



Artikel

Assessment Of N-Power Programme On Beneficiaries' Economic Life In Gombe, Nigeria

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Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai kontribusi program N-Power terhadap kehidupan ekonomi penerima manfaat di Gombe, Nigeria. Tepatnya, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kategori penerima manfaat N-Power, sejauh mana pengaruhnya terhadap kehidupan ekonomi mereka dan hambatan program N-power di Gombe. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei. Rumus Yamane untuk menentukan ukuran sampel digunakan untuk memilih 400 orang untuk penelitian. Teknik stratified random sampling diadopsi, dimana seluruh populasi sasaran dikelompokkan ke dalam strata untuk mencerminkan penerima N-teach, sekolah penerima dan pejabat pemerintah. Kuesioner digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data, sedangkan wawancara informan kunci digunakan untuk melengkapi kuesioner. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini menggunakan tabel, gambar dan persentase untuk analisis data. Studi ini menemukan bahwa penerima manfaat program N-Power sebagian besar terdiri dari non-lulusan yang terdiri dari lulusan sekolah menengah dan aspek akuisisi keterampilan lainnya diikuti oleh N-Teach, Health strand, N-Agro dan Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS).) untai masing-masing. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa N-Power telah meningkatkan standar kehidupan ekonomi penerima manfaat melalui pengentasan kemiskinan, keterampilan dalam bidang TIK, pemberdayaan keuangan, pengalaman kerja dan investasi dalam usaha skala kecil. Namun, terdapat kendala yang dihadapi oleh program tersebut antara lain keterlambatan pembayaran tunjangan, tunjangan yang belum dibayar, jarak ke tempat kerja dan kurangnya pengawasan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan pembayaran tunjangan yang cepat dan tepat waktu kepada penerima manfaat program oleh pemerintah federal, pemilahan masalah tunjangan yang belum dibayar tepat waktu, penempatan terdekat dengan tempat tinggal dan pendidikan guru untuk kategori N-Teach serta pengawasan yang tepat.

Kata Kunci: Penilaian, Penerima Manfaat, Kehidupan Ekonomi, Gombe-Nigeria, Program N-Power

Abstract: The purpose of the study was to assess the contribution of N-Power programme to beneficiaries' economic life in Gombe, Nigeria. Precisely, the objectives of the study were to identify the categories of N-Power beneficiaries, the extent of influence on their economic life and the impediments of the N-power programme in Gombe. This study utilized the survey design. Yamane's formula for determining sample size was used to select 400 persons for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted, where the entire target population was grouped into strata to reflect the beneficiaries of N-teach, beneficiary schools and the government officials. Questionnaires were used to collect data, while key informant interview was used to complement the questionnaire. Furthermore, the study used tables, figures and percentages for analysis of data. The study discovered that the beneficiaries of N-Power programme were mostly composed of non-graduates which comprised secondary school leavers and other skill acquisition aspects followed by the N-Teach, Health strand, N-Agro and Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) strands respectively. The study also found that N-Power has improved the standard of economic life of the beneficiaries through poverty reduction, proficiency skills in ICT, financial

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empowerment, on-the-job experience and investment in small scale businesses. However, there were impediments confronted by the programme which included delay in payment of allowance, unpaid allowances, distance to working places and lack of supervision. The study therefore, recommended prompt and timely payment of the stipends to beneficiaries of the programme by federal government, timely sorting of problems of unpaid allowances, posting nearest to place of residence and teacher education for N-Teach categories as well as proper supervision.

Key Words: Assessment, Beneficiaries, Economic Life, Gombe-Nigeria, N-Power Programme

1. Introduction

N-Power seeks to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. N-Power is the employability and enhancement programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed at absorbing the learn-work entrepreneurship culture in youth between the ages of 18 to 35 (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). Applications for enrolment on the programme are done online to create a level playing field for everyone and to determine which applicants' details would enable selection and direct payment through the bank accounts and Bank Verification Number (BVN) submitted. The linked programmes under N-Power will certify that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Federal Government of Nigeria [FGN], 2018). The programme was implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to address the challenges of unemployment and to alleviate poverty among youth (Obadan, 2017). N-power is linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, employment and social development arenas. The scheme is created to address the challenges of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. Hence, N-power is a government policy that is geared towards addressing social problems in education, health, agriculture, poverty and even unemployment at all levels of government i.e. Federal, State and Local Governments (Obadan, 2017).

The flexible programmes under N-power were designed to ensure that each participant learns and practises most of what is necessary to find or create work. The N-power Volunteer Corps involve a massive deployment of 500,000 trained graduates who will assist to improve the inadequacies in our public services such as education, health, technology and agriculture. Some of these graduates will also help in actualizing Nigeria's economic and strategic aspirations of achieving food security and self-sufficiency (N-power, 2016). By introducing N-Power, the Federal Government provides a platform 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 the larger economy. Besides, N-Power is also a tool for diversifying the economy (Aderonmu, 2017). 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).

The participants in the system cut across youths in the various local government areas in Nigeria. One among them is Gombe local government which is equally the capital the State where numerous youths are empowered (Andrew, 2019). Gombe local government is in the major city of Gombe State and the area council consists of district, wards and

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some villages. This study will, therefore, Assess N-Power Program on Beneficiaries' Economic Life in Gombe Local Government with reference to N-Teach.

Statement of the Research Problem

Nigeria has the highest rates of youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Odeh & Okoye (2014), rather than record remarkable progress in national socio-economic development due to her enormous wealth, Nigeria retrogressed to become the headquarters of poverty of the world (World Watch, 2018). It remains the only member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that is categorized among the world's poorest twenty countries (Gbenyi, 2013). This misery and frustration of the citizenry foisted a state of hopelessness and the majority of the youths have resorted to any means including crime to succeed in life.

To arrest these circumstances, there is the need for the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in their society in which they live in terms of self-employment and self-reliance. This is what N-Power programme is out to provide. Based on this premise, the study assesses the impact of N-Power Programmes on Beneficiaries' Economic Life in Gombe. The central objective of this study is to assess N-power programmes on beneficiaries' economic life in Gombe. Specifically, the study identifies the categories of N-Power beneficiaries and the extent of influence on their Economic life as well as its impediments in Gombe Local Government. The hypothesis formulated to aid the extension of the study was to see the relationship between respondents' perception of N-power programme and reduction in youth unemployment.

2. Method

-Power Programme

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment programme of the National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The N-Power programme has been designed for young Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35 (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). N-Power is the 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- and 35 (FGN, 2018).

N-power is a youth empowerment Scheme being implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to address the challenges of unemployment and to alleviate poverty among youths (Obadan, 2017). N-power is linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, employment and social development.

Economic Life

James (2020) defined Economic Life as the expected period of time during which an asset remains useful to the average owner. When an asset is no longer useful to its owner, then it is said to be past its economic life. Economic life also refers to the length of time an asset is expected to be useful to the owner. It is also called useful life or depreciable life. The measure of an asset's usefulness is how profitable it is to keep – in other words, how long an asset generates more income than it costs to maintain and operate (<https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/accounting/economic-life>). Hence, in the light of this study, economic life is operationalized as the length of time the N-Power programme could improve the living condition of the beneficiaries.

Empirical Review

Some authors have conducted research on N-Power programmes and its implication on Nigerians. For instance, Ifatimehin, Isyak & Omale (2020) examined the effects of the N-Power scheme on youth empowerment in Anyigba area of Kogi state, Nigeria. A sample size of 220 was obtained from a population of 491 using Taro Yamane's. Primary data for

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the study were sourced through questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained via web articles, journals, seminar reports, etc. Descriptive and inferential statistics as well as One-Way ANOVA analysis were used for the data analysis and test of hypothesis. The study found that N-Power scheme has to a very large extent empowered the youths in Anyigba in skills acquisition, financial status, self-reliance and productivity. The study recommended among others that the government should initiate more youth empowerment programs and provide mandatory training and workshops in the area of ICT and agriculture to enhance the beneficiaries' technical skills.

Again, Ayub & Gbaa (2020) conducted research in Oyo State to assess the impact of N-power scheme on the beneficiaries. Structural functionalism was the theoretical framework reviewed and adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting 250 N-power beneficiaries. The quantitative data collected through questionnaire, from 249 respondents, were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 25. The study found out that the programme has had great impacts on the socio-economic livelihoods of the beneficiaries including but not limited to ease of access to basic and daily needs, providing for families, ability to enroll for further studies, etc. The study further revealed that delay in payments, lack of continuity, *inter alia* were challenges posed to the programme. Thus, the study recommended continuity of the programme by successive governments, quick and consistent payments of monthly stipends, etc.

Similarly, Odey & Sambe (2019) undertook a research to assess the contribution of N-Power programme to youth empowerment in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study sought to determine the contribution of N-Power programme to youth empowerment in Cross River, to identify challenges facing the programme in ensuring empowerment of youth in the study area and to suggest ways of improving the N-Power programme for more effective youth empowerment in Nigeria. The study used cluster random sampling to select beneficiaries, while questionnaires were used to collect data. Key Informant Interview was also used to compliment Questionnaire. Percentages were employed for analysis of data. The study revealed that the beneficiaries of N-Power programme were mostly composed of N-Teach strand of the programme, followed by N-Health strand, N-Agro and Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) strands respectively. The study also found that N-Power contributed to empowerment of youth through poverty reduction, proficiency skills in ICT, financial empowerment, on the job experience and investment in small scale businesses. However, delay in payment of allowance, unpaid allowances, distance to working places and teacher training for most of N-Teach beneficiaries were challenges faced by the programme. The study therefore recommended prompt and timely payment of the stipends to beneficiaries of the programme by Federal government, timely sorting of problems of unpaid allowances, posting nearest to place of residence and teacher education for N-Teach categories.

Furthermore, Dauda, Adeyeye, Yakubu, Oni & Umar (2019) examined the impact of N-Power programmes on youth empowerment in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. Data for the study was obtained through cross sectional survey design. 225 respondent youths were sampled from 512 total number of N-Power beneficiaries in the metropolis. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the study participants. Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were used to assess the demographic data while inferential statistics such as Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze the hypothesis. The results of the study indicated no significant relationship between the N-power scheme and employment generation, poverty alleviation and skill acquisition. The study also found that; Job insecurity, non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery and corruption as well as poor monitoring were the major factors that are militating against the effectiveness of the N-Power programme. The study therefore recommends that the authorities concerned should expand the horizon of the programme to cover more unemployed graduates, turn the programme to tenure employment

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opportunities for the beneficiaries and provide grant to enterprising graduates to gainfully employ their latent skills.

Also, Akujuru & Enyioko (2019) examined the impact of N-Power programmes on poverty alleviation in Rivers State of Nigeria. Data for the study was elicited from a sample of 400 respondent youths via questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data for the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that N-Power Programmes' beneficiaries were mainly university and polytechnic graduates, while the major factors that affected the implementation of N-Power programmes were insufficient information, non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery and corruption, wrong bank verification number (BVN), overbearing hands of politicians in the programme etc. It is evident from the findings of the study that there is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State as well as empowerment of the youths in Rivers State. It is therefore, the recommendation of the study 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.

Gap in Literature

Most of the studies apart from being general involving states and the nation at large, lacked control experiment and rigorous statistical analyses. This makes the results unsuitable and unreliable for generalizations. It is against this background that the present study examines N-power programme on beneficiaries' economic life in selected schools, government workers as well as non-beneficiaries to serve as a control experiment; hence, increasing the reliability of the results.

Theoretical Review

This article is hinged on two theories thus: group theory and bureaucratic principle model. Theory can be referred to as approaches or models. According to Dlakwa (2008) a model is an abstract representation of the real world. It is sometimes used interchangeably with concepts like theoretical framework, principles, paradigm, school of thought etc. Theories are used to guide the study of public policy, to facilitate communication, and to suggest possible explanations for policy actions. Since this study is about understanding and analyzing government programme, it is important to explore some models and approaches of public policy developed by scholars. These include: Group Theory and Bureaucratic Politic Model.

It is epochal to note that most of these approaches were not developed specifically for analyzing N-Power; they can readily be bent to that purpose. They are useful to the extent with which they direct our attention to important political phenomena, help clarify and organize our thinking, and suggest explanations for political activity or public policy. The System Theory of public policy is discussed under the theoretical framework of this research as it is adopted for the study.

Group Theory

The group theory is also described as the pluralist theory which claims that the society is made up of different groups and divergent interests. According to the group theory, public policy is the product of the group struggle. 'What may be called public policy is the equilibrium reached in this (group) struggle at any given moment, and it represents a balance which the contending factions or groups constantly strive to weight in their favour' (Anderson, 1990). A group is defined as a collection of individuals who have some characteristics in common and interact with some frequency on the basis of their shared interest (Ikelegbe, 1996).

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Ikeanyibe (2013) described the group theory as a theory that presents policy as primarily reflecting the interest of the groups within society. The central premise of this model is that interaction among groups is a critical ingredient in making policy. Thus, public policy is a temporary point of compromise reached in the course of competition between "mosaics of numerous interest groups with cross-cutting membership" (Dlakwa, 2008). The ability of the groups that is favored at one point to sustain its gain depends on its power to counteract the power of other groups that would make efforts to tilt decisions to their favor. It is this type of competition between groups that determine pattern of allocation of societal resources (Enemuo, 1999). The locus of power in the society changes from time to time, depending from the group that succeeds in exerting its own supremacy over the others.

Bureaucratic Principle Model

The bureaucratic model is equivalent to the group model in the sense that the general principles of the two models are the same. However, while bureaucratic model operates at the organizational level, group model operates at society level. Allison (1971) observes that public policy is a product of internal politics of the various organizations (bureaucrats) engaged in formulating and implementing it. This implies that government behaviour, including policy choice is best understood as "an output of competitive bargaining games among players positioned hierarchically within the government" (Kickert, 1979). It is an outcome of compromise, coalition, competition and confusion among government officials who see different faces of an issue. The level of influence any group of the bureaucrats exerts on public policy has always depended on personality traits of the key officials, the level of control over critical resources especially funds by the unit, the number of formal positions occupied in the organization by key decision makers and the ability to use resources to get support from others.

The bureaucratic model shows how quite often public policy reflects the interest of specific categories of public servants. The content and orientation of the policy are thus determined by the type of squabbles between dominant interest group within the public service. When policies are forced onto the public servants against their wish they are worn to sabotage it during its course of implementation. However, if their interest is fully catered for, the implementation process would be smooth as long as the required resources are made available to the public officials. The significance of this model is that it shows how internal squabbles between different categories of public officials could thwart the effort of policy-makers in realizing their objectives.

Research Methodology

The study relies on both primary and secondary tools of data collection. The primary source of data used in this research includes questionnaires and interview; this is used in order to obtain first-hand information. This study utilized the survey design. Yamane's formula for determining sample size was used to select 400 persons for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted, where the entire target population was grouped into strata to reflect the beneficiaries of N-teach, beneficiary schools and the government officials. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select respondents whose responses assisted in the study. However, the sample was drawn using the simple random sampling technique. This is to allow a respondent to be handpicked from a pool of beneficiaries of the N-teach, the beneficiary schools and the Government officials from the selected Local Government Areas.

Questionnaires were distributed disproportionately to the beneficiaries of N-teach, beneficiary schools and staff representing the Government Officials (Table 1)

Table 1: Population and Sample Size of Respondents

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Target Population	No. of Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries/Government Officials	No. of Questionnaires
Gombe Beneficiaries	2486	383
Beneficiary School	32	5
Government Officials/N-Power Staff	15	2
Teachers' Service Commission Staff	20	3
LEA principal Staff from Gombe LGA	45	7
Total	2598	400

Table 1: Population and Sample Size of Respondents

3. Results and Discussion

This research combines content analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis respectively. The content analysis was used to analyze secondary data. The data obtained via primary sources were presented with the aid of the descriptive statistics. These include tables and percentages. In addition, Pearson Chi-square tool of analysis was also used for testing the independence of the responses on some other variables of interest. The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to run the relationship between the hypotheses at all levels of the analyses which include the estimation of the mean scores and the Pearson Chi-square coefficient.

Categories of N-Power Beneficiaries

Table 2 shows the categories of N-Power beneficiaries in Gombe which comprises non-graduates and skill acquisition (2486), beneficiary schools (32), N-power staff (15), Teachers Service Commission (20), and Local Education Authority (45). This implies that virtually all the categories of youths were involved in the programme. The above finding seems to justify the engagement and the objective for which the programme was created. The above finding appears to agree with Odey & Sambe (2019) study which found that N-Power contributed to empowerment of youth through poverty reduction, proficiency skills in ICT, financial empowerment, on-the-job experience and investment in small scale businesses among youths in Cross River State.

Table 2: Categories of Beneficiaries

Categories of Beneficiaries	Frequencies	Percentage
Schools	32	1.2
N-Power Staff	15	0.8
Teachers Service Commission Staff	20	1.0
Local Education Authority Staff	45	2.0
Others (Non-graduates, Skill-based, etc.)	2486	9.5
Total	2598	100

Source: Field Work, (2021)

N-Power Influence on Beneficiaries' Economic Life

Table 3 shows the extent of influence of the programme on the economic life of N-Power beneficiaries in Gombe. From the opinion of respondents 1.875 disagreed that N-Power programme has not provided employment opportunities to youths that were unemployed in Gombe. This could be due to the nature of its temporariness and duration as the person will still return back to his or her financial status after the scheme. While

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3.3475 agreed that N-Power scheme has not provided earning income for youths that has no means of livelihood probably because of its instability. In the same line, 3.4725 agreed that the N-Power scheme has not provided idle youth opportunities for productive engaging activities. Furthermore, 1.7925 disagreed that N-Power scheme is not an affective public policy in curbing youth unemployment in Gombe State. Although, 3.32 respondents agree that the N-Power scheme has improved the standard of living of beneficiaries in Gombe. The study coincided in view with Isyak & Omale (2020) on the effect of N-Power scheme on youth empowerment in Anyigba, Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. The study found that N-Power scheme has to a very large extent empowered the youths in Anyigba in skills acquisition, financial status, self-reliance and productivity among the youth.

Table 3: N-Power Influence on Beneficiaries' Economic Life

Statements	\bar{x}	Remarks
N-Power scheme has not provided employment opportunities to youth that were unemployed in Gombe State	1.875	Disagreed
N-Power scheme has not provided means of earning income for youths that had no means of livelihood	3.3475	Agreed
N-Power scheme has not provided idle youth opportunities for productive engagements/activities.	3.3875	Agreed
N-Power scheme is not an effective public policy in curbing youth unemployment in Gombe State.	1.7925	Disagreed
N-Power scheme has improved the standard of living of the beneficiaries in Gombe State	3.23	Agreed

Source: Field Work, (2021) Note: \bar{x} =Mean, $\bar{x} \geq 2.5$ = agreed, $\bar{x} < 2.5$ =disagreed

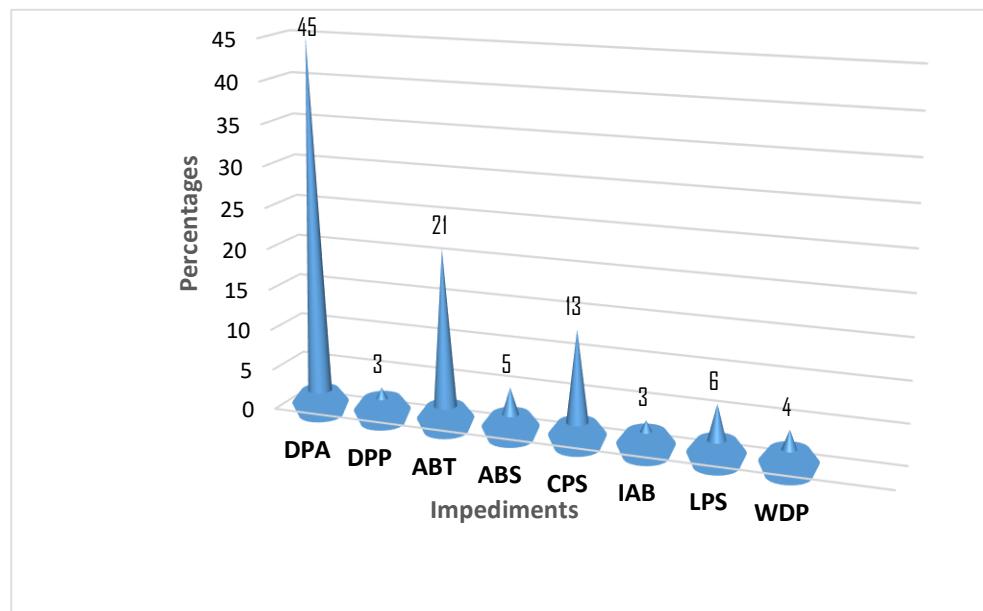
Impediments to the success of N-power scheme in Gombe State

Figure 1 presents challenges of N-Power programme in Gombe. The data above indicated (45%) of the respondents acknowledged delay in payment of allowances as one of the challenges, while (21%) of the beneficiaries identified administrative bottleneck as part of the challenge of the programme. In addition, (13%) of respondents identified with corrupt practices of various kinds to be another challenge of the scheme, while others (3%, (5%), (6%) and (4%) aired their view on: wrong deployment, distance to place of assignment, lack of proper supervision, corrupt practices etc. as part of the challenges.

Some of these difficulties are comparable to the ones found by Ayub, Olalekan, Gbaa, Asombo & George (2020). The study found out that the programme has had enormous impacts on the socio-economic livelihoods of the beneficiaries including easy access to basic and daily needs, catering for relatives, ability to enroll for further studies, etc. Findings revealed that delay in payments, lack of continuity, among others, were challenges associated with the programme.

Figure 1: Impediments to the Success of N-Power Scheme in Gombe State

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Source: Field Work, (2021)

Note: **DPS**-Delay in Payment of Allowance,

DPP - Distance to Primary Place of Assignment,

ABT - Administrative Bottleneck,

ABS - Absenteeism of Beneficiaries,

CPS - Corrupt Practices,

IAB - Indifference Attitude of Beneficiaries,

LPS - Lack of Proper Supervision,

WDP - Wrong Deployment to Primary Place of Assignment

Findings

The first hypothesis sought to test if there is a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on their perception that N-Power scheme has not reduced the rate of youth unemployment in Gombe State. The result of the test of the hypothesis shows that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on their perception that N-power scheme has not reduced the rate of youth unemployment in Gombe State. In other words, respondents' status i.e. beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the scheme influenced their responses on the subject matter.

This finding is corroborated by the revelation from an informal discussion with some of the N-Power beneficiaries. According to them the scheme has made them not to be idle providing them with opportunities for productive engaging activities. Some further acknowledged that beyond the knowledge and experience gained by being engaged to teach under the scheme, they were able to save some small resources earned to start and improve their small-scale businesses. Other respondents are of the opinion that even if a single person was recruited by the scheme, it has made impacts talk more of having thousands of beneficiaries. This finding is further corroborated with the statistics of unemployment in Gombe state. According to Gombe State Bureau of Statistics (2018), Gombe State has a total population of 9627 who were unemployed graduates out of which 2598 were gainfully but temporarily employed by the N-Power scheme.

The reality of the finding of this study is that jobs are not freely available, especially in Nigeria where unemployment is high. This is in line with Sachs (2005) who opines that the current practice is to take what is available, which might mean accepting anything that will serve as a source of income. Sachs (2005) also submits that only a third of the urban dwellers found jobs reflecting their aspirations prior to leaving school. According to UN

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World Youth Report (2015), the decrease in availability of jobs might lead to an increase in compromises in a person's values more especially on family issues. This could lead to reshaping one's needs and values in order to fit into any available circumstances and thereby accepting anything that is obtainable.

However, respondents who are non-beneficiaries looked at the scheme in a different perspective i.e. in terms of non-continuity by successive governments. This again is in line with an informal discussion with some of the government officials who are of the opinion that the N-Power is just a scheme like any other government programmes which could hardly stand the test of time. One of them states that, the scheme is not something to be celebrated upon, because it is only providing temporal employment to only a limited number of people, looking at the level of unemployment in the society and the increasing number of graduates that are coming out of tertiary institutions year in year out. He further stated that, if the government is serious about reducing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the government should increase the number of its beneficiaries and transform them from volunteers to permanent staff with a commensurate payment.

The result of the test of the second hypothesis also shows that there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on their perception that N-Power scheme has not reduced the burden of the state government in providing manpower for beneficiary schools. Like the first hypothesis; the result of the test of the second hypothesis means that respondents differ in their perception based on their status. According to the respondents, the scheme has increased the number of teachers in the beneficiary schools. This finding is in harmony with the available data gotten from the Gombe State N-Power office, which revealed that between the years of 2016 to 2019 the scheme has deployed a total number of 6,618 beneficiaries. This finding is in agreement with an informal discussion held with some of the N-Power beneficiaries. According to them "when they came in, the school didn't have enough teachers, and so our deployment helped a great deal; this has been a good experience because as we teach the students, we also learn from them as well". Some of the staff of the beneficiary schools confirmed this by alluding to the fact that before the coming of the N-Power beneficiaries to their schools, there were no enough teachers and as such forcing them to take a whole arm of a class up to two-three arms which made their performance to diminish.

However, with the coming of the beneficiaries the arms were broken into smaller cells, thereby making them perform better on their service delivery. This finding is supported by the testimonies of some beneficiaries, one of them said "I teach primary three pupils who are mostly from the Hausa community and could not comprehend well in English, but since my assumption of duty, I have made a lot of positive impact on the lives of these pupils". This finding is in tandem with that of Aderonmu (2017), who alluded that the N-Power Teach Programme engages graduates for the benefit of basic education delivery in Nigeria which has increased the number of teachers in public schools and also improved the service delivery. He added that they are not to replace the current teachers, but are to work as support teachers, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. However, this has not in any way delimited the power of state government especially in terms of teachers' recruitment and payment of salaries.

However, the non-beneficiary respondents are of the opinion that the scheme has not in any way reduced the burden of the state government. This means that despite the fact that the scheme has provided additional personnel, provided adequate teachers and also improved the quality of teaching in public schools, the running cost the state government is using to pay teachers' salaries and to run other expenses (the office equipment') has not stopped or even decreased on the account of the coming of the N-Power scheme. In the same vein, other respondents stated that, the state government is not in any way feeling the impact of the scheme because it has not reduced the burden of the state government in terms of reducing the running cost of the government. This is a mystery that requires further investigation to unravel.

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The result of the test of the third hypothesis shows that there is significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on their perception that administrative factor does not constitute a major challenge to the effective implementation of N-Power scheme. It is justifiable to say there is a significant difference in the perception of the respondents. For the beneficiaries, a major administrative factor confronting the effective implementation of the scheme is delay in payment of monthly allowances.

Delay in the payment of allowances is a major challenge to the implementation of the N-Power scheme in Gombe State which has made the beneficiaries to develop bad attitude towards the scheme and made them display some form of absenteeism at their designated schools. This finding is corroborated by the revelation from an informal discussion with one of the respondents who spends N80-100 or above daily on transportation to work, and their stipend has not been paid for months. In addition, some are indebted to their neighbours who usually assist them out of financial difficulties in the hope that they would defray same once their stipends are paid. A good number of the beneficiaries are frustrated because their expectations were yet to be met. In the same vein, the findings also agreed with Odey & Sambe (2019) who outlines delayed and unpaid allowances as some of the challenges affecting the effective implementation of the N-Power scheme.

On the other hand, the non-beneficiaries identified the poor attitude and absenteeism of the beneficiaries from their designated schools and administrative bottlenecks at the N-Power office as major challenges to the success of N-Power programme in Gombe State.

4. Conclusion

Government in every political system exists and operates on behalf of the people. Thus, a good government cannot be active in addressing societal problems without articulating public policy in dealing with issues affecting the society. Indeed, N-Power scheme is a government programme that is geared toward managing and reducing the rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria but one can only say that the scheme has performed fairly well in achieving its objectives.

In addition, it is clear that youth empowerment and poverty reduction is central or critically linked to national peace and security. The youths are the most energetic and active members of the entire society, so their contributions and role in national development and security cannot be overstated. However, it is evident that successive governments at the Federal, State and Local levels have not given youth empowerment the proper attention it deserves, hence the high levels of threat to national security in the country from internal sources.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. The study recommends that the government, philanthropist and the well-to-do in the society should come in partnership with the public and private sector to fund and expand the scheme thereby increasing the number of beneficiaries so as to enhance the impact of the scheme on unemployment in the country.
2. The study also recommends that the Federal Government should review the scheme in such a way that it will accommodate the unemployed graduates thereby transforming the volunteers to permanent staff with a commensurate payment.
3. Federal Government should ensure prompt and timely payment of stipends to beneficiaries of the scheme and should ensure that beneficiaries who have issues that affect payment of their allowances are timely and judiciously treated to solve problems of unpaid allowances.

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