



ASSESSMENT OF THE CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE N-POWER PROGRAMME ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

One of the greatest challenges facing the Nigerian economy today is poverty. This pervasive social and economic problem has prompted past governments to introduce the N-Power programme to alleviate poverty across Nigeria, including in Niger State. The study examines the challenges in the implementation of N-Power Programme on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with the population adjusted to 20,000 beneficiaries who have participated in N-Power programmes. The study reveals that factors such as financial instability, irregular stipend payments, inadequate funding, weak institutional structures, and political interference constitute significant constraints to the effective implementation of the NPower programme in Niger State.. The study concludes that while the N-Power programme has provided opportunities for skill development and temporary employment, its overall effectiveness in reducing poverty has been limited by administrative, financial, and structural challenges. It is therefore recommended that institutional frameworks be strengthened to enhance transparency, accountability, and regular disbursement of stipends, alongside the introduction of a structured postprogramme transition plan to promote long-term sustainability and impact.

Keywords: *N-Power, Poverty, System, Economic Development, Niger State*

Introduction

Poverty has remain of the of the greatest challenges facing Nigerian economy Despite global initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targeting 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) aiming for under 3% poverty by 2030 (World Bank, 2022), poverty continues to affect populations worldwide. A 2022 UNDP report indicates that about 1.2 billion people (19.1%) across 111 countries experience acute multidimensional poverty, including 593 million children under 18. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest concentration (nearly 579 million), followed by South Asia (385 million) (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2022). The World Bank reported a likely 4% income drop for the bottom 40% globally in 2020, pushing extreme poverty up 11% from 648 million to 719 million people an increase that raised the rate 1.2 percentage points above projections, which had forecasted a decline. Most of those in extreme poverty live in developing areas like Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Africa alone, more than 200 million face acute poverty, with 40–50% of Sub-Saharan residents below the \$1-per-day international line (World Bank, 2023).

In West Africa, countries including Nigeria are classified as low-income by the World Bank or low human development by the UNDP (Jev, Henry, John, & Ieave, 2023). Regional responses include the African Union's Agenda 2063, launched in January 2015, to achieve prosperity, unity, and sustainability across the continent by 2063 (African Union, 2022). National strategies have since been developed to support

poverty reduction and broader progress. Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, offers limited opportunities for many citizens. Children born in 2020 are expected to reach only 36% of potential productivity due to inadequate education and health access, placing the country seventh-lowest on the global human capital index. With 3.5 million entering the labor market yearly, weak job growth and entrepreneurship drive emigration (World Bank, 2024).

The Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) stands at 0.257, indicating that poor people in Nigeria experience just over one-quarter of all possible deprivations. The MPI value, which ranges from 0 (no poverty) to 1 (complete deprivation), serves as a measure of the extent of poverty across multiple dimensions, including education, health, and living standards. To address this challenge and reduce the level of multidimensional poverty over time, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced various social intervention initiatives, among which the N-Power Programme was established. (NMI, 2022). The programme was specifically designed to empower unemployed youths, enhance skill acquisition, promote job creation, and ultimately contribute to poverty reduction efforts in the country. In central Nigeria's Niger State, poverty persists amid an agriculture-dominated economy reliant on subsistence farming (Isah & Idris, 2023). Challenges include poor infrastructure, low education, and healthcare access (Abubakar, Danjuma, Ndanusa, Aliyu, Yisa, Utare, & Saidu, 2023). The federal N-Power program addresses youth joblessness and poverty by providing skills training, temporary jobs, and stipends through sectors like Teach, Agro, Health, Tech, and Creative (N-Power Guide, 2024).

Before N-Power, Niger State's poverty was severe, with many unable to meet basic needs. NBS data showed 66.4% in poverty in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023), reflecting barriers to education, health, and work (Omidiji, 2023). Post-launch, employment and skills improved, with graduates gaining sector-specific roles and income (Kayode, Niworu, Agaie & Alaba, 2023; Muhammad, Mustapha, Hassan, & Suleiman, 2023). Yet poverty dropped only slightly to 64.3% by 2020 and 62.8% by 2022 (World Bank, 2023). Limitations stem from poverty's scale, resource constraints, and socioeconomic complexities (Kayode et al., 2023). Prior research (Dauda, Adeyeye, Yakubu, Oni, Umar, 2019; Kayode et al., 2023; Omidiji, 2023; Muhammad et al., 2023) has analyzed program design, implementation, and hurdles but overlooks beneficiaries' sustained livelihood gains in Niger State. This study examines the N-Power program's role in poverty reduction there. The primary objective is to assess N-Power and poverty alleviation in Niger State, Nigeria. Specific objectives include: investigating beneficiaries' views on the program's impact on poverty and living standards; and identifying their challenges and effects on alleviation efforts.

Empirical studies, such as those by Eze and Musa (2024) and Aliyu and Tanko (2023), have highlighted persistent issues including irregular payment of stipends, inadequate supervision, poor monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and limited access to training resources. Additionally, weak institutional coordination, lack of sustainability plans for beneficiaries after program exit, and bureaucratic bottlenecks have further limited the programme's effectiveness in reducing poverty at the community level.

Reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) indicate that Niger State still experiences a high rate of multidimensional poverty, suggesting that the intended outcomes of the N-Power Programme have not been fully realized. Although the initiative has provided temporary relief to some beneficiaries, the persistence of structural poverty raises concerns about the efficiency, equity, and sustainability of its implementation process.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to assess the challenges confronting the implementation of the N-Power Programme in Niger State, with the aim of identifying the factors limiting its effectiveness and proposing strategies to enhance its role in sustainable poverty reduction.

Conceptual Clarification

Poverty

Poverty, similar to many other concepts, defies a single, universal definition, rendering it a multifaceted and challenging phenomenon. It is recognized globally as a pervasive problem. As cited in Alfa, Otaida, and Audu (2022) from the Central Bank of Nigeria (2018), poverty describes a state in which a person cannot sufficiently meet basic needs like food, clothing, and housing. This extends to failing to fulfill social and economic obligations, lacking stable jobs, skills, resources, and self-esteem, and having restricted access to vital services such as education, healthcare, potable water, and sanitation. As a result, those in poverty face constrained prospects for reaching their full potential. Kankwanda, referenced in Barnes (2023), regards poverty as a complex issue shaped by multiple elements, including limited opportunities for income generation and basic facilities. Taiwo and Agwu (2019) and Nkwede (2014) portray poverty as the failure to achieve a basic standard of living and earn societal respect and dignity, which may drive people to extreme actions to sustain their families. From these perspectives, poverty essentially involves the incapacity to satisfy fundamental life requirements, potentially fueling criminal behavior. Further analysis shows that many involved in severe crimes are unemployed or unskilled in supporting themselves and dependents, often due to illness or advanced age. Clearly, poverty and joblessness can exacerbate social issues by intensifying tensions that erode community cohesion. Recently, Nigerian researchers have increasingly examined poverty alleviation strategies and their implementation.

Consequently, poverty reduction has gained prominence, drawing interest from scholars worldwide and nationally, resulting in varied definitions. For instance, Alfa et al. (2022) broadly define it as enhancing income, consumption, and human development, encompassing better living standards via higher earnings, spending, consumption, and access to health and education. Taiwo and Agu (2019) view poverty reduction as a tangible decline in its prevalence and scale, achievable through empowerment programs and skill-building in supportive settings. Similarly, Kayode et al. (2023) interpret poverty reduction or alleviation as a blend of economic and humanitarian efforts aimed at permanently elevating people from deprivation (Slikkerveer, 2019). The goal is to shift individuals from an unacceptable state to a more favorable one. In this study's framework, poverty reduction refers to the process of relieving individuals or communities from ongoing deprivation and hardship, or enhancing their economic resources to secure a fundamental quality of life.

Various research efforts have explored this area, with key examples outlined below: Dauda, Adeyeye, Yakubu, Oni, and Umar (2019) assessed the effects of N-Power programs on youth empowerment in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. Employing a crosssectional survey, they sampled 225 youths from 512 N-Power recipients in the area. Data was collected via structured questionnaires. Demographic details were analyzed using descriptive tools like means and percentages, while hypotheses were tested with inferential methods such as Pearson product-moment correlation. Results indicated no meaningful link between N-Power and job creation, poverty reduction, or skill development. Challenges highlighted included job instability, late stipend disbursements, bribery, corruption, and poor oversight, all hampering the program's success. Recommendations included broadening participation for more unemployed graduates, converting roles to permanent positions, and offering grants to entrepreneurial participants to better apply their acquired skills.

Joseph and Isokpan (2021) examined perceptions of the N-Power program's role in poverty eradication in Ovia North-East Local Government Area, Edo State. They surveyed 100 respondents from the region, analyzing data with simple percentages and testing hypotheses via Chi-square. Results showed that N-Power aided youth empowerment in the area but failed to meaningfully reduce poverty. The study



proposed multiple recommendations: prioritizing job creation in economic policies; fostering a coordinated poverty alleviation strategy among federal, state, and local governments, NGOs, and international donors; incorporating apprenticeships into secondary education to provide vocational skills; bolstering support for unemployed rural and urban residents, who represent a large demographic; expanding productive empowerment opportunities for jobless individuals in both settings; and advancing rural development through N-Power, given that integrated rural progress is vital for easing poverty among the majority rural populace.

Bison (2022) evaluated the N-Power Scheme's effects in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, focusing on employment creation, beneficiaries' economic welfare, and skill improvement. Using a survey method with purposive sampling, the study involved 250 participants. Hypotheses were assessed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation via SPSS. Findings demonstrated a strong positive link between N-Power and enhanced economic conditions, skill acquisition, and job opportunities. The study advised mandatory government-led training in ICT and agriculture for participants to boost post-program employability.

Mohammed, Mustapha, Hassan, and Suleiman (2023) explored N-Power's influence on poverty alleviation in Niger State through a descriptive survey of 1,612 beneficiaries, sampling 377 via the Taro Yamane formula. Results indicated that initiatives like NTeach, N-Health, N-Agro, and N-Vaids promoted socio-economic growth, reducing poverty via skill-building, higher incomes, job creation, and better food access. The study urged pre-implementation evaluations of these programs, among other measures.

Kayode, Agaie, Niworu, and Alaba (2023) assessed the N-Power program's success in youth empowerment and poverty reduction among beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area, Niger State, Nigeria, grounded in human capital theory. They distributed 320 questionnaires to a population of 1,598, with 285 returned for analysis using descriptive statistics and purposive sampling. Many exited beneficiaries reported no poverty relief from the program, citing insufficient pay and skills training, leaving unemployment and deprivation persistent. Recommendations included aligning future program compensation with living costs and urging state and local governments to launch complementary, sustainable anti-poverty efforts alongside federal initiatives.

Concept of N-Power

N-Power Programme is a job creation and youth empowerment initiative established under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). The programme is designed to promote a learn–work–entrepreneurship culture among Nigerian youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). According to Arowubusoye (2020), the federal government created N-Power to substantially reduce youth unemployment. Its primary aim is to provide young graduates and non-graduates with skills, tools, and resources to move from joblessness to employment, entrepreneurship, or innovation. Afolabi (2021) describes N-Power as a job creation and empowerment scheme under the NSIP, overseen by Muhammadu Buhari's civilian government, targeting Nigerians aged 18–35. The program has four core objectives, including directly improving the lives of many unemployed young people. It is divided into two categories: the Graduate Category (NPower Volunteer Corps) and the Non-Graduate Category (N-Power Knowledge and NPower Build). The N-Power Volunteer Corps is a two-year paid volunteering opportunity for post-tertiary Nigerians aged 18–35, where participants perform primary tasks in assigned public services within their communities. All volunteers are provided with computing devices containing role-specific information and materials for continuous training and growth. The program emphasizes four key youth empowerment sectors: NPower Teaching, N-Power Agriculture, N-Power Health, and N-Power Taxation (NPower Information Guide 2022).



The primary aim of N-Power is to address persistent public service challenges such as the low teacher-to-pupil ratio in primary schools, the high prevalence of preventable diseases, and the under representation of taxable individuals in the economy. By leveraging a large volunteer workforce, the programme seeks to mitigate these issues while stimulating sustainable economic growth and development. In addition, N-Power equips non-graduates with essential technical and business skills that enhance their employability and overall livelihood opportunities (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Essentially, the objectives of the N-Power programme are to:

- i. Improve directly the livelihoods of a significant number of unemployed young Nigerians.
- ii. Establish a high-quality system for transferring employability, entrepreneurial, and technical skills.
- iii. Create a comprehensive ecosystem that addresses challenges in public services while supporting government diversification policies.
- iv. Develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Structure of the N-Power Programme

The N-Power programme is structured into two main categories, each targeting distinct needs and stages of career development—namely, the N-Power Volunteer Corps and the N-Power Skills (N-Skills) categories.

. N-Power Volunteer Corps

This category encompasses three sub-programmes N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro which focus on providing employment opportunities and sector-specific skills development:

N-Teach: Designed to address the shortage of teachers in public primary schools by deploying volunteers as teaching assistants, thereby improving the quality of education and learning outcomes.

N-Health: Aims to reduce the high rate of preventable diseases by engaging volunteers in healthcare facilities to support service delivery, community health awareness, and outreach programmes.

N-Agro: Focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity by involving volunteers in farming activities, agricultural extension services, and rural development projects (NPower Information Guide, 2017).

2. N-Power Skills (N-Skills)

The N-Skills component targets non-graduates, equipping them with technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills to improve their employability and business prospects. It emphasizes practical training and mentorship, alongside facilitating access to financial and business support services. This enables participants to start their own enterprises or strengthen their career advancement opportunities (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-Power Volunteer Corps Initiative

The N-Power Volunteer Corps operates similarly to a “local hero” initiative, whereby graduates are engaged in community-based public service for a period of two years. During this period, volunteers receive continuous support through access to computing resources and digital platforms that provide information, training, and guidance. This system serves as a “personal guide” throughout their service duration, ensuring that participants have the resources and mentorship required to perform effectively and contribute meaningfully to their assigned roles (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Implementation of N-Power programmes and the challenges

The N-Power Programme, introduced in 2016 as a federal initiative to curb youth unemployment and foster poverty reduction, has encountered substantial obstacles in Niger State, a largely agrarian region with elevated poverty levels. A core difficulty lies in the uneven flow of information and persistent administrative hurdles. Many beneficiaries, especially in remote areas such as Kontagora, Bida, and



Suleja, struggle with limited awareness of application procedures, selection standards, and deployment schedules. Frequent website crashes, unreliable internet access in rural zones, and dependence on urban cyber cafés create a digital barrier that excludes significant portions of the intended audience. Delays in onboarding and verification, often tied to Bank Verification Number mismatches or incomplete paperwork, further prolong uncertainty, leaving participants waiting for months and eroding confidence in the process.

Financial instability compounds these issues, with irregular stipend disbursements forming a recurring grievance. Payments of ₦30,000 monthly are frequently delayed by three to six months, and in some cases, entire quarters go unpaid. Inflation and steep transportation expenses, particularly for those assigned to distant postings diminish the stipend's value, with rural beneficiaries sometimes expending up to 40% of their earnings on travel alone. This erosion of disposable income undermines the programme's poverty-alleviation goals. Limited budgetary support at both federal and state levels strains resources, especially given Niger State's sizable participant base, leaving the initiative vulnerable to funding shortfalls and operational disruptions. Corruption and political meddling further erode programme integrity. Selection processes are often swayed by favoritism, where political connections override merit, resulting in qualified applicants being sidelined and "ghost" participants inflating rolls. Extortion by local officials for placement or payment clearance is not uncommon, fostering distrust among genuine beneficiaries. Shifts in government leadership at state or federal levels trigger abrupt policy changes, payment suspensions, or redeployments, transforming a development effort into a tool for political patronage rather than sustainable empowerment. The programme's short-term structure capped at 24 months limits its lasting impact. While it delivers immediate income and basic skills, there is little provision for transition into stable employment or self-sufficiency. Volunteers in categories like N-Teach or N-Agro often revert to joblessness upon completion, with acquired competencies remaining underutilized due to the absence of job linkages, seed funding, or entrepreneurial support. This cycle of temporary relief followed by renewed vulnerability fuels skepticism about the initiative's ability to drive meaningful, long-term poverty reduction. The lack of effective oversight and feedback mechanisms allows inefficiencies to persist unchecked. Supervisory engagements are sporadic, and accessible channels for reporting issues are virtually nonexistent. Without systematic, data-informed monitoring, authorities cannot accurately gauge deployment outcomes, skill application, or household-level poverty impacts, leaving the programme disconnected from the realities faced by its participants in Niger State.

Empirical Studies

Magaji, Umar, and Yahaya, (2024), this study explores the challenges and prospects of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria, with a focus on the N-Power program in Bauchi State. Using a qualitative inquiry method, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted. The findings indicate that the N-Power program has significantly contributed to poverty reduction by providing temporary employment opportunities in sectors such as N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro. Additionally, the program has facilitated income generation through monthly stipends and skills development. However, the study also identifies challenges, including political influence, the short-term nature of the scheme, lack of requisite qualifications among some beneficiaries, and a lack of post-program retention. The target audience for this research includes policymakers, program beneficiaries, researchers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders interested in poverty alleviation, empowerment, and youth development initiatives like N-Power under the National Social Investment Program.

Okonkwo, Nwokike and Nwafor, (2021), examined the challenges of youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria: An appraisal of N-Power scheme. The study employed a thematic method using content analysis, with secondary data obtained from various online sources. The analysis revealed that official corruption, delayed payment of allowances, and the absence of a structured transition plan for beneficiaries into



sustainable ventures hindered the effective achievement of the scheme's objectives. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the programme be insulated from political influence, that payments be made regularly and increased where necessary, and that a comprehensive transition plan be established to guide beneficiaries into more meaningful and productive ventures after their participation in the scheme.

Amadi and Ogidi, (2024), Youth Unemployment and N-Power Programme in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the Challenges of Implementation in Rivers State. Descriptive research design was utilized for methodology, while data was derived from secondary sources. Content method was used in analysing the data. The findings reveals a landscape that is marred by mismanagement, technological deficiencies, and delayed payments. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that such revelations underscores an urgent need for a holistic overhaul of the programme, a commitment to accountability, transparency and adaptability to the recipients environment, to attract more participants. The paper therefore recommends that there should be improvements in the areas of transparency, strengthening oversight, upgrading technological infrastructure, adoption of a meritbased selection process, in addition to ensuring timely disbursement of allowances to the beneficiaries of N-Power Programme. These points are so crucial for revitalizing the N-Power schemes as a catalyst for positive change and with the potentials for employment generation for the teeming youths in Rivers and Nigeria at large.

Mba, Ikechukwu and Chukwunonye, (), studied on assessment of the implementation of Buhari administration's N-power program and youth unemployment and poverty reduction in Enugu State, 2015-2023. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design to examine the effectiveness of the N-Power programme in reducing youth unemployment and poverty in Enugu State from 2015 to 2023. A total of 158 respondents were selected through a multi-stage and purposive sampling technique, while primary and secondary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and unstructured interviews. Out of the questionnaires distributed, 124 were correctly completed and analyzed using mean and Chi-square statistical tools, with a significance level of 0.05 percent and a decision benchmark of 3.00. The analysis revealed that the N-Power programme's job creation opportunities did not significantly reduce youth unemployment and poverty in the study area. Findings further indicated that corruption, delayed payments, and the absence of effective transition plans for beneficiaries were major challenges hindering the achievement of the programme's objectives. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the N-Power scheme should be insulated from political interference, ensure regular and adequate payment of stipends, and develop a structured post-programme transition plan to support beneficiaries in engaging in sustainable ventures. Additionally, it suggested the establishment of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework and the design of training programmes aligned with contemporary labour market needs to enhance the programme's long-term impact.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed David Easton's 1965 systems theory, as outlined in his book *World Politics Volume IX*, as its theoretical framework. This approach conceptualizes an organization or society as a dynamic, open system composed of interacting components that sustain a relatively stable balance through ongoing exchanges of energy and information with the external environment. Systems theory portrays social organizations as intricate structures with interdependent parts, encompassing inputs, processes, outputs, feedback loops, and environmental interactions, forming a fluid and integrated whole. In applying this theory to the research, the government is viewed as a system where inputs stem from the public in the form of demands for empowerment initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation and income enhancement, alongside government-led programs benefiting the broader population. Specifically, the N-Power program serves as the conversion mechanism, receiving public demands for poverty reduction efforts, transforming them through processing, and producing outputs in the form of the NPower initiative targeted at mitigating youth poverty. The theory demonstrates how the government addresses societal needs by delivering vital

resources, highlighting the public's articulation of demands to authorities, governmental responses to these demands, and the consequent programs designed to combat poverty and improve citizens' welfare.

Methodology

The methodology employed a descriptive survey research design, encompassing the entire population of N-Power beneficiaries in Niger State. However, out of the total 20,000 unemployed individuals who have benefited from N-Power programmes, this study specifically covered 31,107 participants in the N-Teach Programme, 2,892 in the N-Health programme, 5,187 in the N-Agro programme, 3,119 in the N-Tax programme, 2,615 in the N-Build programme, and 2,918 in the N-Tech programme. The sample size for the study was determined statistically using the Taro Yamane formula (1973), which is 392. Stratified sampling techniques were implemented to ensure equal representation of beneficiaries across all N-Power programmes based on their respective populations. Additionally, the researcher utilised this method to determine the number of respondents from each of the three zones within Niger State. Within each zone, simple random techniques were applied to select two local governments. The selected local governments were as follows: Kontagora and Mariga from Niger North, Suleja and Chanchaga from Niger East, and Bida and Lapai from Niger South. A structured questionnaire, incorporating a Four-point Likert scale, was employed to gather information from the targeted respondents. Data analysis was conducted based on the questionnaire responses, utilising frequency distribution tables and simple percentages.

Result and Discussion

Four hundred (392) copies of the questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents out of which three hundred and ninety two (384) were duly filled and returned with the help of a research assistant. The Analysis carried out was based on the questionnaire filled and returned representing ninety eight percent, (98%). Eight (8) copies of the questionnaires were not returned and this represents two (2%) percent.

Table 5: Financial and Logistical Challenges in the Implementation of N-Power Programme on poverty reduction

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
Delayed payment of stipends affects participants' motivation.	180 (46.9%)	120 (31.3%)	30 (7.8%)	36 (9.4%)	18 (4.7%)	384 (100%)
The amount of stipend paid is insufficient to meet the beneficiaries' needs.	200 (52.1%)	110 (28.6%)	22 (5.7%)	32 (8.3%)	20 (5.2%)	384 (100%)
There are irregularities in payment processes and financial management.	170 (44.3%)	130 (33.9%)	40 (10.4%)	28 (7.3%)	16 (4.1%)	384 (100%)
Inadequate funding limits the success of the N-Power programme.	160 (41.7%)	140 (36.5%)	34 (8.9%)	32 (8.3%)	18 (4.7%)	384 (100%)
The lack of proper logistics hinders effective supervision and coordination.	150 (39.1%)	138 (35.9%)	40 (10.4%)	36 (9.4%)	20 (5.2%)	384 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The responses from Table 5 shows that financial and logistical constraints constitute major impediments to the smooth operation of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction in Niger State. A significant proportion of respondents (46.9% strongly agreed and 31.3% agreed) affirmed that delayed payment of stipends affects participants' motivation. Similarly, more than half of the respondents (52.1% strongly agreed and 28.6% agreed) maintained that the amount of stipend paid is insufficient to meet beneficiaries' needs. This suggests that the stipend provided under the N-Power scheme on poverty reduction In addition, 44.3% of respondents strongly agreed while 33.9% agreed that there are irregularities in payment processes and financial management. Furthermore, 41.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 36.5% agreed that inadequate funding limits the success of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction. Lastly, 39.1% of respondents strongly agreed and 35.9% agreed that lack of proper logistics hinders effective supervision and coordination.

Table 6: Challenges in the Implementation of N-Power Programme on Poverty

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
The implementation of the N-Power programme is influenced by political interference.	190 (49.5%)	120 (31.3%)	28 (7.3%)	30 (7.8%)	16 (4.1%)	384 (100%)
There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection of beneficiaries.	175 (45.6%)	130 (33.9%)	34 (8.9%)	28 (7.3%)	17 (4.4%)	384 (100%)
Corruption among programme officials affects proper execution.	180 (46.9%)	135 (35.2%)	28 (7.3%)	26 (6.8%)	15 (3.9%)	384 (100%)
The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are inadequate.	165 (42.9%)	138 (35.9%)	40 (10.4%)	26 (6.8%)	15 (3.9%)	384 (100%)
Political favoritism determines who benefits from the programme.	170 (44.3%)	125 (32.6%)	38 (9.9%)	32 (8.3%)	19 (4.9%)	384 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The results in Table 6 show that administrative inefficiencies and political interference play a major role in undermining the objectives of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction in Niger State. A majority of respondents (49.5% strongly agreed and 31.3% agreed) stated that the implementation of the N-Power programme on poverty reduction is influenced by political interference. Similarly, 45.6% strongly agreed and 33.9% agreed that there is a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection of beneficiaries. Moreover, 46.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 35.2% agreed that corruption among programme officials affects proper execution. Additionally, 42.9% strongly agreed and 35.9% agreed that the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the programme are inadequate..Finally, 44.3% strongly agreed and 32.6% agreed that political favoritism determines who benefits from the programme.



Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that financial instability, irregular payments, insufficient stipends, and logistical shortcomings have greatly constrained the proper implementation and success of the N-Power programme in Niger State. This findings are consistent with Magaji, Umar, and Yahaya (2024) who found that N-Power programme has contributed positively to poverty reduction through temporary employment and skills acquisition in sectors such as N-Teach, N-Health, and N-Agro, the programme still suffers from political influence, the short-term nature of the scheme, and a lack of post-programme retention.. Similarly, Okonkwo, Nwokike, and Nwafor (2021) examined youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria and reported that official corruption, delayed payment of allowances, and the absence of a structured transition plan hinder the effective achievement of the N-Power scheme's objectives. However, but is in disagreement with the finding of Magaji, Umar, and Yahaya (2024) reported that programme had a relatively positive impact by providing temporary employment and monthly income support.

The finding that the success of the N-Power programme in Niger State has been hindered by weak institutional structures, mismanagement, and inconsistent financial and administrative practices agrees with the studies of Okonkwo, Nwokike, and Nwafor (2021), Amadi and Ogidi (2024), and Mba, Ikehukwu, and Chukwunonye, who all identified corruption, delayed payments, poor management, and lack of effective transition plans as major obstacles to the programme's success, but disagrees with Magaji, Umar, and Yahaya (2024), whose study in Bauchi State found that despite similar challenges, the N-Power programme had significantly contributed to poverty reduction through temporary employment and skills development.

Conclusion

The study establishes that the N-Power programme in Niger State, though designed to reduce poverty through employment and skill acquisition, has faced significant setbacks due to financial instability, irregular payments, weak institutional structures, and administrative inconsistencies. These challenges have limited its effectiveness in achieving its intended goals. While the programme has the potential to empower beneficiaries and alleviate poverty, its success depends on improving transparency, ensuring regular payment of stipends, strengthening institutional capacity, and establishing clear post-programme transition plans to support long-term sustainability and impact.

Recommendations

That government should strengthen institutional and administrative frameworks guiding the N-Power programme by ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficient financial management to minimize mismanagement and irregular payments. The programme should establish a sustainable post-engagement transition plan that supports beneficiaries in moving into stable employment or entrepreneurship, alongside regular review and adequate payment of stipends to enhance motivation and overall programme effectiveness.

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