



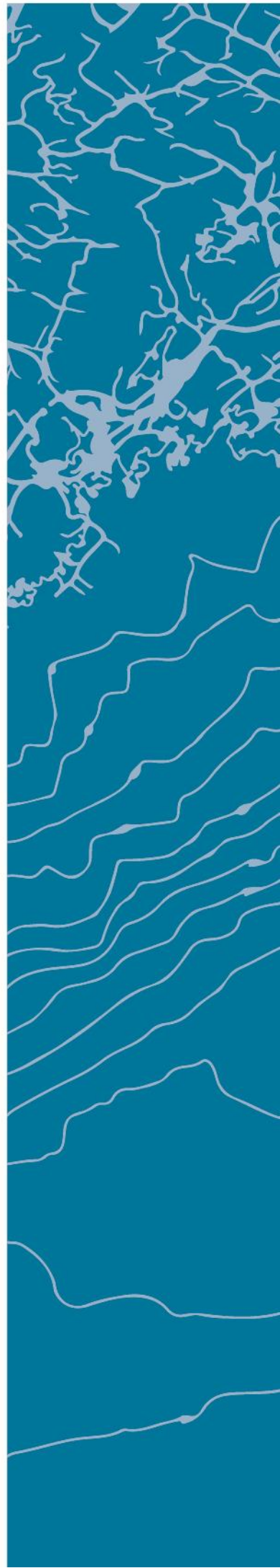
UNIVERSITETET I AGDER

**Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment
Programme in Nigeria
(A Case Study of Nigeria's Social Investment Programme)**

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**Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in
Nigeria**

(A Case Study of Nigeria's Social Investment Programme)

By

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This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

**University of Agder,
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Global Development and Planning**

ABSTRACT

This study aim at evaluating the impact and effectiveness of Nigeria's Social Investment Programme tagged N-Power, designed and targeted at addressing youth unemployment and poverty. The population of the study consists of beneficiaries of N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Southwest Nigeria.

Recognizing that the problems of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria has become by far the most important social problems in Nigeria, this study takes a look at the impact of Nigeria's Social Investment Programme tagged N-Power in addressing the scourge of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, and the contributions made by N-Power programme to youth employment and poverty reduction on some beneficiaries of the programme.

This study considers theories such as unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion in explaining youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

The research methodologies employed are qualitative and participatory approaches. 40 semi-structured questionnaires were administered on respondents in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon. Similarly, two focus group discussions plenary were organized by the researcher in both towns.

The results of the research however revealed that the N-Power have recorded some successes in addressing the scourge of youth unemployment and poverty in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State. However, beneficiaries also made far-reaching recommendations and policy adjustments to the government on the programme.

Keywords: Youth, Unemployment, Poverty, Inclusive Growth, Social exclusion.

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On a final note I thank God Almighty for His grace, knowledge and gift of life.

For others too numerous to mention, I say a big thank you to you all.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Late Mother Gladys Omiade Oyekunle (Nee Ojeyemi) and above all to Almighty God for the gift of life.

DECLARATION

I **Olubukola Idowu Oyekunle** declare that this report on the topic: Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria's Social Investment Programme) is my original piece of work and has never been submitted for any academic award to any institution of learning other than the University of Agder.

Kristiansand
Place

Olubukola Idowu OYEKUNLE
Signature

December 14, 2020
Date

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ACF | Agricultural Credit Fund |
| ADB | African Development Bank |
| BOI | Bank of Industry |
| BVN | Bank Verification Number |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| ERGP | Economic Recovery and Growth Plan |
| FGN | Federal Government of Nigeria |
| FIRS | Federal Inland Revenue Service |
| FMARD | Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development |
| FMBNP | Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning |
| FMH | Federal Ministry of Health |
| HDR | Human Development Report |
| HoR | House of Representatives |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| NBS | National Bureau of Statistics |
| NOA | National Orientation Agency |
| NSIP | National Social Investment Programme |
| NYSC | National Youth Service Corps |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Development |
| UBE | Universal Basic Education |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Education Fund |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| SMECGC | Small and Medium Enterprises Credit Guarantee Scheme |
| SIP | Social Investment Programmes |
| SUBEB | State Universal Basic Education Board |
| VAT | Value Added Tax |
| WB | World Bank |
| YOUWIN | Youth Enterprise With Innovation |

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts by setting the tone for the research work. It discusses the background of the research, igniting the readers' interest in the research. It also discussed extensively the problems of youth unemployment and youth poverty with specific focus on Nigeria. Finally, it summarizes the objectives of the study as well as the statement of problem and the research questions; whilst also highlighting the scope of the study and the limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

The problems of youth unemployment and youth poverty has attracted a lot of global concern and has become key discuss in shaping sub-national, national, regional, continental economic and social investment policies. In fact, the twin problems of youth unemployment and youth poverty have assumed dangerous proportions around the world, with developing nations mostly affected. With a rapidly growing global youth population, the prevalence of youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth has become unacceptable. The Independent Evaluation Group (2013) reinforced this view that youth employment is a major concern for many countries because of the negative effects on the welfare of young people, and its adverse effects on economic performance and social stability.

Additionally, IEG (2013) also stated that youth unemployment rates globally are considerably higher than adult rates, even where economic growth is positive. IEG (2013) also reveals that labour market position of youth differs significantly from adults as youths are more likely to be among the “working poor” than adults, have higher risk of unemployment, underemployment, or working in jobs with low earnings. Similarly, Fatih (2016) opines that youth unemployment rate is approximately three times bigger than that of the adult, and that lack of sustainable decent work makes young people more susceptible to fall below the poverty line.

However, the UN World Youth Report (2013) stated that the employment scenario for young people has been worsened by the lingering global economic crisis, and the current situation of youth employment poses an urgent challenge with long-term implications for both young people and the society. In its report, the OECD (2013, 7) similarly argued that “the global economic crisis has had a hard blow on youth employment”. These evidences also suggest that youths are at the receiving end of any economic downturn globally, as they are not well-positioned, nor possess the skills and

sufficiency to contain its effects. Youths are also generally perceived as the weakest class of organizational workforce by employers, hence the constant desire of employers to relief them of jobs first; a situation that further aggravates their economic wellbeing and underemployment status. Fatih (2016) supported this position further by arguing that young people are generally affected deeply by economic crisis, because they are the weakest group at the labour market, with their economic conditions far worse than before. With the UN World Youth Report (2013, 20) also stating that “young people in all regions are more likely than adults to be unemployed or work in vulnerable employment”.

However, the role and importance of the youth in any country and globally cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the importance of ensuring that youths are provided with employment and economic opportunities is clearly justified. On the other side, the dangers and unintended consequences of youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth cannot be quantified, as it could in fact disrupt the very foundations of a state, its stability and social coherence. Furthermore, youth unemployment have the unintended consequences of creating social disruption, low national economic productivity, fuel crime and social disorder, and ultimately leads to low negative fiscal balance position due to low tax base. Just like the popular quote that “an idle man is the devil’s workshop”, youths unemployment is a grave danger to national and political stability, contributes to violent crime, and poses significant danger to national security perspective of a state or region.

In this vein, Fatih (2016) posits that youths have special importance for all countries globally, as they are energetic, talented, creative, open-minded, dynamic and with entrepreneurial spirits and as engines for achieving developmental goals, thus youths must be integrated into labour force and economies in order to achieve development goals. Being the fabric and major workforce of any economy, the youths represent a great and diverse pool of talents to any economy if well put to use and well maximized; and, non-maximization of the youth strengths and economic potentials puts a state or nation at the tip of a cliff, and a great danger and great incentive for social disorder.

The UN World Youth Report (2013) stated that developing countries are home to 87 per cent of the world’s youth population, who are often under-employed and are working in the informal economy under poor conditions. Therefore, the core challenge for these countries according to UN World Youth Report (2013) is not only to generate new employment opportunities for young people, but to also improve the quality of all jobs available to them.

Sadly, during periods of economic growth and economic recess, young people are often the last to be recruited by employers who value experience possessed by older workers, and the first to be dismissed by employers (UN World Youth Report 2013). Olaleye (2019, 4) captured this scenario succinctly when he stated that “youths are disproportionately susceptible to poverty in comparison with other age groups primarily because of the fluid nature of the challenges and opportunities they face during transition to adulthood, particularly in relation to the labour market”.

Across regions of the world, young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty. Even during periods of economic growth, many economies have been unable to absorb large youth populations into the labour market (UN World Youth Report 2013). ILO (2017, 1) stated that “young people today face a difficult process in seeking to enter the world of work”, even as the UN World Youth Report (2013, 20) states that “the longer youth remain disconnected, the more difficult it is to support their integration into the labour market”. According to the Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2018, 31) young people are more likely to face difficulties securing full-time employment and are more likely to be completely idle or engage in part-time or other menial jobs.

In recognition of this problem, the IEG (2013) stated that addressing youth employment issues has become a major issue of concern for many countries, as it negatively affects the welfare of young people and potentially the rest of the aggregate economy as well; as unemployed youth do not get a chance to build professional skills they require to compete. Thus, in its report, the UN World Youth Report (2013) argued in favour of need to provide more and better jobs for young people exist across countries.

In addressing this dilemma, IEG (2013) asserted that policymakers across the world have become very concerned by the events of the Arab Spring as well as the intolerably high rates of youth unemployment and discontent, a situation that could lead to social unrest and socio-economic turmoil. The United Nations similarly in its World Youth Report (UN World Youth Report 2013, 12) stated that “one of the contributing factors to the recent Arab Spring uprisings is the disturbingly high levels of youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa region”.

Olaleye (2019) also suggests that youth unemployment contributes to crime and violence, and the combination of youth unemployment and availability of firearms is deadly; with unemployed youths as tools in the hands of desperate politicians of being use exploited for political thugs and

electoral violence. Olaleye (2019) further argued that youths suffering from poverty have a higher rate of juvenile delinquency and crime, and their proximity to drug and alcohol abuse is equally high. Thus, it is therefore suffice to conclude that youth unemployment which creates idleness of minds is an incentive for crime amongst the youths.

However, Akwara et al., (2013) submitted that poverty and unemployment are some of the biggest problems facing most nations of the world today, whether they are developed or developing, and are both impediments to social progress, resulting to waste of human and material resources. Similarly, Emeka (2011, 362) stated that “massive youth unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems”. Rufus & Oluwatunmise (2017, 30) opines that “unarguably, youth unemployment is a major issue in developing countries, including Nigeria where it affects young men and women with a potential for crime and social unrest”.

Freedom (2014) quoted an empirical study carried out by several high levels of local and foreign institutions conducted in Nigeria between June-November 2013, which revealed that the twin evils of unemployment and poverty are some of the numerous factors that contributed to youths joining Boko Haram, alongside with corruption. In the same vein, Akwara et al., (2013) advance that poverty and unemployment as social problems have remained major developmental challenges in Nigeria for a very long time, with the youths accounting for the highest unemployment rate in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth has repeatedly occupied the centre stage of manifestos of political office seekers, reinforcing the dire situation of youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youths in Nigeria. While much has been said, debated and written about it, little has been achieved in Nigeria; thus increasing the already bogus and outrageous number of unemployed youths and poverty amongst Nigeria’s youths.

Statistics from Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics NBS has not only revealed the dire situation of youth unemployment in Nigeria, but has gone further to suggest that youths in Nigeria have the tendency of being subjected to poverty as a result of not being able to earn decent income or not being in employment or any trade at all. The NBS statistics in third quarter of (2018) shows that unemployment trend continues to rise, peaking at 23.1% at Q3 2018 (Figure 1).

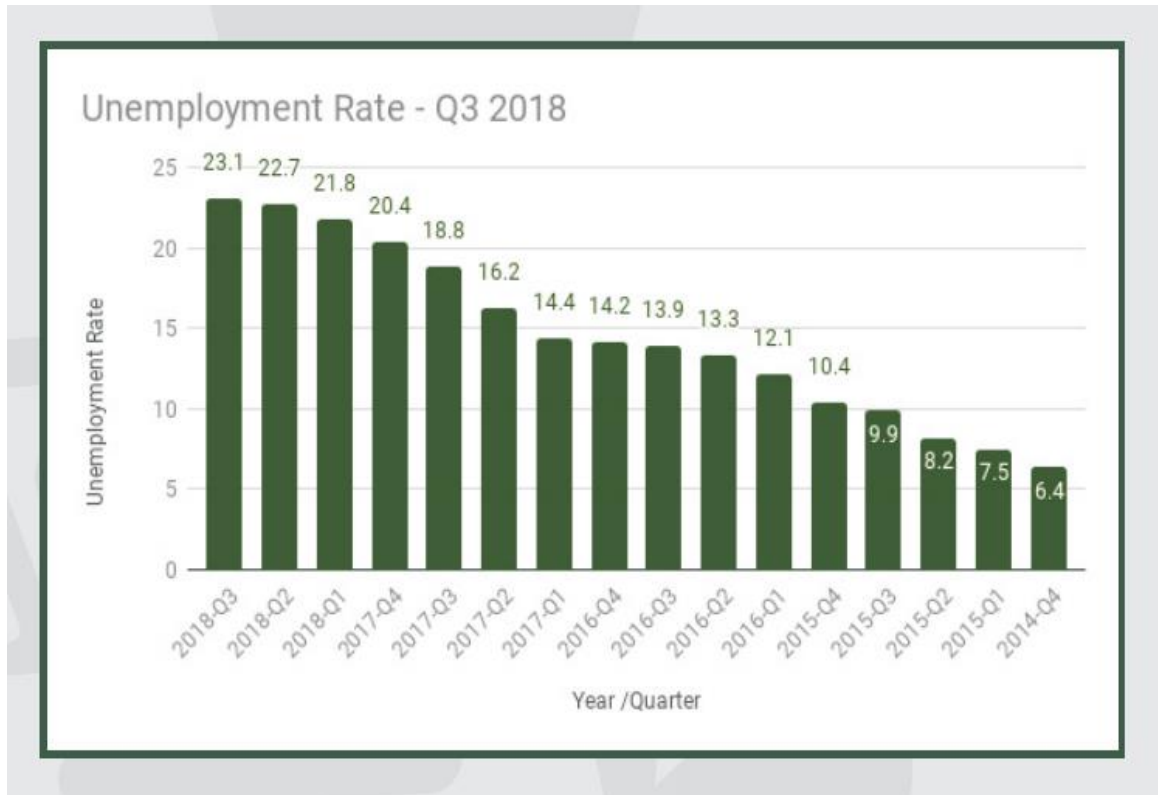


Figure 1 showing growing rate of unemployment at Q3 2018. Source: NBS (2018)

Similarly, according to a report published by Plecher (2020) on youth unemployment situation in Nigeria covering 1999-2019, it was reported that youth unemployment had grown steadily in Nigeria from 9.62% in 1999, climbing to 13.96% in 2019 of unemployed youths of ages 15-24 years in Nigeria, a completely undesirable situation that poses grave danger to social and political stability (Figure 2).

However, recent actions and monetary policies of central bankers have begun to focus on employment creation as a way of accelerating economic development and boosting national tax receipts, as against the decades-long orthodox focus on fighting inflation. Gerald (2007) backed this view by canvassing for a return to employment, economic growth and poverty reduction goals of central banks. Gerald (2007, 5) further argues that “stabilization role of monetary policy is only one of the tasks facing central banks; the other task is to contribute directly to economic growth, employment creation and poverty reduction” and this is particularly important for Nigeria with such a high rate of unemployment.

Nigeria: Youth unemployment rate from 1999 to 2019

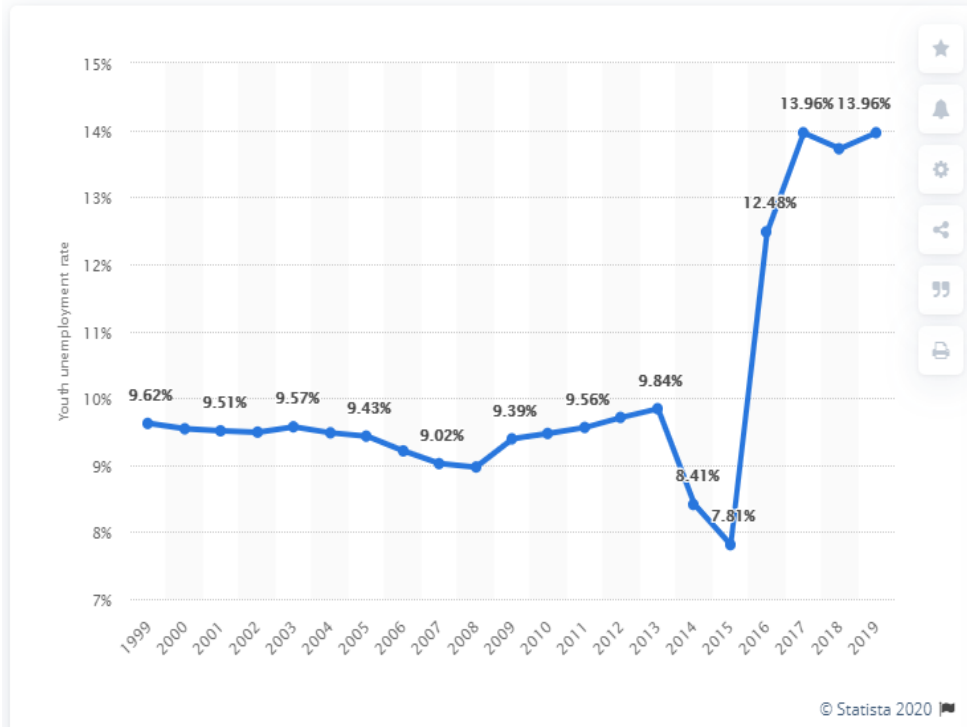


Figure 2 showing growing rate of youth unemployment during a 20 year period. Source: Plecher, H. (2020)

Sunday et al., (2016) posited that monetary policy is generally viewed as a process through which monetary authority of a country controls the supply of money primarily through interest rate adjustment to ensure price stability and also to contribute to economic growth. Sunday et al., (2016, 1 & 2) similarly argues that monetary policy rests on “the relationship between the price at which money can be borrowed and the total supply of money in the economy”; postulating further that “monetary policy has a dual mandate of guaranteeing high employment rate and price stability”. At one time or another, economic agents around the globe have also tried to use monetary policy to achieve almost every conceivable economic objective with economic growth and low level unemployment often high in the list”.

While examining the relationship between money supply of the banking sector and unemployment in selected European countries spanning 1980-2012, Göçer (2013) proved that decrease in unemployment rate was as a result of lending activities in these countries. In a similar vein, Blue (2013) opines that when unemployment situation is high in the United States, the Federal Reserve

keeps interest rates low as this will incentivize investors to invest in their businesses through expansion, therefore contributing to employment creation.

Doğrul & Soytaş (2010, 1523) suggests that “unemployment is an important macroeconomic and political problem all economies confront, and due to its social and economic consequences, it is essential for policy makers to identify the factors that are affecting the unemployment rate the most”. Typically, central banks are confronted with the twin economic evils of unemployment and inflation. Thus, as part of their traditional responsibilities, central banks are charged with implementing the right monetary policies that will not only reduce inflation, but will also ultimately boost employment. These two objectives often criss-cross one another, and are mutually exclusive.

Altavilla & Ciccarelli (2009) clarifies the uncertainty about the nature of relationship between inflation and unemployment, arguing that monetary policy has a significant impact on domestic economic activity and employment, whilst Lakstutiene et al., (2011) attributes the Russian high level unemployment of 2002 to the 1998 financial crisis and the subsequent tightening of monetary policy.

In tackling unemployment by central banks, Engler (2011, 1) opines that “when a central bank embarks on an expansionary monetary policy, it does so to stimulate domestic economy and reduce unemployment, while contractionary policy involves raising interest rates to combat inflation, as reduced real interest rate results in an increase in output and employment while unemployment falls”.

Furthermore, in justifying the role of central bankers in employment creation in today’s world, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have in fact gone beyond implementing monetary policy to promote employment creation by getting involved in form of direct intervention, by providing needed critical financial for key investments in the Nigerian economy. Ezekiel & Elizabeth (2015, 4) recalled that the “Central Bank of Nigeria in the last few years have established a ₦500 billion intervention fund in year 2010 to assist manufacturing, aviation and power sectors; ultimately to stimulate employment for Nigeria’s teeming unemployed youths”.

Ezekiel & Elizabeth (2015, 4) also mentioned “other key CBN intervention in the economy to include intervention in the power sector ostensibly to assist the manufacturing sector to generate its own power to support production and ensure uninterrupted production in their manufacturing

plants; and also with ₦200 billion initiative each for Small and Medium Enterprises Credit Guarantee Scheme (SMECGC) and Agriculture Credit Fund (ACF), with the ACF designed to assist and encourage the development of large scale modern agricultural enterprises in both employment generation and contribution to the nation's economy".

A National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2018) also revealed the total number of people classified as unemployed, which means they were not involved in any form of work at all or worked too few hours (under 20 hours a week) increased from 17.7 million in Q4 2017 to 20.9 million in Q3 2018. Of the 20.9 million classified as unemployed as at Q3 2018, 9.7 million did earn nothing, whilst 90.1% of them or 8.77 million were reported to be unemployed and doing nothing because they were first time job seekers and have never worked before.

Similarly, the National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2018, 26) unemployment by gender reveals that during Q3 of 2018, 26.6% of women within the labour force (aged 16-64) and willing, able and actively seeking work were unemployed, a 6.3% higher than unemployment rate for their male counterparts which stood at 20.3%, and a 3.5% higher than total labour force unemployment rate which stood 23.1%.

Also, the NBS (2018, 30) official statistics further revealed that youth unemployment by age categorization shows that in Q3 2018, unemployed youths aged 15-24 stood at 36.5% and for aged for aged 25-34 at 24.4%, making up the total youth unemployment rate at 29.7% as at Q3 2018. Similarly, NBS (2018, 31) official statistics further revealed that as of Q3 2018, 68.7% of young people in the labour force, aged 15-24 years were either underemployed (engaged in work for less than 20 hours a week) or unemployed (willing and actively seeking to work), compared to 67.3% in the same period of previous year. This age group has the highest rate amongst all the age groups and is 23.5% higher than the age group with the second highest combined unemployment and underemployment rates of age group 25 to 34.

Thus, the combined rate for the 25 to 34-year age group stood at 45.1% within the quarter under review, compared with 42.4% at the same period of last year. These age groups, 15-24 years and 25-34 years combined represent the youth population in Nigeria and have a combined unemployment and underemployment rate of 55.4% or 24.5 million, with 13.1 million unemployed and another 11.3 million underemployed (Figure 3).

NBS (2018, 34) further revealed that unemployment rate by educational grouping was the highest for post-secondary education certificates or tertiary institutions graduate with 29.8%, with that of persons with primary school certificates showing 19.5% as at Q3 2018, while highest for category of persons that never attended school at 27.0% as at Q3 2018 (Figure 4).

Unemployment Statistics by Age Group

| Period | Youth Unemployment Rate (%) | Rate of Quarterly Change (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2015q1 | 10.43 | |
| q2 | 11.34 | 0.66 |
| q3 | 13.65 | 1.71 |
| q4 | 14.46 | 0.54 |
| 2016q1 | 12.09 | 1.64 |
| q2 | 18.41 | 1.24 |
| q3 | 19.08 | 0.56 |
| q4 | 19.39 | 0.35 |
| 2017q1 | 19.22 | 0.21 |
| q2 | 22.28 | 1.74 |
| q3 | 25.48 | 2.62 |
| q4 | 26.58 | 1.62 |
| 2108q1 | 29.05 | 1.41 |
| q2 | 30.5 | 0.9 |
| q3 | 29.72 | 0.4 |

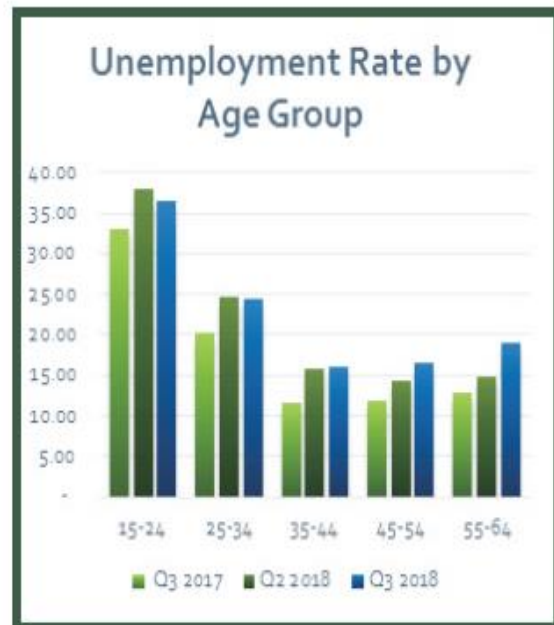


Figure 3 showing youth unemployment statistics by age grouping. Source: NBS (2018, 31)

Furthermore, the footprints of youth unemployment and poverty have already made their marks across the six geo-political regions of Nigeria. In the oil-rich Niger-Delta region of Nigeria for instance, youth unemployment and poverty have repeatedly been blamed on youth restiveness, incessant attacks and sabotage of oil and gas facilities and installations, and the trend of kidnap of expatriate oil workers for ransom. For this reason, Akwara et al., (2013, 2) stated that “tacking insecurity remains incomplete as long as poverty and unemployment persist”.

Akwara et al., (2013, 3) further submits that “unemployment and the attendant poverty situation it brings, though not always by itself, poses a serious problem to democratic governance as well as the security integrity of the nation itself but their consequences have a number of security implications, as lack of employment opportunities has contributed to youth involvement in urban conflicts and militancy that confront the Nigerian nation today”. Akwara et al., (2013, 3) concluded that “the

conflict situation in the Niger Delta is spearheaded by youths, all of whom were unemployed and poor”.

Unemployment Statistics by Educational Group

| Period | Unemployment Rate (%) | Rate of Quarterly Change (%) | Post-Secondary or Graduate Unemployment Rate (%) | Rate of Quarterly Change (%) |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 2015q1 | 7.54 | | 8.6 | |
| q2 | 8.19 | 0.66 | 9.72 | 1.12 |
| q3 | 9.9 | 1.71 | 11.71 | 1.99 |
| q4 | 10.44 | 0.54 | 12.37 | 0.66 |
| 2016q1 | 12.09 | 1.64 | 14.18 | 1.81 |
| q2 | 13.32 | 1.24 | 23.2 | 9.02 |
| q3 | 13.88 | 0.56 | 23.28 | 0.09 |
| q4 | 14.23 | 0.35 | 23.67 | 0.39 |
| 2017q1 | 14.44 | 0.21 | 16.66 | -7.02 |
| q2 | 16.18 | 1.74 | 27.96 | 11.3 |
| q3 | 18.8 | 2.62 | 31.78 | 3.82 |
| q4 | 20.42 | 1.62 | 25.65 | -6.13 |
| 2108q1 | 21.83 | 1.41 | 30.3 | 4.65 |
| q2 | 22.73 | 0.9 | 32.45 | 2.15 |
| q3 | 23.13 | 0.4 | 29.75 | -2.7 |

Figure 4 showing unemployment rate by educational groupings. Source: NBS (2018)

In the Northeast region of Nigeria, which is also home to Nigeria’s insurgent group, Boko Haram (which literally means Western education is sin), youth unemployment have been identified as the remote and primary cause of insurgency in the region, and it continues to be responsible for the repeated attacks on both civilian, state and military institutions, destruction of homes and livelihood, thereby leading to deaths of unimaginable proportion and kidnap and women for sexual exploitation and ransom.

However, the definition of youth varies across countries, just as the globally acceptable definition of youth is difficult to come by. Flynn et al., (2017) as cited in Roz (2019, 2) opines that “although ‘youth’ has risen as a category in recent years, it has many definitions; young people are heterogeneous and it is often unclear to whom the label applies”.

In several countries however, the youths constitute the largest proportion of total population, with huge potentials to stimulate economic growth, contribute to innovative and technological advancement and social cohesion if well-harnessed. Their strategic importance in global affairs is also very crucial, as they form the bulk of global talents of workforce. Similarly, Fatih (2016) reckon that youths generally have special importance for all countries worldwide, being more energetic, talented, creative, and as the engine for achieving developmental goals. Whilst Idoko

(2013, 74) postulates that “youths are the most vibrant but vulnerable and volatile group in every society”.

However, for the purpose of this research, the age bracket of youth is construed in line Nigeria’s youth social investment programme as someone, male or female between the ages of 18-35 years. With massive youth unemployment in the Northeast region of Nigeria, the level playing ground for social disorder as well as the actions of non-state actors freely manifests. Freedom (2014) argues along this line that Boko Haram draws its members mainly from disenfranchised youths, unemployed high school and university graduates, as well as destitute. Furthermore, Freedom (2014, 4) reported that “evidence reveals that the foot soldiers of the sect consist predominantly of young people who are ready to fight and die for the new cause they have been made to believe in, based on an analysis of 144 arrested members of Boko Haram with median age of thirty”.

Freedom (2014, 3) also reported that Boko Haram “became even more worrisome in 2004 when students, especially tertiary institutions in Bornu and Yobe states, withdraw from school, tore up their certificates, and joined the group”. In explaining this sad development clearly, Akwara et al., (2013, 2) stated that “the worst thing that would ever happen to a nation is for the nation’s educated citizens to be involved in crimes, and most of them are involved in cyber-crimes and advanced fee frauds. Whereas the uneducated are mostly involved in violent crimes, the educated are involved in non-violent crimes which are worse in magnitude and scope than the violent crimes; which have greater consequences and impacts on the socio-economic processes and administration of the country”.

Therefore, Freedom (2014) argues that non-state actors like Boko Haram have constantly undermined Nigeria’s internal security landscape, using young men as foot soldiers, as empirical studies conducted suggests that poverty, unemployment and illiteracy contributes to making young men vulnerable to radicalization.

In the Northwest region of Nigeria, youth unemployment and poverty have also been singled out as the cause of kidnap for ransom, cattle rustling, and other violent and sectarian violence that has continued to ravage the region. In many instances, unemployed young people have been recruited by criminal gangs and other criminal bandits to wreck havoc in many states across the Northwest, kidnap innocent citizens for ransom and sometimes wanton deaths and destructions.

In Nigeria's Southeast region, youth unemployment have also been blamed for the continued quest and agitation for the secessionist agenda of Biafra, large scale kidnap for ransom, high-level and sophistication of robbery incidents, money rituals, and advancement of internet frauds, popularly known as Yahoo-Yahoo fraud in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Southwest region is also not left behind in this terrible dilemma. Youth unemployment and poverty have also visible in the prevalence in form of internet frauds and other anti-social vices that have continued to ravage the region.

To further underscore the problems associated with youth unemployment, the OECD (2013, 8) highlighted the danger of youth unemployment by stating that, "long periods of unemployment for youth have been shown to have potential scarring effects, and consequently, could have a harmful impact in later life". Nigeria's youth unemployment epidemic also manifested during a 2014 recruitment exercise of Nigeria Immigration Service where 500,000 job applicants were invited to apply for only 4,556 vacancies at the Nigeria Immigration Service test conducted at the Abuja national stadium. Following the ensuing stampede, 16 young Nigerians lost their lives in the process, causing a national outcry and a backlash of the then administration (Associated Press, 2014). Events like this further underscores the terrible situation Nigerian youths have found themselves with no hope in sight, as unemployment and poverty worsens across the country.

The UN World Youth Report (2013) raised the alarm that the developing world which Nigeria is part of, is home to 87% of world's youth who are often underemployed and working in the informal economy under very bad circumstances. Furthermore, the UN World Youth Report (2013, 19) stated that "in low-income economies, young people have limited or no social safety nets on which to fall back, so that few young people can afford to stay out of work". This portend that without any potential for economic sustenance or jobs, the youths are constantly susceptible to poverty in difficult periods, particularly in Nigeria and many other Sub-Saharan African countries where social safety nets does not exists.

Therefore, the UN World Youth Report (2013) opines that the goal of countries should focus on how to generate new employment opportunities, and also how to improve the quality of jobs available to its youths. The UN World Youth Report (2013) therefore canvassed for the need to

provide better jobs for young people exists across countries, just as the youth employment challenges portend diverse dimension in both developed and developing nations.

However, several factors have however been adduced to be responsible for the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. One of such factors constantly blamed for the millions of unemployed youths in Nigeria is the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) foisted on Nigeria in the 1980's by the Bretton Woods Institutions of World Bank, also known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the wake of Nigeria's request for credit with the Bretton Woods Institution. The Structural Adjustment Programme also known as (SAP) was a loan condition to be implemented by Nigeria as part of its loan application to the Bretton Woods Institutions.

The sudden collapse of the global price of crude oil in mid-1980s made Nigeria's oil receipts which accounts for a large chunk of national revenue to shrink drastically, causing a deep hole in Nigeria's fiscal position and inability to meet her obligations. Objectively, SAP was a loan condition imposed on Nigeria under the Military regime of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in the wake of the global oil glut of the 1980's that led to the collapse of oil revenue which was Nigeria's economic mainstay and revenue source. In order to plug this hole, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria turned to the Bretton Woods Institution for financial assistance.

Described by Abah & Peter (2016) as a neo-liberal economic reform initiated by Bretton Woods Institutions to help restructure and diversify Nigeria's economy from total reliance on exports of hydrocarbon resources and help achieve fiscal and balance of payment viability, adoption of realistic exchange rate policy, devaluation of Nigerian currency (Naira), trade and payment liberalization, deregulation, privatization and commercialization of state-owned enterprises, and engender private-sector led economy. However, SAP turned out to be a bad prescription for a minor economic headache for Nigeria.

Furthermore, Galadima et al., (2019) opines that part of the loan conditions given by the IMF and World Bank to Nigeria was rationalization of labour force, and the devaluation of Nigerian currency. The implementation of these conditions by the Federal Military Government of Nigeria resulted in widespread loss of jobs across the country as well as sudden collapse of factories and death of hundreds of companies. Similarly, Abah & Peter (2016, 9) affirmed that with the massive

privatization and commercialization of state-owned enterprises which had hitherto provided employment, the “adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria worsened unemployment challenges in the country as thousands of public servants /civil servants lost their jobs”.

Other key elements of the SAP was the adoption of a fixed exchange rate policy which further led to shortage of foreign currency in the market which are sourced by manufacturing companies to pay for importation of essential raw materials and machineries, leading to redundancies of factories and massive layoffs of employees, further aggravating the poverty situation of Nigeria. As Abah & Peter (2016) remarked that the adoption of SAP truncated and stagnated the pace and pendulum of economic growth and development, not only in Nigeria, but on the African continent.

Sulaiman et al., (2014) in a similar vein stated that SAP was although adopted as a panacea to remedy the worsening economic situation in Nigeria such as high poverty and unemployment rates in pre-SAP era, they questioned the realism of the Bretton Woods Institutions in terms of using SAP to promote economic growth as situations got even worse after implementation of SAP.

As argued by Galadima et al., (2019) the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was done out of pressure by the IMF and World Bank, as the Nigerian elites and the political class were not prepared for such, perhaps because they have foreseen the consequences and were paranoid of its negative effects of implementing (SAP) or because they well unprepared for its implementation. In conclusion thereof, SAP was indeed a wrong and terrible dosage of medication for Nigeria’s health at that time; its key components implemented by the Federal Military Government at that time triggered a long period of significant economic decline for Nigeria, causing massive loss of jobs and aggravating unemployment situation and poverty.

In attempting to resolve this dilemma head on, successive Nigerian leaders have attempted at one time or the other to resolve the problem of youth unemployment and poverty, with little or no result to show. Past social investment programmes such as Youth Enterprise With Innovation (YOUWIN) have been criticized of being mere deceit by the government, and lacking necessary genuine political commitment by the leaders to see to its conclusions (Bassey 2018).

In realization of the enormity of youth unemployment and poverty bedeviling Nigeria before the entry into office, Nigeria’s President General Muhammadu Buhari and his running mate, Vice-

President Yemi Osinbajo in 2015, prioritized tackling youth unemployment and poverty as part of their agenda. The administration has thus committed itself repeatedly to addressing youth unemployment and poverty with the launch of a series of social investment programmes such as Nigeria's National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP). The National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) is the umbrella for all other social investment programmes of the Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo administration. However, the core component of the Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo social programme that addresses youth unemployment and poverty is the N-Power, under the framework of the National Social Investment Programme (Maryam, 2020). However, the N-Power programme constitutes the main Social Investment Programme of the Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo administration, designed to address youth unemployment and youth poverty.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growing spate of unemployment and poverty has assumed more serious dimensions amongst Nigerian youths, leading to tremendous rise in anti-social behaviours, drug abuse, violent crimes, and the dangerous illegal migration to European countries; seriously posing grave dangers to social cohesion and socio-political stability of the Nigeria. These problems arise out of lack of economic and employment opportunities, and much needed jobs to keep the youths gainfully employed.

Available statistics from the NBS (2018) also shows that the total number of unemployed youths stood at 13.1 million, with another category of 11.3 million underemployed youths in Nigeria, constituting at aggregate of 24.5 million. This no doubt portends grave danger for the country's political and social stability, as well as socio-economic development.

However, previous social investment programmes initiated by previous administrations have not significantly helped in addressing youth unemployment and poverty across the country. In light of the foregoing, this study seeks to understudy the impact of the N-Power programme on the employment, self-sustenance, poverty levels, and general economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Southwest Nigeria.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to investigate Nigeria's youth Social Investment Programme tagged N-Power in addressing youth unemployment and poverty in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State. However, other specific objectives are:

- i. To what extent has Nigeria's youth Social Investment Programme N-Power had impact on youth unemployment in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State.
- ii. To investigate the effect of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction amongst the youths in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State.
- iii. To identify the impact of the N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State.
- iv. To identify the problems and challenges of the N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State.
- v. To investigate the effectiveness and efficacy of N-Power towards employment generation and poverty reduction in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research work will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between N-power programme and youth employment with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?
- ii. How does the N-Power programme impact on poverty reduction amongst its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?
- iii. What is the impact of N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?
- iv. How has the N-power programme improved the standard of living of both graduates and non-graduates beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To date, studies in Nigeria have not critically documented the effects and effectiveness of the N-Power programme on its beneficiaries in terms of employment and poverty reduction in one empirical analysis. Against this backdrop, this study was motivated by the urgent need to fill this gap by investigating the effects and effectiveness of N-Power on youth unemployment and poverty, as well as their general economic and socioeconomic well-being of its beneficiaries.

To achieve this, the study focused on youths between the ages of 18-35, who are the targeted age demographics of the N-Power programme and recommend policy re-alignments that will help create suitable employment opportunities for the youths, thus taking them out of the abyss of unemployment and poverty.

The study will also serve as a useful tool for scholars and researchers in the field of development, social science, political science, and those studying public administration, who would want to carry out further research in this domain.

The outcomes of the study would no doubt be significant and invaluable to politicians, political office holders, researchers, and policy makers and implementers at large, who are saddled with the responsibilities of addressing youth unemployment and poverty as they will find the results of this research study and recommendations invaluable.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The frontier of this study covers the beneficiaries of Nigeria's youth social investment programme called N-Power, with specific focus on Akute and Ajuwon towns in Ifo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State. The study will examine the effectiveness and efficacy of the N-Power programme in addressing youth unemployment and poverty, as well as economic and socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries, including the administration and challenges associated with the N-Power programme, with a view to providing practical and workable recommendations for sustainability and effectiveness of the N-Power programme.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As a result of the broadness and lack of generally accepted definitions of youth unemployment and poverty, this study defines youth unemployment as the total number of youths aged between 18-35 years who are unemployed and are not engaged in any formal or informal work. Graduate youths

were also defined as tertiary institutions graduates (including colleges, colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities), who are able, willing and ready to work but cannot find gainful employment. Non-graduates youths were also defined with those with primary and high school certificates, dropouts, or those with no primary or secondary education. These definitions were based on the guidelines prescribed by the secretariat of the N-Power programme. The framework adopted for definition of youth is persons between the ages of 18-35.

Similarly, this study also defines poverty as lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, by not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, nor having access to credit; insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities, and susceptibility to violence, and by living on marginal and fragile environments, and not having access to clean water and sanitation (United Nations, 1998).

Other limitations of this study includes the global outbreak of the Corona Virus pandemic that has ravaged global economy, fundamentally changed the course of education globally with lockdowns of academic institutions around the world and a switch to online learning models, and the restrictions it has placed on human daily interactions by way of social/physical distancing.

1.8 THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter one began by giving a brief introduction to the study, with the background providing a comprehensive discussion on the research.

Chapter two began with the literature review, diving deeper into the theoretical frameworks of the study. Much attention was also paid to looking at the theoretical concepts that underpins the study by various authors. The definitions of youth unemployment and youth poverty were critically discussed in this section.

Chapter three started by looking at Nigeria's historical development since independence, with main emphasis on the country's political past, and its economic and socio-economic results in the last couple of years. It also talks specifically about the study area, providing some background to the state and the Local Government Area's political and administrative governance systems.

In chapter four, the research methodology, motives of selection, method of data collection, were discussed as well as the research instruments, and practical aspects of doing development research were explored. Also, the validity and reliability of instruments was explained.

Chapter five provides the data presentation and analysis of data obtained from the field survey and also contained transcripts of the focus group discussion, while the empirical findings from the research were discussed in chapter six.

Chapter seven is the last chapter, providing a summary to the research, conclusions drawn from the research, as well as policy recommendation to public authorities and governments.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of relevant literatures on youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. It also embodies the theoretical and conceptual framework which provides the anchorage for the frameworks in this study from which analysis and findings were drawn by scholars and researchers in the fields. It also discusses Nigeria's youth social investment programme christened N-Power.

This chapter also uses significant proportion of local and indigenous literature. Carthy (2006) advocated for using local and indigenous literature and engagement with local knowledge as integral to conducting research in Global South, arguing that it can open up life-worlds of those involved in research which will in turn produce high quality findings that challenge so-called scientific views of Western experts. Carthy (2006, 222) further justified this as "practical, theoretical and ethical; as it enhances the quality of information gathered and provide more complete research project. Failure to include views of local people and researchers can lead to widespread ethnocentrism".

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is an important aspect of any academic or research work, because it serves as the bridge between the proposed area of research and past literatures on the subject. However, it is a crucial aspect of academic research where the researcher demonstrates his or her competence and knowledge of the research focus in writing, by carrying out a critical yet objective analysis of the works of others on the subject. Furthermore, Bryman (2012, 98) justifies the importance of literature review by describing it as "a means of developing an argument about the significance of your research and where it leads". Accordingly, Bryman (2012) also describes literature review as being able to explicate what have been written, and using their ideas to support a particular viewpoint.

However, the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, and lack of inclusive growth have become dominant debates in all social science and development fields around the world. Similarly, these themes have dominated almost all development policies across political divides, and across the Global South and Global North policymaking processes.

Although these problems have enjoyed considerable discuss in academic and research papers in Nigeria on an individual basis or as a combination of two or more mix, these problems have not been holistically debated as a whole in a single piece of research work.

Most studies in Nigeria have either focused on youth unemployment and poverty (John & Bright 2012; Mercy & Christie 2014; Mu'azu et al., 2019), or on poverty and social exclusion such as (Birchall 2019), or on youth unemployment, poverty and social exclusion (Hussainatu et al., 2013); or social exclusion and inclusive growth (Ogbeide & Agu (2015); and employment, poverty and inclusive growth (Tella et al., 2019).

This review therefore addresses this important aspect of combining the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and absence of inclusive growth in one piece, seeing them as part of a chain, with the occurrence of one leading to another part of the chain.

Empirical evidences around the world have confirmed the existence of a correlation between unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, and the lack of inclusive growth. It is thus believed that the existence and prevalence of one of these leads to another, a scenario that follows a chain pattern.

Authors such as John & Bright (2012, 269) have written extensively on the correlation between unemployment and poverty amongst the youths in Nigeria, submitting that “unemployment and poverty are so intertwine that one can easily confuse one for the other”. John & Bright (2012, 269) opines that unemployment and underemployment reflect fundamental failure to maximize a key factor of production, labour, as a mechanism for accelerating economic growth in Nigeria; and “low returns to labour as well as high unemployment indicates poverty”.

Furthermore, John & Bright (2012) examined the effect of unemployment on poverty and demonstrated in an empirical finding that poverty is a function of unemployment, using statistics from agricultural, manufacturing and services contributions to real GDP, as well as population and inflation rate; in which growth rate of the variables are modeled. The result thus proved that unemployment have positive influence on poverty levels in Nigeria, recommending that governments at all levels should create jobs to arrest the scourge of unemployment as a strategy to tackling poverty.

Similarly, Mercy & Christie (2014, 92) expressed sadness about the neglect of the enormous potentials of the human resource potentials of Nigeria's youths, describing it as "the most pernicious of wastes which can militate against the development efforts of the nation". Mercy & Christie (2014, 93) thus examined the dynamics of poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria and established that there is a relationship between youth unemployment and youth poverty in Nigeria, stating that "while the unemployment rate has remained very high due to the rising rate of poverty, the poverty rate has equally remained high due to the high level of unemployment". Mercy & Christie (2014, 2) aptly submits that "Nigerian youths are confronted with poverty, unemployment".

Empirically, Mercy & Christie (2014) showed that majority of the youths in Nigeria live below the poverty line as a result of unemployment, even though they are employable; thus recommending among other things for a holistic approach to employment creation so as not to only reduce youth unemployment, but also combat the dangerous poverty level amongst the youths.

Furthermore, Mu'azu et al., (2019, 2) noted that youths are very "important stakeholders in any society regarded not only as useful resources in nation-building but also the backbone of any societal development", and therefore identified the twin problems of poverty and unemployment to be very common amongst Nigerian youths, citing unemployment as the primary cause of youth poverty; and calling for a conscious design and implementation of effective social safety security system as a strategy of reversing the surging rate of youth unemployment and poverty.

Mu'azu et al., (2019) further stated that a vast number of Nigeria's youths are unemployed; whilst those employed are poorly paid with large dependant relatives and marginal take home income after net of taxation. This further suggests that the creation of employment is not enough, but the creation of suitable employment with decent income.

On the other side, Jenny (2019) opines that poverty and social exclusion are interrelated but distinct from one another, as poverty increases the occurrence of social exclusion, further providing an overview of social exclusion in Nigeria and submitting that young people in particular are prone to economic and social exclusion even though they are literate, with young people still displaying the highest unemployment and inactivity rates in Nigeria.

Studies by Hussainatu et al., (2013) established the nexus between youth unemployment and poverty, expressing dismay at youth unemployment and lack of participation in labour market which is attributable to social exclusion are some major problems confronting Nigeria. Hussainatu et al., (2013) concluded that social exclusion manifested in form lack of youth participation, youth unemployment and poverty; are some of the structures of pathologies of democracy and national security challenges bedeviling Nigeria.

According to Ogbeide & Agu (2015, 5) the existence of social exclusion and absence of inclusive growth by stating that “inequitable distribution of resources in the society hinders the person or group of persons affected negatively so that they will not have enough to take care of the basic needs of life”, and inequality and poverty are through growth, employment among others.

Ogbeide & Agu (2015) also expressed the relationship between the absence of inclusive growth and poverty occurrence as during period of economic development where the economy is growing and there are increase in inequality, those affected by the rising inequality are termed poor because the rising inequality leads to increase in poverty levels, given that there is a positive relationship between the level of inequality and poverty affecting an individual or in a country. Ogbeide & Agu (2015) reached a conclusion empirically that poverty, inequality and unemployment are casually related in Nigeria.

Perhaps, the most comprehensive and recent study on unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion is the conducted by Tella et al., (2019) where it documented the relationship and effects of unemployment, poverty, and inclusive growth in one empirical analysis. Tella et al., (2019) investigates the relationship between unemployment, poverty and inclusive growth in Nigeria, the level of poverty and employment in Nigeria do not stimulate inclusive growth.

In their study, Tella et al., (2019) lamented that despite sustained and robust economic growth recorded in terms of GDP growth of prior to the recent 2016 economic recession, the Nigerian economy has witnessed sustained growth, making it one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and sadly, such growth has not benefited majority of Nigerians through the creation of decent and wage paying employment opportunities, with surging poverty levels in the midst of rapid economic growth. Tella et al., (2019) described the scenario as structural disequilibrium in growth, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

As part of their recommendations, Tella et al., (2019, 1) emphasized the need for government “establishment of a recruitment monitoring framework for all government agencies and ministries that will ensure that such recruitment is devoid of corruption, and that all Nigerians benefit from government employment programmes”

Although Tella et al., (2019) critically underscores the chain of relationship between unemployment, poverty, and inclusive growth in one empirical piece, it falls short of including aspects of social exclusion as it affects youths in Nigeria and how it contributes to youth poverty.

Therefore, it is therefore believed that this research work will contribute in not only underscoring the chain of relationship between unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion; it will also supplement existing research and literature on the subjects, whilst also providing avenue for further studies on the subject.

2.2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Dickson et al., (2018, 438) posited that “the theoretical and conceptual framework explains the path of a research and grounds it firmly in theoretical constructs, with the overall aim of making the research findings more meaningful and acceptable to the theoretical constructs in the research field and ensures its generalizability”. Dickson et al. (2018) further canvassed that theoretical and conceptual frameworks both assists in stimulating research, while ensuring the extension of knowledge by providing both the direction and impetus to the research inquiry, as well as enhancing the empiricism and rigor of a research. This position was further justified by Imenda (2014) who posited that both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks give life to a research.

Similarly, Grant & Osanloo (2014) further asserts that a theoretical framework is a ‘blueprint’ or guide for a research, as well as a framework based on an existing theory in a field of inquiry that is related and/or reflects the hypothesis of a study. Grant & Osanloo (2014) justified that theoretical framework is a blueprint that is often ‘borrowed’ by the researcher to build his/her own house or research inquiry, consisting of theoretical principles, constructs, concepts, and tenets of a theory.

Hence, the importance of theoretical framework in research is of great significance, as it gives the academic or research works the very foundation upon which its structures can be erected. Grant & Osanloo (2014) argues that it provides the structure in showing how a researcher defines his/her study philosophically, epistemologically, methodology and analytically.

In the same vein, Ravitch & Carl (2016) argued that the theoretical framework assist researchers in situating and contextualizing formal theories into their studies as a guide. Norman (2010) also posited that conceptual framework or theoretical model may be integrated in literature reviews; just as all social research uses technical concepts, as they form the language of every discipline.

Finally, Bryman (2012, 8) shared views expressed by others by suggesting that “concepts are the way we make sense of social world, and are essentially labels that we give to aspects of the social world that seem to have common features that strike us as significant”. Bryman (2012) argued further by concluding that the fields of social sciences have a strong tradition of concepts, which have become part of the language of everyday life, serving several purposes in social research. Concepts are a key ingredient of theories. Indeed, it is almost impossible to imagine a theory that did not have at least one concept embedded in it. They are important to how we organize and signal to intended audiences our research interests.

2.3 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.3.1 UNEMPLOYMENT

The International Labour Office (2003, 41) defines unemployment to comprise “all persons within the age limits specified for measuring the economically active population, who during the reference period were without work are not in paid employment or self-employment as specified by the international definition of employment, currently available for work either for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and seeking work and had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment”.

Furthermore, Emeka (2011, 361) described unemployment as the condition of people without jobs, going further to define “youth unemployment as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any”; just as Rufus & Oluwatunmise (2017) define youth unemployment as a situation whereby people between the ages of 18-35 years who are willing and ready to work, but cannot find work.

However, unemployment is no doubt a global problem, although with significant proportion in Global South countries. Emeka (2011, 362) shares this view by stating that “unemployment is a global trend, but occurs mostly in developing countries of the world”. Emeka (2011, 361) further that “when labour supply exceeds labour demand, it results into joblessness and unemployment”.

In Nigeria however, the problem of youth unemployment has lingered for decades, and had recently assumed unimaginable proportions. In fact, youth unemployment is by far the greatest social problem bedeviling Nigeria. The massive number of unemployed youths in today's Nigeria has become unbearable and unacceptable. Each year, thousands of fresh graduates are churned out of Nigeria's educational institutions with no hope of credible employment or economic sustenance in sight. Emeka (2011) also reinforced this position that the chronic problem of youth unemployment is very evident in Nigeria, as thousands of graduates are turned out for who there are no jobs.

Accordingly, Nigerians see unemployment as one of the main problems facing the country, well above poverty; and the lack of job opportunities is specific area of concern for young people (World Bank, 2016; as cited in Roz 2019). Emeka (2011, 359) went further by succinctly painting the ugly situation of youth unemployment in Nigeria by stating that "Nigerian youths are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some industries". This portray the rather sad and unfortunate reality the Nigerian youths has been subjected to since time immemorial. Furthermore, in examining the unimaginable high rate of youth unemployment, Idoko (2013) described the situation as a paradox; the problem of inadequate jobs for youths in the midst of abundant human and natural resources, fertile land and numerous natural resources, including hydrocarbon resources.

Idoko (2013, 74) described unemployed youths in Nigeria to include the "unemployed school leavers, graduates, and retrenched workers like the sacked motor cycle riders in major cities across the country for alleged risk associated with it, plus others who are virtually unskilled and have no job".

Idoko (2013) described Nigeria's high rate of youth unemployment as the inability to participate in any productive activity in either the formal and informal sectors of the economy, which extends to small-scale business and hawking; whilst also decrying that the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria poses a serious threat to her meeting up national and international challenges.

Idoko (2013, 74) further argues that the growing rate of unemployment in Nigeria as not only out of "omission or commission, but out of naivety between selfish goals (corruption) and rather out of economic malaise". With over US\$200 billion oil revenue earned within a decade 1999-2009 (Nwadioke 2012; as cited Idoko 2013) it is unjustifiable the level of youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youths in Nigeria. Idoko (2013) further queried how a country like Nigeria

with one of the world's richest hydrocarbon resources could also be home to some of the world's poorest people due to unemployment, corruption and other social vices.

The importance of tackling youth unemployment in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, as the World Bank (2016) affirmed that the working-age population in Nigeria is set to increase rapidly in absolute terms by some 66 million people between years 2010 and 2030, necessitating the urgent need to create 40 to 50 million or more additional jobs needed to employ Nigeria's growing population between 2010 and 2030; as this translates to over 2 million additional jobs per year.

Similarly, the World Bank also estimates that Nigeria's population is expected to grow to over 440 million people by 2050, effectively becoming the third most populated country in the world (World Bank, 2016; as cited in Roz 2019).

Kahraman (2011) as cited in Rufus & Oluwatunmise (2017) notes that youth unemployment is a challenging policy arena for developing countries, yet little empirical evidence is available to inform policy planning and development. This is however a major policy area which policymakers in Nigeria has consistently treated with kid gloves.

Furthermore, Mader (2018, 1) as cited in (Roz 2019, 6) reiterate that young people in Africa do not "generally lack the skills or education to work, nor are idle by choice" but "the provision of opportunities to work is the main challenge"; just as Roz (2019) stated that young people in Nigeria are not idle by choice but lack opportunities to work. These thus suggest the fact that youth unemployment is the precursor to youth poverty in Nigeria, as poverty arise out of lack of capacity to earn decent income for economic and social sustenance.

Finally, Olakitan (2015) as cited in Rufus & Oluwatunmise (2017) also states that, aside from terrorism, youth unemployment is one of the greatest threats to national security mainly because idle hands are the devil's workshop.

2.3.2 POVERTY

There is no globally acceptable definition of the concept of poverty; hence it is difficult to have a common ground on the subject. However, the United Nations (1998) ascribed poverty to be lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's

living, nor having access to credit. However, the United Nations (1998) also defines poverty to include insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities, and susceptibility to violence, and by living on marginal and fragile environments, and not having access to clean water and sanitation.

Poverty on the other end is a multidimensional phenomenon (Dahlquist 2013; as cited in Tella et al., 2019). Furthermore, Victoria (2018, 22) cited in Backwith (2015) argues that despite the controversies surrounding its conceptualization, it is generally agreed that poverty has adverse effects on individuals and communities; it breeds social exclusion, isolation, fear, distress and deprivations. Similarly, Akwara et al., (2013, 4) defines poverty as “state of being, in which an individual is incapable of utilizing resources around him to improve himself or herself economically, socially, politically or otherwise”, or the absence of the basic necessities of life for any person or a human group. Poverty is a condition of having insufficient resources or income.

Victoria (2018, 20) poignantly submits that “poverty has remained a threat and challenge to humanity in all ramifications, and also as a complex, multidimensional and multifaceted with manifestations in the economic, social, political, environmental and every realm of human existence”.

On the one hand, Tella et al., (2019, 4) provides a linkage between poverty and unemployment by stating that “poverty reduction depends on the strength of each link between poverty and employment”. Tella et al., (2019, 4) went further by stating that “the hallmark of poverty in Nigeria is the high level of unemployment”, thus establishing a casual relationship between poverty and unemployment.

On the other hand, Bhalla & Lapeyre (2016) as cited in Victoria (2018) relate poverty to the concept of social exclusion as an emerging phenomenon in both developed and developing contexts. Poverty is indeed a dilemma and an enemy of humanity, as it significantly all aspects of human development, thus calling for concerted and comprehensive efforts of governments and policymakers to attention. In Nigeria however, it remains a paradox-poverty in the midst of plenty and rising in periods of economic growth (Omoyibo 2013; as cited in Victoria 2018).

Nigerian youths have unfortunately been pushed to the frills of poverty as a result of unemployment, social exclusion and not being included in the aggregate economic growth. The

inability to find decent jobs for self-sustenance, coupled with the lack of social security to provide one's self, have contributed to youth poverty across Nigeria.

2.3.3 INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Notably, post World War II development thinking focused specifically on industrial development and rapid economic growth as an approach to development. Although this line of development thinking has recorded some successes; it also comes with its shortcomings. The rampaging global poverty and inequality in the midst of global economic development across nations has therefore provoked new development thinking. While it is correct to conclude that nations have succeeded in significantly improving their GDP growth rates as compared to pre and early post-World War II era, evidence also suggests that the rate of global poverty and inequality, social exclusion has continued to surge, necessitating a new approach to development thinking. In recognition of this, Ranieri & Ramos (2013) opines that the concept of inclusive growth has become a central concern in development literature and in policy making in several countries.

However Tella et al., (2019, 2) described inclusive growth as “a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them”. To underscore the relationship between inclusive growth and employment, McKinley (2010) as cited in Tella et al., (2019) postulates that one of the primary ingredients of inclusive growth is productive employment because it enhances the growth of income per person; a clear confirmation of the correlation between inclusive growth and employment.

Tella et al., (2019, 3) also remark that “employment growth creates new job opportunities to absorb unemployed labour and engages more hands within the labour force”. Tella et al., (2019, 3) further affirmed that “expansion in income is fundamental in advancing the objectives of inclusive growth. The expansion in income, especially among the working poor, is the basis for creating and expanding economic opportunities”.

Hence, McKinley (2010) cited in Tella et al., (2019, 3) advance that “one of the primary ingredients of inclusive growth is productive employment because it enhances the growth of income per person”; and further contend that the successful accomplishment of the objective of income expansion through productive employment set the pace for progress in many other dimensions of sustainable and inclusive growth (McKinley, 2010; as cited in Tella et al., 2019).

Similarly, Ali & Zhuang (2007, 10) defines inclusive growth to mean “growth with equal opportunities, with focus on creating opportunities and making the opportunities accessible to all; and growth is therefore inclusive when it allows all members of a society to participate in and contribute to the growth process on an equal basis regardless of their individual circumstances”. Ali & Zhuang (2007, 10) further suggests that “equal opportunity is a basic right of a human being and that it is unethical and immoral to treat individuals differently in access to opportunities; in recognition that equal access to opportunities increases growth potential”. Ali & Zhuang (2007, 2) concludes that inclusive growth main focus is on creating economic opportunities with equal access.

However, Migap et al., (2015); as cited in Tella et al., (2019) also describes inclusive growth is a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them, further reckoning that inclusive growth as the literal meaning of the two words refers to both, the pace and the pattern of the economic growth; whilst McKinley (2010) as cited in Ezekiel & Elizabeth (2015, 33) postulates that “an inclusive growth that aims at achieving sustainable growth that will create and expand economic opportunities, and secondly that would ensure broader access to these opportunities so that members of the society can participate in and benefit from the growth”.

Therefore, the need for inclusive growth in today’s development plan has become more important, particularly in a developing country like Nigeria. While it is true to say that Nigeria has consistently witnessed sustained economic growth since return to civilian and democratic government since 1999, very little has been achieved in reducing unemployment and poverty levels, particularly amongst the youths.

This same view was also echoed by Tella et al., (2019) stating that despite robust economic growth recorded in Nigeria in terms of GDP growth rates over the years, the vast majority of Nigerians have been left out of the growth with lack of decent and wage paying employment opportunities, and pervasive poverty amidst rapid economic growth. Tella et al., (2019, 2) described this scenario as “structural disequilibrium in growth, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria”.

In light of this, Ali & Zhuang (2007) canvassed that more and more countries are adopting inclusive policy agenda in their development plans and policymaking processes, citing empirical cases from India and China (Planning Commission of India 2006 and State Council of China 2006).

Finally, Ali & Zhuang (2007) contend that inequalities due to differences in circumstances often reflect social exclusion, a situation which suffices from weaknesses of the existing systems of property and civil rights, needing corrections through public policy interventions. Ali & Zhuang (2007) further asserts the importance of inclusive growth as it addresses the inequality issue, and also contributes to the poverty reduction agenda. Evidently, the pursuit of inclusive growth that creates meaningful employment and economic opportunities for Nigeria's teeming population of unemployed youths requires urgent and necessary policy and political embracement by Nigeria in order to effectively reduce the ugly trend of youth unemployment and poverty.

2.3.4 SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Marlier and Atkinson (2010) relate the concept of social exclusion to the lack of voice, power, and representation whereby individuals and groups are involuntarily barred from political, economic, and social activities, preventing their full involvement in the society in which they live. Similarly, Labonté, et al., (2011, 9) define social exclusion as "a state in which individuals are unable to participate in economic, social, political and, for some theorists, cultural activities at a level considered to be normatively acceptable" (as cited in Victoria 2018, 27). However, social exclusion, as described by Brian (1998, 5) "is no more than a relabeling of what used to be called poverty"; further suggesting that social isolation encompasses social exclusion but is not confined to it.

In the same vein, Robin (2001, 26) defines social exclusion as synonym for income poverty and refers to it in relation to "people who are not attached to the paid labour market (exclusion from the paid workforce) or to those people in low-wage work; and more broadly as more than poverty, income inequality, deprivation or lack of employment"; and Jenny (2019) poignantly submits that "social exclusion is understood as a process where individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life; a result of complex and intersectional factors that combine to reduce their participation in society".

In Northern Ireland, the concept of social exclusion has been defined as "a set of processes, including within the labour market and the welfare system, by which individuals, households, communities or even whole social groups are pushed towards or kept to the margins of society; encompassing not only material deprivation but also more broadly the denial of opportunities to

participate fully in social and civil life. (Democratic Dialogue 1995, emphasis added) cited in Robin (2001, 26).

Similarly, the Scottish Office proposes that the concept of social exclusion is complex, and its causes are connected, and its effects themselves become causes of further exclusion; for example, poverty is both a key cause of social exclusion and a key effect. (Scottish Office 1999: 1-2 online, emphasis added) as cited in Robin (2001).

Whilst the United Kingdom social exclusion unit in its earliest manifestations, described social exclusion by focusing more on individuals, remarks that “social exclusion more in terms of conventional poverty discourse”. Thus, the complexity was identified in terms such as “linked problems”: Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (UK Social Exclusion Unit, 1999; as cited in Robin 2001, 27).

However, the consequences of social exclusion cannot be easily quantified. Because of its multidimensional focus, quantifying social exclusion in this study shall be narrowed down to lack of employment opportunities, lack or absence of inclusive growth, as it affects Nigerian youths.

Within the context of Nigeria, lack of employment opportunities and youth poverty are two key areas of social exclusion because it denies the youth from active participation in labour market opportunities, inclusivity, and its resultant poverty outcome. When youths leave school or any educational establishment, the transition from school to labour market is extremely difficult to overcome. Many Nigerian youths after leaving schools are faced with the herculean task of securing suitable employment opportunities and participation in labour market in one way or the other. Accordingly, the UNDP (2018); as cited in Birchall (2019) young people in Nigeria face a range of barriers to social inclusion, with an estimated 83 percent of the population are below the age of 40, and 62 percent are under 25 years old.

Mader (2018, 1) as cited in (Roz 2019, 6) summarized this pathetic situation by stating that young people in Africa do not “generally lack the skills or education to work, nor are idle by choice but the provision of opportunities to work is the main challenge”; just as Roz (2019) stated that young people in Nigeria are not idle by choice but lack opportunities to work. These therefore indicate that

youth unemployment in Nigeria cannot be define in terms of (types of unemployment which are) but can best be described in terms of lack of general employment opportunities, a danger and clear precursor to youth poverty in Nigeria.

2.4 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

Youth unemployment and poverty pose grave dangers to social stability, state fragility, and a major factor for general insecurity of a state. Similarly, the large number of poverty amongst the youth also undermines human development effort and constitutes setbacks towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

However, Uddin & Uddin (2013) in their studies reveled that youth unemployment in Nigeria produces six major effects in the country such as tension and hatred between the haves and have not, communal clashes, rise of non-state actors such as Boko Haram, fuels militancy, oil and gas infrastructures sabotage, vandalism in the Niger Delta by militants, fuels armed robbery, contributes significantly to female prostitution home and abroad, child and human trafficking; and generally constitutes obstacles to security of lives and properties.

Uddin & Uddin (2013) further stressed that unemployment has the potential to result in decline in quality of life, lack of access to shelter, education, healthcare and nutrition; and ultimately lead to reduction in life-span. Similarly, Chima (2019) posits that unemployment is one of the macroeconomic problems facing Nigeria.

Furthermore, Chima (2019) estimated the impact of unemployment on the economic growth in Nigeria using time series data from 1999 to 2017 to carry out his tests. Findings from the tests thus uncovers that there exists negative and insignificant relationship between unemployment and economic growth, which suggests that for any increase in rate of unemployment, there is an economic loss economic loss in terms of total output that unemployed could have produced in the economy if employed. This suggests that unemployment affects overall economic performance, with recommendations that the objective of pursuing an increase in GDP growth rate should be matched with the objective of significantly reducing unemployment across the country.

Other studies such as Rufus & Oluwatumise (2017) also mentioned the effects of unemployment to be low standard of living and high crime rates as some of the direct consequences of youth

unemployment, thus recommended diversification of the nation's economy to enhance the generation of job opportunities, as well as the resuscitation of collapsed local industries to absorb the growing number of unemployed youths

Ajufo (2013) argues that youth unemployment poses risk to Nigerian society and could be disastrous for the country, and also highlighted consequences of youth unemployment to produce increased violence, crime, drug abuse and political instability. Ajufo (2013) opines that crime may be a consequence of unemployment, but it is also an additional factor causing youth unemployment through its negative effects on the economy.

Lastly, authors such as property Adebayo (1999); Egbuna (2001); Alanana (2003); and Okonkwo (2005); as cited in Ajufo 2013) all affirms the negative consequences of youth unemployment to include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder, armed robbery, and all manner of criminal behaviours causing general insecurity of life across Nigeria.

2.5 SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES

However, one major policy instrument used in addressing the problems of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth, and social exclusion as it affects the youths is by employing the instrumentality of social investment programmes. Social investment programmes, also known as (SIPs) are those social plans or programmes pursued and implemented by governments and policy-makers towards the achievements of targeted social objectives such as youth employment, healthcare programmes, and economic empowerment programmes.

Saleh (2019, 205) describes the aim of social investment programs as “granting youths the power to perform their duties and create change, teaching them about their ability to control their lives and change society to inculcate a sense of value”. Similarly, Olaf & Chen (2015, 4 & 5) defines social investment programme to include “public policies which are aimed at both investing in human-capital development and making efficient use of human capital in terms of labour-market participation”; whilst the “intention of the European social investment agenda was to get people out of poverty by moving them into work”.

As canvassed by (Hemerijck, 2013; in Olaf & Chen 2015) it was argued that the overarching policy objectives have been shifted from combating unemployment to increasing employment. However,

and as postulated by Nathalie (2013, 635-636) “three areas of public policy stand out as particularly central to the social investment perspectives- policies that invest in human capital development and that help to preserve human capital throughout the life course; policies that help to make efficient use of human capital; policies that provide ‘active securities’ throughout the life-course”.

Nathalie (2013, 636) also argues that in all of these, “social investment programmes that encompasses capacitating public services emerged as a strategy that aims and focus on investing in human capital, as perhaps the social policy which gathers the greatest consensus amongst social investment proponents”.

In summary, it is important that social investment policy, as canvassed by different authors, should not just concern monetary payments, but should encompass a policy that promotes capacitating its beneficiaries in a way that invests in human development and preserves human capacity.

2.6 CRITICAL REVIEW OF NIGERIA’S SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME N-POWER

It is a common practice that many developing countries pursue and implement a variety of social programmes as part of their goal of reducing social imbalance, curbing unemployment and poverty levels; and ultimately enhance human development. This therefore calls for a comprehensive and strategic approach to the processes of designing and implementation social programmes. In this context, Nigeria currently runs a youth social investment programme tagged N-Power which is targeted at the youths, and which accommodates unemployed Nigerian youths within the ages of 18-35 years irrespective of educational background. N-power is a catchy acronym that stands for empower. The N-Power programme currently operates under the robust framework of Nigeria’s National Social Investment Programme NSIP.

The N-Power has a robust network of both local and foreign partners such as United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), World Bank, Bank of Industry, Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Universal Basic Education, National Orientation Agency, National Bureau of Statistics, NYSC, The Partnership for Child Development, Save the Children, SUBEB, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, World Food Programme, NDDC, Dangote Group; and a host of others.

Conceived as a strategic job creation and skills empowerment programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and designed specifically to help young Nigerians acquire and develop life-long skills to become practical solution providers in their communities, N-Power enables Nigeria's youths to become innovative players in both the domestic and global markets.

However, the core mandate of the N-Power programme is to provide beneficiaries with requisite skills within the designated period of either one year or two years, depending on the category; provide relevant work experience opportunities towards job employment for unemployed youth; and to link policies towards enhancing public services.

The main policy thrust of the N-Power programme is to harness large-scale skill development in the country. Recognizing that skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development, the current high level of youth unemployment in the country thus compelled the (FGN) to harness Nigeria's young demography through an objective online process, providing them with an opportunity to achieve financial and social inclusion, as well as productivity within the country (N-Power, 2020).

However, the N-Power programme has not come without its challenges. In recent times, the N-Power programme has faced several backlashes from beneficiaries and members of the public. In a study conducted by Odey & Sambe (2019), it was argued that over-centralization of the N-Power programme under the authority of the Federal Government of Nigeria was a challenge, as it affects interactions between the authorities who control the programme and the beneficiaries of the programme, thereby limiting the possibility of improving the programme through understanding the plights of the programme beneficiaries. Similarly, Kelvin et al., (2017) in their report stated that at inception, the N-Power programme was bogged down by challenges such as systemic hiccups such as insufficient information and wrong bank verification number (BVN) as some of the factors undermining the programme.

Punch Newspapers (2019) reported that although some beneficiaries commended the Federal Government for initiating the programme, stating that it had transformed their lives, they lamented the persistent delays in payment of their monthly stipends, begging the Federal Government to consider their plight. However, in a similar report by Leke (2019) in Punch Newspapers, it was reported that Nigeria's lower chamber, the House of Representatives (HoR) had commenced an

investigation into alleged arbitrary disengagement of youths engaged in the N-Power programme, whilst their monthly payments are also withheld.

Finally, in a report by Okechukwu (2020) in Punch Newspapers, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, now saddled with the responsibility of administering and managing the N-Power programme released a statement to the effect that the Federal Government cannot afford the ₦300bn (Three-Hundred billion Naira) N-Power beneficiaries demand.

All of these circumstances that while the beneficiaries of the N-Power suggest having positive inclination towards the N-Power programme; the programme has been occasioned by several challenges which if not swiftly and adequately addressed, could impair the overall success of the programme in no distant time.

Key deliverables of the N-Power programme are:

- i. To provide beneficiaries with requisite skills within the designated period of either 1 year or 2 years, depending on the category;
- ii. To provide work experience opportunities towards job employment, for unemployed youth;
- iii. And to link policies towards enhancing public services.

The N-Power programme is categorized into two segmented into two categories: Non-Graduate Programmes and Graduates Programmes.

2.6.1 NON-GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

On the one hand, the non-graduate segment of N-Power is segmented into two frameworks, N-Power knowledge and N-Power Build, with both targeted at equipping non-tertiary institutions graduates young Nigerians of between 18-35 years for a knowledge economy and skills-to-job training.

The N-Power knowledge component was designed to provide 5,000 beneficiaries with world-class skills and certification in areas such as animation, graphic design, post-production, and script writing; whilst the N-Power Build component is an accelerated training and certification

programme designed to provide 75,000 young unemployed Nigerians with skills and training as technicians, artisans and service professionals.

In summary, both the N-Power knowledge component and the N-Power Build component of the non-graduates programmes are designed to provide and equip a total pool of 80,000 young Nigerians between 18-35years with practical skills to enable them become self-sufficient and participate in the economy; ultimately taking 80,000 young Nigerians out of the unemployment quagmire and the abyss of poverty (N-Power, 2020).

2.6.2 GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

On the other hand, the graduate component of N-Power programme involves the engagement of 500,000 tertiary institutions graduates across Nigeria, and is designed as a volunteer scheme. It was segmented into four components as N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach; and N-Power Tax. Beneficiaries are paid a monthly stipend of thirty thousand naira N30, 000, and are between the ages of 18-35 years.

Furthermore, beneficiaries are equipped with electronic devices and are engaged as N-Power Agro, and are charged with the responsibility of providing advisory services to farmers across the Nigeria, as well as disseminating knowledge aggregated by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (FMARD) in the areas of agricultural extension services. N-Power Agro volunteers are also collects data on Nigeria's agriculture assets. For N-Power Health, beneficiaries are engaged to help improve and promote preventive healthcare in their communities to vulnerable members of the society including pregnant women and children and to families and individuals.

N-Power Teach beneficiaries are engaged to contribute to improving basic education delivery in Nigeria and deployed as assistant teachers in primary schools around Nigeria, and to provide assistance with school management and sundry functions within the schools, and where required, provide assistance in taking basic education to children in marginalized communities. N-Power Tax beneficiaries are engaged to help improve national compliance amongst taxpayers across Nigeria by working as tax liaison officers with respective tax authorities within their jurisdictions with responsibilities for providing real-time answers to customers' inquiries, customer management and ultimately create tax awareness amongst the populace (N-Power, 2020).

According to Maryam (2020), at inception, coupled with the determination to guarantee high-level political authority and coordination for all social protection programmes within Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) established the National Social Investment Office (NSIO) within the Presidency with the Vice President charged with the goal of establishing a credible method of targeting the poor and vulnerable, undertake and ensure standard delivery, as well ensure improvement in human capital indices.

Therefore, the office of the Vice President was tasked with ensuring clarity in roles and responsibilities, transparency, efficiency and accountability through skilled and ethical human workforce, ensure effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as well as proper coordination and synergy amongst key Ministries, Departments and Agencies, across Federal, State and Local Governments.

However, following the successful implementation of the social protection programmes during the first tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, and to ensure the sustainability of the programme, all National Social Investment Programmes are now domicile under the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Social Development and Disaster Management. In this sense, the N-Power programme is now currently being handled and coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Social Development and Disaster Management.

Beneficiaries of the N-Power are mandated to have valid Bank Verification Number (BVN) to enable them receive funds directly from the Federal Government through their personal bank accounts (Maryam, 2020).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF NIGERIA AND RESEARCH AREA

This section provides a brief history of Nigeria and the research area, the towns of Akute and Ajuwon both in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria. It highlights Nigeria's historical background since independence, looking at its political, economic and socio-economic performances over the years. It also discusses the administrative governance system of Local Governments in Nigeria, with specific focus on the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State.

3.1 COUNTRY PROFILE

Nigeria, located in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea and lying between Benin and Cameroon, is Africa's most populous country. Nigeria is a key regional player in West Africa, with approximately 184 million inhabitants, accounting for 47% of West Africa's population, and has one of the largest populations of youth in the world (World Bank, 2018).

In geographical size, Nigeria has a total land area of 923,768 square kilometers, including 13,000 square kilometers of water. Nigeria shares land borders with Cameroon 1,690 kilometers in the east, Chad 87 kilometers in the northeast, Niger 1,497 kilometers in the north, and Benin 773 kilometers in the west (Library of Congress, 2008). As a federation consisting of 36 autonomous states, Nigeria is also a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society. Blessed with abundance of resources hydrocarbon, solid minerals, natural gas; Nigeria prides herself as Africa's biggest oil exporter, and also possess the largest natural gas reserves on the continent (World Bank, 2018).

Nigeria got her independence from Britain in 1960 and operated a parliamentary system of government until her first military coup of January 1966, followed by a counter-coup of July 1966 which led to a 36 months long and brutal civil war. The country returned to democratic system of government in 1983 when the then military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo handed over power to an elected leader- Nigeria's first democratically elected president, Shehu Shagari (Library of Congress, 2008; Abdulrahman, 2014).

The military grabbed power again in 1985 and Nigeria faced years of political turmoil, unrests and a failed political transition in 1993, until the military finally relinquished power in 1999 after years

of international political isolations and sanctions from Western powers. A hurried political transition in 1999 led to a new democratic system of government when a new president was elected; with former Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo and military general who had hitherto enjoyed international and global recognition as the first sitting African military head of state to successfully transmit power to a democratic leader, emerging as a President (Abdulrahman, 2014; Abdulsalam, 2013). Nigeria has enjoyed interrupted democratic administrations since 1999 till date and has equally pursued several economic reforms and national development programmes till date, with little or no results.

Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, is the seat of power and houses the three-arms of government. Abuja has remained the Federal Capital of Nigeria since 1991 after it was moved from Lagos. According to (Unnumen & Adepoju, 2019) Abuja was chosen as a new capital for Nigeria because of the shortcomings and inadequacies of Lagos.

Nigeria is also Africa's largest democracy, operating a Washington-type system three arms of government consisting the Executive, National Assembly of both the Senate which is the upper legislative arm and the House of Representatives which is the lower legislative arm, as well as a Judiciary (Library of Congress, 2008).

Nigeria is a federation consisting 36 autonomous states with 774 Local Governments Areas spread across the country. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society. With an abundance of resources, Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil exporter, and also has the largest natural gas reserves on the continent (World Bank, 2018).

Nigeria had for decades consistently faced quite a number of development challenges. In the course of its development pursuits, Nigeria has made significant progress in socio-economic terms over the last 15 years. Between 2005 and 2015, Nigeria's Human Development Index value increased by 13.1%, but inequality in terms of income and opportunities has been growing rapidly, and has adversely affected poverty reduction (UNDP Human Development Report, 2016).

The North-South geopolitical and geo-economic divide has widened in recent years due to the Boko Haram insurgency and a lack of visible economic development in the northern part of the country. Large pockets of Nigeria's population still live in poverty, with unemployment widespread across the length and breadth of the country; coupled with inadequate access to basic services, and visible

lack of inclusive development. The lack of job opportunities is at the core of the high poverty levels, of regional inequality, and of social and political unrest in the country (World Bank, 2018).

However, Nigeria still faces several economic, socioeconomic and human development challenges, with new challenges emerging in recent times as a result of non-state actors such as terrorists, bandits, secessionists; all of which can be attributed to youth unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and lack of inclusivity of the youths. Nigeria's population of unemployed and underemployed youths with little or no form of income continues to soar rapidly.

3.2 NIGERIA'S RECENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

Although Nigeria has continued to witness gradual and sustained economic progress since her return to civilian administration in 1999, the country is still face with numerous unemployed, poor and socially excluded citizens. According to the African Development Bank Group also known as (ADB), Nigeria's real GDP growth rate recorded 2.3% in 2019, more than 1.9% recorded for 2018, with the transport sector, improved oil sector performance ICT; contributing significantly. Manufacturing activities continues to experience inadequate financing, with household consumption being the major growth driver for 2019 (ADB, 2020).

Projected real GDP growth rate was estimated at 2.9% for years 2020 and 3.3% in 2021; although this will very difficult to come by following the global pandemic of Covid-19 and its resultant global oil price crash. However, the African Development Bank Group also reported Nigeria's total public debt as at year 2019 stood at US\$83.9 billion, 14.6% higher than previous year. Local or domestice component of the debt was put at US\$56.7 billion, and external debt accounting for US\$27.2 billion (ADB, 2020).

The (ADB, 2020) also reported that poverty remain widespread across the length and breadth of Nigeria, with poverty rate in over half of the 36 states of the country above national average of 69%. The ADB also observed that Nigeria's poverty levels reflects rising unemployment amongst the populace, estimated at 23.1% in 2018, a huge jump from 14.2% recorded in 2016.

However, the ADB (2020) acknowledged that the government's N-Power social programs targeted at addressing youth unemployment along with other youth empowerment schemes are going to be of great significance in addressing unemployment. Projected GDP growth rates for 2020 and 2021

were hinged on the successful implementation of the government's economic reform programme tagged Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), which emphasizes economic diversification. Government's recent increment of Value Added Tax (VAT) rates from 5% to 7.5% from year 2020 could help shore up the nation's tax revenue, and could also hurt household consumption.

The ADB (2020) also cited general insecurity across the country as some of the challenges facing inflow of foreign investors, just as it recalled that high unemployment rate could potentially create social tensions.

3.3 OGUN STATE

Ogun State was carved out of the defunct Western region of Nigeria by the Federal Military regime on the 3rd of February 1976. The State was named after its popular river, river Ogun, which cut across the state from its southern to northern frontier. Abeokuta is the state capital and seat of power since its creation, located 90 kilometers from Nigeria's commercial and industrial hub of Lagos, and 740 kilometers from Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. 2016 population estimate of 7.1 million inhabitants, and a vast area of 16,432 square kilometers

Ogun State is also refers to as the Gateway State because of its strategic location as it is bordered on its eastern side by Ondo State, Oyo and Osun States in the North and Lagos on its Southern flank, Atlantic Ocean in the West and Republic of Benin, another West African state giving Ogun State access to a wide range of access to both local and foreign markets (Figure 5). Ogun State is currently governed by Governor Dapo Abiodun who assumed power on 10 March, 2019 (Ogun State Government Website, 2020).



Figure: 5 Map of Ogun State (in red) in relation to the rest of Nigeria. Source: Google Image (2020)

3.4 MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF OGUN STATE

According to Amy (2020), agriculture remain the economic mainstay of Ogun State with production of rice, corn (maize), cassava (manioc), yams, plantains, and bananas. Cocoa, kola nuts, rubber, palm oil and palm kernels, tobacco, cotton, and timber are the main cash crops. Cement production near the State capital of Abeokuta provides essential building material to nearby markets, with solid mineral extraction such as include limestone, chalk, phosphates, and clay. Industries in Ogun State are renowned for the production of cement, canned foods, foam rubber, paint, tires, carpets, aluminum products, and plastics (Amy, 2020).

3.5 IFO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Ifo Local Government Area occupies 82,000 sq km, and the present Ifo Local Government is the first half of the old Ifo Local Government from which Ewekoro Local Government was carved out on December 5, 1996. The Local Government is predominantly peopled by all the sections of Egbas which are composed of (Egba-Alake, Egba -Owu, Egba Oke-Ona and Egba-gbadura) and the Aworis and all other sub-ethnic groups co-existing in a peaceful atmosphere.

The people in Ifo Local Government area are predominantly farmers, trader and general businesspeople. The main staple food in the area is fufu, made from cassava. The main cash and food crops abundantly grown in the area are kolanut, palm kernel, sugar cane, rice (Ofada), cassava, yam, maize, plantain, vegetables and fruits.

Yewa South Local Government in the West, Ewekoro Local Government in the North, in the East by Obafemi-Owode Local Government and in the South by Ado-Odo Ota in Ogn State and Kosofe, Ikeja and Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government in Lagos State (Tripod, 2020).

3.6 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY OF IFO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ifo Local Government is an integral part of the twenty (20) local governments in Ogun State as recognized by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, and part of the 774 officially recognized local government areas in Nigeria as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (Figure 6).

The Secretariat of Ifo local government secretariat is currently situated at Ifo town and it is administered in line with section 7 (1) of the 1999 Constitution Nigeria, which provides for the office of the Executive Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Supervisory Councilors', and Councilors'; with Hakeem Bello Olanrewaju serving as the current local government Chairman

By political and constitutional definition, Ifo Local Government has autonomy over its finances and expenditures and it is constitutionally empowered to source its funds by collecting fees such as tenement rates, marriage, birth, and death registration fees, shops and kiosks rates, slaughter slab fees, wrong parking charges, right of occupancy on lands in rural areas, and naming of street registration fees; as contained in schedule 1 part (3) of the Nigerian constitution of 1999 as amended (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended).

Ifo Local Government is currently divided into ten (10) political wards which are Ifo I, Ifo II, Ifo III, Agbado Central, Akute-Ajuwon, Isheri, Oke-Aro-Ibaragun, Ososun, Sunren, Coker, and Ibogun. The towns of Akute and Ajuwon which are the two towns sampled in this research are some of the several towns located in Ifo Local Government Area.

local government reforms aimed both to accelerate development and to enable the local population participates and holds those in power accountable for their governance roles.

Finally, Makinde, Hassan & Olaiya (2016) argues that the reasons for local government creation range from economic through social and cultural to political, and, among the reasons are that local government provides for administrative convenience, brings governance closer to the people, ensures effective mobilization of resources and preserves the heritage and common interests of the people (Oviasuyi, Idada & Isiraojie 2010; as cited in Makinde, Hassan & Olaiya, 2016).

3.7 ECONOMIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC INDICES OF IFO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Ifo Local Government can be classified as semi-urban area spanning large area of land, an economic privilege it enjoys because of its very close proximity to Lagos, Nigeria's economic power state. However, the hinterlands and towns in of Ifo Local Government present its true situation as rural and deprived localities. Economic activities in Ifo Local Government range from small-scale manufacturing such as table water and sachet water production vast trading activities which occupies a significant portion of economic activities. Ifo local government also boast of large base of middle-income class, and also parade a vast number of extremely poor and deprived population.

3.8 MAIN RESEARCH AREAS-AKUTE AND AJUWON

The towns of Akute and Ajuwon are two neighboring towns sharing very close borders, and can in fact be very difficult to identify their borderlines. Actual population estimates of both towns are difficult to estimate as there are no official population figures from any public institutions on the towns. However, total population of both towns is around 150,000 (Dayo, 2012).

Dapo (2012) also reported that despite the proximity of the towns of Akute and Ajuwon to Lagos, coupled with the fact that 40% of the residents of Akute and Ajuwon have daily contact with Lagos and earn their living from Lagos, both towns lack public amenities such as good road networks, public libraries, housing scheme, constant power supply, and pipe-borne water. Dapo (2012) also affirmed that both Akute and Ajuwon towns are largely rural based on housing types located in the towns, with poorly equipped local health centre. Akute and Ajuwon towns are also reported to be populated by low income earners such as artisans, commercial cyclists, drivers and people (Dapo 2012).

While conducting the fieldwork, I took some pictures of places to highlight some of the numerous challenges faced by the towns of Akute and Ajuwon. For instance, photos of the only public primary and secondary schools in Akute (Figure 7, 8, & 9) with completely dilapidated structures and facilities which are no doubt begging from immediate upliftment were seen. In the pictures background, pupils were seen taking lessons in deplorable conditions, while some were seen rehearsing some dance lessons. Stagnant rainwater was also seen in the premises which could potentially play host to mosquitoes, which poses significant health threats to the pupils.



Figure 7 Showing signpost of the entrance of Akute Primary School Source: Fieldwork (2020).



Figure 8 showing premises of the only public primary and secondary schools in Akute with pupils in background (left) taking classes in dilapidated structures and some students doing a dance rehearsal (right). Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In (Figure 9) an abandoned and uncompleted flyover ridge was seen which passersby I spoke to said had been lying uncompleted for over four years. Passersby lamented about the general poor

road and public infrastructural status at Akute, and narrated the daily commuting pain the uncompleted and abandoned flyover bridge has had on their daily lives, economic losses and health challenges. One passerby reportedly said “I have decided to park my vehicle at home because of the near impassable status of the road and the constant damages it was causing my car, I now prefer to jump on motorbike to transport myself out of and back to Akute”. However, the main economic and commercial center of Akute was shown in (Figure 10) with a haphazard outlay.



Figure 9: Showing uncompleted and abandoned flyover bridge at Akute. Source: Fieldwork (2020)



Figure 10 Showing main economic and commercial centre in Akute Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Similarly, picture of the only public secondary school in Ajuwon (Figure 11) and the only public primary healthcare facility in Ajuwon (Figure 12) were taken to document social challenges of both

towns. An aerial picture of the main market and commercial centre at Ajuwon was also taken (Figure 13).



Figure 11 Showing pupils queuing up for classes at the only public secondary school, Ajuwon high. Source: Fieldwork (2020).

At the Ajuwon high school, a senior female teacher observed the researcher taking pictures, dashed out and called the attention of the school gateman. In the ensuing situation, they insisted that the researcher deleted all the pictures of the school taken by the researcher both on his pictures gallery and in recycle bin. Unfortunately, pictures of the only primary in Ajuwon and other important pictures were lost in the process. Still not satisfied, they uncovered other pictures of public primary and secondary schools in Akute on the picture gallery of the researcher's phone. They insisted that all must also be deleted in their presence, which the researcher promptly complied with. All explanations of the researcher fell on their deaf ears, as they were unprepared to tolerate any explanations.



Figure 12 Showing the only public health facility for pregnant women and nursing mothers in Ajuwon. Insert are women with their babies queuing up for medical attention. Source: Fieldwork (2020)



Figure 13 Aerial view of Ajuwon economic and commercial centre. Source: Fieldwork (2020)

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs the combination of both qualitative and participatory research methods. As canvassed by Linda (2006, 118), the aim of combining both qualitative and participatory research methods in development research is “to see how different methods can be integrated into a coherent research process which builds on the relative strengths and weaknesses of each”, further asserting that this method has become a new practice in doing social research in recent times.

Vandana & Robert (2006); Linda (2006) emphasized that early approaches to development stressed development as economic growth, thus requiring more of quantitative approaches; and quantitative research methods as commonly conceived derive from experimental and statistical methods in natural science with main tools such as large-scale surveys which are analyzed using statistical tools, which has shortcomings in development and social science researches. Furthermore, Linda (2006) contend that because of the overwhelming emphasis in many development agencies on economic growth and the economic dimensions of poverty, qualitative and participatory methods often relegated to desirable frills.

On the one hand however, Linda (2006) maintains that qualitative research method offers a special advantage of focusing on compiling a selection of micro-level case studies which are investigated using a combination of informal interviews, particular observation and more recently visual media like photograph and video; coupled with broad and open-ended questions and the possibility to change and develop them overtime as reality unfolds. Linda (2006) also maintained that the main aim of qualitative approach is not so much knowledge on per se, but social change and empowerment.

On the other hand, Tony (2006) opines that though questionnaires are still very useful in development research, the obsession with it in the 1960s and early 1970s has faded, while trends in recent years has embraced participatory field-based research methods. Thus, “participatory or bottom-up approaches to development planning are now usually considered the most appropriate strategies and as such strongly encouraged by donor agencies” Janet (2006, 49).

In furtherance, the importance of non-quantitative research methods in development and social research has continued to grow in recent times, just as Linda (2006) submits that participatory research have emerged to dominate the empowerment high ground in development research.

Sally (2006) further argues that there has been a universal move towards more participatory research techniques, portrayed as a means of generating information on public perceptions and viewpoints, and an excellent tool for exploring group behaviours; as participatory research encompasses the use of researched community in processes and decision-making that directly affects them as enshrined in the United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948).

4.1 MOTIVES OF SELECTION

Firstly, the new trend of embracing qualitative and participatory approaches in development research, coupled with the shortcomings of quantitative research method in social research, reinforced the adoption of both qualitative and participatory approaches in this research.

Also, the primary motive for selecting qualitative research methodology as advanced by Rahman (2017) is that the researcher can interact directly with participants during the data collection, making data collected detailed and subjective; while (Denzin, 1989; as cited in Rahman, 2017, 4) pinpoint the advantage of qualitative research methodology that it “produces the thick, detailed description of participants’ feelings, opinions, and experiences, and interprets the meanings of their actions”.

Besides its flexibility and structure of its design, qualitative methods can be constructed and reconstructed, allowing for greater flexibility for the researcher to adjust and achieve better insights and understanding, whilst providing deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering, and interpreting language assessment; and seeking to explore events, using semi-structured methods such as interviews, participants observation, and its richness and explanatory in nature (Chalhoub-Deville & Deville, 2008; as cited in Rahman, 2017).

Linda (2006) also advance that in recent times, interdisciplinary courses are common in development studies and development agencies commonly requires interdisciplinary teams, igniting cross-fertilization of tools and more integrated approach to complement between different methods. Therefore, the combination of qualitative and participatory research approaches in this research work offers me the possibility to leverage on both approaches to deliver good quality research.

Whilst the qualitative methods me the possibility to obtain relevant data from the researched,, the participatory methods also offers me the possibility to engage the research and have their active participation in the fieldwork.

As postulated by Linda (2006), participatory research methods have their origins in development activism: non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements, and seek to give voice to those groups in society who are most vulnerable and marginalized in development decision-making, and it involves small focus groups. This is particularly important as Nigerian youths are at the receiving end of development in Nigeria, having been denied decent employment, socially excluded in development planning and poor.

Linda (2006) thus postulates that the combination of qualitative and participatory research methods enables the researcher to consolidate strengths and cross-check as an integrated methodology, and the possibility to disseminate information in different ways for different audiences and ensure more beneficial outcomes for participants.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design allows for the technical design of the research in a suitable manner. Norman (2010) in a similar vein, affirm that research design is a technical document that is developed by one or more researchers and is used by them as a guide or plan for carrying out a research project; whilst Bryman (2012, 46) defines research design as the framework for the collection and analysis of data, and the choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process.

A research method is simply “a technique for collecting data, involving a specific instrument, such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watches others” (Bryman 2012, 46).

Hence, semi-structured questionnaires was employed in this research and administered on the respondents as the research instruments for eliciting information from respondents. The choice of semi-structured questionnaires was because it is cheaper and quicker to administer, and very convenient for respondents to respond to.

4.3 SURVEY DESIGN

Survey design allows for description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It often includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Fowler 2009, cited in Creswell 2014). Babbie (2011, 271) argues that “surveys include the use of a questionnaire, an instrument designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis”. Typically, it involves the use of questionnaires aimed at generalizing from a representative sample population, to a larger population of interest. From the result obtained from a survey, a researcher can generalize or draw inferences to the entire population of study.

In light of this, the survey was designed specifically to target the beneficiaries of N-Power in both Akute and Ajuwon towns. Semi-structured was used to elicit information from them and two focus groups discussions plenary were held with the researched population.

4.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The definition of target population is given here. This consists of selected youth beneficiaries of Nigeria’s social investment programme N-Power located in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State, Southwest region of Nigeria. However, factors such as ethnicity, religion, or political affiliations were not considered in selection of respondents.

4.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Arising from the sparsely large and national coverage of the entire population of beneficiaries of N-Power, and the impossibility of conducting a survey on the total population of beneficiaries, a sample survey was employed as a subset of the total population of N-Power beneficiaries. Sample and sampling technique simply refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher adopts in selecting items for the sample, laying down the number of items to be included in the sample.

In practice, issues such as time constraint and resources are factors that lead to selection of respondents in research endeavor. In this sense, a snowball sampling method was used. Natasha et al., (2005) opines that snowball sampling, also known as chain referral sampling, can be described as a method of sampling where participants or informants with whom contacts have been made leverage on their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. This, this method is often used to find and recruit hidden

populations that are group not easily accessible to the researcher through other sampling strategies. Katie (2006, 148) also described snowballing technique as when one contact suggests others, so the list gets longer and longer.

This technique was chosen because of the difficulty in accessing the beneficiaries of N-Power beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon towns resident in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State. The towns of Akute and Ajuwon both have haphazard outlay, which makes it very difficult to access. Besides, youths in both towns maintain very close working relationships, which informs the decision to employ snowballing technique. The techniques thus makes it very easy to gain access N-Power beneficiaries with less efforts.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Data collection was carried out by conducting survey with the use of semi-structured questionnaires administered on the beneficiaries of N-Power in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State. Babbie (2011, 271) argues that “surveys include the use of a questionnaire, an instrument designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis”. Additionally, it is also relatively cheap to conduct, and usually have standardized answers, making it easier for data compilation.

Consequently, the semi-structured questionnaire used for data collection was structured into two (2) sections A and B. Section A was designed to collect information on demographic data while section B raised salient questions on N-Power programme and its effects and efficacy in addressing youth unemployment and poverty. However, sections of the questionnaire were designed on five (5) Likert scale, the measurement is illustrated below:

| | | |
|-------------------|----|---|
| Strongly Disagree | SD | 5 |
| Disagreed | D | 4 |
| Undecided | U | 3 |
| Agree | A | 2 |
| Strongly Agree | SA | 1 |

Responses were scored by indicating appropriate information with a tick (√).

Likert scale, according to Edmondson (2005) & McLeod (2014); cited in Ankur et al., (2015) was devised in 1932 in order to measure ‘attitude’ in a scientifically accepted and validated manner.

Ankur et al., (2015, 397) further stated that “Likert scale is a set of statements (items) offered for a real or hypothetical situation under study whereby participants are asked to show their level of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) with the given statement (items) on a metric scale”.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Here, data collection procedure was carried out by conducting survey with the use of semi-structured questionnaire, which was administered on beneficiaries of N-Power in both Akute and Ajuwon towns. David (2006) suggests that a semi-structured questionnaire is the most widely used in development research because it incorporates a mixed format, making it suitable for a range of situations. A total of forty questionnaires were administered on respondents which were correctly completed.

David (2006, 163) described “questionnaire as one of the most widely used social research methods, including in development research, is the undertaking of surveys by means of questionnaires”, and as a tool for ascertaining a wide range of factual information and subjective views and perceptions from a representative of a particular population. David (2006) further defines questionnaire as a device or tool for collecting information to describe, compare, understand and or explain knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and or socio-demographic characteristics of a particular population or target group.

4.8 DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability are two closely related concepts in research and are equally important principles of data collection in research. These two elements are important concepts in modern research, as they are used for enhancing the accuracy of the assessment and evaluation of a research work (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; as cited in Mohajan, 2017). Thus, it has become very necessary for data to satisfactorily meet the two criteria.

However, data validity and reliability increases transparency, and decrease opportunities to insert researcher bias in qualitative research (Singh, 2014; as cited in Mohajan, 2017). Data “reliability is referred to the stability of findings, whereas validity is represented the truthfulness of findings”

(Altheide & Johnson, 1994; as cited in Mohajan, 2017, 1). Validity is concerned with the accuracy of measurement and the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research, whether an indicator or set of indicators that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept (Bryman 2012, 47).

Data validity is therefore the strength and backbone of qualitative research, as it determines whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers (Creswell & Miller, 2000; as cited in Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, (Gibbs, 2007; cited in Creswell, 2014) argues that qualitative validity means that the researcher has employed necessary procedures to ascertain the degree accuracy of the findings; while qualitative reliability suggests that the researcher's method conforms with different researchers methods. Heale & Twycross (2015) contend reliability is the consistency of a measure.

Bryman (2012, 168-169) was of the opinion that “reliability is fundamentally concerned with issues of consistency of measures” and going further to describe it as “the consistency of a measure of a concept”. Bryman (2012, 46) opines that “reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable”.

In ensuring that data collected are valid and reliable, the researcher designed the questionnaire to elicit most relevant pieces of information from the respondents, whilst also ensuring that errors, mistakes and misinterpretations in data are neutralized in order to ensure both the validity and reliability of data.

4.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS

The validity and reliability of the instruments of the study were subjected to pilot tests. However, to ensure that the validity and reliability of instruments measures validly, reliably and consistently with what it is purported to measure, a pilot test-retest was conducted on 8 selected beneficiaries of the N-Power with the research instruments. David (2006, 169) emphasized the need for pilot testing of questionnaire, suggesting that “it is important to road test the prototype before commencing the full survey as this throws up unanticipated problems or interpretational difficulties that should be ironed out”.

The exercise enabled the research to identify critical weaknesses in the questionnaire, with inputs taken from tested respondents inculcated into the redesigned questionnaire.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The importance of addressing key ethical issues in social research cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the researcher has carefully and holistically addresses key ethical issues relating to the research, just as good ethically inclined research confers credibility on the research and the researcher.

4.10.1 INFORMED CONSENT

As advanced by Lynne (2006, 26), the term “informed consent has come to the forefront over the past ten years as ethical concerns have grown in importance, and what this means is that we may carry out our research, ask questions, organize focus groups, participate in community why we are doing this and what are the intended outcomes, both for ourselves and for them”. However, Lynne (2006) also suggests that only after this informed consent has been obtained do we begin to carry out the research. In conducting this research, the researcher obtained oral consent and approval from all of the researched before administering questionnaires on them. Although many of the respondents initially distanced themselves from the survey, the assurances of anonymity and confidentiality given by the researcher made them reconsidered their stance. Hence, an informed consent was provided to each respondent to enable them understand the purpose of the research and solicit their interest and approval.

4.10.2 POWER GRADIENT

The relationship between the researcher and researched is also a very important element of ethical issues in social research. As a result of the youthfulness of the researcher and the researched, it was quite easy to manage the power relationships existing between the two parties. Because the researcher understands the plights of the researched, there exists a natural flow of cooperation and understanding among the parties while conducting the field work.

4.10.3 HARM TO PARTICIPANTS

As described by Bryman (2012), research that is likely to harm participants is regarded by most people as unacceptable. Furthermore, Bryman (2012) states that identities and records of individuals should be maintained as confidential, and to ensure that care needs to be taken when findings are being published to ensure that individuals are not identified or identifiable. Confidentiality and anonymity are particularly important in qualitative research. In recent times,

there has been a clampdown on all opposition figures around the country, particularly youth movements. Therefore, it becomes more than necessary to ensure anonymity and protect the researched from unintended harm.

4.11 PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF DOING FIELDWORK IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

This research was conducted in my home country, and I am well at home and clearly understood the cultural aspects of doing research in a developing country like Nigeria. However, the language and medium of communication and that of doing the fieldwork is well-known to me, as I was able to communicate and interact freely and easily in both English and Pidgin English. Pidgin English is simply the modified version of English Language widely spoken across the length and breadth of Nigeria, either by educated and uneducated.

Tim (2006) reckons that not only can doing research at home offer the researcher the possibility to return to research area to gain more data, but to also gain insights. This therefore offers me the advantage of gaining the trust of respondents and being able to also invaluable insights from them. Also, the fieldwork was conducted in my region, Southwest region; hence I have the luxury of moving around and interacting without needing the services of a local guidance to help me navigate the challenges of dealing with cultures unknown to me.

However, in conducting the fieldwork, a youth gatekeeper who is also unemployed and with very good connection to beneficiaries of N-Power in both towns of Akute and Ajuwon was recruited as research assistant to help organize contacts with N-Power beneficiaries, facilitations of focus group, and on other sundry assignments. His active participation and interest in the fieldwork was of great effect in successfully completing the fieldwork.

Lastly, the vast majority of my respondents were very free to relate with me without attaching any suspicion to my research. Nevertheless, I complied faithfully and truly with the ethical issues in doing research, particularly in a developing country.

However, the importance of meeting with local chief of research area in African societies is very strategic, as it gives the researcher some leverage in carrying out good fieldwork and also confers on the researcher some form of permission. In fact, kings and local chiefs are considered as custodians of culture and tradition in Yoruba societies, and an important gatekeeper to their local populace. In this sense, Tony (2006, 18) suggested that in most African communities, an audience

with the chief at an early stage is an essential prerequisite for successful research, with an expectation of community leaders likely asking what the community is to gain from such research.

Janet (2006, 49) further stressed that “researchers generally need to obtain permission from local leaders in order to enter a community and thus are seen as allied with these leaders”. Before I embarked on actual fieldwork, I paid courtesy calls on the Oba of Akuteland and Oba of Ajuwonland respectively. “Oba” in Yoruba language means king.

At the visit to the Oba of Akuteland, His Royal Highness Oba Aleeh Idowu Akanni Akindele; a female youth, noticing that I am carrying out a development research and thinking that I am funded by a foreign organization, appealed to me to help communicate the socioeconomic and infrastructural challenges in Akute to foreign development agencies to see to the conclusion of abandoned public infrastructures in the Akute which he said on completion would stimulate and boost socioeconomic activities in the town. This scenario represents a clear case of expectation gap in development research.

Caesar & Jane (2006) noted that working while undertaking development research, researcher should be aware that many communities will perceive them as representative of either national or international donor agency, with the potential to offer tangible development benefits to the communities. Aware of this, I declared that I do not represent any foreign donor agencies and that my research work was strictly for academic purposes.

A similar courtesy visit was paid to the Oba of Ajuwonland, His Royl Highnes, Oba Nurudeen Adediran Egunshola. A man in his premises whom I spoke to requesting for permission to meet with the King declined, being skeptical of my intentions as to whether I represent rival political parties to the ruling political party. I distanced myself from such and have to reaffirm my neutrality from political affiliations.

In summary, the task of administering the questionnaires on respondents was generally smooth, although disrupted and rescheduled many times as a result of the heavy downpours of rains which was at its peak. Also, where necessary, the heavy and almost daily rains also affected changing proposed locations of focus groups discussion plenary, one of which was held in a church premise which two of the researched attends on regular basis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The presentation and analysis of data collected from the field was done in this chapter. It also contains the transcripts of focus group plenary discussion organized with N-Power beneficiaries.

5.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter dealt with the presentation of raw data collected from the fieldwork, as well as the analysis of the data collected from fieldwork. The essence of this chapter is to present, interpret and analyze data collected in a simple and detailed manner for easy understanding by the reader; just as Bryman (2012) affirmed that without adequate data analysis, it is more or less impossible to interpret the material. In a similar vein, Bryman (2012, 13) states that “data analysis is basically about data reduction, concerned with reducing the large volume of information the researcher has gathered in order to make sense of it”.

The research methodology employed in this research work is anchored on both qualitative and participatory research methods; hence the need for administering questionnaire survey on respondents and involving the respondents in the process, making sure that their voice is heard. For this, Bryman (2012) contend that for a start, raw data have to be managed, requires that the researcher has to check the data to establish whether there are any obvious flaws. Therefore, the research has made concerted efforts to eliminate flaws in the data to ensure its relevance and accuracy. Finally, Bryman (2012, 13) also advanced that “data analysis is a stage that incorporates several elements”

Thus, a total of 40 questionnaires were administered on the respondents and were correctly completed and returned. Similarly, transcripts of focus group discussion with N-Power beneficiaries were also presented accordingly.

The results of the data collected from fieldwork are presented beginning with the demographic characteristics of respondents; results of the main research questions and transcript of focus group discussion with beneficiaries of N-Power programme will be presented in part.

The results of the analysis are presented beginning with demographical characteristics of the respondents as shown in tables below. However, analysis was done by using frequency count and simple percentage. Furthermore, all stated hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of Chi-

square (X^2) test in order to measure the degree of relationship between the dependent and independent variables in each hypothesis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0).

5.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Gender Analysis

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | Male | 19 | 47.5 |
| | Female | 21 | 52.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 1 above represents the breakdown of gender analysis of respondents. A total of 40 respondents were surveyed, comprising 19 Male, representing 47.5% and 21 Females representing 52.5%.

Table 2: Age Groupings/Range

| Age Groupings/Range | | Frequency | Percent % |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | 18-22 | 8 | 20 |
| | 23-27 | 15 | 37.5 |
| | 28-31 | 10 | 25 |
| | 32-35 | 7 | 17.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 2, the age range of respondents is presented here with those respondents between ages 18-22 constituting 20%, those between 23-27 years 37.5%, 28-31 respondents 25%, and ages 32-35 totaling 17.5%.

Table 3: Marital Status

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | Single | 13 | 32.5 |
| | Married | 25 | 62.5 |
| | Married but living apart | 2 | 5 |
| | Divorced | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 3 represents the breakdown of marital status of respondents, with single respondents representing 13 or 32.5%, married stood at 25 with 62.5%, two respondents were separated with 5%, and no respondents claimed to be divorced. Interestingly, two respondents claimed to be

married but living apart from their spouses said it was purely economical, as their spouses are located in villages with their parents, while the husbands live in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon and send financial support to their wives occasionally.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

| | Frequency | Percent % |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid Non-Graduates | 17 | 42.5 |
| Graduates | 23 | 57.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 4 represents the two categories of N-Power programme of both non-graduate and graduate category that constitute the main focus of this research undertaking. A total of 17 non-graduates representing 42.5% were surveyed while 23 tertiary institutions graduates representing 57.5% were surveyed.

Table 5: Accommodation Type

| | Frequency | Percent % |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid One room apartment | 9 | 22.5 |
| Flat | 26 | 65 |
| Others | 5 | 12.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 5 above, 9 respondents representing 22.5% reported to be living in one room apartment, while 26 respondents at 65% reported to be living in Flat. 12.5% respondents reported to be living in other forms of accommodation.

5.1.2 EMPIRICAL DATA OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The presentations of the findings of the questionnaires are presented here.

Table 6: It was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 10 | 25 |
| | A | 17 | 42.5 |
| | U | 5 | 12.5 |
| | D | 6 | 15 |
| | SD | 2 | 5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In the analysis from Table 6 above, 25% strongly agree that it was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power; whilst 42.5% agreed. 12.5% of respondents were undecided. 15% disagreed with the statement, while 5% strongly disagreed. The result suggests that it was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power.

Table 7: I offered inducement in cash/kind to an N-Power official before I was enlisted on N-Power programme

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 0 | 0 |
| | A | 0 | 0 |
| | U | 3 | 0 |
| | D | 0 | 0 |
| | SD | 40 | 100 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In table 7 above, all respondents, representing 100% submitted that they do not offer any form of inducement either cash or kind to any N-Power official before they were enlisted on the programme. This thus suggests the level of transparency of the N-Power programme in selecting its beneficiaries.

Table 8: I offered cash tips or kind to N-Power official to facilitate funds disbursement to me on a regular basis

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 0 | 0 |
| | A | 0 | 0 |
| | U | 3 | 7.5 |
| | D | 0 | 0 |
| | SD | 37 | 92.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Form the analysis from Table 8 above, a total of 92.5% strongly disagree to offering cash tips or kind to any N-Power official to facilitate funds disbursement to them. 7.5% were undecided. This is an indication of level of transparency and ease of administration of the N-Power programme.

Table 9: N-Power has contributed positively to youth employment

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 21 | 52.5 |
| | A | 16 | 40 |
| | U | 1 | 2.5 |
| | D | 2 | 5 |
| | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 9 above, a total of 21 respondents, representing 52.5% strongly agreed that N-Power had contributed positively to youth employment; whilst 40% agreed. 2.5% were undecided and 5% disagreed. In aggregate, the results suggest that N-Power has contributed positively to youth employment.

Table 10: N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship by providing them with capital financing and appropriate training

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 14 | 35 |
| | A | 20 | 50 |
| | U | 2 | 5 |
| | D | 4 | 10 |
| | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

From the analysis in Table 10 above, 35% confirmed and strongly agreed that N-Power contributes to enhancing youth entrepreneurship with capital provision and appropriate training. 50% respondents also agreed, while 5% were undecided. 10% respondents disagreed, whilst no respondents strongly disagreed. The analysis thus suggests that majority of respondents are of the opinion that N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship.

Table 11: N-Power supports youths to start their own business and become self-reliant

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 12 | 30 |
| | A | 24 | 60 |
| | U | 1 | 2.5 |
| | D | 3 | 7.5 |
| | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Analysis of respondents in Table 11 above suggests that N-Power support the youths to start their own business and become self-reliant, as 30% strongly agreed, and 60% agreed. One respondent was undecided representing 2.5% and 7.5% disagreed. It can therefore be deduced that N-Power support the youths to start their own business and become self-reliant.

Table 12: Youths are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements and attachments to public corporations

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 21 | 52.5 |
| | A | 13 | 32.5 |
| | U | 4 | 10 |
| | D | 2 | 5 |
| | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In table 12 above, 52.5% of respondents strongly agreed that youths are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements in public corporations, while 32.5% also agreed in a similar vein. 10% respondents were undecided and 5% respondents disagreed. No respondent strongly disagreed. This is an indication that N-power is facilitating youth employment with public corporations and government agencies.

Table 13: N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 12 | 30 |
| | A | 19 | 47.5 |
| | U | 2 | 5 |
| | D | 3 | 7.5 |
| | SD | 4 | 10 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

From the analysis from Table 13 above, 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment, while 47.5% agreed also agreed. 5% were undecided while 7.5% disagreed. A total of 10% respondents strongly disagreed. Overall, the results indicated that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment.

Table 14: N-Power is making youth to be economically empowered

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 9 | 22.5 |
| | A | 14 | 35 |
| | U | 6 | 15 |
| | D | 7 | 17.5 |
| | SD | 4 | 10 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Analysis from Table 14 above suggest that 22.5% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power is empowering the youths economically, whilst 35% also were also in agreement. 15% of respondents were undecided, 17.5% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed.

Table 15: N-Power is positively impacting the economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 17 | 42.5 |
| | A | 15 | 37.5 |
| | U | 4 | 10 |
| | D | 3 | 7.5 |
| | SD | 1 | 2.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In table 15 above, 42.5 % or respondents and 37.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that N-Power is positively impacting the economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries, whilst 10% were undecided. Also, 7.5% of respondents and 2.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Nevertheless, the results from the analysis suggest that N-Power is positively impacting both economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries.

Table 16: N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 12 | 30 |
| | A | 19 | 47.5 |
| | U | 1 | 2.5 |
| | D | 5 | 12.5 |
| | SD | 3 | 7.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 16 shows that 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries whilst 47.5% agreed. 2.5% respondents were undecided, 12.5% disagreed, and 7.5% strongly disagreed. This results thus suggests that majority of respondents are of the opinion that N-Power is contributing to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries.

Table 17: N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 10 | 25 |
| | A | 21 | 52.5 |
| | U | 3 | 7.5 |
| | D | 5 | 12.5 |
| | SD | 1 | 2.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 17 above, 25% strongly agreed that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries, whilst 52.5% also agreed. 3.5% were undecided, 12.5% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed. The results indicate that majority of respondents held the view that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries.

Table 18: Youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 14 | 35 |
| | A | 24 | 60 |
| | U | 2 | 5 |
| | D | 0 | 0 |
| | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 18 above, 35% of respondents strongly agreed that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power, while 60% also agreed. 5% of respondents were undecided. No respondent neither disagreed nor strongly disagreed. Hence, the results suggest that majority of respondents share the common opinion that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power.

Table 19: N-Power should be broadened and sustained as a critical social investment programme

| | | Frequency | Percent % |
|-------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Valid | SA | 12 | 30 |
| | A | 21 | 52.5 |
| | U | 3 | 7.5 |
| | D | 2 | 5 |
| | SD | 2 | 5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

In Table 19 above, 30% of respondents strongly agreed that N-Power should be broadened and sustained as a social investment programme, whilst 52.5% also agreed. 7.5% of respondents were undecided, and 5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Overall, the results suggest that majority of respondents canvassed for the broadening and sustenance of N-Power as a critical social investment programme.

5.2 TRANSCRIPTS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH N-POWER BENEFICIARIES

The research methodology employed in this research is qualitative research methodology. However, “qualitative research encompasses a family of approaches, methods and techniques for understanding and documenting attitudes, behaviors and the meanings of people’s words” (Brockington & Sullivan 2003:57; Bloor et al., 2001; as cited in Sally (2006, 153). Hence, Laws et al, (2003); Morgan (1997); as cited in Sally (2006, 153) state that “a prime research tool of this family of approaches is focus group and it has a well-established history of application in the field of development, particularly in seeking to understand community dynamics and viewpoints”.

David (2006) argues that more recent methodological innovations such as focus groups as part of participatory approach have become rampant, and they are often combined with questionnaire survey; just as Janet (2006, 49) emphasized that “participatory research must also involve the return of researcher to the researched with researcher holding a workshop with participants to enable them provide feedbacks on the research findings to enable researcher correct mistakes or assumptions; necessary in order to eliminate researcher imperialist view”. Following the conclusion of the questionnaire survey component of fieldwork, the researcher organized a focus group discussion with N-Power beneficiaries.

In a similar vein, Sally (2006, 153) also refers to focus group as a “group depth discussions are group-based interviews typically lasting from 1.5 to 3 hours and are conducted with around 6-8 participants”. Therefore, the importance of focus group discussion in today’s social science research, particularly in development research cannot be overemphasized.

Thus, the focus group discussion held with the beneficiaries of N-Power programme was guided by the researcher in order to ensure smooth proceeding. This enabled the researcher to listen and learn from beneficiaries of N-Power programme as far as possible. It also enabled the researcher to gain the trust of the N-Power beneficiaries. Also, attendees were allowed to express their general comments and opinions about what they feel about the N-Power programme before the close of the focus group plenary without being directed with by any question. This was a special occasion for the beneficiaries of N-Power to air their general views on the programme from diverse perspectives. However, to maintain anonymity and protect attendees, no photographs of attendees were taken, and no attendee was identified by their names.

The focus group discussions held with the beneficiaries of the N-Power programme lasted for forty-five minutes. Participants suggest ways to best tackle youth unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth, and social exclusion; as it affects Nigerian youths. Furthermore, far-reaching policy recommendations were made during the focus group discussions which are discussed in chapter seven of this research. Participants during the focus group discussion consist of both graduate and non-graduate youths who are beneficiaries of the N-Power programme in order to ensure a more balanced opinion.

5.2.1 What is the relationship between N-power programme and youth employment with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Respondent A: “I hold a bachelor in finance and I had looked everywhere for jobs. I got tired because I wasn’t seeing any interview letters so I decided to sit at home and hope for better days ahead. I was doing nothing other than just sitting at home on a daily basis. This N-Power thing just came up, I thought it was a joke or a programme organized for the youth wing of the ruling federal party. I applied anyway and to my surprise I was enlisted. It is good, at least I have a job now and some form of income, it’s my saving grace and life-line”.

Respondent B: “I had already learnt tailoring some years back but I could not afford to buy equipment and tools...and when my uncle suggested I apply to N-Power programme, I wasn’t really expecting it to come out this way. They selected me and I went for training in computer hardware training has been very beneficial for me economically. I am now employed with an IT company that does computer services and IT for companies”.

Respondents C: “I joined late last year after I completed my youth service and it was just a good transition for me because I was just about to start getting really worried about how to survive. Luckily, I was selected and posted to a government agency where I work. I can at least say I have a job though the salary is not so great”.

Respondent D: “Yes, I work as a teacher in a secondary school now...even though I studied education in school, I haven’t had any practical teaching experience until I was posted to a school by N-Power. It has been a really good experience for me. I enjoy it, although the school is not a standard public school as I would expect, but it is a launch-pad for me”.

In this instance, respondents reported to have gained employment through the N-Power programme.

5.2.2 How does the N-Power programme impact on poverty reduction amongst its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Respondent E: “I was enlisted in June 2019 and I have been receiving my allowances regularly. Although it can be a bit delayed which I understand is due to mostly verification exercise and irregularities in applicant data and bank records. But now I can live on something which I earn from the N-Power programme, and I do not have to worry endlessly about what to eat anymore”.

In this circumstance, respondents were not comfortable to respond to question pertaining to their poverty status in a group setting. Only one respondent was able to respond to the questions. Others I suspect were not comfortable to freely express their situations regarding poverty levels in the midst of others.

5.2.3 What is the impact of N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Respondent F: “Well...before now I can't even feed myself and my two children since my husband absconded from home, now this N-Power programme has really given me more capital to my clothing business, I bought more goods and I can sell and earn more. N-Power has indeed provided the necessary working capital for me to expand my clothing business and keep my entrepreneurship spirit burning”.

Respondent G: “N-Power programme has really supported me to start my own business. After getting trained in animation and post-production, I now provide services for artists and musicians who want to do their music videos. I also provide services to film producers and comedians who want to produce and upload comedies on social media. You know entertainment is a big business in Nigeria and Nollywood is respected worldwide so I see a lot of opportunities for me to continue in this business”.

Respondent H: “Yes, in fact I have gained very good knowledge of taxation since I started working at Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). I have even registered for the taxation professional exams hoping to become a professional tax practitioner, hoping that I can either get regular employment with FIRS or start my private tax consultancy practice. Taxation is a big issue in today's Nigeria, and tax professionals are constantly in large demand now”.

Here respondents claimed to have felt the impact of N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship.

5.2.4 How has the N-power programme improved the standard of living of both graduates and non-graduates beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Respondent I: “believe me, I could barely survive, life was extremely difficult for me as I had to rely solely on my wife who is a trader for sustenance. It was quite awful as I could not provide for my family. But now, I get enough money from Federal Government, with some stipend and tips I receive on the job. My standard of living has improved though not to desired level, but I can categorically say that my economic and socio-economic condition has improved”.

Respondent J: “I strongly believe that N-Power has been a great thing for me. While I can say that I have secured employment through the N-Power programme, I have also been very lucky with where I work. The head of the agency where I was posted to also task me with additional responsibilities and this comes with additional pay. Hence, this has significantly improved my standard of living beyond past circumstances”.

Respondent K: “My standard of living has improved because after I was trained by N-Power, I now receive numerous customers’ orders in need of my services and I make good income from them which have made my standard of living to increase. I can now afford things I could not afford to buy and do prior to my N-Power training”.

5.2.5 How would you describe the operationalization of the N-Power programme?

Respondent L: “The Federal Government should please increase the scope and coverage of the programme. There are millions of graduates like me who would be interested in the N-Power programme. Overall, the N-Power programme is a blessing in disguise for unemployed youth who is focused on achieving life objectives. Finally, they should please increase the thirty thousand Naira (N30, 000) allowance, it is too small in view of the incessant cost of living in this country. At least they should pay us like those employed graduates on grade level 08 salary scheme of the Federal Government”.

Respondent M: “My name is (name withheld). I work as an ad-hoc staff of the Federal Inland Revenue Service under the N-Tax programme and a participant in the N-Tax component of N-

Power. I think the N-Power initiative is really good, if you compare with past programmes. But government should make it continuous because I heard they will scrap it by 2023 as the present government did with YOUWIN. I think that is unfair”.

Respondent N: “The administration of N-Power should be domiciled with state and local government. It’s not convenient dealing with an invincible Federal Government that is based in Abuja, almost 718kilometeres from here. In fact the state coordinator appointed is a bit slow and sometimes unfriendly the way he talks. I would prefer that the state or local government should be in charge, I don’t think that would still affect the transparency in any way”.

Respondent O: “The thing I don’t like about this N-Power programme is that it is targeted at children of poor...the children of the rich, politicians and politically connected persons are still being smuggled into Federal Government establishments for lucrative jobs...why can’t they just do open recruitment instead of secretly employing their own children?”

However, opinions amongst participants varies here, but most participants agreed that the operationalization of the N-Power as coordinated and directed by the Federal Government of Nigeria is over-centralized, occasioned by prolonged bureaucratic delays in payments processing and irregularities. Majority suggested that the programme should be domicile with the State or Local Governments; which are closer to the people with majority funding coming from the Federal Government.

5.2.6 Do you think the N-Power programme is the best social investment programme to address youth unemployment and youth poverty?

Respondent P: “They said they are providing us with employment opportunities and reducing youth unemployment and poverty, have you seen any of the children of President, Vice-President, Governors and Deputy-Governors, Ministers, Senators, House of Representatives, politicians and political office holders among us?”

Respondent Q: “This N-Power thing is a sham and a shame...they keep employing their children and wards in NNPC, CBN, DPR, and other lucrative jobs whereas they are putting children of poor in N-Power with stringent conditions, this N-Power thing that will only end when this administration is gone”.

Respondent R: “If they said they really want to employ us, why can’t they employ us in government ministries, parastatals, boards or are we not good enough for those jobs?”

Respondent S: “I must confess...I still continue my search for jobs, you know this Thirty Thousand Naira (30,000) we’re getting can’t take us anywhere; I can’t build my future on this programme because I know it will end when this government is gone in 2023”.

Respondent T: “Although I am enlisted on the N-Power programme I am just spending my thirty thousand naira on transport for job interviews elsewhere because this N-Power does not suit my dream, but it’s my little share of national cake”.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the finding obtained from the research. Empirical research is based on observed and measured events that derive its knowledge from actual experience rather than from a particular theory. Empirical findings contain three ingredients, which are events that can be directly and empirically observed; an observation by way of using senses to recognize and record facts; and inference which is a conclusion that is derivable from such facts (Robergs 2010).

6.1 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Empirical research is based on observed and measured events that derive its knowledge from actual experience rather than from a particular theory. The main rationale for empirical findings has become increasingly important in today's world. Therefore, the need to validate the hypothesis and contribute to existing human knowledge in particular fields cannot be overemphasized.

As seen in table 9, those who strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power programme has contributed positively to youth employment are 52.5% and 40% respectively. This indicates that majority of the N-Power beneficiaries affirmed that the N-Power programme has had positive impact on youth employment. A similar occurrence was shown in table 12 where 52.5% strongly-agreed and 32.5% agreed that youth beneficiaries of the N-Power are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements and attachments to public institutions. This was further justified in table 13 where 30% strongly-agreed and 47.5% agreed that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment situations. In table 18, 35% and 60% of respondents' strongly-agreed and agreed that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power programme.

In table 16, 30% and 47.5% respectively strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries. Table 17 portrayed the percentage of N-Power beneficiaries who affirmed that N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries, where 25% of respondents strongly-agreed and 52.5% agreed with the statement. Also, as seen in table 10, 35% strongly-agreed and 50% of the respondents agreed that N-Power has contributed to enhancing youth entrepreneurship by providing them with appropriate training and capital for them to start their own businesses. Similarly in table 11, 30% and 60% of respondents strongly-agreed and agreed that N-Power is supporting youths to start their own business and become self-reliant.

6.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

This research work was anchored on the following four research questions. What is the relationship between N-power programme and youth employment with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State? How does the N-Power programme impact on poverty reduction amongst its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State? What is the impact of N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State? How has the N-power programme improved the standard of living of both graduates and non-graduates beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

However, to justify these research questions, this research explored the theories of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion, to underscore the fundamental causes and nature of youth unemployment and poverty as it affects the youths in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon, Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Southwest-Nigeria.

Furthermore, this research also employed qualitative research strategy, and uses both semi-structured questionnaire method which were administered on 40 respondents. It also uses participatory method, using focus group discussions which enabled the researcher to incorporate the voices of the researched, which provided significant support to the semi-structured questionnaire.

Analysis was done by using frequency count and simple percentage. Furthermore, all stated hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of Chi-square (X^2) test in order to measure the degree of relationship between the dependent and independent variables in each hypothesis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0). Hence, the research questions, results from semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions were explored in relation to the theories of the study.

6.2.1 What is the relationship between N-power programme and youth employment with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Results from semi-structured questionnaire administered on respondents and focus group discussion held with beneficiaries of N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State suggests that the N-Power programme has contributed positively to youth employment, as good percentage of youths reported to have secured employment by way

of placements in government departments, agencies, or attached to teaching institutions through N-Power. However, this conforms to the positions of Mercy & Christie (2014) which established a correlation between youth unemployment and poverty.

Mercy & Christie (2014, 93) further stated that “while the unemployment rate has remained very high due to the rising rate of poverty, the poverty rate has equally remained high due to the high level of unemployment”. Similar studies by John & Bright (2012); and Mercy & Christie (2014); which examined the effects and dynamics of poverty and youth unemployment, established that poverty is a function of youth unemployment.

This therefore informs that when employment opportunities are created for the youth, it directly reduces the level of youth poverty. Hence, they are able to engage in meaningful and productive economic activities, and can earn income that will ultimately enhance their socio-economic and economic well-being, thereby leading to poverty reduction amongst the youths.

6.2.2 How does the N-Power programme impact on poverty reduction amongst its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Results from the semi-structured questionnaire administered on respondents and focus group discussion held with beneficiaries of N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State suggests that the N-Power is significantly contributing to poverty reduction among its beneficiaries by way of creating employment opportunities for the beneficiaries and providing them with means of livelihood. Studies by Mercy & Christie (2014) have shown that majority of the youths in Nigeria live below the poverty line as a result of unemployment, even though they are employable; thereby recommending among other things for a holistic approach to employment creation so as not to only reduce youth unemployment, but also combat the dangerous poverty level amongst the youths. Similarly, studies such as Jenny (2019); Hussainatu et al., (2013); Ogbeide & Agu (2015); Tella et al., (2019); and Brian (1998) all established the relationship between social exclusion, youth unemployment, poverty, and inclusive growth. Whilst Jenny (2019) concludes that poverty and social exclusion are interrelated, although distinct from one another. Hussainatu et al., (2013) however underscores the connection between youth unemployment and poverty, suggesting that youth unemployment is attributable to social exclusion, which translates to youth poverty. Jenny (2019) further informs that poverty increases the occurrence of social exclusion.

Finally, Ogbeide & Agu (2015) also highlighted the relationship between inclusive growth and poverty, arguing that inequality leads to occurrence of poverty levels, and concluding that poverty, inequality and unemployment are casually related. In this sense, it is evident that the N-Power programme is positively contributing to poverty reduction amongst its beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon towns in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State by way of employment creation which enables the beneficiaries to earn income to help sustain their economic well-being, thus lifting them out of the abyss of poverty. In the same vein, John & Bright (2012) recommended that governments at all levels should create jobs to arrest the scourge of unemployment as a strategy to tackling poverty.

6.2.3 What is the impact of N-Power programme on youth entrepreneurship with regard to its beneficiaries in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Results from the semi-structured questionnaire administered on respondents and focus group discussion held with beneficiaries of N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State suggests that the majority of respondents agreed that N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship through training and provision of start-up capital to them. Analysis from the results also suggests that majority of respondents agreed that N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship through training and provision of start-up capital to them. Beneficiaries of the N-Power knowledge programme reported to have acquired necessary skills in graphic design and animation, giving them the necessary skills to start-up their own self enterprise. However, they also affirmed to have received start-up capital from the N-Power office to enable them acquire necessary tools and working capital to commence their own businesses. The ability to engage and give the youths an opportunity to participate in economic activities is consistent with what Tella et al., (2019, 2) described inclusive growth as “a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them”. Tella et al., (2019) argues related inclusive growth to be mean the active participation of the youths’ in normal economic processes. Thus, it is possible to achieve inclusive growth by supporting the youths with training and start-up capital to participate in economic activities.

6.2.4 How has the N-power programme improved the standard of living of both graduates and non-graduates beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Results from the semi-structured questionnaire administered on respondents and focus group discussion held with beneficiaries of N-Power programme in the towns of Akute and Ajuwon in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State suggests that the N-Power is positively impacting both economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries in both Akute and Ajuwon towns, and is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries. Tella et al., (2019) underscores the chain of relationship between unemployment, poverty and inclusive growth. Tella et al., (2019, 4) succinctly stated that “poverty reduction depends on the strength of each link between poverty and employment” Tella et al., (2019, 2) also described inclusive growth as “a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them”.

Tella et al., (2019) thus postulates that one of the primary ingredients of inclusive growth is productive employment because it enhances the growth of income per person. However, the creation of employment opportunities has significant impact on the standard of living of an individual. Evidenced from the semi-structured questionnaires administered on N-Power beneficiaries as well as focus group discussion, beneficiaries of the N-Power programme reported to have witnessed improvements in their standard of living prior to their enlistment on the programme. They mentioned that their standard of living situation has improved marginally, as they can now afford to live relatively decent live and afford some basic necessities of life.

Other findings from the focus group discussions held with the beneficiaries of N-Power programme also revealed that it was easy to be enlisted and access funds from the N-Power programme. This therefore suggests some level of transparency of the N-Power programme in selecting its beneficiaries. Similarly, the results also indicates the degree of transparency and ease of administration of the N-Power programme, as N-Power beneficiaries also confirm that they do not have to offer incentives or inducement to any official in order to be enlisted or receive funds from the programme.

Finally the results of the study largely revealed that N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment, and also support the youths to start their own business and become self-reliant. Majority of respondents also affirmed that youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power. Overall, the results indicates that majority of respondents canvassed for the broadening the scope and sustainability of N-Power programme as a critical social investment programme.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the summary, conclusions drawn and policy recommendations proposed from this research.

7.2 SUMMARY

This chapter encompasses the summary as well as conclusion, and recommendations. This study has carefully examined the relevant theories and concepts of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth, and social exclusion, as it affects the youths. However, adequate emphasis has also been made to highlight the problems of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, and its socio-economic and security implications. Globally, youth unemployment and poverty has become very disturbing, reference to Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria in particular.

In recognition of this, the UN World Youth Report (2013) affirmed that developing countries are home to 87 per cent of the world's youth population who are often under-employed and are working in the informal economy under poor conditions. Therefore, UN World Youth Report (2013) stated that the challenge is for these countries to create new employment opportunities for young people and also improve the quality of jobs available to them.

Therefore, to underscore and explain these circumstances, the theories of unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion were considered. Studies by the International Labour Office (2003, 41) defines unemployment to comprise "all persons within the age limits specified for measuring the economically active population, who during the reference period were without work are not in paid employment or self-employment as specified by the international definition of employment, currently available for work either for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and seeking work and had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment". Similarly, Emeka (2011, 361) described "youth unemployment as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any";

Also, Tella et al., (2019, 4) established a relationship between poverty and unemployment, arguing that "poverty reduction depends on the strength of each link between poverty and employment".

Tella et al., (2019, 4) further stated that “the hallmark of poverty in Nigeria is the high level of unemployment”, thus establishing a casual relationship between poverty and unemployment. In the same vein, Tella et al., (2019, 2) described inclusive growth as “a kind of growth in output that creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them”. Ali & Zhuang (2007, 10) defines inclusive growth to mean “growth with equal opportunities, with focus on creating opportunities and making the opportunities accessible to all; as growth is therefore inclusive when it allows all members of a society to participate in and contribute to the growth process on an equal basis regardless of their individual circumstances”. Whilst Brian (1998, 5) argues that social exclusion “is no more than a relabeling of what used to be called poverty”.

However, in view of the foregoing, this research also explains the importance of social investment programme. Saleh (2019, 205) describes the aim of social investment programs as “granting youths the power to perform their duties and create change, teaching them about their ability to control their lives and change society to inculcate a sense of value”. Therefore, social investment programme is an important tool for addressing the persistent problems of youth unemployment and poverty, as well as inclusive growth and social exclusion.

Social investment programme provides social support to its beneficiaries, enabling them to participate in normal course of life. One key social investment programme deployed by the government in addressing the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, inclusive growth and social exclusion is the N-Power programme. The N-Power programme was conceived by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a social scheme to cover both graduates and non-graduate youths of between the age brackets of 18-35 years.

Thus, the outcome of the research established that N-Power programme has been fairly successful in addressing youth unemployment and poverty in Akute and Ajuwon towns of Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Southwest Nigeria. Beneficiaries of the N-Power who participated in the survey affirmed that they have gained employment opportunities from the N-Power programme. Also, beneficiaries who participated in the focus group discussion also affirmed that they have experienced positive impact of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction amongst the lives of the beneficiaries in Akute and Ajuwon towns, Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

7.3 CONCLUSION

Governments hold the responsibility and social contract to ensure that it provides employment opportunities for the youths, and that the scourge of youth poverty is drastically reduced. Furthermore, government also has a responsibility of ensuring inclusive growth and eliminating the social exclusion amongst the youths. Therefore, the importance of addressing unemployment and poverty incidences amongst the nation's youths cannot be over-emphasized. Government can significantly contribute to reducing youth unemployment and youth poverty by creating the right policy environment or framework for private capital to flourish, stimulate employment creation by way of direct employment into public institutions, public agencies and corporations to absorb the large number of unemployed youths.

Similarly, government also has a duty to fight poverty amongst its youth population, making sure that every youth have the benefit of living above the poverty line. Also, an integral part of the social contract and objectives of every government is to enhance the standard of living of its citizenry by creating decent employment opportunities, fostering inclusive growth, eliminate social exclusion, thus reducing poverty levels amongst its citizenry; particularly the youths.

Forming the major pillars of every society, the youths on the other hand have a significant role to play in ensuring national development through the use of their skills and energy, defense of the nation's territorial integrity, and channeling their creativity and innovativeness to economic development. These can only be done where there are employment opportunities for the youths, as well as suitable social investment programmes that will contribute to youth innovativeness and development.

In this light, the design of an appropriate and sustainable social investment programme that is inclusive and creates opportunities for growth, and enhances the well-being of the youths cannot be overemphasized. In essence, the human development objective should form the basis of existence of any government. Hence, formulation and implementation of an effective social investment programmes should underscore the basis of any government activities or policies, particularly in an environment of high incidences of youth unemployment and poverty as obtainable in Nigeria.

However, in order to achieve these objectives, governments must regularly come up with public policies that are specifically designed to meet the aspirations of the youths'. Achieving these noble objectives entails not only the formulation of policies but also the effective implementation of such formulated policies by the public bureaucracy. Thus, one key social investment programme employed by the government is the N-Power programme.

Results from the questionnaire survey administered on forty N-Power beneficiaries, as well as the focus group discussions held with N-Power beneficiaries revealed that the N-Power programme have made significant impact in creating employment opportunities to its beneficiaries. Furthermore, results from the questionnaire survey administered on N-Power beneficiaries and the focus group discussions held with N-Power beneficiaries also revealed that the N-Power programme has made positive impacts in the reduction of poverty amongst its beneficiaries, thus contributing to improving their standard of living, as well as the economic and socio-economic conditions.

7.4 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of participatory method employed in this research enabled the researcher to obtain first hand, very relevant opinions of the researched, who made far-reaching recommendations to the N-Power programme. With the help of a second focus group discussion towards the end of the research work, the researcher was able to obtain very critical opinions of the youth regarding changes they seek to be made to the N-Power programme, as well as other policy changes that they seek. Lynne (2006) opines that the outcomes of development research have the potential to provide information that might underpin changes, hence the need for the policy recommendations discussed here. However, opinions vary across board between the graduates and non- graduates beneficiaries of the N-Power. The recommendations so obtained are highlighted below:

- (i.) Beneficiaries suggested policy changes to N-Power to increase monthly funding as the (Thirty Thousand Naira Only) ₦30, 000 was grossly inadequate to meet their daily economic obligations.
- (ii.) Beneficiaries also call for massive open employment of youths on a regular basis (bi-annually) into government Ministries, Parastatals, Departments, Public Bureau, and Corporations as against the common practice of hand-picking sons, daughters, and wards of politicians, political office holders, and politically connected individuals. They

- advocated for a transparent, fair, and equitable employment opportunities practice across Federal, State and Local Government levels where the children of poor and needy can compete on a level playing field with children of political office holders and politically connected persons.
- (iii.) Beneficiaries of N-Power call for the abolishment of contract jobs in both Nigerian-owned and foreign-owned companies operating in Nigeria, except short-term consultancy and research employments. They specifically mentioned that almost half of banking jobs, oil & gas, telecommunication and other sectors has embraced contract employment, a situation that puts working Nigerian youths in the trap of “working poor”. This, they believe, would create more opportunities to absorb more unemployed youths.
 - (iv.) Beneficiaries of N-Power also call for urgent and strict restrictions on foreign workers daily influx into the country, citing uncontrollable numbers of Chinese, Indians, Philippines, and Togolese taking over maritime, construction, and technical jobs in Nigeria. They argued that foreigners are now getting the few lucrative jobs available in the country, rendering they Nigerians unemployed and poor.
 - (v.) Beneficiaries also call for the establishment of a comprehensive and broad-based social security system in the country in form of cash disbursement to all youths as obtained in Western and developed world irrespective of social and educational class, political and ethnic class, as a way of reducing youth unemployment and poverty amongst the youth, thereby reducing incentive for crime and other criminal activities common with youths.
 - (vi.) Both graduates and non-graduates of the N-Power advocated for quick fixing of power/electricity problems in Nigeria, attributing the large scale of youth unemployment and poverty to electricity crises across the country. Most of the beneficiaries specifically mentioned to be formerly employed in some indigenous industries which had collapsed due to irregular and epileptic power supply which has led to near state of industrial collapse across Nigeria. They also called on the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to expedite action on ensuring Nigeria’s self-sufficiency in petroleum refining. One young entrepreneur particularly said he was erstwhile doing his personal business but could not sustain the high cost of petroleum price hence he closed shop. He is now enlisted as a beneficiary on the N-Power.

- (vii.) Also, some graduate beneficiaries of the N-Power programme called for the reduction in length of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme they are statutorily required to undertake after graduation, arguing that keeping them out of employment for 12 months with no employability skills added to their pre-employment life does not make them employable according to some employers. They also called for the NYSC programme to be skill-oriented to equip them with practical business and entrepreneurship skills, along with technological skills and global trend skills which they can acquire and use to effect changes in their personal lives, and community and ultimately escape unemployment and poverty.
- (viii.) Furthermore, some graduates also called for the reduction in years of academic periods in Nigeria. They advocated that current academic programmes of four years should be reduced to three years while current five year programmes should be reduced to four years in line with European standards. They cited will help them get into employment faster. Whilst also calling for an overhaul of national tertiary education programmes across the country.
- (ix.) Non-Graduates beneficiaries of N-Power advocated for a national curriculum on vocational education to make it standardized and free where they can learn and acquire hands-on skills and compete favorably with migrant workers who they accused of taking over technical jobs available in Nigeria. In the same vein, they advocate for proper funding of technical institutions across the country and enhancement of their relevance and capacities by giving them statutory relevance enjoyed by the tertiary institutions. They also wanted Federal Government, State Governments and Local Governments across the country to mandate and enforce their employments to both local and foreign contractors executing public contracts, as this would go a long way in reducing their unemployment and poverty.
- (x.) Both graduate and non-graduate beneficiaries of N-Power criticized the top-down approach of the Federal Government in addressing youth unemployment and poverty and argued for them to be part and parcel of any future youths oriented social programmes in order to have their voices represented in programme planning, design and implementation. They prayed for a decentralized approach to social investment

programmes where States and Local Governments would be supported and partnered with by the Federal Government in addressing youth unemployment and poverty, arguing that prevalence of unemployment and poverty differs across states and regions of the country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Introduction Letter to Respondents

Appendix 2 Informed Consent Form

Appendix 3 Research Survey Questionnaire

University of Agder
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Global Development and Planning
(Specialization in Development Management)

Dear Respondent,

Introduction Letter

I am a student of the above named department and institution presently conducting a research on the topic “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria’s Social Investment Programme)”.

Consequently, I humbly seek your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaires to support my research work as part of my M.sc thesis.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections A & B and are unanimous.

Additionally, the output shall not be disclosed to third parties during the conduct or after the conduct of my thesis. I have also enclosed herewith an informed consent form to seek your permission to participate in this regard.

I would be very glad in seeking your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Once again, I wish to reiterate strict confidentiality on any information supplied by you during and after the research.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

.....
Olubukola Idowu Oyekunle
(Research Student)

Informed Consent Form for Academic Research

This informed consent form is for beneficiaries of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) social investment programme tagged N-Power who I am inviting to participate in research titled “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria’s Social Investment Programme)”.

Name of Researcher: Olubukola Idowu Oyekunle

Name of Institution: University of Agder

Title of Thesis: “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria’s Social Investment Programme)”.

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

Part I: General Information (to share information about the study with you)

Part II: Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: General Information

Introduction

I am Olubukola Idowu Oyekunle, an M.sc student of Department of Global Development and Planning, University of Agder, Norway. I am conducting a research on the topic “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria’s Social Investment Programme)”. I am cordially inviting you to be part of this research and will supply you with all necessary information. Please note that you do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. However, before you decide to participate in this research, you are free to consult anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please feel free to ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them and I will be glad to provide further details.

Purpose of the research

Youth unemployment and poverty have become one of the most frightening social problems confronting today’s Nigeria, calling for concerted efforts by all to tackle the ugly trend. To address the situations, the Federal Government has launched the social investment programme tagged N-Power. I believe you can share your experiences with me on the N-Power programme in general and how it has affected and impacted you personally. I want to gain insights on how the N-Power has impacted your socio-economic well-being and your opinions on how to make the programme better.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve participation in completing a questionnaire. It will also involve your participation in a group discussion that will take about forty-five minutes.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to participate in this research because that I feel that your experience as a N-Power beneficiary is invaluable to this research.

Voluntary Participation

Please note that your participation in this research is completely voluntary, and it is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate, this will have no consequences on you as a beneficiary of N-Power programme.

Procedures and Timelines

I am soliciting that you participate in this research to help me gain insights on N-Power. If you choose to accept to participate, I will be asking you to share your views on the N-Power programme along with other beneficiaries of the programme. The procedure of your participation can involve either your participation in focus group discussion or participation in questionnaire survey.

The focus group discussion will consist of about 6 persons who are also beneficiaries of the N-Power. The discussions during the focus group will be guided by me Olubukola Idowu, Oyekunle. The discussion will start with me as the moderator and will involve the mix use of English and Pidgin English to ensure that you are comfortable and familiar with the language of the discussion. I will be asking you questions about the efficacy of N-Power and what you feel about the programme, and how it has impacted your economic and socio-economic situations. If you feel uncomfortable about any question(s), you can choose not to answer it by saying "no response". The focus group discussion will take place at Oriental Bar which access to will be strictly restricted to only those who choose to participate in the discussion. I will be taking notes and recording with my mobile phone, and no individual will be identified by name. The notes and recording will be confidential and will not be communicated to anyone. The notes and recording will be destroyed by me after thirty days.

You may be required to fill-out a questionnaire to be given to you by myself or my research assistant Mr. Adefemi Damilola and retrieved also by the person who gave out the questionnaire to you. You may choose to answer the questionnaire yourself or read to by either myself or my research assistant, or whoever you may wish to consult with. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions included in the questionnaire, you may skip them and move on to the next question. Please note that the questionnaire will be retrieved from you in 48 hours. The questionnaire shall not contain any of your personal information such as name, address, phone number, occupation. The contents are strictly designed to protect your confidentiality and anonymity.

Risks

Both the questionnaires and focus group are designed not to pose any immediate or future personal risks to you, your families and friends, and your participation in the N-Power programme.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is very likely to provide invaluable recommendations to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) on policy changes to the N-Power programme.

Inducements and Reimbursements

There shall be no inducements or reimbursements for your participation. However, should you choose to participate in the focus group discussion, there shall be provision for table water.

Confidentiality

No information about you will be shared or stored with anyone. The information to be collected in the course of this research project will be kept private and destroyed thirty days.

Sharing the Results

No information shared with the researcher shall be shared with anybody. The final result of this research will be shared with you via email after approval by the educational institution should you choose to receive a copy.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not negatively affect your participation in the N-Power programme in any way, or your personal life circumstances. However, you may stop your participation in the focus group discussion at any time that you wish. You may also wish to withdraw your participation in the questionnaire survey by either refusing to complete the questionnaire.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions about any part of this research study, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask me any questions later, you may contact me through (Name: Olubukola Idowu Oyekunle; email: bukkyafrika@yahoo.com; Tel: 08146024178).

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been invited to participate in research titled “Addressing Youth Unemployment and Poverty through Social Investment Programme in Nigeria (A Case Study of Nigeria’s Social Investment Programme)”.

This section is mandatory

I have read and understood the foregoing information, or it has been read to me and understood by me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Name of witness _____

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and ensure that to the best of my ability, that the participant understands every detail contained therein.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided freely to the participant.

Name of Researcher _____

Signature of Researcher _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

SECTION A:

BIO-DATA

1. **Gender:** Male [] Female []
2. **Age Grouping of Respondent:** below 18-22 years [] 23-27 years [] 28-31 years [] 32-35 years []
3. **Marital Status:** Single [] Married [] Separated [] Divorced []
4. **Educational Qualification:** Non-Graduates Formal Education [] Graduates []
5. **Accommodation Type:** One room apartment [] Flat [] Others []

SECTION B

INSTRUCTION: Please indicate appropriate information with a tick (√)

SA (Strongly Agree) A (Agree) U (Undecided) D (Disagree) SD (Strongly Disagree)

| S/N | QUESTIONS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. | It was easy to be enlisted and access funds from N-Power | | | | | |
| 2. | I offered inducement in cash/kind to an N-Power official before I was enlisted on N-Power programme | | | | | |
| 3. | I offered cash tips or kind to N-Power official to facilitate funds disbursement to me on a regular basis | | | | | |
| 4. | N-Power has contributed positively to youth employment | | | | | |
| 5. | N-Power has contributed positively to enhancing youth entrepreneurship by providing them with capital financing and appropriate training | | | | | |
| 6. | N-Power supports youths to start their own business and become self-reliant | | | | | |
| 7. | Youths are gaining employment opportunities through N-Power placements and attachments to public corporations | | | | | |
| 8. | N-Power contributes to reduction in youth unemployment | | | | | |
| 9. | N-Power is making youth to be economically empowered | | | | | |
| 10. | N-Power is positively impacting the economic and socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries | | | | | |
| 11. | N-Power is contributing positively to poverty reduction of its beneficiaries | | | | | |
| 12. | N-Power is improving the standard of living of its beneficiaries | | | | | |
| 13. | Youth unemployment and poverty can be substantially reduced through effective use of N-Power | | | | | |
| 14. | N-Power should be broadened and sustained as a critical social investment programme | | | | | |