



**Exploring the prospect and challenges of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria:
A study of N-power program in Bauchi State**

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges and prospects of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria, with a focus on the N-Power program in Bauchi State. Using a qualitative inquiry method, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted. The findings indicate that the N-Power program has significantly contributed to poverty reduction by providing temporary employment opportunities in sectors such as N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro. Additionally, the program has facilitated income generation through monthly stipends and skills development. However, the study also identifies challenges, including political influence, the short-term nature of the scheme, lack of requisite qualifications among some beneficiaries, and a lack of post-program retention. The target audience for this research includes policymakers, program beneficiaries, researchers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders interested in poverty alleviation, empowerment, and youth development initiatives like N-Power under the National Social Investment Program.

Keywords: Challenge, Empowerment, N-Power Program, Poverty Alleviation, Prospect

1. Introduction

Poverty continues to elude global efforts, and no nation, regardless of development, is free from its grasp. Nigeria, despite its high economic growth rate averaging 7.4% as reported by the World Bank in July 2019, faced a GDP drop to 2.7% in 2015 and a 1.6% contraction in 2016 due to declining oil prices and unfavorable production shocks. Nationally, 43% of Nigerians (89 million people) live below the poverty line, and another 25% (53 million) are vulnerable (World Bank, 2021).

Numerous global organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations, have led efforts to alleviate poverty. Their initiatives focus on offering financial assistance, encouraging economic development, improving access to education and healthcare, and

strengthening social protection systems. However, significant obstacles persist, such as economic disparities, conflicts, climate change, and limited access to critical services. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed progress in reducing global poverty, driving millions back into extreme poverty (World Bank, 2021).

Africa continues to be one of the continent's most deeply affected by poverty, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for over half of the world's extreme poor population. Factors such as political instability, corruption, poor infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare exacerbate poverty across the continent. In response, the African Union (AU) and other regional organizations have introduced various poverty alleviation initiatives, emphasizing



economic integration, agricultural development, and social protection. Programs like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are designed to stimulate economic growth and generate employment opportunities. However, significant challenges remain, including a dependence on subsistence farming, rapid population growth, and a lack of sufficient investment in human capital. Additionally, external debt and a reliance on foreign aid undermine the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts (African Union, 2023).

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has a large segment of its population living in poverty. The nation grapples with a range of complex issues, including high unemployment rates, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, and regional disparities. Although Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural resources, particularly oil, the distribution of wealth remains uneven (NBS, 2022).

The Nigerian government has launched various poverty alleviation initiatives, including the N-Power program, as a scheme under the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) focuses on reducing youth unemployment. These initiatives aim to create employment, enhance access to education and healthcare, and support vulnerable populations. However, the effectiveness of Nigeria's poverty reduction efforts is undermined by political interference, corruption, and inadequate funding. The short-term scope of many programs and difficulties in reaching the most vulnerable groups also diminish their impact. Additionally, severe security challenges, particularly in the Northeast, further exacerbate poverty in the country (NSIP, 2021).

Efforts at poverty alleviation in Nigeria and Bauchi State have shown some economic growth but persistent unemployment and poverty. Most research on poverty in Nigeria has been unidimensional or monetary (Abula & Adebayo, 2016; Aye,

2013; Dauda, 2016). In Bauchi State, the poverty incidence is 89.5% (Alkire, Roche, Seth, & Sumner, 2015). The State governor attributes high poverty and social inequalities to unemployment, illiteracy, overdependence on government labor, and the Boko Haram insurgency (The Punch, 2020).

In June 2016, the World Bank Group approved a \$500 million credit, supplemented by an additional \$1.3 billion from the Nigerian Government, for the National Social Investment Program. Since then, more than 4 million Nigerians have received job training, financial support, and social development services (Ibrahim, 2018). Established on June 8, 2016, N-Power, a component of this program, was designed to tackle youth unemployment by targeting both unemployed graduates and non-graduates aged 18 to 35 (Okagbare, 2017). The program, which lasts for two years, involves beneficiaries working within their states of residence. By July 2019, the federal government had allocated ₦279 billion to the initiative.

Bauchi State was allocated fifteen thousand beneficiaries in Batch A and B of the program, with a total monthly stipend expenditure of ₦450 million, amounting to a projected ₦15 billion over the course of the program. Despite these substantial efforts, the levels of unemployment and poverty among youths continue to be high, thus prompted the necessity of this study to investigate the impacts of poverty alleviations in the state with specification on N- This study is structured into introduction, research questions, objectives, methodology, literature review, discussions, recommendations, conclusion, and references.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews previous studies on the concept and causes of poverty, the goals of poverty alleviation, and a historical overview of poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria. Additionally, the



concept of the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) and the N-Power program are discussed.

The Concept of Poverty

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes poverty as either absolute or relative. Absolute poverty is defined as “the lack of sufficient income to meet essential needs such as food, clothing, and shelter,” while relative poverty pertains to “an individual's economic status” in comparison to prevailing living standards in a particular society” (Mohammed, 2018). According to the World Bank (1999), poverty encompasses “a lack of food, shelter, illness, limited access to education, inability to read, fear of the future, unemployment, communication difficulties, loss of a child due to illness from contaminated water, lack of representation, powerlessness, and insufficient freedom.” The World Bank further elaborated in 2011 that poverty involves “distinct deprivation in living conditions across multiple dimensions, including the inability to access basic needs...” (Musa et al., 2016). Additionally, the World Bank defines poverty as living on less than \$1.90 per day (Vyas & Bhargava, 1995).

Yakubu and Aderonmy (2021) describe poverty as having income levels insufficient to ensure well-being. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines poverty as a condition where individuals experience persistent or chronic deprivation of essential resources, capabilities, choices, security, and power required for an adequate standard of living, including various civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights.

Absolute poverty refers to a state where individuals suffer from severe deprivation of essential human needs, such as food, clean drinking water, sanitation, health care, shelter, education, and information. This condition is influenced not only by income levels but also by access to

necessary services (Mattes et al., 2022). Although these signs of poverty are widespread in Nigeria, there is strong evidence suggesting that the situation is worsening, with estimates showing that approximately 70% of Nigerians are living in absolute poverty.

Causes of Poverty

Several factors contribute to poverty, including changing economic trends, high illiteracy rates, increasing divorce rates which contribute to the feminization of poverty, a culture of poverty that does not support poverty alleviation efforts, poor governance, mismanagement of public funds, and high unemployment rates.

Danaan (2018) examines the theoretical nature of poverty in Nigeria, positing that poverty is a complex and multidimensional issue. This complexity arises because the factors influencing poverty extend across social, psychological, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Other suggested causes of poverty in Nigeria includes;

Bad Governance

Narayan (2000) attributes the causes of poverty in Nigeria to poor governance. He argues that governance in Nigeria has been marked by incompetence, official corruption, and inadequate policy prioritization. These issues have led to the misappropriation of scarce resources and the failure to provide essential social and economic infrastructure.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a significant factor contributing to poverty in Nigeria. There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty; as individuals remain unemployed, their sources of livelihood diminish, leading to a higher cost of living and a decreased standard of living. Many Nigerians face limited employment opportunities. According to the World Bank, the formal unemployment rate in Nigeria was estimated at 4.9 percent in 2007, and the country was ranked 61st



globally in terms of unemployment (World Bank).

Corruption

Transparency International defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” This practice is widespread in Nigeria and has severely destabilized the political system. Leaders often misappropriate government funds, prioritizing the interests of their families and friends while neglecting the needs of the general population (Chimobi, 2019). In Nigeria, government income primarily comes from revenues generated through natural resources.

Non-diversification of the Economy/Oil Over Dependency

Nigeria’s poverty is influenced by various factors, among which the lack of economic diversification stands out. The country's heavy reliance on oil has led to what is known as “Dutch disease,” where an over-dependence on natural resources makes other sectors less competitive. As a result, while a few benefit from the oil sector, the majority face impoverishment. Historically, the agricultural sector was a primary source of income, but its significance has diminished with the rise of oil, rendering many agricultural products less relevant (Chimobi, 2020).

Inequality

Inequality involves a concentration of resources or attributes, such as income or consumption, within a distribution (Townsend, 2018). In Nigeria, income inequality has worsened following the economic growth experienced between 1965 and 1975. This disparity has exacerbated poverty across the country. The gap between rural and urban incomes is particularly significant. Rural residents rely primarily on agriculture, a sector that has suffered as oil has dominated Nigeria’s economy, further deepening the divide between rural and urban areas.

Laziness

Laziness is a prevalent issue in Nigeria, particularly concerning economic

responsibility. This often leads to greed and a tendency to hoard family wealth. In many families, there is heavy reliance on the primary breadwinner, whose death can result in significant financial instability. The mismanagement of funds and lack of financial planning can lead to the rapid deterioration of family fortunes upon the breadwinner's death, as other members are left without means or support (Chimobi, 2010).

Poor Education System

Education is a critical factor in poverty reduction. The World Bank emphasizes that education is pivotal to development, fostering economic growth, national productivity, innovation, and promoting democratic values and social cohesion. In Nigeria, the majority of the poor are those with little to no education. The Nigerian education system is often seen as inadequate compared to global standards. According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “everyone has the right to an education,” yet many Nigerians have been denied this fundamental right, leading to their marginalization and invisibility in society (Chimobi, 2010).

In Bauchi, Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS) 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report reveals that 73.9 percent of Bauchi's estimated 7.75 million residents live in multidimensional poverty, which is assessed across health, education, and living standards. According to perceptions of the locals, the causes of poverty in the state include socioeconomic factors, individual attitudes and behaviors, political and policy failures, corruption and mismanagement of resources, insecurity, ethnoreligious crises, as well as climatic and demographic factors (Musa, 2020).

Other causes of poverty in Bauchi State, as identified by a study conducted by Musa (2018), include unemployment, illiteracy, habitual reliance on salaries, inadequate infrastructure, poor entrepreneurial



initiatives, cultural factors, and mismanagement of resources.

The Concept of Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation, also known as poverty reduction, aims to free humanity from severe poverty by empowering and educating individuals to meet their personal and family basic needs. This goal can be achieved globally and locally through the sincere efforts of individuals, organizations, and governments (Obiwuru, 2019).

Eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030 is a pivotal goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From 2015 to 2018, global poverty continued its historical decline, with the poverty rate falling from 10.1% in 2015 to 8.6% in 2018 (SDGs, 2022). Achieving the goal of poverty reduction requires sound policies that address the root causes of poverty and promote inclusive economic growth (Ayoo, 2022). Chakrabati (2013) suggests that development projects and poverty alleviation programs worldwide primarily aim to reduce poverty among poor and vulnerable communities through various participatory and community-driven approaches.

The Historical Overview of Poverty Alleviation programs in Nigeria:

Various financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and both military and civilian governments in Nigeria have initiated a series of poverty alleviation programs aimed at liberating Nigerians from the grips of poverty. Musa et al. (2016) highlight efforts that include “capacity building,” “employment generation for the less privileged and tertiary institution graduates,” “skills acquisition,” and “income generation to boost agricultural output,” among other initiatives. It is crucial to recognize that the drive to mitigate poverty in Nigeria is not a recent endeavor. Early efforts include the Farm Settlement Option of the 1960s, which aimed at agricultural improvement

for the export of cash crops. Following the collapse of this program, the government introduced the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP) and Agricultural Development Project (ADP) in 1972 and 1973, respectively. These programs aimed “to create an avenue for testing and adapting agricultural findings and making such available to farmers nationwide” and “to provide credit facilities for agricultural projects to promote integrated rural development.” The World Bank partially financed and oversaw the execution of these programs, particularly the ADP (Taiwo & Agwu, 2016).

On May 20, 1976, General Olusegun Obasanjo, shortly after succeeding the late General Murtala Mohammed, launched Operation Feed the Nation (OFN). The goals of OFN were to “drastically boost local food production (thereby reducing imports),” “diminish rural-urban migration due to the abandonment of agriculture,” and increase youth employment through the “return to farm” agenda (Mohammed, 2018). During Obasanjo’s regime, the Rural Banking Scheme was introduced in 1977 and 1978 to bring banking services closer to rural dwellers through credit facilities, and Austerity Measures were implemented to prohibit the importation of certain commodities (Taiwo & Agwu, 2016).

In April 1980, after becoming President of Nigeria in 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari launched the Green Revolution, aimed at achieving “self-sufficiency in farm produce and food surplus,” thereby alleviating hunger and lack. Shagari’s government also introduced the Federal Housing Scheme, allocating N2.6 billion for the provision of affordable housing for low-income earners (with annual incomes not exceeding five thousand naira) and medium-income groups (with annual incomes not exceeding eight thousand naira). The government planned to build 40,000 units annually, with 2,000 units per



state and the Federal Capital Territory (Irouke et al., 2017).

Later, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was adopted in 1986 under General Ibrahim Babangida's regime, targeting economic growth free of inflation. In 1987, the Better Life Programme (BLP) was introduced, focusing on skill acquisition, healthcare, and rural development. Prior to this, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) aimed to provide jobs for Nigerian youths, and the Directorate for Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) was focused on rural development. In 1994 and 1997, respectively, the Family Support Programme (FSP) and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) were launched to improve the lives of Nigerians through support for child welfare, youth development, and provision of credit facilities for cottage industries (Taiwo & Agwu, 2016).

With the return to democratic rule in 1999 and recognizing that about 70% of Nigerians were living in severe poverty, the government launched the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), which provided 200,000 jobs for unemployed Nigerians. Despite this effort, poverty did not decrease as expected, leading to the introduction of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001, which included a budget of six billion naira for poverty eradication. NAPEP was structured into four schemes aimed at addressing various aspects of poverty reduction:

Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES): Focused on providing job opportunities, skills acquisition, and training programs for young Nigerians.

Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS): Aimed at improving the infrastructure in rural areas, including transportation, water supply, and electricity.

Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS): Targeted the most vulnerable groups in society by providing social services such as healthcare, education, and support for people with disabilities.

Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS): Promoted the sustainable use and development of Nigeria's natural resources to ensure long-term economic benefits and environmental protection. (Hussaini, 2014). In 2004, the Nigerian government launched the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). At the state level, this initiative was known as the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), and at the local level, it was referred to as the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS). The primary objectives of NEEDS were to combat corruption, promote transparency, and establish a society governed by the rule of law. The strategy also aimed to create jobs, enhance education, improve public health, and ensure security. It involved collaboration with various non-governmental organizations, ministries, and parastatals to achieve these goals and foster sustainable development across Nigeria.

In 2007, President Musa Yar'Adua introduced the Seven-Point Agenda, addressing critical issues such as erratic power supply, food security, and human capital development. Following President Muhammadu Buhari's election in 2015, he allocated 500 billion naira for poverty eradication efforts. In 2016, Buhari launched the N-Power program, designed to "empower Nigerian youths for prosperity" by providing large-scale, relevant work skills acquisition and development. N-Power aims to foster the emergence of software developers, hardware service professionals, animators, graphic artists, building services professionals, artisans, and other skilled workers, thereby addressing poverty and



unemployment among the youth (Mohammed, 2018).

The National Social Investment Program

The National Social Investment Programs (NSIP) were established in 2015 and became operational in 2016 to address previous shortcomings and aim to lift Nigerian citizens out of poverty through capacity building, investment, and direct support (FGN, 2018). The main objectives of NSIP include:

Objective Leadership and Proactive Monitoring and Evaluation: Ensuring effective governance and oversight.

Standard Delivery Mechanisms: Implementing consistent and high-quality service delivery.

Proper Coordination and Synergy: Collaborating with key ministries, departments, local governments, and states for effective program execution.

Sustainable and Long-term Vision: Developing and executing a sustainable strategy for social investment.

Elimination of Duplication: Streamlining roles and responsibilities to avoid overlap. To achieve these goals, NSIP is structured into four major components namely: N-Power (Job Creation and Youth Employment), NHGSFP (National Home-Grown School Feeding Program), NASSCO (National Social Safety Net Program) and GEEP (Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program).

However, these Programs Has Three Pillars as follows: NCTP (National Cash Transfer Program), YESSO (Youth Employment and Social Support Operation) and CSDP (Community Social Development Project).

The operational objectives of the National Social Investment Programs (NSIP) are as follows:

Increase Income Access for Poor and Vulnerable Households: Provide targeted funds to help households absorb economic shocks and enhance their livelihood.

Reduce Inequalities and Disparities: Address and diminish economic and social inequalities.

Enhance Access to Education and Health Services: Empower vulnerable sectors by improving access to essential services.

Decrease Youth Unemployment: Connect volunteers with opportunities to fill observed gaps in the job market.

Eradicate Malnutrition in School-Age Children: Establish a sustainable school feeding program to improve nutritional outcomes.

Provide Affordable Credit to MSMEs: Boost business revenue and facilitate market linkages through accessible financial support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Stimulate Productivity and Growth in Rural Communities: Promote economic development and growth in rural areas.

Capture Identities of Unregistered and Vulnerable Groups: Improve planning by identifying and registering vulnerable populations.

Promote Financial Inclusion: Enhance access to financial services to increase financial inclusion rates.

The challenges faced by the National Social Investment Programs (NSIP) include:

Lack of Awareness: Insufficient publicity due to the vast and diverse geographical coverage.

Poor Connectivity: Inadequate internet access and connectivity issues affecting technology-driven payment systems.

Remoteness of Locations: Difficulties arising from the remote areas where beneficiaries reside.

State Officials' Misconduct: Instances where state officials attempt to manipulate or short-change field offices and beneficiaries in their payments.

Unresponsive Officials: Lack of motivation and responsiveness among some state officials.



Food Purchase Racketeering: Issues with racketeering and exploitation in the process of purchasing food for farmers and caterers.

Exploitation of Beneficiaries: Exploitation of low literacy and poverty levels among beneficiaries, including the extortion of unapproved fees.

The Concept of N-Power

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment initiative under the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). The program aims to foster a learn-work-entrepreneurship culture among youths aged 18 to 35. It seeks to address ongoing public service challenges, such as the low teacher-to-pupil ratio in primary schools, high rates of preventable diseases, and the underrepresentation of taxable individuals. By leveraging a large volunteer workforce, N-Power aims to tackle these issues and stimulate economic growth. Additionally, the program provides non-graduates with essential technical and business skills to enhance their employment prospects and improve their livelihoods (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Essentially, The objectives of N-Power are:

- i. To directly improve the livelihoods of a substantial number of unemployed young Nigerians.
- ii. To establish a high-quality system for transferring employability, entrepreneurial, and technical skills.
- iii. To create a comprehensive ecosystem that addresses challenges in public services and supports government diversification policies.
- iv. To develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy.

The N-Power program is structured into two main categories, each targeting distinct needs and stages of career development:

N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro: These strands focus on providing employment opportunities and skills development in specific sectors:

N-Teach: Addresses the low teacher-to-pupil ratio in public primary schools by deploying volunteers as teaching assistants to improve educational quality.

N-Health: Targets the high rates of preventable diseases by placing volunteers in healthcare facilities to support health services and outreach programs.

N-Agro: Enhances agricultural productivity by engaging volunteers in farming activities and agricultural support services.

N-Power Skills (N-Skills): This category is designed to equip non-graduates with technical and business skills to improve their employability and entrepreneurship prospects. It focuses on providing vocational training and practical experience as well as facilitating access to financial and business support to help trainees start their own businesses or enhance their career opportunities.

The N-Power Volunteer Corps functions similarly to a "local hero" initiative, where graduates participate in public service within their communities for a two-year term. Volunteers benefit from continuous support through computing services, which offer essential information and ongoing training. This system acts as a "personal guide" throughout their service, ensuring they have the resources and guidance needed to effectively contribute to their roles (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework serves as a blueprint or guide for a study, providing a structured foundation based on relevant theories that are interrelated and reflective of the study's assumptions. It often involves adapting existing theories to design and conduct the investigation (Grant, 2014). In this study, Human Capital Theory was utilized to thoroughly examine the phenomena under review.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, introduced by economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz in the 1960s, highlights the



significance of education, training, and skill development in boosting individuals' productivity, earning potential, and overall economic well-being. The theory frames human capital as an investment in individuals' knowledge, skills, and capabilities, which can lead to higher wages, better job opportunities, and improved living standards over time. It argues that both individuals and societies can enhance their economic outcomes by investing in education and skill development. By acquiring knowledge and skills, individuals increase their productivity and effectiveness, thereby improving their earning potential and economic prospects. Additionally, the theory suggests that governments and institutions investing in knowledge creation and skill development are likely to achieve higher returns in the form of increased wages, enhanced job prospects, and greater career advancement opportunities compared to those with lower levels of human capital.

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design, incorporating semi-structured interviews and face-to-face conversations. A quota sampling method, a form of purposive sampling, was employed to gather data from six informants. Qualitative research is particularly useful for exploring specific issues or problems, especially when investigating a particular group or population and identifying variables that are difficult to measure quantitatively. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of issues beyond existing literature or research findings, providing a deeper understanding of the subject (Creswell, 2013).

The respondents for this study consist of the officials as well as beneficiaries of N-Power scheme of National Social Investment Programs.

4. Findings and Discussion

An interpretative approach was used alongside thematic analysis to examine the data. The study adhered to a rigorous protocol during the interviewing process, ensuring that all procedures were followed and that the study's objectives were clearly communicated to each participant (Creswell, 2012; Neumann, 2006). The research also followed established guidelines for conducting interviews, as outlined by Creswell (2012), Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010), and Neuman (2006).

Impacts of N-Power on Poverty Alleviation

The study found that the N-Power program has significantly benefitted its participants. It provides opportunities for employment, income generation, skills development, and entrepreneurial growth. The responses from the informants confirmed these positive impacts.

Thus, Informant one submitted that;

"The N-Power scheme has proven highly effective, especially in employment generation. In Bauchi State alone, approximately fifteen thousand beneficiaries, including both graduates and non-graduates, have participated in the program, leading to a notable decrease in the state's unemployment rate. Additionally, the program has provided beneficiaries with a range of skills that promote self-reliance. Through its entrepreneurship support, N-Power also encourages and assists beneficiaries in starting their own businesses, thereby fostering job creation and stimulating local economic development."

In another response by Informant two, stated that;



"The N-Power program in Bauchi State and across Nigeria has significantly aided beneficiaries by offering monthly stipends of at least thirty thousand naira (₦30,000). This financial support is adequate to meet basic needs, enhance overall well-being, and directly contribute to poverty alleviation. Additionally, the program aligns with broader national development goals and strategies for reducing poverty. Initiatives that are part of a comprehensive development framework tend to achieve a more substantial impact."

Informant three portrayed that;

"Beneficiaries experience financial stability due to the monthly stipends of at least thirty thousand naira (₦30,000) they receive. Additionally, the program proves highly effective in enhancing beneficiaries' attractiveness to potential employers. The experience gained through various program engagements gives them a notable edge over individuals who were not involved in the scheme."

From the above responses, it can be concluded that all informants agree that the program has markedly improved the socioeconomic conditions of its beneficiaries through job placement, income generation, skills acquisition, and entrepreneurship, among other benefits.

The Challenges hindering the effective realization of N-Power Program goals

Poverty alleviation programs, including the N-Power initiative, are affected by the "Nigerian factor," which encompasses issues such as political interference, resource mismanagement, beneficiary-related challenges, and cultural and social norms. As reported by the informants, the

N-Power program has encountered many of these difficulties.

Informant four submitted that;

"The challenges attributed to the program are primarily administrative and have significantly hindered its effective implementation. Moreover, the overbearing influence of politicians has resulted in issues such as favoritism in beneficiary selection and the diversion of resources for political gain."

In another response, Informant five posited that;

"Some of the challenges associated with the program's implementation include its short-term and temporary nature. Although each batch is intended to participate for two years, there is also a lack of an exit package. The government has not fulfilled its promise of providing an exit package to beneficiaries upon completion of the program."

While Informant Six revealed that;

"Another challenge was the failure to retain beneficiaries in permanent employment, despite promises from the ministry and some state governors. Additionally, many beneficiaries in the N-Power Teach strand were inadequately trained before being sent to their various places of primary assignments. Furthermore, there were frequent delays in the payment of monthly stipends."

The discussion highlights that, like many other initiatives in Nigeria, the N-Power program has faced various challenges, some of which may extend beyond those mentioned. Addressing these issues requires the attention of policy actors.

The findings demonstrate that the N-Power program has played a significant role in alleviating poverty by providing temporary



employment through its various components, such as N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro. The program also supports income generation by offering beneficiaries a monthly stipend of thirty thousand naira (₦30,000). However, the results also point to several challenges, including political interference, the program's short-term nature, inadequate qualifications of some beneficiaries, and the absence of permanent employment opportunities after the program's completion.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, this study has revealed that the N-Power program has produced several beneficial effects, including job creation, income generation, skill development, youth empowerment, and advancements in agriculture, all of which contribute to reducing poverty over time. Nonetheless, the study also uncovered several

challenges, such as political interference, insufficient qualifications among some participants, and unmet promises regarding permanent employment opportunities by the overseeing ministry and state governments.

Based on the findings above, the study recommends the following:

Eligibility for Soft Loans: Individuals who have gained skills through the N-Power program should be eligible for soft loans to help them start their own businesses.

Permanent Employment Consideration: Beneficiaries who demonstrate exceptional promise, efficiency, and discipline should be considered for permanent employment by the government.

Timely Payment of Stipends: Stipends should be paid promptly to beneficiaries to ensure they can cover transportation and other personal expenses.

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