

Effect of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation among Youth in Potiskum Local Government, Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigates effect of N-power programme on poverty alleviation among youth in potiskum local government of Yobe state. The Broad objective of the study is to determine the impact of N-power programme on poverty alleviation among the youth in the study area. The global economic meltdown of 2009 has seriously affected developing countries particularly Nigeria. Unemployment rate in potiskum local government and many parts of the country is growing at geometrical progression whereby most of the young graduates roam the streets with attendant social vices such suicidal cases, political thuggery and substance abuse as result of economic downturn. As such poverty and unemployment remains one of the biggest social problems in the area. The study adopted descriptive survey design, and data were sourced from primary and secondary sources, while frequency and simple percentage were used to analyze data. Als the study adopted Elite theory as the theoretical framework of analysis. The results of the study revealed that, the N-power programme has contributed to poverty reduction hence improved livelihood condition in Potiskum local government Area of Yobe state and Nigeria at large. Specifically, the N-power programme has helped in skill acquisition, increased beneficiaries income, and employment generation. Notwithstanding, the scheme has been heralded with challenges such as inconsistency of participant to their place of primary assignment due to the corrupt nature of some participants, mismanagement of funds from the Federal Government, unlawful disengagement of participants among others. The study recommended that, there is need for improvement in the number of the beneficiaries of the N-power programme, as well as improve of their monthly stipend and ensure that are paid in due time because of the high cost of living conditions. The Government should also prepare a workable exit policy from the beginning of the programme.

Keywords: N-Power programme, Poverty Alleviation, Potiskum, Youth

Introduction: Poverty is a global issue which affects various continents, nations and people differently. It affects people in various levels at different times and phases of existence. In Africa, the trajectory of poverty has been noted following decline in the standard of living of the people. According to Mwabu (2005 cited in Micheal & Hezekiah, 2019), over 50% of the African population live below the international subsistence standard of one dollar per day and the population is at risk of suffering from reduction in its current standard of living. In case of Nigeria, eradication of poverty is one of the greatest challenges to growth and developmental needs of the country. However, successive government efforts on youth employment programmes such as; the National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) as well as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) seem to have yielded marginal result (Attah, Et al, 2021). Consequently, Nigerian government has evolved a new paradigm in 2016 to curb unemployment and boost economic development in the country. The N-power Programme, introduced and targeted approximately five million unemployed youths across the states and local government areas over all the country, through randomization of the beneficiaries who eventually are trained and empowered for self-actualization (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). According to The National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the N-power assessment report revealed that in 2017, 200,000 youths were engaged in the N-power scheme, and it reduced youth unemployment from 23.6% to 16.6% and in 2018 another 300,000 was engaged thus further reducing unemployment from 32.45 to 29.75%. The implication of this report is that youths from Potiskum LGA are integral part of the stock of the 500,000 beneficiaries of the Need-Power. It is against this background that this study is intended to examine the effect of N-power programme on poverty alleviation among youth in Potiskum Local government area of Yobe state:

Research Design and Methods: The research deemed it appropriate to use the descriptive survey design which allows the collection of data in both quantitative and qualitative manner.. According to the National Population Commission (2006), Potiskum Local government has a total population of 205,876 people. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size of the study. Sampling procedure as a systematic process employed to select a required proportion of a target population. Random sample describes as selected groups which fairly represent the entire population of interest. A total of 123 questionnaires were administered and distributed to the sample population. The questionnaires were designed in such a way that it gives the respondents the opportunity to freely express their views on ‘the impact of N-power programme on poverty alleviation among youth in the study area. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. For the primary data, were gathered through close ended questionnaire directly from the field, while the secondary sources, gathered information from published and unpublished materials, specifically from textbooks, reputable journals, magazine, Newspaper, seminar paper presentation, and thesis. The data presented and analyzed using simple percentage.

Review of Relevant Literature

1- The Concept of Poverty

The issue of poverty was first given much attention by classical political economists in their attempt to explain economic growth, development and international trade. Adam Smith (1759) in his book “An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations” identified poverty as a psychic pain which distresses the poor. This in turn cause real hardship, the deprivation of goods per se hardly entered the picture. He stressed that what oppressed a man in poverty was not a lack of physical comfort or health but a sense of social isolation and inferiority. In Smith’s words, the poor man is ashamed of his poverty (Sule & Sambo, 2020:110).

According to Alimmenka, (2001:26) Poverty can be regarded as the lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable live hood, hunger and malnutrition, ill-health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morality from illness and inadequate housing, unsafe environment, social discrimination and exclusion. Accordingly, Central Bank of Nigeria, (1998) asserted that poverty is a state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter and is unable to meet social and economic obligation like gainful employment, skills, asset and self-esteem, and had limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as health, education, portable water, and sanitation and consequently has limited changes of advancing his or her welfare. Poverty is seen as a condition in which income is insufficient to meet substantial needs. Because of the effects of underdevelopment and corruption in Nigeria, the poor are found in both rural and urban sitting with different categories of poverty. The poor man in Nigeria, where the number is in excess of about 80% of the population is vulnerable to diseases, lives in huts, mud houses, under bridges, parks and slums or corroded apartment surrounded by squalor (Greenwald and Associates, 1997; cited in Wodon, 2007).

In another dimension, Chanda (1981) assert that poverty is lack of physical asset and income. He went further to state that poverty is subject of general condition of derivation whose dimension include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, powerlessness and humiliation. Umo (1986) defined poverty as capability deprivation. He further explained ‘capability deprivation’ as a situation when the poor is unable to participate in community affairs and therefore suffer exclusion. Poverty us also seen as lack of command over basic consumption needs which means that there is an inadequate level of consumption given rise given rise to insufficient foods, clothing and or shelter and more over the lack of certain capabilities such as being able to participate with dignity in society. Poverty is also relative; people can be said to be poor when they are unable to attain a level of well-being regarded by their society as meeting a reasonable minimum standard (Wodon, 2007:14).

The problem of poverty in Africa has over the years engaged the attention of the international community, governmental and non-governmental organizations and veteran scholars from Western and African countries. This is as a result of confusion and identified mayhem unleashed to Africans (Michael and Hezekiah, 2019). According to scholars like Omotosho (2009), they conceived poverty as a state of deprivation in terms of economic and social indicators such as

income, education, healthcare, social status, self-esteem and self-actualization. To Anikpo (1995:32), poverty is the process whereby individuals or groups are forcefully eliminated from control of decision making machinery that determines the production and distribution of resources in a society. He maintains that poverty has manifested itself in various forms such as hunger, lack of good drinking water, clothes, shelter and good health, poor education and poor distribution of resources.

For instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Guideline on Poverty Alleviation (2000:29) stressed that an adequate concept of poverty should include all the most important areas in which people of either gender are deprived and incapacitated in different societies. It should encompass the causal links between the core dimensions of poverty and the central importance of gender and environmental sustainable development. Being multidimensional in nature, poverty entails inadequate livelihood material goods and failure to achieve basic capabilities in nutrition, health, economic and social life. As noted by Taiwo and Aguu, (2017:12); Ucha, (2010:19) and Adebayo (2020:28); poverty is a consequence of deprivation, lack of good health and social or economic exclusion, including lack of access to active involvement in community life in all its ramifications.

A United Nations Statement (1998 in Ucha, 2010:46) referred to poverty from the standpoint of vulnerability to risk, insecurity and powerlessness. It stated that: “Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities”. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (Ibietan, Chidozie, and Ujara, 2014).

Webster (1990:16 in Omoyibo, 2013: 30-31) have defined poverty in two terms – subsistence also called absolute/extreme poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty describes a situation in which people barely exist, where the next meal may literally be a matter of life or death. It describes a lack of basic human needs such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services. On the other hand, he describes relative poverty as a process of encroaching deprivation by which people gradually slip out of the mainstream of social life, almost unnoticeably, without being the stereotype paupers in rags and tatters. Similarly, Adawo (2011:14) summarizes absolute and relative poverty to mean that: Absolute poverty is a misery linked to an insufficient resource base, lack of income, narrow margin, high risk of failure, hunger, disease, etc.; while, relative poverty is associated with experiencing deviational outcomes from expectations and irrelevant comparison of one’s material position with others, mostly peer and age groups. In the case of the Nigerian society, poverty is one of the most debilitating social phenomena that has been negatively affecting the peoples, which according to many sociologists is directly responsible for the escalation of social vices and insecurity.

2. General Overview of N-Power Scheme

The World Bank group in June 2016 granted the sum of \$.5 billion International Development Association credit to assist in the establishment of programmes aimed at economic development in Nigeria (Okoro & Bassey, 2018). The Federal Government of Nigeria sourced an additional \$1.3 billion from its budget to create the social safety net programmes which came to be known as the National Social Investment Program (NSIP). Since then, more than 4 million people have benefited directly from financial assistance, job training and social intervention scheme of these programmes (National Bureau of Statistic (NBS), 2018).

N-power is one of the social intervention schemes initiated in 2016 by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the present administration of President Mohammad Buhari. It was designed to 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 is aimed at addressing the challenges of unemployment especially among graduate youths as it is categorized into Graduate Teachers Corps which is targeted at 500,000 graduates. N-power knowledge is targeting 25,000 non-graduates while N-power Build targets 75,000 non-graduates recruitment. Through N-power, young Nigerians youths will be empowered with the necessary tools to go and create, develop, build, fix and work on exceptional ideas, projects and enterprises that will change the communities, the economy and the nation (Michael and Hezekiah, 2019).

By deploying a force of 500,000 trained graduates in their communities, the N-Power Programme is a community-sourced solution to the nation's under-developed public services like education, healthcare, and civic engagement (N-Power, 2017). The Programme is built to prepare young Nigerians for a modern, globalized economy by helping equip youths with skills and certifications for emerging global markets. Accordingly, the goals of N-power include the following; to reduce the rate of unemployment in the country, bring about a system that would facilitate transferring of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills and to bring solutions to poorly public service and government diversification policy. The programme is designed in such a way that it can be divided into different categories as follows:

3.1 Volunteer Corps

The establishment of N-Power Volunteer Corps 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).

3.2 N-Power Teach Programme

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).

3.3 N-Power Creative Programme

This will train and develop 5000 young creative talents. The strategy is to put Nigeria's creative industry on the global radar as exporters of world-class services and content. Training lasts for 3 months which can be divided as 1 month in class and 2 months hand-on-group project, across selected cities in Nigeria. The participants are being trained and certified in one of the following: Animation, Graphic Design, Post-Production, and Script Writing (Michael and Hezekiah, 2019).

3.4 N-Power Agro Programme

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 N-Power Agro programme is built to link the diverse communities of Nigeria while promoting a modern economy (Odey & Sambe, 2019).

3.5 N-power Build Programme

N-power Build is an accelerated training and certification programme that will engage and train 75,000 young unemployed Nigerians in order to build a new crop of skilled and highly competent workforce of technicians, artisans and service professionals (Michael and Hezekiah, 2019).

3.6 N-Power Health Programme

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).

3.7 N-Power Tax Programme

In order to ensure high efficiency in collection of tax, the federal government mobilized some volunteers who will assist the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) in collection of taxes. The

government seeks to encourage non-complaint and partially complaint tax payers to come clean and declare and pay their appropriate tax due to the government. Following this, N-power will be required to select 3700 volunteers to work as a Community Tax Liaison Officers to work in their states of residence within the state's tax authorities. They will have the following key responsibilities which will include answering online inquiries, customer management, creating awareness of tax compliance (Michael and Hezekiah, 2019).

3. The Implication of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation among Youth

One of the N-power program impacts is that it serve as a platform for diversifying the economy by preparing young Nigerians for a knowledge economy where, equipped with world-class skills and certification, they become innovators and movers in the domestic and global markets (Akujuru and Enyioko, 2019). According to National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the N-power assessment report revealed that in 2017, 200.000 youths were engaged in the n-power scheme, and it crashed youth unemployment from 23.6 per cent to 16.6 per cent and in 2018 another 300,000 was engaged thus further reducing unemployment from 32.45 to 29 -.75 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Akujuru & Enyoko (2019) corroborating this assertion states that beyond the Npower benefits, youths also have the N-build and N-tech of the N-SIP program 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 Potiskum LGA are integral parts of the stock of beneficiaries (Attah, et.al, 2021).

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 the larger economy (Sule, and Sambo, 2020). 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; this has also serve as an alternative job for the unemployed youth (Ifatimehin, Isyak, & Omale, 2020).

There is also the N-Power Knowledge programme which is the Federal Government's first step towards diversifying to a knowledge economy. This programme works alongside the planned eight innovation hubs across the country to provide incubation and acceleration of the technology and creative industries. The programme is a 'Training to Jobs' initiative, essentially ensuring that participants can get engaged in the marketplace in an outsourcing capacity, as freelancers, as employees and as entrepreneurs (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). Indeed, the programme is carefully designed in such a manner that if well implemented, can help in further addressing the challenges of empowerment and subsequently, reduce poverty among the youths (Akujuru and Enyioko, 2019).

N-Power is also linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, empowerment and social development arenas. N-Power addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. The modular programmes under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most

of what is necessary to find or create work (Akujuru and Enyioko, 2019). The N-Power Volunteer Corp involves a massive deployment of 500,000 trained graduates who will assist to improve the inadequacies in our public services in education, health and civic education. Some of these graduates will also help in actualizing Nigeria's economic and strategic aspirations of achieving food security and self-sufficiency (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

Apart from the above positive impacts of N-Power programme on poverty alleviation among the youths, below are the most visible and prominent impact of the N-Power program;

i. Job Creation: The most prominent objective of establishing N-power programme is to create temporary jobs to the unemployed graduates for two years and provide access to soft loans to the indigents. However, there is no doubt that the N-power scheme has positively impacted the youth in Potiskum LGA and elsewhere in Nigeria by providing the temporary job, many youth were exonerated from abject poverty, in fact some of the beneficiaries even after disengaging from the N-Power program they can do something meaningful that can sustain them. Onuoha et'al (2019).

ii. Poverty Reduction: Another strong reason for establishing N-power programme is to reduce to the barest minimum the incidence of poverty in the society. Of course the scheme has reduce the high rate of poverty among the youth, prior to the formation of the N-Power program many youth were unemployed, but with the coming of the N-Power program many youth were exonerated from the high rate of poverty. Even though the programme has been associated with a number of problem, but at least it has positively impacted many unemployed youth and reduce many forms of social vices in Potiskum LGA such as drug and substance abuse, political thuggery which are the major deviant behavior that contradict the norms and values of the good peoples of Potiskum LGA and Nigeria at large.

iii. Skill 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 (Ifatimehin, Isyak, & Omale, 2020). The N-Power has impacted many beneficiaries acquire many skills, thus it positively reduced the high rate of poverty among the youth.

The abovementioned factors have no doubt positively impacted the beneficiaries as well as many other peoples in Potiskum, Yobe state and the Nigerian society at large which has no doubt reduce the rate of poverty and unemployment in the area.

4. The Problems Associated With N-Power Programme among Youth

The N-power program has been associated with many challenges which include:

The Insufficient information and wrong Bank Verification Number (BVN): this have been identified as factors threatening to wreck the N-Power programme, introduced by the Federal Government, as a social safety net to reduce the rate of graduate unemployment plaguing the country. Specifically, the programme, which took off in December 2016 is designed to provide a stopgap for 500,000 unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions over the next two years (Bennel,

2017). While the Federal Government is responsible for their monthly stipends, it is in partnership with state governments to verify selected unemployed graduates and deploy them to their places of primary assignment. Volunteer graduates are expected to serve in the communities where they are resident. Under the programme, the first batch of 200,000 participants are to be paid N30, 000 a month and deployed by the respective state governments and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to their different places of assignment, including classrooms as teachers (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). But some months into the programme, it has started facing different challenges, with about 13,000 participants alleging that they have not been paid their monthly stipend (Aderonmu, 2017).

For instance, the Nigeria Interbank Systems (NIBSS), which provides the technical support for the programme has identified sundry challenges, including failure on the part of the beneficiaries to input correct Bank Verification Numbers (BVN) and other details to match the information initially provided for processing. Funmi Olowosulu, a participant who was posted to LGEA Primary School, Lokoguma, Kogi State, where she teaches, is yet to receive her monthly stipend of N30, 000 three months after enrolling in the programme, because of inconsistency in her personal details, as well as her Bank Verification Number (BVN) (Bennel, 2017).

Another beneficiary, Umar Abdulrasheed, who spends N80 daily on transportation to work, has also not received his stipend for the same number of months. Additionally, he is indebted to his neighbours who usually bail him out of financial difficulties in the hope that he would defray same once his stipends are paid. The situation is not different in Rivers, Edo, Enugu and Kaduna and Potiskum LGA of Yobe states, where participants have protested and called on the Federal Government to come to their aid by addressing the numerous challenges facing the smooth operation of the programme. A good number of participants in the programme are frustrated because their expectations were yet to be met, three months after the programme kicked off (Aderonmu, 2017). Besides, some of the participants are disqualified for various reasons, ranging from being over-age, to falsification of information and being currently gainfully employed.

According to Abin (2018), some of the problems faced by the programme included unpaid and late payment of stipend to volunteers. Other challenge noted was the over centralization of the programme. This has the tendency to affect interaction between beneficiaries and authorities who control the programme and limit possibility of improving the scheme through understanding plights of beneficiaries. In another dimension, Okoro and Bassey (2018) noted that the programme did not provide teacher education to volunteers before deployment in the N-Teach strand. This implies that such volunteers were not empowered to take up the teaching profession by the programme before deploying them.

Theoretical Framework

Elite theory gained a wider currency within the academia towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century through the works of classical Italian political theorists - Vilfredo (1935), and Gaetano (1939). Since then, the existence and role of elite and its activity has been widely recognized and discussed in the social science literature. The term “elite” encompasses all those who through educational exposure, connection and talent, political and economic resources, are

materially empowered; they also exercise considerable influence in the nation's political, economic, cultural, social and intellectual life (Putnam, 1976). This group of people (a privileged minority) is imbued with or characterized by organizational skills, leadership abilities, knowledge and information, drive and ambition.

Thus, elites are the societal agents through which broader forces such as ethnicity, class and religion are filtered to ordinary people. They play significant role in defining or recognizing important policy issues and deciding which and what should receive priority in relation to others. In other words, when elites uphold a clear picture of what should be done, the public tends to see events from that point of view, suggesting therefore that the society is elite directed. Elite not only control and dominate the commanding heights of the economy, exercise legal monopoly over the means of coercion, dominate the structures and institutions of politics and economy, but also shape the ideological and philosophical direction of society.

Elite stratum comprises of those hold formal and legal authoritative power and those do not but are rather behind the scene, teleguiding and manipulating overt political and policy actions. Thus, Pareto's major contribution to the development of the elite theory was his classification and description of the nature of the ruling class (elite). According to him, there are various strata in the elite stratum. These include;

- (a) The governing elites that consist of the individuals (such as former rulers, top leaders of political parties) who directly or indirectly wield considerable influence and command in government.
- (b) The political elites (those that occupy formal political institutions) that effectively and particularly exercise political power
- (c) Non-governing elites (such as the owner of big businesses and corporations) that consist the rest of the stratum (Pareto 1968:78 cited in Delican, 1977). The second (the political elites) who in the context of this study includes the state governors and their agents such as the commissioners are at heart of our discussion here.

According **Gaetano (1939)**, society is divided into two strata: upper strata and lower strata. The upper strata are the elites, while the lower strata are masses. Elites are few minority individuals who control political, social and economic activities of the society by the virtue of their organization. To him, elites are divided into two governing elites and non-governing elites. Accordingly Vilfredo (1935) asserted that elites are special few minority individual who control elite political affair of the society but also control social and economic sector of the society by the virtue of their special qualities. He further observed that elites are divided into two: ruling elite and non-ruling elite. The ruling elites are ones who control political and economic activities of the society. While non-ruling elites are the leaders of political parties, pressure groups, religious groups etc.

Mills classified the elites into three, which are: firstly, the highest political leaders including the president and a handful of key cabinet members and close advisers; (political elite); secondly,

major corporate owners and directors (economic elite); and thirdly, high-ranking military officers (military elite).

The connection of this theory to explaining effect of N-power on poverty alleviation among youth in Potiskum Local government area of Yobe State essentially lies within the context of the role of elites in policy making. Policy makers, such as the office of the Vice President of Nigeria that initiate and supervise the N-Power Programme are elites. Incidentally, they often tend to reflect their values and preferences as they formulate policies. Corroborating this view, Ayinde (2008), averred that “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 Potiskum Local government area of Yobe state, the N-power Scheme to a reasonable extent has reflected interests of the beneficiaries as large chunk of activities in the scheme is service and rural based, and above all it has extensively reduce the high rate of poverty among youths in the area (Daura, Joel and Adole, 2020).

Data Presentation and analysis:

A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared and administered to 123 respondents using the Taro Yamani simple random sampling technique. In the cause of administering questionnaire three respondents were not retrieved. It means that the remaining 120 copies were used as valid for obtaining analyzable data for this study. More so, the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical technique through the use of simple percentage with tables.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	87	73%
Female	33	27%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 1 shows that, out of 120 respondents, 73% were males, while 27% were females, it should be mentioned at this juncture however, that, the majority of the respondents in the sample area were males, this difference is because the males respondents were easy accessible than their female counterpart in the study area. This is due to the cultural and religious nature of the people or the tradition of the area of study. In view of this therefore, the females are either girls that are not married or civil servants that are allowed to out and work in office.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-24years	20	17%
25-34years	62	52%
35-44years	25	20%
45 Years and above	13	11%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table 2 above shows that, out of 120 respondents, 17% were from the age of 18-24years, whereas 52% were from the ages of 25-34years, while 20% were from the ages of 35-44years, and finally, 11% of the respondents were 45 years and above. This clearly revealed that the majority of the respondents were youth ranging from the ages of 25-34 years.

Table 3: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
B.Sc	85	70.8%
HND	35	29.2%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 3 shows that, out of 120 respondents, 85 which represented 70.8% have B.Sc 8% while 35 which accounted for 29.2% have HND. This indicated that Degree holders are more in number. This is because the N-Power programme was mainly targeted the unemployed youth graduate.

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents According to Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	66	55%
Married	39	32%
Divorced	8	7%
Widowed	7	6%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

Based on data presented in table 4 it indicated that, out of the 120 respondents, 66 constituting 55% were single; 39 representing 32% were married; while 8 representing 7%, and 7 constituting 6% were divorced, and widowed respectively. This clearly revealed that the majority of our respondents were single. The reason is because majority of the peoples in the area are youth whom are easy accessible than the elderly peoples and other age categories of respondents within the society.

Table 5: Respondents Views on whether they earn a living as a Beneficiary of the N-Power Programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	55	46%
Strongly agreed	30	25%
Disagreed	18	15%
Strongly disagreed	12	10%
Undecided	5	4%

Total	120	100%
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Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 5 shows that, out of 120 respondents, 55 respondents which accounted for 46% agreed and 10 respondents that represented 9% strongly agreed that they earn a living as beneficiary of the N-power programme, whereas 18 respondents that represented 15% disagreed and 12 respondents that constituted 10% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents that constituted for 4% were undecided. This indicated that the majority of the respondents earn a living as beneficiary of the N-power programme.

Table 6: Respondents view on whether their income level has increased significantly as a result of the implementation of the N-power programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	53	44%
Strongly agreed	27	22%
Disagreed	19	16%
Strongly disagreed	15	13%
Undecided	6	5%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 6 shows that 53 respondents which constituted 44% agreed and 27 respondents that represented 22% strongly agreed that their income level has increase significantly as a result of the implementation of the N-power programme. Whereas, 19 respondents that constituted 16% disagreed and 15 that represented 13% strongly disagreed, while 6 respondents that accounted 5% were undecided. Therefore, it is worthy to note at this juncture that the majority of the respondents agreed that their income level has increased significantly as a result of the implementation of the N-power programme.

Table 7: Respondents view on whether they agree that the implementation of the N-power programmes has significantly provided new skills for self-reliance.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	64	53%
Strongly agreed	33	27%
Disagreed	13	11%
Strongly disagreed	8	7%
Undecided	2	2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 7 indicated that, 64 respondents that represented 53% agreed and 33 respondents that constituted 27% strongly agreed that the implementation of the N-power

programmes has significantly provided new skills for self-reliance. On the other hand, 13 respondents that represented 11% disagreed and 8 respondents which constituted 7% strongly disagreed respectively, while 2 respondents that represent 2% were undecided. This clearly indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that the N-power programme has significantly provided new skills for self-reliance. It is not surprising that even after disengagement from the scheme; some of the beneficiaries have secured capital for the startup of new business.

Table 8: Respondents view on whether many people in Potiskum Local Government Area have benefited from N-power programme in terms of employment opportunity

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	40	33%
Strongly agreed	55	46%
Disagreed	13	11%
Strongly disagreed	10	8%
Undecided	2	2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 8 indicated that, 40 respondents that represented 33% agreed and 55 respondents that constituted 46% strongly agreed that many people in Potiskum Local Government Area has benefited from N-power programme in terms of employment opportunity. On the other hand, 13 respondents that represented 11% disagreed and 10 respondents which constituted 8% strongly disagreed respectively, while 2 respondents that represent 2% were undecided. This clearly indicated that majority of the respondents noted many people in the study area have benefited from N-power programme in terms of employment opportunity.

Table 9: Respondents view on whether inconsistency of participant to their place of primary assignment is one of the problems associated with the N-Power Programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	45	38%
Strongly agreed	34	28%
Disagreed	22	18%
Strongly disagreed	15	13%
Undecided	4	3%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 9 indicated that, out of 120 respondents, 45 respondents which constituted 38% agreed and 34 that represented 28% strongly agreed that inconsistency of participant to their place of primary assignment is one of the problems associated with the N-Power Programme, whereas 22 respondents that represented 18% disagreed and 15 representing 13% strongly disagreed, while 4 respondents that represented 3% were undecided.

Table 10: Respondents view on whether mismanagement of funds constitutes a challenge on the implementation of the N-power programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	26	22%
Strongly agreed	58	48%
Disagreed	15	12%
Strongly disagreed	12	10%
Undecided	9	8%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 10 revealed that out of 120 respondents, 26 respondents which represented 22% agreed and 58 that constituted 48% strongly agreed that mismanagement of funds constitutes a challenge on the implementation of the N-power programme, whereas 12% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed while 8% of the respondents were undecided. This signifies that the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that mismanagement of funds constitutes a challenge on the implementation of the N-power programme.

Table 11: Respondents view on whether unlawful disengagement of participants constitute a challenge to the implementation of the N-Power Programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	47	39%
Strongly agreed	22	18%
Disagreed	32	27%
Strongly disagreed	15	13%
Undecided	4	3%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 11 indicated that, out of 120 respondents, 47 respondents which constitute 39% agreed and 22 that represented 18% strongly agreed that unlawful disengagement of participants constitute a challenge to the implementation of the N-Power Programme, whereas 32 respondents that represented 27% disagreed and 15 representing 13% strongly disagreed, while 4 respondents that represented 3% were undecided. This clearly indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed that unlawful disengagement of participants constitute a challenge to the implementation of the N-Power Programme.

Table 12: Respondents view on whether there is need for government to improve or increase beneficiary's stipend

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	55	46%
Strongly agreed	30	25%
Disagreed	18	15%
Strongly disagreed	12	10%
Undecided	5	4%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 12 shows that, out of 120 respondents, 55 respondents which accounted 46% agreed and 10 respondents that represented 9% strongly agreed that there is need for government to improve or increase beneficiary's stipend, whereas 18 respondents that represented 15% disagreed and 12 respondents that constituted 10% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents that constituted for 4% were undecided. This indicated that the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that it is necessary for the government to increases the beneficiary's stipend due to the high cost of living cause by inflation.

Table 13: Respondents view on whether there is need for the number of beneficiaries to be increased

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	69	57%
Strongly agreed	43	36%
Disagreed	4	3%
Strongly disagreed	2	2%
Undecided	2	2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 13 shows that out of 120 respondents, 69 that constituted 57% agreed and 43 respondents that represented 36% strongly agreed that there is need for the number of beneficiaries to be increased, whereas 4 respondents which is accounted for 3% disagreed and 2 respondents that represented 2% strongly disagreed respectively, while 2 respondents that represented 2% were undecided. It is worthy to not that the majority of the respondents agreed that there is need for the number of beneficiaries to be increased. This is due to the high rate of unemployment in Potiskum Local Government Area and the country at large, every unemployed person is aspiring to get job.

Table 14: Respondents view on whether Government should monitor and promptly punish any beneficiary that is absent without genuine reason in their place of primary assignment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	55	46%
Strongly agreed	30	25%
Disagreed	18	15%
Strongly disagreed	12	10%
Undecided	5	4%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

The data presented in table 15 shows that, out of 120 respondents, 55 respondents which accounted for 46% agreed and 30 respondents that represented 25% strongly agreed that government should monitor and promptly punish any beneficiary that is absent without genuine reason in their place of primary assignment, whereas 18 respondents that represented 15% disagreed and 12 respondents that constituted 10% strongly disagreed, while 5 respondents that constituted for 4% were undecided. This indicated that the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the government promptly monitor and punish beneficiaries that violates the rules of the N-Power Programme, this is because adequate supervision will enhance productivity of the beneficiaries.

Discussion of Major Findings

The study examined the effect of N-power programme on poverty alleviation among youth in Potiskum Local Government Area. it is observed in the study that the majority of the respondents earn a living as beneficiary of the N-power programme, as indicated in table 5 that the income level of many peoples in Potiskum Local Government Area has increase significantly as a result of the implementation of the N-power programme.

In line with the above findings, According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the N-power assessment report revealed that in 2017, 200.000 youths were engaged in the N-power scheme, and it reduced youth unemployment from 23.6 per cent to 16.6 per cent and in 2018 another 300,000 was engaged thus further reducing unemployment from 32.45 to 29.75 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Akujuru & Enyoko (2019) corroborating this assertion stated 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 Potiskum Local Government Area are integral part of the stock of beneficiaries.

Accordingly, the N-Power Programme has been heralded with a lot of challenges in Potiskum Local Government Area which include inconsistency of participants to visit their place of primary assignment due to the inept nature of some participant as indicated in table 10, and mismanagement of funds from the Federal Government of Nigeria as indicated in table 11. Unlawful disengagement of participants is another challenges of the N-Power programme.

Based on the challenges that bedeviled the N-Power Programme, table 12 indicated that the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that it is necessary for the government to increase the beneficiary's stipend due to the high cost of living caused by inflation. This is in conformity with the findings of Obadan (2017) who stated that the increasing incidence of poverty, both within and among locations, was in spite of various resources and efforts exerted on poverty-related programmes and scheme in the country, thus suggesting that the programmes and schemes were ineffective and ineffectual. The effects of 30,000 monthly stipend being advanced to beneficiaries relative to sky-rocketing inflationary trend tend to erode the good intentions of the government. The reality is that only about 5-7% of the teeming unemployed graduates are within the coverage of N-power programme (Obadan, 2017).

As indicated in table 13 majority of the respondents were of the opinion that there is need for the number of beneficiaries to be increased, due to large number of unemployed graduates. Table 15 indicted that the government should promptly monitor and punish beneficiaries that violates the rules of the N-Power Programme, this is because adequate supervision will enhance productivity of beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Conclusively, no Nigerian Government, be it military or civilian, has come without introducing and leaving behind one form of poverty alleviation or reduction programme meant to reduce the level of poverty especially among the teeming youth Population, give hope, succor to the poor and move towards some sort of wealth creation. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that N-power Programme has contributed to poverty reduction hence improved livelihood condition in Potiskum Local Government Area and Nigeria at large. The N-Power Programme has helped in skill acquisition, increased beneficiaries' income, employment generation, and increased food availability amongst many others. Notwithstanding, the scheme has been heralded with challenges such as inconsistency of participant to their place of primary assignment due to the corrupt nature of some participant, mismanagement of funds from the Federal Government of Nigeria, unlawful disengagement of participants among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. There is need for increase in the number of beneficiaries of the N-Power Programme in Potiskum Local Government Area and other places in country.
2. There is also the need to improve the beneficiary's monthly stipend due to the high cost of living and inflation.
3. The monitoring and evaluation team should be motivated to ensure the elimination of inconsistency of the beneficiaries into their place of primary assignment.

4. Government should introduce induction course to familiarize the beneficiaries of the N-Power into the system and effectively see to the monitoring of the beneficiaries on field to increase their productivities.
5. The recruitment exercise into the N-Power Programme should be strictly by character system not residential system.

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