buhari’s democratic administration in Nigeria. Beneficiaries of the N-Power who participated in the survey affirmed that they have gained employment opportunities from the N-Power programme. Also, beneficiaries who participated in the focus group discussion also affirmed that they have experienced positive impact of the N-Power

programme on poverty reduction amongst under the democratic administration of President Mohammadu Buhari in Nigeria.

5.3 Conclusion

Governments hold the responsibility and social contract to ensure that it provides employment opportunities for the youths, and that the scourge of youth poverty is drastically reduced. Furthermore, government also has a responsibility of ensuring inclusive growth and eliminating the social exclusion amongst the youths. Therefore, the importance of addressing unemployment and poverty incidences amongst the nation's youths cannot be over-emphasized. Government can significantly contribute to reducing youth unemployment and youth poverty by creating the right policy environment or framework for private capital to flourish, stimulate employment creation by way of direct employment into public institutions, public agencies and corporations to absorb the large number of unemployed youths.

Similarly, government also has a duty to fight poverty amongst its youth population, making sure that every youth have the benefit of living above the poverty line. Also, an integral part of the social contract and objectives of every government is to enhance the standard of living of its citizenry by creating decent employment opportunities, fostering inclusive growth, eliminate social exclusion, thus reducing poverty levels amongst its citizenry; particularly the youths.

Forming the major pillars of every society, the youths on the other hand have a significant role to play in ensuring national development through the use of their skills and energy,

defense of the nation's territorial integrity, and channeling their creativity and innovativeness to economic development. These can only be done where there are employment opportunities for the youths, as well as suitable social investment programmes that will contribute to youth innovativeness and development.

In this light, the design of an appropriate and sustainable social investment programme that is inclusive and creates opportunities for growth, and enhances the well-being of the youths cannot be overemphasized. In essence, the human development objective should form the basis of existence of any government. Hence, formulation and implementation of an effective social investment programmes should underscore the basis of any government activities or policies, particularly in an environment of high incidences of youth unemployment and poverty as obtainable in Nigeria.

However, in order to achieve these objectives, governments must regularly come up with public policies that are specifically designed to meet the aspirations of the youths'. Achieving these noble objectives entails not only the formulation of policies but also the effective implementation of such formulated policies by the public bureaucracy. Thus, one key social investment programme employed by the government is the N-Power programme.

Results from the questionnaire survey administered on 200 N-Power beneficiaries, as well as the focus group discussions held with N-Power beneficiaries revealed that the N-Power programme have made significant impact in creating employment opportunities to its beneficiaries. Furthermore, results from the questionnaire survey administered on N-Power

beneficiaries and the focus group discussions held with N-Power beneficiaries also revealed that the N-Power programme has made positive impacts in the reduction of poverty amongst its beneficiaries, thus contributing to improving their standard of living, as well as the economic and socio-economic conditions.

5.4 Policy Recommendations

The participatory method employed in this research enabled the researcher to obtain first hand, very relevant opinions of the researchers, who made far-reaching recommendations to the N-Power programme. With the help of a second focus group discussion towards the end of the research work, the researcher was able to obtain very critical opinions of the youth regarding changes they seek to be made to the N-Power programme, as well as other policy changes that they seek. Lynne (2006) opines that the outcomes of development research have the potential to provide information that might underpin changes, hence the need for the policy recommendations discussed here. However, opinions vary across board between the graduates and non- graduates beneficiaries of the N-Power. The recommendations so obtained are highlighted below:

- (i.) Beneficiaries suggested that N-Power should increase monthly funding as the (Thirty Thousand Naira Only) N30, 000 was grossly inadequate to meet their daily economic obligations.
- (ii.) Beneficiaries also call for massive open employment of youths on a regular basis (biannually) into government Ministries, Parastatals, Departments, Public Bureau, and Corporations as against the common practice of hand-picking sons, daughters, and wards

of politicians, political office holders, and politically connected individuals. They advocated for a transparent, fair, and equitable employment opportunities practice across Federal, State and Local Government levels where the children of poor and needy can compete on a level playing field with children of political office holders and politically connected persons.

(iii.) Beneficiaries of N-Power also call for the abolishment of contract jobs in both Nigerian owned and foreign-owned companies operating in Nigeria, except short-term consultancy and research employments. They specifically mentioned that almost half of banking jobs, oil & gas, telecommunication and other sectors has embraced contract employment, a situation that puts working Nigerian youths in the trap of “working poor”. This, they believe, would create more opportunities to absorb more unemployed youths.

(iv.) Beneficiaries of N-Power also call for urgent and strict restrictions on foreign workers daily influx into the country, citing uncontrollable numbers of Chinese, Indians, Philippines, and Togolese taking over maritime, construction, and technical jobs in Nigeria. They argued that foreigners are now getting the few lucrative jobs available in the country, rendering they Nigerians unemployed and poor.

(v.) Beneficiaries also call for the establishment of a comprehensive and broad-based social security system in the country in form of cash disbursement to all youths as obtained in Western and developed world irrespective of social and educational class, political and ethnic class, as a way of reducing youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth, thereby reducing incentive for crime and other criminal activities common with youths.

(vi.) Both graduates and non-graduates of the N-Power advocated for quick fixing of power/electricity problems in Nigeria, attributing the large scale of youth unemployment and poverty to electricity crises across the country. Most of the beneficiaries specifically mentioned to be formerly employed in some indigenous industries which had collapsed due to irregular and epileptic power supply which has led to near state of industrial collapse across Nigeria. They also called on the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to expedite action on ensuring Nigeria's self-sufficiency in petroleum refining. One young entrepreneur particularly said he was erstwhile doing his personal business but could not sustain the high cost of petroleum price hence he closed shop. He is now enlisted as a beneficiary on the N-Power.

(vii.) Also, some graduate beneficiaries of the N-Power programme called for the reduction in length of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme they are statutorily required to undertake after graduation, arguing that keeping them out of employment for 12 months with no employability skills added to their pre-employment life does not make them employable according to some employers. They also called for the NYSC programme to be skill-oriented to equip them with practical business and entrepreneurship skills, along with technological skills and global trend skills which they can acquire and use to effect changes in their personal lives, and community and ultimately escape unemployment and poverty.

(viii.) Furthermore, some graduates also called for the reduction in years of academic periods in Nigeria. They advocated that current academic programmes of four years should

be reduced to three years while current five year programmes should be reduced to four years in line with European standards. They cited this as it will help them get into labour market faster. Whilst also calling for an overhaul of national tertiary education programmes across the country.

(ix.) Non-Graduates beneficiaries of N-Power advocated for a national curriculum on vocational education to make it standardized and free where they can learn and acquire hands-on skills and compete favorably with migrant workers who they accused of taking over technical jobs available in Nigeria. In the same vein, they advocate for proper funding of technical institutions across the country and enhancement of their relevance and capacities by giving them statutory relevance enjoyed by the tertiary institutions. They also wanted Federal Government, State Governments and Local Governments across the country to mandate and enforce their employments to both local and foreign contractors executing public contracts, as this would go a long way in reducing their unemployment and poverty.

(x.) Both graduate and non-graduate beneficiaries of N-Power criticized the top-down approach of the Federal Government in addressing youth unemployment and poverty and argued for them to be part and parcel of any future youths oriented social programmes in order to have their voices represented in programme planning, design and implementation. They crave for a decentralized approach to social investment programmes where States and Local Governments would be supported and partnered with by the Federal Government in addressing youth unemployment and poverty, arguing that prevalence of unemployment

and poverty differs across states and regions of the country and it requires the collective effort of both the Federal, State and Local government.

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