



Impact of N-Power Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) on Youth Unemployment in Toro Local Government Area of Bauchi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of N-Power social investment programme (N-SIP) on unemployed youth in Toro Local Government Area of Bauchi State. The objectives of the study included determining the impact of N-power on the capacity building of youths, and the challenges in the implementation of the programme. This population of this study was four thousand three hundred fifty (4,350) beneficiaries of N-power while 200 N-power beneficiaries were sampled, using a simple random sampling technique. A survey research design was adopted for the study. An Impact of N-Power Programme Questionnaires (INPQ) was used for data collection. The data collection instrument was validated by experts in Research Measurement and Evaluation while the reliability index obtained after the pilot study was 0.81. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested using a t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that N-POWER has significantly led to more job creation; the possibility for a post-N-POWER employment for the beneficiaries is high; and youths, through the N- Power, have acquired specialized skill (s) for capacity development. The findings also revealed that the challenges facing the implementation of the N-power are: Poor organization of the verification exercise; low remunerative offered to beneficiaries; disproportionate between the resident and deployment locations of some beneficiaries; and poor supervision of beneficiaries. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the remuneration of beneficiaries should be reviewed upwards to boost the level of job motivation and work productivity. Also, the government should seek private-sector partnerships for financing and training of the beneficiaries.

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INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is a global challenge faced by most countries, though it is worse in the developing countries of the world. Unemployment is a situation where persons aged 15-64 years that should make up the labor force, are available for work but are without work (ILO in National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2018). Unemployed persons comprise those that absolutely do nothing and

those that work for less than 20 hours per week. Unemployment among the graduate and non-graduate manpower has become one of the most topical and thorny issues in contemporary Nigeria. The typical Nigerian unemployment situation is abnormal. Between year 2005 and 2019, unemployment rate increased from 11.9 % to 23.1 % (Akinyemi & Ofem, 2012) (which accounts for 20.9 million unemployed persons in the 3rd

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quarter (Q3) of 2018; NBS, 2018). Also, the conspicuous problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

The total youth (working population below 34 years) unemployment rate is 29.7 % (which is tantamount to 13.1 million youths). Youths, upon graduation, take an average of 2-3 years for job - seeking. This can be corroborated with the fact that 79.6 percent of unemployed adults have been so for 3 years or less. According to Akinyemi (2012), 619,097 graduates were churned out, as at year 2005, from Nigerian tertiary institutions. In addition to that, unemployment rate of 29.8 % by educational grouping was highest for persons with tertiary school certificates (NBS, 2018). The confidence level of an educated youth being gainfully employed in 12 months upon graduation is low. Out of 9.7 million people who did absolutely nothing, 90.1 % are looking for their first job. Also, streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily should have found gainful. The self-employed graduates are in quandary as deplorable infrastructure and paltry funding those stunts or at times stifles their businesses growth, ostensibly, makes entrepreneurship an insidious alternative to job-seeking.

In Nigeria, various policies have been initiated and implemented by the government, at Federal, State and Local levels, in a bid to correct certain perceived negligence of youth unemployment. Of all the government policies instituted to address unemployment among youths, the N - power social investment program (NSIP) initiated by the immediate past administration of President Muhammad Buhari is efficacious. However, there is a need to assess the level of impact of the NSIP on youth unemployment and to evaluate the gap (s) between its expected outcome and its current performance in Nigeria and, limited by the scope of this study, in Toro Local Government Area, Bauchi state.

The NSIP is a post-tertiary engagement initiative for Nigerians jobless youths between 18 and 35 years. It is a paid volunteering 2years program that is coordinated by office of the Vice President. The program aims at providing jobless

youths with the requisite skills and experience needed for them to transcend from unemployment to employment and from job - seeking to job - creating. The beneficiaries undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities.

The program comprises different tracks namely: N-power Teach, N - power Health, N - power Tech, N - power Agro, N - power Build, N - power Creative and N - power Tax. The beneficiaries are paid a monthly stipend of N30, 000 during their period of engagement. In 2016, the Federal Government engaged 200,000 N - power beneficiaries; in 2018, the Federal Government enlisted an additional 300,000 (Premium Times, November, 20th 2018). There has been no detailed study aimed at assessing the level of success or impact of the program.

Hence, this study examined the impact of the NSIP on youth unemployment in Toro local government area of Bauchi State. Global audit and tax advisory firm, KPMG, has projected that Nigeria's unemployment rate is expected to rise to 40.6% as compared to 2022's 37.7%.

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the N-power assessment report revealed that in 2017, 200.000 youths were engaged in then-power scheme, and it crashed youth unemployment from 23.6 percent to 16.6percent and in 2018 another 300,000 was engaged thus further reducing unemployment from 32.45 to 29-.75 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Akujuru & Enyoko (2019) corroborating this assertion states that beyond the N- power benefits, youths also have the N-build and N-tech of the N-SIP programme to enhance their capacities. Furthermore, the implication of the report of the (500,000) five hundred thousand beneficiaries of the N-power is that youths from Toro Local Government are integral parts of the stock of beneficiaries and therefore characteristics of delinquency and other social ills among the Toro youths should be reasonably in check or greatly reduced.

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). NSIP generally aimed at increasing the poor and vulnerable house hold with income/livelihood by providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shock (Abin, 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 program is available for graduate and non-graduates (Okeke & Ngonnadu, 2012).

The goals of the program include; reducing the rate of 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 paper is limited to the N-Power scheme with a view to assessing its impact in ameliorating youth unemployment, mitigating the high incidence of poverty and skill acquisition respectively.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

N-POWER aims at addressing the endemic nature of unemployment among the Nigerian youths, the ever - growing army of jobless youths who are both frustrated and desperate poses a major threat to development. Largely, unemployed youths tend to be agents of anti - social activities such as political thuggery, communal crisis (conflicts), armed robbery,

terrorism, prostitution, internet fraud, ritual killings, insurgency, kidnapping, drug and human trafficking, syndicates impersonation, document racketeering, among other vices. Despite the effort made by Government to reduce the rate of unemployment in Nigeria through social investment programmes such as National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and the current N-POWER programme that is exiting in the country.

Since its inception in 2016, the programme has successfully engaged over 500,000 youths in making them employed, but still the problem of unemployment keeps on increasing in the country (Ojong & Iji, 2019). It is from this background that the present study intends to investigate the Impact of N-POWER Programme on Youth Unemployment in Toro Local Government Area. There have been numerous coherent studies aimed at assessing the methods adopted for implementing the N-POWER program as well as at evaluating the extent to which the program has achieved its set goal of reducing unemployment and at analyzing the possible challenges militating against its smooth implementation. Based on the information gathered by the researcher from the N-power desk officer in Toro Local Government, and the internet search, there was none of such research that was carried out in Toro local Government Area. The study therefore intends to answer the following questions; how has N-power reduced Youth's unemployment in Toro Local Government Area; what are the impact of the N-power programme on the capacity building of the youths in Toro Local Government Area and what are the challenges faced in the implementation of the N-power programme in Toro Local Government Area, Bauchi state.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of the N-power social investment program on youth unemployment in Toro Local

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Government Area. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out how N-POWER programme has reduced unemployment in Toro Local Government Area.
2. Find out the impact of the N-power programme on the capacity building of the youth in Toro Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The researcher raises the following research questions to address the research problem.

1. How has N-power reduced youth unemployment?
2. What is the impact of the N-power programme on the capacity building of the youth in Toro Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of the three categories of N-Power program on the rating on how the programme has reduced youths' unemployment in Toro Local Government Area
2. There is no significant relationship between the means rating of male and female beneficiaries on the capacity building of the youths in Toro Local Government Area.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Keynesian Theory of Employment. It was propounded by John Maynard Keynes in 1936. The theory is referred to as the General Theory. It is based on the premise that there is a positive relationship between investment and employment. The theory is founded on the principle of effective demand. Effective demand consists of desired consumption and desired investment. The desired consumption (with a certain level of real income) follows a

psychological law that when aggregate real income is increased aggregate consumption is increased, but not by so much as income (Liu, 2012). The Keynesian theory posit that employment is what determines the real wage, unlike the classical theory which believe real wage is what determines employment (Eze, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the Descriptive Survey Research Design. This design was employed because it is out to gather quantitative data among the population under study, also, descriptive research design helps to collect opinions from the respondents where the responses are described in detail to satisfy curiosity of readers. The population of the study comprises the entire N-power beneficiaries in Toro Local Government Area of Bauchi State which includes four thousand three hundred and fifty (4,350) beneficiaries of N-power. The sample of the study consist of 200 N-power beneficiaries which was derive using stratified sampling techniques. The sample random sampling was adopted to select the respondents for the study.

A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire titled "Impact of N-power Program Questionnaire (INPQ) was used to get the desired information from the respondents. In order to ensure the validity of the instrument used for data collection, content validity was established. The face and content validity was ascertained by giving the designed questionnaire (INPQ) Two (2) experts of Research, Measurement and Evaluation Educational foundations, University of Jos. Were given the objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses and expert evaluation form for validation before distributing them to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the Cronbach s' Alpha Coefficient approach. It is being used because it is more generalized method of estimating internal consistency which was developed by Cronbach in 1951.

A trial test was carried out outside the sampled area. The instruments were administered on twenty respondents while the data collected analyzed using Cronbach's Alfa method to

establish the reliability of the instruments where a high value of reliability index was generated. The reliability of the instrument was 0.81 indexed which qualified the instrument for administration.

Research Question One:

How has N-power reduced youth unemployment?

Table 1: An analysis on the effects of N- Power on Youth Unemployment

S / N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Crit	X	Decision
1.	NPOWER has significantly led to creation of more jobs	200	100	50	25	25	2.50	3.13	Accepted
2.	NPOWER has significantly reduced the rate of youth's unemployment	200	75	70	15	40	2.50	2.90	Accepted
3.	NPOWER is a great opportunity for fresh graduates to save money for personal business	200	10	10	80	100	2.50	1.65	Rejected
4.	There is high chance of selection of the applicants of the NPOWER. 2	200	80	80	20	20	2.50	3.40	Accepted
5.	NPOWER beneficiaries are entitled to receive credit device facility under the scheme	200	100	50	30	20	2.50	3.15	Accepted
6.	NPOWER is an avenue for unemployed youths to be engaged with a job	200	105	55	20	20	2.50	3.23	Accepted
7.	NPOWER is an avenue for unemployed youths to have job experience related to their career	200	20	20	55	105	2.50	1.78	Rejected

Table 1. Reveals the result on The Effects of N - power on the reduction of youth un employment in Toro Local Government Area, Bauchi state. from the Questionnaire items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 the result shows that N- Power has significantly led to Creation of more Jobs, N - Power has Significantly reduced the rate of youth's un employment, there is high chance of selection of applicant of the N - Power. N - power

beneficiaries are Entitled to receive Credit device facilities under the Scheme and N- Power Program an avenue for unemployed youth to be Engaged with jobs, had their mean Scores above 2.50.

Research Question Two:

What are the impacts of the N-POWER on the capacity building of the youth?

Table 2: An analysis on the Impacts of the N-POWER on the Capacity Building of Youths

S/N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Crit	X	Decision
1	N-POWER has significantly improved youths ' professional skills	200	80	80	20	20	2.50	3.10	Accepted

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S/N	Item	N	SA	A	D	SD	Crit	X	Decision
2	Youths have acquired specialized skills via the NPOWER for the improvement of their capacity	200	90	60	30	20	2.50	3.10	Accepted
3	The NPOWER develops character and competence of the beneficiaries	200	20	20	100	50	2.50	1.95	Rejected
4	NPOWER involves necessary physiological and psychological training.	200	05	25	50	120	2.50	1.58	Rejected
5	NPOWER helps to equip youths with relevant technical skills to become innovators	200	130	55	05	10	2.50	3.53	Accepted

Table 2 Revealed the result on the impact of the N-power on the capacity building of youth in Toro Local government Bauchi state. From the questionnaire items 1,2,3,4, and 5, the result shows that N-power has significantly improve youth's professional skills, youth have acquired specialized skills via the program for the improvement of their capacity, the program develops character and competence, the program involves necessary physiological and psychological training and it helps to equip youths

with relevant technical skills to become innovators had their mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Hypotheses one

There is no significant difference between the mean score of the three categories of N-Power program on the rating on how the programme has reduced youths' unemployment in Toro Local Government Area.

Hypotheses One

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.083	1	0.083	0.165	0.685	Not sig.
Within Groups	99.917	198	0.505			
Total	100.000	199				

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists between the three categories of N-power programme on rating on how the programme has reduced youths' unemployment in Toro Local Government Area. Table 10 shows that F (0.165), $p > 0.05$, since 0.685 is greater than 0.05 level of

significance the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that there is no significant differences between the mean score of the three categories of N-Power program on the rating on how the programme has reduced youths' unemployment in Toro Local Government Area.

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Hypotheses Two:

There is no significant relationship

between the means rating of male and female beneficiaries on the capacity building of the youths

Hypotheses Two

Variance	N	Mean (x)	Std. Deviation	Df	t - test	Sig.	Decision
Male	120	64.43	17.41	198	-1.089	0.277	Not sig.
Female	80	67.05	15.56				

Analysis of independent t – test was conducted to determine the significant relationship between the mean rating of male and female beneficiaries on the capacity building of the youth. P – value is 0.277 greater than the SPSS default level of significance 0.05. This imply the acceptance of null hypotheses and conclude that there is no significant relationship between the means rating of male and female beneficiaries on the capacity building of the youth in Toro Local Government Area.

CONCLUSION

Social investment program on reduction of youth unemployment has significantly led to great improvement in reduction of unemployment in Nigeria. From the findings, the study concluded that the effects of the N – power created more jobs. Also, the impacts of the NSIP on capacity building of the youth significantly improved youths professional skills, youths have acquired specialization through the N-Power for the improvement of their capacity. In addition to this, the program has equipped youths with relevant technical skills to become innovators. Lastly, the study concluded that the challenges facing the implementation of N-Power are the poor organization of verification exercises and paltry remuneration for beneficiaries reduces job motivation level non - proximate distances from residence to work exacerbates stress and is cost and time ineffective thereby, reducing work productivity, and poor supervision of beneficiaries lead to weak work performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the following findings, it is hereby recommended that:

1. The monthly allowance being paid to beneficiaries should be reviewed for an increment in order to increase the level of job motivation among the beneficiaries particularly, youths.
2. The N-Power should be totally supported, and expanded for continued promotion of employable skills and leadership training aimed at empowering youth for self-employment (or may be entrepreneurship) or securing a gainful job, so as not only banish poverty and hunger but also to minimize or expunge crime.

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