

# ASSESSMENT OF N-POWER PROGRAMME IMPACT ON YOUTHS AS A SUSTAINABLE EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-EAST REGION, NIGERIA

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Article History	Abstract
<b>Original Research Article</b>	<p><i>This study investigated the N power programme impact on youths as a sustainable empowerment development in Adamawa State and Gombe State. Two research question were raised to guide the conduct of the study. Two research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The study was based on Human Capital Theory. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of study was 9882 comprising of Adamawa state 5402 and Gombe, states 4480 N power beneficiaries. A sample of 385 was selected to serve as the sample size of the population using Taro Yamane formula. The data collected and retrieved from the field was analyzed using percentage, mean and standard deviation for answering of the research question and Spearman ranking for testing the two hypothesis. Base on the findings, it was revealed that the N-Power Programme in Adamawa state and Gombe State has positively influenced youths' livelihood and also serve as a sustainable development to the nation through the income support, skills acquisition and job creation. It was recommended that Government and stakeholder should introduce structured program and strategies such as grants, loans, or job placement to beneficiaries of the programme and create means of assessing loans for them in order for them to be empowered permanently.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> N power, programme, youths, youth empowerment, sustainable development.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Most of the countries in the world are struggling to address the problems of unemployment in their country, this issue of unemployment brings about social problems in their societies and lead to underdeveloped. African countries are not exception because most of the unemployment rates are affected by African countries.

Nigeria, with an estimated population of about 206.14 million according to recent United Nations projections (World Population Review, 2020), is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh largest in the world. It is also Africa's largest economy, but it still facing challenges among them are; insecurities, high unemployment, ethnic crises resulting to underdevelopment. According to empirical research, unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people, are two most serious socio-economic problems. (Anyanwu, 2017). This is made worse by the fact that Nigeria is very poor and has a low ranking

on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2019). In response, successive administrations have introduced policy interventions aimed at poverty reduction and employment generation: under the leadership of Olusegun Obasanjo, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was instituted as a federal mechanism to address extreme deprivation and joblessness; the administration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan subsequently established the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) to expand employment opportunities, particularly through graduate internship initiatives; and later, the government of Muhammadu Buhari implemented the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) as a comprehensive framework designed to mitigate poverty and unemployment through capacity development, financial inclusion, and direct support mechanisms, structured around four core components—N-Power, the

National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP), and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) (Abin, 2018).

The Federal Government of Nigeria's National Social Investment Programme includes N-Power, which is a largescale public Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, particularly in the North-East region where numerous problems are occurring daily among them are insecurities, poverty, unemployment, schools drop out. Despite various governmental interventions aimed at addressing youth joblessness and social tensions, the rate of unemployment and underemployment among young people continues to create serious threats to economic stability, social problems, and sustainable development. In response to these challenges, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the N-Power Programme under the National Social Investment Programme in 2016 as a strategic initiative to enhance youth employability through skills acquisition, temporary employment, and financial stipends.

The programme was designed to provide immediate income support while simultaneously equipping beneficiaries with vocational, entrepreneurial, and digital competencies intended to target long-term economic independence. However, there is limited empirical evidence assessing whether the programme has translated into sustainable empowerment outcomes, specifically within Adamawa state and gombe state.

Given the significant public resources allocated to youth empowerment initiatives, a systematic evaluation of the N-Power Programme's impact in Adamawa and Gombe state were both timely and necessary. Specifically, there is a need to determine whether the programme has achieved its intended objective of sustainable empowerment development or not.

The program's three main goals are to create jobs, reduce poverty, and give young people more power through structured volunteer and service opportunities. The program is for Nigerians aged 18 to 35, both graduates and non-graduates, and it aims to create a culture of learning, constructive involvement, and entrepreneurship that will last (FGN, 2018). N-Power is a government program that aims to reduce young unemployment by creating an institutional framework for mass skills acquisition and capacity development that is in line with the country's key sectors. The program was originally divided into three parts, each with its own target group and recruitment goals. The Graduate Teachers Corps aimed to hire 500,000 graduates; N-Power Knowledge aimed to hire 25,000

nongraduates; and N-Power Build aimed to hire 75,000 nongraduates into vocational pathways. Participants who signed up for the graduate stream were supposed to get computers with role-specific tools and materials for ongoing professional development to help them do their jobs. Beneficiaries were sent out to give instructional, advisory, and technical support in four key areas: agriculture, health, power technology, and community education. This connected the development of human capital with the demands of certain public service sectors (Obadan, 2019).

### Statement of the problem

Despite various governmental interventions aimed at addressing youth joblessness and social tensions, the rate of unemployment and underemployment among young people continues to create serious threats to economic stability, social problems, and sustainable development. Youth unemployment remains one of the most constants socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, particularly in the North-East region where numerous problems are occurring daily among them are insecurities, poverty, unemployment, schools drop out. Youth unemployment has become a significant developmental issue, both regionally and worldwide, due to its demonstrated effects on instability and dangers to peace and security (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). In response to these challenges, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the N-Power Programme under the National Social Investment Programme in 2016 as a strategic initiative to enhance youth employability through skills acquisition, temporary employment, and financial stipends.

The programme was designed to provide immediate income support while simultaneously equipping beneficiaries with vocational, entrepreneurial, and digital competencies intended to target long-term economic independence. Furthermore, previous social investment initiatives executed by prior administrations seem to have produced minimal measurable effects in significantly alleviating youth unemployment and poverty in North-Eastern Nigeria, thereby eliciting apprehensions regarding policy continuity, implementation effectiveness, and enduring structural outcomes.

However, there is limited empirical evidence assessing whether the programme has translated into sustainable empowerment outcomes, specifically within Adamawa state and Gombe state. Therefore, there is a need to investigate whether the programme has achieved its intended objective of sustainable empowerment development or not. The states of the North East are Adamawa, Taraba, Gombe, Bauchi, Yobe, and Borno.

## Objective of the study

The main purpose of the study is to assess the impact of N power programme on youths as a sustainable empowerment development programme in Adamawa and Gombe state, Nigeria.

However, specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the N-Power Program in enhancing the livelihoods of youths in Adamawa and Gombe state.
2. To identify the key factors contributing to the success or challenges of the N-Power Program in Adamawa and Gombe state.

## Research question

Two research questions were raised to direct this study.

1. What is the effectiveness of the N-Power Program in enhancing the livelihoods of youths in Adamawa and Gombe state Nigeria?
2. What are the key factors contributing to the success or challenges of the N-Power Program in Adamawa and Gombe state?

## Research Hypotheses

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** The N-Power Program has significantly improved the economic status of beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries in Adamawa and Gombe State.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is a positive correlation between participation in the N-Power Program and improvements in employability skills among youths in Adamawa state and Gombe State.

## Significance of the Study

The results of this study may be significant or advantageous for many groups, include; Government, Policymakers, society, and scholars.

The Government; The study could identify effective strategies to boost economic productivity and reduce unemployment among youths in the region.

Policy makers; Findings will provide more understanding to policymakers to refine and enhance existing youth empowerment programs.

Society; it will make the society to understanding the impact on the beneficiaries thereby encouraging them to support the program or similar one that would come.

Researchers; the findings of the study will add value to an existing knowledge and it will serve as literature review.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Theoretical Framework (Human Capital Theory, 1993)*

This study adopted Human Capital Theory Profounded by

(Becker, 1993) he stated that investment in education, skills, and training enhances productivity and income generation. The N-Power Programme aligns with this theory by equipping youths with employable skills and work experience to improve their economic outcomes.

## Concept of youth

**Youth:** Youth is the period of life that comes after childhood and before adulthood (maturity). People between the ages of 18 and 35 are also considered youths (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2019).

## Youth Empowerment:

Strategic empowerment of youth is a fundamental element for human capital development, poverty alleviation, and sustainable economic growth, as it provides future generations with the skills and autonomy required for meaningful participation in socio-economic activities. Smith and Johnson (2022) define empowerment as a transforming process wherein individuals undertake intentional activities to combat the powerlessness engendered by social stigmatisation and institutional exclusion. Within this paradigm, empowerment theory proposes normative and practical solutions aimed at reducing marginalisation and structural inequality through the promotion of capacity building, critical consciousness, and skill development (Nkambule & Mashiloane, 2022). In the context of youth development, empowerment is a multidimensional process—attitudinal, structural, and cultural—through which young individuals gain the authority, competence, and autonomy necessary to make informed decisions and instigate change in their personal and collective situations (Obadan, 2019). Consequently, youth empowerment involves the intentional establishment and institutional endorsement of conducive conditions that enable young individuals to exercise self-determination and initiative, rather than merely serving as passive recipients of externally imposed interventions.

## Concepts of N-Power:

N-Power is a government program that aims to give all Nigerians access to skills training and chances to build their human capital. The program's first modular parts are only for those between the ages of 18 and 35, as long as they meet the requirements for each group. Selection is typically based on a clear interest in the chosen field, successful completion of required assessment procedures, willingness to undergo rigorous training beyond one's comfort zone, and the ability to develop skills that align with program goals (Aderonmu, 2017). Structured requirements govern participation, yet beneficiaries are anticipated to take principal responsibility for optimising the training and experiential opportunities offered. For practical reasons, the term "graduate" includes people who have post-secondary

degrees, such as the Ordinary National Diploma (OND), the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), or other credentials that are spelt out in program rules (Obadan, 2019). N-Power has seven main parts: N-Power Agro, NPower Tax, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach, and N-Power Tech (for hardware and software). The N-Power Volunteer Corps is a crucial feature of the plan. It is a paid two-year post-secondary involvement program that sends volunteers to their local areas to help with public service delivery. Volunteers get computers that come with role-specific information already installed on them to help them do their jobs better and keep learning new things. In 2016, the Federal Government got 200,000 volunteers to help out. In 2017, they got another 300,000. The June 2017 cycle only allowed applications from graduates. The program aims to deploy 500,000 trained graduates to fill systemic gaps in education, health, civic education, and agricultural extension services. This will help the country reach bigger goals, such as food security and economic independence (Bennel, 2017; Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2015).

#### **The contributing of N-Power programme on the youth of Adamawa and Gombe State**

1. N-power Provides direct employment to thousands of youths, reducing unemployment rates in Adamawa state and Gombe state
2. N power Equips beneficiaries with the relevant skills in areas such as agriculture, health, and education in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
3. N-power Increases the financial independence of participants, and enable them to support themselves and their families in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
4. N-power Encourages entrepreneurial skills and mindset, promoting self-employment in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
5. N-power beneficiaries contribute to community service projects, and enhancing local infrastructure and services in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
6. N-power Creates platforms for young people to connect with mentors, industry leaders, and other youths in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
7. N-power Engages youth in productive activities, which can lead to economic growth in the region in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
8. N-power Enhancements in educational support through the provision of teaching and learning resources in Adamawa state and Gombe state.

9. N-power Fosters a sense of social responsibility and civic duty among participants in Adamawa state and Gombe state.
10. By engaging youth in meaningful work, the N power programme may help reduce crime and social unrest in Adamawa state and Gombe state.

#### **Evaluation of N-Power Program Implementation**

The implementation of the N-Power program has been met with varied outcomes, particularly impacting youth empowerment in North East Nigeria. Evaluative studies reveal that the program, which aims to alleviate poverty and enhance employability, has experienced challenges such as delays in stipend payments and inadequate communication regarding participant benefits. For instance, a study focusing on the N-Power Agro initiative indicated that 80.0% of respondents believed their working experience had improved, while 79.2% reported significant contributions to poverty reduction. However, these benefits were countered by issues like non-timely stipend disbursement and high transportation costs, which detracted from potential economic gains (Fapojuwo et al., 2024). Moreover, synthesizing lessons from previous development frameworks, such as the World Bank Groups Gender Equality as Smart Economics plan, underscores the necessity of addressing gender disparities and enhancing program efficiency to ensure long-term sustainability within the N-Power initiative (N/A, 2010). Ultimately, addressing these challenges is crucial for truly empowering youth in the region.

#### **Assessment of job creation and skill enhancement among beneficiaries**

The N-Power program has emerged as a critical intervention aimed at addressing both job creation and skill enhancement among youth in North East Nigeria. By equipping beneficiaries with practical skills and entrepreneurial knowledge, this initiative seeks to bridge the gap between academic qualifications and actual employability, which has become increasingly essential in a region facing high youth unemployment rates. Studies indicate that effective skill training programs can significantly promote job readiness; however, without a robust framework that combines entrepreneurship education with practical application, potential benefits may remain unrealized (Bamidele et al., 2024). Furthermore, the historical context of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria underscores the urgency of such initiatives, as previous attempts at economic empowerment have often faltered due to mismanagement and ineffective strategies (Eleagu et al., 2018). Ultimately, the assessment of N-Powers impact on skill development and job creation will provide valuable

insights into the programs effectiveness and sustainability as a model for youth empowerment in the region.

### Empirical Review

Dauda (2019) conducted an empirical evaluation of the N Power initiative, focusing on its effects on youth empowerment in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to gather primary data from program users. Out of 512 registered participants in the study area, a sample of 225 teenagers was chosen. Data collection was executed via a structured questionnaire, while analytical methodologies integrated both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques: metrics such as means and percentages were employed to encapsulate demographic characteristics, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was utilized to evaluate the formulated hypotheses and ascertain the strength of association between variables. The research focused on unemployed graduates participating in specific segments of the program, specifically N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, and N-Power Teach. Empirical data indicated no statistically significant correlation between participation in the N-Power project and essential outcome variables, such as employment generation, poverty alleviation, and skills acquisition. The investigation also found that there were a number of structural and administrative problems that made the program less effective. These included employment insecurity, late stipend payments, corruption-related behaviours, and insufficient monitoring systems. Based on these findings, the study suggested that the program should cover more unemployed graduates, become a way for graduates to get more stable jobs, and give money to help entrepreneurial graduates use their new skills in a productive way.

Okoro (2018) undertook an evaluative study on the instructional proficiency of N-Power teachers and their effective utilisation of educational resources, emphasising the broader ramifications for pedagogical efficacy within Nigeria’s primary and post-primary educational systems. In a similar study, Abin (2018) looked at the N-Power program's implementation architecture and how it helped people in Akwanga Metropolis, Nasarawa State, with their social and economic well-being. He focused on administrative processes, delivery methods, and measurable welfare outcomes.

Zainab et al. (2024) recently looked into how N-Power programs help young people in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, become more powerful. Despite these academic evaluations, current evidence indicates that the program has not yet developed into a structurally

revolutionary or durable solution to Nigeria’s enduringly elevated unemployment rates. Recent labour statistics show that unemployment and poverty levels are still rising, which raises serious questions about whether current intervention programs, like N-Power, have had any significant longterm effects on the economy or society, especially when it comes to helping young people who are vulnerable and making it harder for them to find work.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study utilized a survey research design as the primary methodological framework. According to Ogbonnai and Dewan (2006), survey research is focused on systematically describing, examining, and analysing the current conditions, traits, or phenomena within a specified community. The selection of this design was deemed suitable for producing empirical data that effectively captures participants' experiences and perspectives related to the N-Power Programme. Consequently, the methodology enabled the acquisition of pertinent data essential for formulating evidence-based conclusions and deriving generalisable inferences regarding the influence of the N-Power initiative on youth empowerment and its feasibility as a sustainable development strategy in NorthEast Nigeria.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study include; all the beneficiaries of N Power program in Adamawa and Gombe State. Total population = **9,882 beneficiaries**

States	population
Adamawa state	5402
Gombe state	4480
Total	9882

### Sample technique and sample size

The researchers used Taro Yamani formular to get the sample size of 385

$$n = \{N\} / \{1 + N(e)^2\}$$

$$n = \{9882\} / \{1 + 9882(0.05)^2\}$$

$$n = \{9882\} / \{25.705\} 385$$

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

**Research question one:** Has the N-Power Programme significantly improved the livelihood of youths in Adamawa and Gombe States?

**Table 1: Respondents for both states**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Adamawa state	212	55.1%
Gombe state	173	44.5 %
Total	385	100

From the above table 1, it clearly showed that Adamawa state has the Highers number of N power beneficiaries' respondents with 212 representing 55.1% while Gombe State has the lowest number of N power respondents with 173 representing 44.5%.

**Table 2: Responses on livelihood improvement (RQI)**

Items	Yes	No	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
Increase income	260	125	385		
Improved employability	248	137	385	1.65	0.48
Enhanced job skills	248	137	385		
Aggregate	252	133			

From the above Table 2; it was clearly indicated that about 260 respondents agreed that N-Power Programme has significantly improved the livelihood of youths in Adamawa and Gombe States by increasing of their monthly income while 125 respondents did not agreed that N-Power Programme has significantly improved the livelihood of youths in Adamawa and Gombe States. 248 respondents also agreed that N power programme has improved their employability in Adamawa and Gombe states while 137 respondents did not agree on that. Also 248 respondents agreed that N power programme enhanced their job skills in Adamawa and Gombe states, while 137 respondents did not agree on that. This result to the mean of 1.65 while the standard deviation is 0.48.

**Research question two:** What major challenges affect the effective implementation of the N-Power Programme in the study area?

**Table 3: Responses on Research Question two on Programme Challenges (RPC)**

Items	Yes	No	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
Delayed stipends	262	123	385		
Weak monitoring	274	111	385	1.70	0.46
Insufficient support	268	117	385		
Aggregate	268	117			

From the above Table 3; it was clearly indicated that about 262 respondents agreed that the N-Power Programme major challenges was delayed in stipends that delayed in payments in both Adamawa and Gombe States while 123 respondents did not believed that one of the major challenges of N-Power Programme in Adamawa and Gombe state was delayed in stipends. 274 respondents also agreed that N power programme has challenges of weak monitoring in Adamawa and Gombe states while 111 respondents did not agree on that. Also 268 respondents agreed that N power programme has challenges of insufficient support from the government and communities in Adamawa and Gombe states, while 117 respondents did not agree on that. Also. This results to the mean of 1.70 while the standard deviation is 0.46.

**Hypothesis testing:** The N-Power Programme has no significant effect on the livelihood of youths in Adamawa and Gombe States

**Table 4: Spearman Rank Correlation Results**

Hypothesis	Correlation Coefficient (r <sub>s</sub> )	p-value	Decision
H <sub>01</sub> : Effect on Livelihood	0.67	< 0.05	Reject
H <sub>02</sub> : Challenges and Effectiveness	-0.58	< 0.05	Reject

From the above table 4, it showed that Both the hypotheses are statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . because There is a significant positive relationship between N-Power participation and improved youth livelihood.  $r_s = 0.68$   $p < 0.05$  at such it was Rejected

**Hypothesis 2**

- $r_s = -0.59$
- $p < 0.05$

N-power Programme challenges significantly reduce the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme. Because the p value 0.05 is greater than coefficient -0.59. at such it was rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the N-Power Programme in Adamawa state and Gombe state has positively influenced youths livelihood which serves as sustainable development to the nation through the income support, skills acquisition and job creation. However, persistent challenges particularly payment delays, weak monitoring, and lack of exit strategies limit its sustainability. This is in line with the study of Adebayo & Yusuf (2021), in his paper Youth < 0.05 Reject < 0.05 Reject

empowerment programmes and employment outcomes in Nigeria. He revealed that N-Power programme has improved short-term income to an individual but also lacked sustainability mechanisms. Also, Mohammed & Lawal (2023), in his study, Social investment programmes and youth livelihood outcomes in Adamawa State. He revealed that, N power programme has Positive livelihood effects on individuals in Adamawa state and Gombe state but there is weak monitoring and supervision.

## CONCLUSION

It was Concluded that the N-Power Programme in Adamawa state and Gombe state has positively influenced youths' livelihood and sustainable development to the nation through the income support, skills acquisition and job creation. The N-Power Programme has made meaningful contributions to youths' empowerment in Adamawa and Gombe States By providing vocational training and employment opportunities, these programs have not only alleviated poverty but also fostered a sense of agency among young people. Nonetheless, its long-term developmental impact remains constrained by implementation and sustainability challenges.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that;

1. To give beneficiaries of the program permanent power, the government and stakeholders should set up organised programs and tactics like grants, loans, or job placement. They should also find ways to assess loans for them. They should also make monitoring and supervision stronger at the state and local levels.
2. The Economic policies of governments should Partner with private sector organizations to absorb trained beneficiaries.
3. The youth should see the program as a way to help the world grow in a way that lasts. And stay away from crime and unemployment by being dedicated to the N-Power program and learning the skills they

need to start their own businesses and become financially independent.

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