Assessment of the N-Power Programme for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Reduction in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was motivated by the rising rate of unemployment and poverty among Nigerian youths which have continued to generate concern. The study examines the impact of N-Power Programme for sustainable growth and Poverty reduction in Nigeria: A study of Delta State. The study adopted the Marxist political economy theory as theoretical framework. This study made use of both primary and secondary data. The study population comprises the youth in Delta state in the South-South Geopolitical zone. The study made use of 2006 total population of youth in Delta State. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling method). Purposive sampling method technique restricts the questionnaire to only participants of N-Power programme in Delta State who has adequate knowledge of the N-Power programme at such only 1,384 persons were purposively selected. The basic research instrument used in this study for data collection is the questionnaire while secondary sources such as the internet, personal observations/experiences, periodic visits to notable library and archives across the country were used for intensive inquiry. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyze data in this study included: frequency distribution, rating scales, ranking and summations. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) with the t-test was used to validate the hypotheses. The study revealed that youths who are participating in the N-Power programme are mostly reliant on the scheme as a temporary measure to cushion the effect of poverty but do not necessarily provide them with lasting opportunity out of unemployment and the risk of poverty in the long-run. The study also found that the major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation include: non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery and corruption, high transportation fare paid by the participants to work, poor funding of the programme, among others. Based on the findings, the study recommend that skills development centers should be adequately funded, equipped and be given the due attention by government at all levels in order to serve as a hub for massive employment generation and the N-Power programme should be enacted into laws to provide a legal framework for youth mainstreaming in the national development plans and strategies.

Keywords: *N-Power, Programme, Poverty, Alleviation, Sustainable, Development*

Introduction

Empowerment and poverty alleviation as a measure of sustainable development has over the years been an issue of concern to successive and present administration and has become one of the terms equated with development. The absence of empowerment and failure of public policies in Nigeria often results in activities of miscreants such as militancy, like in the Niger Delta, communal crises, the deadly Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, incessant farmers-herders violence, political thuggery, banditry and trafficking, hence, upsetting the seemingly peaceful and stable socio-political situation (Ayodeji, Salau & Adeniyi, 2014; Salami, 2013). Thus the dialectical linkage between poverty and unemployment have been recognized by successive governments as having implication to social stability and sustainable development, as former President Olusegun Obasanjo had always echoed out this fear; describing the situation as a "time bomb" (Obasanjo, 2013). The attempt to tackle the persistent crisis of poverty and unemployment has attracted the attention of different Federal Government administrations through various programmes. Some of the programmes introduced were basically applied to boost food production and enhance the income stream of rural dwellers (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012).The attempts were reinforced by the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of the United Nations which gave rise to emergence of programmes such as the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, the Green Revolution in 1979, and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund established by Decree No. 20 of 1977 and started operations in April, 1978. Other poverty alleviation initiative embarked upon include the establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) In 1972, The Directorate of Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1986, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Peoples' Bank of Nigeria in 1990, Better Life for Rural Women in 1987, National Board for Community Banks, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) in 1997 and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001. The aforementioned programmes have been followed by others which are targeted at youth unemployment and poverty eradication. These empowerment programmes and policies targeted at tackling the menace of unemployment in the Nigerian social space over time includes initiatives such as SURE-P, Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE), YOU WIN, among others. Nigeria prides itself as the 6th largest producer of Crude oil with large deposits of other mineral resources, from Gold, iron ore, lime stone, rubber and rich agricultural resource potentials. The N-Power Programme, initiated by the Nigerian government, aims to address youth unemployment, reduce poverty, and foster socioeconomic development. The government in 2016 through N-Power engaged and deployed 200,000 young Nigerians in public primary schools, primary healthcare centers and in agriculture development project centers in all the Local Government Areas in Nigeria. Another 300,000 young graduates were later added in 2017, bringing to total of 500,000 being empowered, and recently a new set of 500 thousand in the process of being engaged to increase the total figure of beneficiaries to one million. However, despite its implementation, poverty remains a significant challenge in Delta State, with many residents struggling to access basic necessities like healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. The programme's effectiveness in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable growth among its beneficiaries in Delta State is uncertain, raising concerns about its impact and sustainability. Hence, this study assessed the impact of the N-Power programme on poverty

reduction and sustainable growth in Delta State, Nigeria so as to identify areas for improvement to ensure the programme achieves its objectives and benefit the intended recipients.

Conceptual Framework

N-Power Programme

N-power is a youth empowerment scheme sponsored by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address the challenges of poverty and youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development. N power is designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18–35 years. The N-Power Program is part of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), a collection of programs established in 2015 and introduced in 2016 by the Nigerian Federal Government. Its purpose is to offer socio-economic assistance to disadvantaged individuals throughout Nigeria. The modular programmes under N-Power ensures that each participant learns and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (FGN, 2018). N-Power Volunteers receive computing devices with essential information related to their roles, as well as materials for ongoing training and development. The programme focuses on four key areas of youth empowerment: N-Power Teaching, N-Power Agriculture, N-Power Health, and N-Power Taxation (N Power Information Guide, 2022). The N-power programmes are broadly categorized into two groups: N-Power Graduates Category (N-Power Volunteer Corps) and N-Power non-graduates' category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build). The N-Power Volunteer Corps is a post-college engagement initiative for Nigerians aged 18 to 35. It's a two-year paid volunteering program. The n-power non-graduate is designed to train and empower non graduate with skills that they can use for the betterment of themselves and the economy at large. N- Power non-graduate category is designed to provide training and certification in two key areas which include N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build. Studies show the programme has had a significant presence in Delta State, with thousands of beneficiaries across various sectors and have to improved livelihoods and economic empowerment among youths (Adeyemi & Oluwatayo, 2018; Okonkwo & Nwankwo, 2020; Imene & Udjo Onovughakpo, 2023).

Sustainable Growth

Sustainable growth is a holistic approach that balances economic, social, and environmental needs. The Brundtland Commission (1987) defined it as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). This concept emphasizes intergenerational equity and responsible resource management. In practice, sustainable development involves adopting renewable energy, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly practices. Sen (1999) defined growth as a tool which enables people to reach the highest level of their ability. On the other hand, growth has resulted to inequalities between individuals and states, whereby a large number of the world's inhabitants are mired in poverty, especially in Africa. The term development in international parlance includes the need and means by which to provide better lives for people in poor countries. It includes not only economic growth but also human development, providing for health, nutrition, education and a clean environment (Okereka, 2015; Aroghene, 2022). Some constraints on development are high economic poverty, hunger, high mortality rates, unsafe water supplies, poor education systems, corrupt governments, war and poor sanitation these constraints create poverty traps and cycles that must be broken for countries to develop (UNDP, 2003; Aroghene et al., 2025).

Poverty Reduction

Poverty can be seen as insufficient resource base, lack of income, narrow margin, high risk of failure, hunger, disease, malnutrition. According to Akinmulegun (2014) from a comparative point of view relative poverty manifests in irrelevant comparison of one's material position with others mostly age groups and peer which results in deviational outcomes from expectations. Poverty reduction simply refers actions are taken in order to ensure that people who are unable to meet up with the basic necessities of life are supported and assisted to achieve same (Lawal & Hassan, 2012; Kpelai, 2013; Imene, 2022; Aroghene & Onuorah, 2023). In Nigeria, government had purposively designed series of social investment programmes in the time past with a view to solving the incessant problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality. In some point in times, it is categorically geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in volatile areas and states of the federation.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxist Political Economy Theory

The Marxian political economy theory was used to underpinned the study. Political economy theory has its roots from the classical works of Marx and Engels (1962) that derived their intellectual stand from the works of great economists such as Smith (1937), Pye (1966) and Mill (1970). Marxist political economy theory is concerned with the distribution of social wealth, class relations and conflicts as well as their impacts on the development of the society from one stage to another. The theory gives credence to material conditions, particularly economic factors in all social lives. Without doubt, economic needs are the most fundamental needs of man, because he must eat before pursuing other things such as worship, culture, tourism, and other social things. Ake (2005) and Orimuo et al. (2023) further posit that once we understand what the material assets and constraints of a society are, how the society produces goods to meet its material needs, how the goods are distributed and what type of social relations arise from the organization of production, we have come a long way to understanding the culture of that society its laws, its religious system, its political system and even its modes of thought. The Marxist political economy theory looks into the interconnection of phenomena, programmes and policies with the sole intention of discovering the class origin, character, composition and the logic of their existence and future. Thus, this approach is used in the analysis of problem of poverty in Nigeria, especially as the social relations emanating from productive forces create room for class differentiation in the society. While some categories of people in the society swim in affluence, others wallow in material poverty.

Research Method

This study adopted survey research design. This study made use of both primary and secondary data. The study population comprises the youth in Delta state in the South-South Geopolitical zone. The study made use of 2006 total population of youth in Delta State. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling method). Purposive sampling method technique restricts the questionnaire to only participants of N-Power programme in Delta State who has adequate knowledge of the N-Power programme at such only 1,384 persons were purposively selected. The basic research instrument used in this study for data collection is the questionnaire while secondary sources such as the internet, Personal observations/experiences, periodic visits to notable library and archives across the country were used for intensive inquiry. The questionnaire was structured / designed to include open ended,

close-ended, dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. The 'Test-retest' is adopted to test the level of validity of the instrument. This was done by measuring the consistency of constructed questionnaire through a sample of 10 persons outside the pilot sample of the main study. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyze data in this study included: frequency distribution, rating scales, ranking and summations. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) with the t-test used to validate the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Demography Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
16-20 years old	10	0.72
21-25 years old	345	24.93
26 -30 years old	552	39.88
31-35 years old	477	34.47
Gender		
Male	514	37.14
Female	870	62.86
Education		
SSCE	19	1.37
Diploma/NCE	391	28.25
HND/Bachelor Degree	744	53.76
Post Graduate	230	16.62
N-Power Job Role		
N-Power Teach	381	27.52
N-Power Tax	348	25.14
N-Power Agro	367	26.51
N-Power Health	288	20.80

Source: Fieldwork, 2026.

With regard to the participants' ages, Table 1 shows that, 10 representing 0.72% of the respondents fall between the age bracket of 16 and 20, while 345 representing 24.93% are between the ages of 21 and 25. Further, 552 representing 39.88% fall within 26 and 30 age group and lastly 477 representing 34.47% fall within 31 and 35 age group. From the gender category, 37.14% are male while 62.86% are female. From the educational qualification, 1.37% hold SSCE, 28.25% hold Diploma/NCE, 53.76% HND/Bachelor Degree and 16.62% hold Post Graduate Degree. The job role indicated that, 27.52% fall into N-Power Teach, 25.14% did N-Power Tax, 26.51% were into N-Power Agro while 20.80% did N-Power Health.

Analysis of Research Questions

The below shows the scale and associated mean weight for each research questions

Scale Items	Mean Weight
Indifferent	1
Not Effective	2
Fairly Effective	3

Moderately Effective	4
Very Effective	5

Research Question 1

To what extent can you appraise participation in the N-Power as effective in poverty alleviation and sustainable development in your state?

Table 2: Effectiveness of N-Power in Empowerment of Youths

Effectiveness	Frequency	Weighted Score	Percentage
Indifferent	234	234	16.90
Not Effective	258	516	18.64
Fairly Effective	332	996	23.98
Moderately Effective	250	1000	18.06
Very Effective	310	1550	22.39
Total (M =3.1, SD= 8.14)	**1384**	**4296**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Respondents' perception on the effectiveness of N-power in empowering youth is presented in Table 3 above. Respondents' that perceived N-Power to be very effective is (22.39%) in empowering them constitute the majority. Therefore, it is empirical to conclude that youth that enrolled in N-Power Social Investment Programme believed that the scheme is effective in empowering them.

Research Question 2

To what extent has the N-Power programme effectively impacted on the skills and development of beneficiaries?

Table 3: Respondents' Responses to Questions 2

Skills Acquisition and Development	Means	SD
Improved my computer literacy skills	2.76	0.77
Enhanced my entrepreneurial skills	2.95	0.98
Enhanced my professional skills	4.38	0.17
Does not contribute to my skill acquisition	1.57	0.22
Enhanced my creative ability	3.79	0.65
N-power hasn't impact on my self-development	1.31	0.39
Total	**2.79**	**0.53**

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Research Question 3

To what extent has the youths truly been empowered economically by the N-Power programme of the Buhari administration?

Table 4: Respondents' Responses to Questions 3

Levels of empowerment	Means	SD
I' am empowered economically	4.08	0.63
I have become self-reliant	2.65	0.66
It has improved my financial strength	3.69	0.24
It has improved by livelihood and economic well being	3.94	0.17

It is enabling me to contribute to the nation's economy growth and development	3.94	0.1
Total	**3.66**	**0.36**

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Research Question 4

What are the factors constraining N-Power as a scheme for effective tool for empowerment and development?

Table 5 Respondents' Responses to Questions 4

Problems facing the N-Power Programme	**Means**	**SD**
Non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due	4.38	0.07
High transportation fare paid by the participants to work	4.30	0.08
Poor funding of the programme	3.08	0.2
Bribery and corruption	4.17	0.24
Lack of Working material	3.74	0.14
Non availability of Internet facilities	3.64	0.26
Total	**4.02**	**0.17**

Research Question 5

What is the impact of the N-Power programme on employment generation in the nation's development process?

Table 6: Respondents' Responses to Questions 5

Impact on employment creation	**Means**	**SD**
Secured another job since participation in the scheme	2.12	0.70
Increased access to credit facility	1.77	0.39
Now an employer of labour	2.01	0.39
Your experience from N-Power is beneficial to your current means of livelihood	2.02	0.2
Total	**1.98**	**0.42**

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Testing of Hypotheses

To test this hypotheses, computed indexes of the main constructs were correlated, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a test of hypotheses was conducted using the Excel spreadsheet to determine the p-value. The null hypotheses if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 and if the p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05 we accept.

Hypothesis 1 Results

Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the development of skills necessary for poverty alleviation.

Table 6: t-Test: Paired Two Sample for means

	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	3.1	2.7925
Variance	0.027866667	0.018291667
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	-0.172741011	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	2.647560252	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.038577363	
t Critical one-tail	2.353363435	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.077154726	
t Critical two-tail	3.182446305	

Table 6 results revealed a positive relationship since p value (0.03857). There is a significant relationship between that N-Power social intervention programme and youth's skill acquisition and development since P-value is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted since the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses 2 Results

Hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the empowerment levels of youths towards poverty alleviation.

Table 7: t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	3.1	3.66
Variance	0.027867	0.053533
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	0.169153	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	-4.28452	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.011682	
t Critical one-tail	2.353363	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.023363	
t Critical two-tail	3.182446	

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 7 revealed a positive relationship since the P-value is 0.01162. There is also a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the empowerment level of youths towards poverty alleviation. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted since the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance

Hypotheses 3 Results

Hypothesis 3 states that there is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and employment creation towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Table 8: t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	3.1	1.9825
Variance	0.027866667	0.159091667
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	0.017521874	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	5.201543961	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.006903637	
t Critical one-tail	2.353363435	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.013807273	
t Critical two-tail	3.182446305	

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Hypotheses 3

Table 8 revealed a positive relationship however that there is a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the employment creation for the youths towards poverty alleviation. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted deriving from the result which revealed that the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examines the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation and sustainable development in Nigeria: A study of Delta State. The research concluded that participating in the N-Power scheme improved the skills of beneficiaries but the scheme's effective in empowering the youths and reducing unemployment in the long run might be dependent on other factors which the government should consider. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: entrepreneurial or skills development centers should be adequately funded, equipped and be given the due attention by government at all levels in order to serve as a hub for massive employment generation, youth empowerment should be should be anchored on inclusive growth fundamentals from its design, implementation and evaluation to endear stakeholder participation for better result and the National Social Investment scheme particularly the N-Power programme should be enacted into laws to provide a legal framework for youth mainstreaming in the national development plans and strategies.

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