

**A Critically Study of Unemployment and Social Intervention Programmes in  
The Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria: Indications From N-Power  
Programme**

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**Abstract**

*The study intends to critically look at unemployment and social intervention programmes with emphasis on N-Power Programme in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, to ascertain its impact on the general society where it was implemented and if it has achieved its stated objectives. The methodology adopted is survey while resting on the decision-making theory. Major findings indicate that though, the N-Power was a timely response to address poverty menace, it however did not achieve its full target. The study recommends among others; an audit of the programme to identify the major obstacles, and improve on it for subsequent social intervention programmes.*

Keywords: Social Intervention, Federal Capital, N-Power, Unemployment, Poverty.

**1.1 Background to the Study**

Over the past few years, poverty remains the main threat to mankind in the world particularly, in developing countries (UNDP, 2015). Sustainable Development Goals one and two strongly emphasise the need to address the problems associated with poverty and hunger.

Unemployment and poverty have become life acid with a sour taste in the developing economies as they cast a shadow over the development. Mutiullah (2010:6) justified this statement by saying

that “unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unemployment and poverty have overshadowed the economy in such a way that youths and young graduates are living in perpetual hopelessness”.

The repercussion of unemployment reaches beyond the person out of work, touching, spouses, children, the economy and society at large (Duncan, 2001). Many of these effects can be traced backed to the psychological effect of unemployment. Besides economic hardship and partly as a result of it, many unemployed persons suffer lowered self-esteem, depression, anxiety, shame, physical illness, marital problems and isolation from family and friends perhaps because they cannot afford to socialize or because they do not want to burden others with their problems or they are ashamed (Micheal, 1968). In most cases, isolation from society may also result if the duration of unemployment is long. People begin to feel alienated and see the nation’s political and social institutions as callous and uncaring.

The negative result of unemployment in society is poverty which is strong and evil. Poverty has various social and economic dimensions that express its manifestation in lack of income and insufficient productive resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Poverty indicators; hunger and malnutrition, limited access to quality education and basic services, increased morbidity and mortality which occur as a result of illness, inadequate housing, unsafe environment and social discrimination. As a matter of fact, the concept of poverty does not subject itself to any straight jacket definition (Agumagu, 2000). As there are divergent views on the concept of poverty, one could observe that poverty exists when people lack the means of sustaining the basic needs of life.

Nigeria is a nation that is endowed with multifarious resources both in human and materials. However, the prevailing high rate of poverty and unemployment could be attributed to some factors which include perceived corruption in all tiers of government, the inordinate ambition of politicians to amass wealth and resources at the expense of the masses, poor implementation of economic policy that could alleviate poverty, leadership problems and mismanagement of human and material resources (Akomolafe, Agunbiade and Ndayako, 2018).

Nigeria with a population of about 180 million is experiencing a rising rate of unemployment and attendant poverty particularly among the youths (Hassan 2014). The universities and other tertiary institutions in the country produce graduates each year without the hope of any job. This situation

has resulted in different forms of social, economic, political and psychological consequences such as armed robbery, oil bunkering, pipe vandalism, militancy, political thuggery, prostitution, illegal trafficking, cultism and many others (Odeh and Okoye 2014).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The problems of unemployment and poverty are the issues that always receive the attention and the influence of every new government in Nigeria through their repertoire of policy. Despite the manifest of government interventions via Poverty Reduction Programmes, and employment generation in Nigeria, there is obvious prevalence of poverty and unemployment problems due to poor implementation and the inability of the government to concretize the objective for which Poverty Alleviation Programmes were established.

It is fundamentally expected that N-Power Programme as anti-poverty, will reduce the incident of poverty and unemployment, and provide a solution to the ailing public service of the various states in the country which was caused by the shortage of staff and unwillingness of the state's governors to do massive recruitment because of the challenges in payment of salaries especially as it addressing the sustainable development goal one. It becomes the public's conjecture to view N-Power Programme as nothing than a specific regime exercise that will have no impart just like other past Poverty Alleviation Programmes ever initiated in Nigeria. Whereas, only little attention has been devoted to the studies of the N-Power Programme by researchers like;( Akuruju and Eyioko 2019, Bisong 2019, Odey 2018, and Abin 2018), etc. in confined areas of Rivers State, Cross River state and the Nasarawa States, and with a submission that the programme has contributed to poverty reduction of the volunteers alone. However, the studies have neglected the effect of the programme on the general society. With the high level of poverty in Nigeria presently, which raise more questions than answers on the reality of the N-Power Programme as anti-poverty, warrants further investigation beyond what others have done in extant literature especially, as none has in my view sufficiently answered the questions or done the study of N-Power Programme and unemployment reduction in Federal Capital Territory. And neither has there been any research work related to the subject of inquiry in the selected Area Councils areas which make the study to be relevant.

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to critically study unemployment and social intervention programmes with emphasis on N-Power Programme in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria to ascertain its impact on the general society where it was implemented and if it has achieved its stated objectives. Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. find out the extent to which the N-Power Programme has reduced the incidence of poverty and unemployment problems in Federal Capital Territory.
- ii. ascertain the impact of the N-Power Programme on the ailing Public Service delivery of Federal Capital Territory.
- iii. assess the effect of the N-Power Programme on the people of Federal Capital Territory other than volunteers.
- iv. identify the factors militating against the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme in Federal Capital Territory.

### **1.4. Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts decision-making theory. According to Robert (2012), decision-making is the study of identifying and selecting alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision-maker. Making a decision implies that there are choices to be considered, and in such a case we want not only to identify as many of these alternatives as possible but to choose the one that (1) has the highest probability of success or effectiveness and (2) best fits with our goal's desires, lifestyle, values, and so on. Wang, (2007), also opined that decision-making can be regarded as the mental processes (cognitive process) resulting in the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Every decision-making process produces a final choice; the output can be an action or an opinion of choice.

N-Power Programme is a product of the decision taken by the government to provide sound and enabling conditions to the youths and young graduates in Nigeria. It is a fact that the government is faced with complex societal problems, which cannot be solved at once given the resources as such decision becomes pertinent as to choose among the various alternative what is to be done or not to be done.

N-Power Programme in Nigeria is found to be a product of decisions reached by the policymakers having weighed the financial implication of various alternatives, examining both their strengths and weaknesses resolve to adopt the policy as a blueprint and panacea for Poverty reduction and unemployment problem. The theory has many contributions toward understanding how policies are made and the process in which social goods are delivered to the citizens of the state. Decision-making is a pointer to the understanding of the various government policies, their inter-relatedness, how the policy affects various communities as well as how citizens yield to the dividend of the policy. However, a variety of critiques have been offered in several contexts and at various levels of analysis of the decision-making theory.

### **1.5. Methodology**

This study is a survey research method; it is focused on the assessment of the N-Power Programme and poverty reduction in Federal Capital Territory. The study also looks into those who benefited from the Programme as a target population in Federal Capital Territory. The study used questionnaires and interviews in obtaining information. The research opted for the questionnaires given the nature of the research work. The research work used the N-Power volunteers of the three area councils selected from the FCT as the respondents.

Respondents were reached at the place of primary assignment while others have been disengaged from the place of primary assignment as at the time the questionnaire administration began. The researcher has to join the N-Power Whatsapp group of the Area Councils selected in order to have access to the respondents. It was from this platform that the researcher was able to also connect with N-Power Area Councils coordinators and some individual respondents whom the researcher engaged to help administer the rest questionnaire to their friends who participated in N-Power Programme in their respective Area Councils areas. The researcher also made some personal visits to some public teachers and other areas where N-Power volunteers were deployed for face to face interviews.

### **1.6 Data Presentation**

#### **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented below and the respondents' response rate shows 94%. 347 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned by the respondents

out of 369 questionnaires administered, while 22 (6%) were not properly filled and returned. The Area Councils areas covered by this study are presented in Table 5.1.1 and Fig 5.1.1 as follows:

**Table 1.1: Area Councils Areas**

<b>Local Govt. Area</b>					
	Area Council	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AMAC	210	60.5	60.5	60.5
	Gwagwalada	55	15.9	15.9	76.4
	Bwari	82	23.6	23.6	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022**

Table 1.1 shows the three Area Councils areas in Federal Capital Territory for which samples were selected for this study. Abuja Municipal had (210) 60.5% of the respondents, Gwagwalada had (55) 15.9% and Bwari had (82) 23.6% of the respondent respectively. This implies that Abuja Municipal has the highest number of respondents.

## Data Analysis of Inferential Statistics

Descriptive Statistics						
Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1. Has N-Power Programme created jobs in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.00	2.00	1.5937	.49186	.242
2. Has N-Power programme reduced unemployment in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.00	2.00	1.4899	.50062	.251
3. Is N-Power programme has job security?	347	1.00	2.00	1.8559	.35169	.124
4. Is N-Power Programme an empowerment?	347	1.00	2.00	1.1210	.32664	.107
5. N-Power Programme has not created job but an empowerment?	347	1.00	2.00	1.1009	.30158	.091
Valid N (list wise)	347					

**Table .2.1:** N-Power Programme, employment generation and poverty reduction in Federal Capital Territory

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Table 2.1 shows the descriptive statistics and for N-Power Programme, employment generation and poverty reduction in Federal Capital Territory, the minimum and maximum for each item is 1 and 2 respectively. The mean values for item one and three should be rejected because it is higher than 1.5 (1.5937 and 1.85591 respectively) while Item two, four and five should be accepted because the mean values are less than 1.5. This implies that N-Power Programmes do not create jobs in Federal Capital Territory but, empowerment that reduces unemployment, in the state. appendix 11 gives details of simple percentage results for each item or statement to support the result presented here.

**Table 2.2: N-Power Programme and Poverty reduction on Volunteers**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Has N-Power Programme provided financial empowerment to the unemployed youths in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.2536	.43570	.02339
2. Has N-Power Programme reduced over reliance on parents for daily living?	347	1.1239	.32997	.01771
3 Has N-Power Programme reduced social mess of unemployment on the volunteers?	347	1.2767	.44799	.02405
4 Has N-Power programme improved the livelihood of young unemployed?	347	1.1988	.39971	.02146
5 Has N-Power programme reduced poverty level in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.3458	.47632	.02557

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Table 2.2 showed the responses for each statement, all the statements are to be accepted because the mean values of 1.25360, 1.12392, 1.27666, 1.19885 and 1.34582 are less than 1.5 which is the scale means for statements one, two, three, four and five respectively. Appendix III demonstrated that too is the result of simple percentage. It means that N-Power Programme provided financial empowerment to the unemployed youths in Federal Capital Territory, reduced the social mess of unemployment on the volunteers, over-reliance on parents for daily living, improved the livelihood of young unemployed and reduced the poverty level in Federal Capital Territory.

**Table 2.3: N-Power Programme and ailing public civil service in Federal Capital Territory**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Has N-Power programme contributed to the education sector in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.1671	.37365	.02006
2. Has N-Power programme provided enough teachers in response to the shortage of teachers in the public schools in Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.2680	.44356	.02381
3. Is there any improvement in the performances of students and pupils in the public schools, compare to when there was no N-Power Programme	347	1.2594	.43892	.02356
4. Has N-Power filled the vacuum that public service deficiency created?	347	1.2622	.44049	.02365
5. Has N-Power programme impacted the ailing public service of Federal Capital Territory?	347	1.2104	.40816	.02191

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Table .2.3 revealed that all statements are to be accepted because the mean values of 1.16715, 1.26801, 1.25937, 1.26225 and 1.21037 are less than 1.5 which is the scale means for statements one, two, three, four and five respectively. the simple percentage in Appendix Iv revealed it. This implies that the N-Power programme contributed to the education sector, provided enough teachers in response to the shortage of teachers in the public schools in Federal Capital Territory, improvement in the performances of students and pupils in the public schools, compared to when there was no N-Power Programme, filled the vacuum that public service deficiency created and impacted the ailing public service of Federal Capital Territory

**Table 2.4: Impact of N-Power Programme on the people of Federal Capital Territory other than volunteers**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Has N-Power Programme relieved parents of the financial burden on volunteers?	347	1.1787	.38363	.02059
2. Has N-Power Programme improved the socio-economic development of the State via buying and selling of the volunteers?	347	1.1671	.37365	.02006
3. Has N-Power Programme promoted social responsibility for the volunteers?	346	1.2197	.41461	.02229
4. Has N-Power Programme enhanced social security in society?	347	1.3516	.47815	.02567
5. Has N-Power Programme reduced the poverty level in society?	345	1.3623	.70238	.03782

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

The result in Table 2.4 showed the acceptance of all the statements because the mean values of 1.17867, 1.16715, 1.21965, 1.35159 and 1.36232 are less than 1.5 as indicated in the simple percentage result in Appendix V. By implication, N-Power Programme relieved parents of the financial burden on volunteers, improved socio-economic development of the State via buying and selling of the volunteers, promotes social responsibility for the volunteers, enhanced social security in the society and reduced poverty level in the society in the study area.

**Table 2.5: Factors militating against the effectiveness of N-Power Programme in Federal Capital Territory**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1 There are no effective monitoring teams to oversee volunteers at PPA	347	1.4496	.49817	.02674
2. Most of the volunteers do not even show up at the place of primary assignment	347	1.5101	.75402	.04048
3 Majorities of volunteers are impersonated	347	1.5130	.50055	.02687
4 N-Power teachers have replaced public teachers instead of assistant teachers	347	1.2305	.42179	.02264
5 N-Power programme is not tailored towards skill acquisition in your society	347	1.2738	.45930	.02466

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Table 2.5 revealed that all the statements are accepted based on the fact that the mean values of 1.44957, 1.51009, 1.51297, 1.23055 and 1.27378 are less than 1.5 or not greater than 1.5 which is the scale means for statements one, two, three, four and five respectively. It was indicated in simple percentage results. (Appendix VI contains the details). This means that there are no effective monitoring teams to oversee volunteers at the place of primary assignment (PPA), most of the volunteers do not even show up at the place of primary assignment and majorities of volunteers are impersonated. Also, N-Power teachers have replaced public teachers instead of assistant teachers and the N-Power programme is not tailored towards skill acquisition and entrepreneur in the study area.

**Table 2.6: Overall Assessment of N-Power Programme on Poverty Reduction in Federal Capital Territory**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Employment generation to the youths	347	2.2709	.76130	.04087
2. financial empowerment to the youths	347	2.9741	.67311	.03613
3. Contribution to education sector	347	3.0893	.69729	.03743
4. Fill the vacuum that public service created	347	2.9914	.70295	.03774
5. It alleviates poverty level in the society	347	2.7233	.70391	.03779
6. Ensure social economic development of the state	347	2.7522	.67722	.03636
7. N-Power Programme is not tailored towards entrepreneurial and skill acquisition	346	2.9827	.74580	.04009

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Table 2.6 showed that all the statements are accepted because the mean values of 2.27089, 2.97406, 3.08934, 2.99135, 2.72334, 2.75216 and 2.98266 are greater than the liker scale of 2.5 for statements one, two, three, four, five, six and seven respectively. And this was indicated in Appendix G in simple percentage results. By implication, N-power programme impacts include; employment generation to the youths, financial empowerment to the youths, contribution to the education sector, fill the vacuum that public service created, alleviating poverty level in the society and ensuring social-economic development of the state. However, the N-Power programme is not tailored towards entrepreneurial and skill acquisition.

**Table 2.7: How would you rate the impact of N-Power on poverty reduction in Federal Capital Territory?**

<b>One-Sample Statistics</b>				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Employment generation	347	1.5360	.58473	.03139
2. Poverty reduction in the State	347	1.9712	.54219	.02911
3. Financial empowerment in the State	347	2.0346	.66625	.03577
4. Ensure social economic development of the State	347	2.0058	.59862	.03214
5. Fill the vacuum that public service created	347	2.0115	.58880	.03161

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

The results from Table 2.7 rate the impact of N-Power on poverty reduction in Federal Capital Territory, using both simple percentages in Appendix VIII mean difference. Statement one and two were rejected while statements three, four and five were accepted. The mean values for statement one and two; 1.53602, and 1.97118 respectively is less than the scale means of 2.0. This implies that the N-power programme has a low capacity for employment generation and fairly contributed to poverty reduction in the Federal Capital Territory. However, it is fairly rated for financial empowerment in the State, social-economic development of the State and Filling the vacuum that public service created.

### **1.7. Hypothesis Testing**

The hypotheses for this study which are stated in the null form are thereby tested with chi-square

**Hypothesis one: N-power programme does not have a significant impact on poverty and unemployment reduction in Federal Capital Territory**

<b>Table 5.3.1 Chi-Square</b>		
	Has the N-Power programme reduced unemployment in Federal Capital Territory?	Has the N-Power programme reduced the poverty level in Federal Capital Territory?
Chi-Square	.141 <sup>a</sup>	32.994 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.707	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 173.5.		

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022**

<b>Table 5.3.2 Test Statistics</b>	
	Has the N-Power programme reduced the poverty level in Federal Capital Territory?
Chi-Square	32.994 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 173.5.	

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

Hypothesis one is tested with two research questions because it involves two dependent variables; unemployment and poverty as revealed in Table 5.3.1, 5.3.2, with Chi-Square. The Chi-square result shows that N-power has a statistically significant impact on unemployment and poverty level in Federal Capital Territory. From Table 5.3.1, p-value (0.000) is less than (0.05) which means  $H_0$  is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted thereby we conclude that the N-power programme has a significant impact on poverty and unemployment reduction in Federal Capital Territory.

**Decision Rule:**

The p- value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 and  $X^2$  tabulated (5.02) is less than  $X^2$  calculated (32.994) in Table 5.3.1. Therefore, we reject  $H_0$  and accept the alternative. This implies that the N-power programme has a significant impact on unemployment reduction in Federal Capital Territory.

**Hypothesis Two**

$H_{02}$ : N-Power programme does not have a significant impact on the ailing public service of Federal Capital Territory

<b>Table 5.3.3 Test Statistics</b>	
	Has the N-Power programme impacted the ailing public service of Federal Capital Territory?
Chi-Square	116.429 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 173.5.	

**Source: Field Survey, December 2022.**

**Decision Rule:**

Table 5.3.3 shows the Chi-square result, the p- value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 and  $X^2$  tabulated (5.02) is less than  $X^2$  calculated (116.429). Therefore, we reject  $H_0$  and accept the alternative. This implies that the N-power programme has a significant impact on the ailing public service of Federal Capital Territory.

## **1.8. Policy Implications and Discussion of Results**

From the views and opinion of the respondents, it was observed that the N-power programme has not created jobs as claimed by the federal government but viable empowerment that engage the youths from the idleness. N-power programme is an empowerment programme that does not specify job security, and after the expiration of the programme for two years, many volunteers still came back to the labour market searching for a job.

The opinion of the respondents also stated that N-power Programme has not created jobs but it has reduced unemployment among the youths in the state. The statement looks anti-thetical in the sense that what has not created job should not reduce unemployment. However, the study emphasizes that most volunteers that used to stay and sleep at home when others are going to work have now joined the train of the working class even though there is no job security. Other volunteers have also tapped into the opportunity and become entrepreneurs

It was observed that the Npower programme has not created jobs but empowerment and this is in line with the submission of (Odey and Sambe, 2018) who studied the contribution of the N-power Programme to youth empowerment in the Cross River State of Nigeria.

The view of the respondent further indicated that N-power Programme had made a credible contribution to the reduction of poverty on the volunteers in the State. From the study reviewed, (Abin 2008) look into the impact of the N-power Programme, implementation and the contribution to the social economic well-being of the beneficiaries at Akwanga metropolis of Nasarawa State, and the study found out that N-power Programme has contributed to the financial, material social wellbeing of the beneficiaries. The result of the finding in this study is an affirmative complement to the submission of (Abin, 2008) that the N-power programme has provided financial empowerment, reduced the social mess of unemployment, reduced over-reliance on parents on daily living and that has improved the livelihood of the volunteers. The direct implication to the volunteers is the reduction of poverty.

## **1.9. Conclusion**

There is no doubt that N-power is an anti-poverty programme that has recorded half a success story compared to the past Poverty Alleviation programmes. But, its effect and achievement may not

last, except it is practically tailored towards skill acquisition and entrepreneur beyond a mere pronouncement in the paper. The study concludes that N-power Programme remains an important anti-poverty programme ever introduced by the federal government because it captured the large population of young jobless graduates across the country and it is politically free in the mode of selection and in the payment of the stipend.

### **1.10. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are presented

1. For the N-power programme to be able to realize and achieve its cardinal objective of poverty reduction holistically there will be a need for it to be pragmatically tailored towards skill acquisition and entrepreneur, such skill will provide self-reliance after the expiration of the programme.
2. N-power Programme should be training and retraining grand for the volunteers. It should serve as an opportunity to learn a new skill and acquire a vocational skill. This is because majorities' volunteers are young school leavers. This will complement the skill acquisition and entrepreneur.
3. A monetary fixed salary policy (MFS) should be introduced in the programme; the monthly stipend designated to individuals volunteers should be divided into two while part should be fixed by the government into individuals volunteers' bank accounts till, after the expiration of the programme and thereafter, the government shall complement the little fixed money for the volunteers so that they can start a small-scale business with it.
4. The stipend of the volunteers should be increased to be commensurate with the current inflation situation in the country, and to be sufficient for the monetary fixed salary policy recommended.
5. N-power should be reviewed and expanded with legal backing by the legislature to prevent political parties' influence because of change of government. This will lead to the continuation and sustainability of the programme.

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