

## THE IMPACT OF N-POWER PROGRAMMES ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF RIVERS STATE

**AKUJURU, Chukwunonye Abovu**, (PhD, LLM, M.Sc., B.Ed., LLB, B L

Department, Public Administration, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola Port Harcourt.

**ENYIOKO, Newman Chintuwa**, (MNIM, MBA, M.Sc., B.Sc., Ph.D. Research Student)

Research and Development Director-Medonice Consulting and Research Institute, Port Harcourt.

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study examined the impact of N-Power programmes on poverty alleviation in Nigeria: A study of Rivers State. Survey design was used in this study to generate data. A sample of 400 respondent youths was studied. After going through them 381 copies (i.e. 95.25% response rate) were found useful for the data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data in this study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that the major N-Power programmes used towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State included: N-Power Teach, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Agro, N-Power Tech Software N-Power Tax, N-Power Health and N-Power Tech Hardware. The study revealed that N-Power Programmes' beneficiaries were mainly university and polytechnic graduates. The study found that the major factors that affected the implementation of N-Power programmes included: Insufficient information, non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery and corruption, wrong bank verification number (BVN), overbearing hands of politicians in the programme etc. It is evident and conclusive that: There is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State and there is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State. The study therefore recommends that the authorities concerned should promote rural development through N-Power programmes. Also, government at all levels should reactivate moribund industries and enterprises and expand the horizon of N-Power programmes in that direction.*

**KEYWORDS:** n-power programmes, poverty alleviation, rivers state, youth empowerment, social investment programme Nigeria

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**JEL Classification:** 138 Welfare, Well-Being, and Poverty: Government Programs; Provision and Effects of Welfare Programs

## INTRODUCTION

Indeed, the N-Power programme has become a household name and has continued to generate some controversy, although the government is living up to its billing in addressing concerns raised in association with the programme. Explaining the rationale behind the programme, a highly placed government official says, the N-Power Programme of the Federal Government is a job creation and empowerment initiative of the Social Investment Programme, designed to drastically

reduce youth empowerment in Nigeria (Obadan, 2017). The focus is to provide our young graduates and non-graduates with the skills, tools and livelihood to enable them advance from empowerment to empowerment, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Perhaps to further demonstrate the fact that it was aimed at addressing the challenges of empowerment, it forerunners categorized it into Graduate Teachers Corps which targeted 500,000 graduates recruitment, N-Power Knowledge targeting 25,000 non-graduates recruitment and N-Power Build which targets 75,000 nongraduates' recruitment. It was gathered that the 500,000 graduates under the N-Power Corps programme will get computing devices that will contain information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development. Participants are to provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in 4 key areas namely agriculture, health, power tech and community education (Obadan, 2017).

The N-Power Agro volunteers are meant to function as intermediaries between research and farmers. They operate as facilitators and communicators, helping farmers in their decision-making and ensuring that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain the best results on farms. Through the N-Power Health programme, young graduates who form part of the 500,000 N-Power Corps members are trained to work as public health assistants. They teach preventive health to community members including pregnant women, children, families and individuals. They are also trained to provide basic diagnostic services (Aderonmu, 2017). The N-Power Teach programme engages qualified graduates for the benefit of basic education delivery in Nigeria. They are deployed as teaching assistants in primary and secondary schools across Nigeria. They are not to replace the current teachers, but are to work as support teachers, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. They assist in taking basic education to children in marginalized communities (Aderonmu, 2017).

There is also the N-Power Knowledge programme which is the Federal Government's first step towards diversifying to a knowledge economy. This programme works alongside the planned eight innovation hubs across the country to provide incubation and acceleration of the technology and creative industries. The programme is a 'Training to Jobs' initiative, essentially ensuring that participants can get engaged in the marketplace in an outsourcing capacity, as freelancers, as employees and as entrepreneurs (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). Indeed, the programme is carefully designed in such a manner that if well implemented, can help in further addressing the challenges of empowerment and subsequently, reduce poverty among the youths. But then of course, there appears to be some confusion of some sort in the way and manner the programme is being handled. The programme could not kick off in most states as scheduled. Some of the controversies included the fact that the names released so far are reportedly fraught with 'ghost names' (Bennel, 2017).

Poverty alleviation remains a major challenge of modern economies around the world today, Nigeria is no exception. Resulting from poor enterprise culture, the poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria is now a major driver of poverty and social vices. The poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria have assumed multi-dimensional phenomena cutting across all facets of age group, educational strata and geographies. Poverty alleviation programmes are unevenly

distributed across the age groups with youth between the ages of 18-35 being the greatest beneficiaries. More disturbing today, is the ever-rising trend of youth poverty alleviation programmes in the country. The effective implementation of the programmes will discourage them from engaging in social vices which constrain in Rivers State. This study therefore seeks to examine the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria (A study of Rivers State).

Some systemic hiccups, including insufficient information and wrong Bank Verification Number (BVN) have been identified as factors threatening to wreck the N-Power programme, introduced by the Federal Government, as a social safety net to reduce the rate of graduate unemployment plaguing the country. Specifically, the programme, which took off in December 2016 year is designed to provide a stopgap for 500,000 unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions over the next two years (Bennel, 2017). While the Federal Government is responsible for their monthly stipends, it is in partnership with state governments to verify selected unemployed graduates and deploy them to their places of primary assignment. Volunteer graduates are expected to serve in the communities where they are resident.

Under the programme, the first batch of 200,000 participants are to be paid N30, 000 a month and deployed by the respective state governments and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to their different places of assignment, including classrooms as teachers (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). But some months into the programme, it has started facing different challenges, with about 13,000 participants alleging that they have not been paid their monthly stipend (Aderonmu, 2017). For instance, the Nigeria Interbank Systems (NIBSS), which provides the technical support for the programme has identified sundry challenges, including failure on the part of the beneficiaries to input correct Bank Verification Numbers (BVN) and other details to match the information initially provided for processing. Funmi Olowosulu, a participant who was posted to LGEA Primary School, Lokoguma, Kogi State, where she teaches, is yet to receive her monthly stipend of N30, 000 three months after enrolling in the programme, because of inconsistency in her personal details, as well as her Bank Verification Number (BVN) (Bennel, 2017).

Another beneficiary, Umar Abdulrasheed, who spends N80 daily on transportation to work, has also not received his stipend for the same number of months. Additionally, he is indebted to his neighbours who usually bail him out of financial difficulties in the hope that he would defray same once his stipends are paid. The situation is not different in Rivers, Edo, Enugu and Kaduna states, where participants have protested and called on the Federal Government to come to their aid by addressing the numerous challenges facing the smooth operation of the programme. A good number of participants in the programme are frustrated because their expectations were yet to be met, three months after the programme kicked off (Aderonmu, 2017). Besides, some of the participants are disqualified for various reasons, ranging from being over-age, to falsification of information and being currently gainfully employed. Already, Rivers State government, in collaboration with the Federal Government has embarked on another verification exercise in order to afford those that missed out in the first phase come on board. The efforts on the part of the government in alleviating and eradicating poverty among the youth in Rivers State have paradoxically led to more problems for the youth in the state. This study is therefore faced with

the problem of appraising the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: A study of Rivers State. Specific objectives of the study therefore, are:

1. To ascertain the activities of N-Power Agency towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State
2. To determine the extent to which N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State.
3. To ascertain how N-Power Programmes alleviate poverty in Rivers State.
4. To identify the problems affecting N-Power Agency/programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

The following are the research questions of the study which would elicit answers:

1. What are the activities of N-Power Agency towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State
2. To what extent do N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youth in Rivers State?
3. How would N-Power Programmes alleviate poverty in Rivers State?
4. What are some of problems affecting N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State?

#### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated in this study for testing:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Conceptual Issues*

**N-Power:** N-Power is an integrative programme set by government that provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. At this time however, the initial modular programmes in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35.

**Youth:** Youth is the time of life between childhood and adulthood (maturity). Youths are also regarded as those persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years(Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

**Youth Empowerment:** Youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives (Obadan, 2017).

### *The Concept of N-Power Programme*

N-Power aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. At this time however, the initial modular programmes in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35. One needs to meet the minimum requirements (if any) for the respective programme. Generally, selection is based: On one's expression of a genuine interest in whichever area you decide; passing the relevant tests; willingness to push beyond comfort zone; and ability to show a flair to develop all the skills you need to be the best you can be (Aderonmu, 2017). While there are fixed requirements along the way, we will be relying on you to take ownership of the process and take the lead in shaping your route, by making the most of the training that you will receive. For the purposes of N-Power, Graduate means any post-tertiary qualification including an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or as may be specified by the programme (Obadan, 200). The key N-Power Programmes include: N-Power Agro, N-Power Tax, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software

The N-Power Volunteer Corps is the post-tertiary engagement initiative for Nigerians between 18 and 35. It is a paid volunteering programme of a 2-year duration. The graduates will undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power Volunteers are entitled to computing devices that will contain information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development. In 2016, the Federal Government engaged 200,000 N-Power Volunteers. In 2017, the Federal Government is enlisting 300,000 more. The June 2017 Application is only open to the Graduate Category- the N-Power Volunteer Corps. N-Power volunteers provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in 4 key areas (Bennel, 2017).

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development. Despite the current high level of unemployment, harnessing Nigeria's young demography through appropriate skill development efforts provides an opportunity to achieve inclusion and productivity within the country. Large-scale skill development is the main policy thrust of the N-Power Programme.

N-Power is also linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, empowerment and social development arenas. N-Power addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. The modular programmes under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work. The N-Power Volunteer Corp involves a massive deployment of 500,000 trained graduates who will assist to improve the inadequacies in our public services in education, health and civic education. Some of these graduates will also help in actualising Nigeria's economic and strategic aspirations of achieving food security and self-sufficiency (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

N-Power is also a platform for diversifying the economy. N-Power is preparing young Nigerians for a knowledge economy where, equipped with world-class skills and certification, they become innovators and movers in the domestic and global markets. Nigeria will have a pool of software developers, hardware service professionals, animators, graphic artists, building services



professionals, artisans and others. N-Power also focuses on providing our non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

### *The Concept Youth Empowerment in Nigeria*

According to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), 2006 – 2015, developed through wide-consultation with key stakeholders in all regions of the Commonwealth, youth empowerment is to empower, engage and create value so that young women and men can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families and countries and to their own fulfillment. Enyioko (2006) also identified the following dimensions of youth empowerment: Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of these actions.

Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the directions of others. The enabling conditions according to Aderonmu (2017) fall into four broad categories:

- An economic and social base
- Political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks
- A stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system.

From these foundational issues, Momoh (2008) insists that we can agree that any transformational agenda for young women and men in Nigeria must of necessity, address these four areas to empower young people to make their much-needed contribution to the peace and development of this country. McGrath (2009) opines that the quality of a country is not based on the number of men and women in its armed forces nor is it determined by faithfulness to the application of the principles of zoning and or the allocation formulae of political offices, which in Nigeria is actually a euphemism for sharing public funds. No country becomes great by the number of politicians jostling for political offices or the number of times its constitution is amended in a quarter. The greatness of any nation is in the quality of its people in the worth of its governance and in the empowerment of its youths.

Underdevelopment, environmental degradation, devastation by the activities of oil exploration and exploitation of the Niger Delta area, as well as, the exclusion of the people were some factors that pushed many into militancy. The result was a region ignited by violence, destruction, massacres, kidnapping and a drastic reduction in oil production. There was breakdown of law and order, and anarchy threatened to envelop the country. Life was hard enough without the attendant violence and crossfire to which the people were being exposed to Egbware (2007).

Access to quality education has become an elitist preserve. Yet, our Constitution charges the government to make education at all levels, accessible to the Nigerian citizen. Section 18 states that: “Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels...; government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this

end, Government shall as and when practicable provide free, compulsory and universal primary education, free secondary education, free university education, and free adult literacy programme.” Our tertiary education has been in crisis for decades, bedeviled amongst other things by poor funding to brain drain, low administrative capacity and frequent government-staff industrial disputes that have seen their frequent closures, Obadan (2017).

#### *Youth Empowerment Schemes and Poverty Alleviation*

The alleviation of poverty is universally accepted as a primary development objective. Poverty is a vicious circle which keeps the poor in a state of destitution. The concept of poverty which reflects its numerous visible attributes is multi-dimensional in nature. Poverty according to Na’Allah (2004) and Kwaghe (2006) is multi-dimensional, because it affects many aspects of the human condition, including physical, moral and psychological. For many societies, poverty is a concrete phenomenon and can easily be identified. It is also relative because the population that may be classified as poor in a developed economy could be regarded as materially well off in least developed countries. Each society as pointed out by Kwaghe (2006) defined poverty in its own terms. Conventional measures of poverty count the number of people below the poverty line and define the poverty rate as the proportion of total population below the poverty line. Poverty, according to him, is therefore, a normative concept and setting the poverty level requires a judgment about social norms. Irrespective of how poverty is defined, the poor have been described as those who could not obtain adequate income, find stable job, own property or maintain healthy condition (Obadan, 2017).

They also lack adequate level of education and cannot satisfy their basic needs (Sancho, 1996). Thus, the poor are often illiterate, poor in health and have short life spans (Farmanesh et al, 2005). They have no access to basic necessities of life. They are unable to meet both social and economic obligations, lack skills and gainful empowerment, fewer, economic assets and sometimes lack self-esteem. The poor according to Farmanesh et al (2005) are those with income below the poverty line, who lack access to basic services, practical contacts and other forms of support. They people isolated in rural areas and the marginal urban zones where essential infrastructure is lacking. The preceding definitions indicated that perceptions about poverty have not only evolved historically but also vary tremendously from culture to culture. The criteria for distinguishing the poor from the non-poor tend to reflect national or societal normative concepts and priorities. And as countries or societies become wealthier, their perceptions of acceptable deprivation change (Kwaghe, 2006).

Although, the task of alleviating and eradicating poverty is difficult, it is impossible. In the past years, governments of developing countries and the World Bank have focused almost exclusively on agricultural developments as the way to reducing rural poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth. It is therefore in the light of this that this research work intends to undertake the assessment of the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria with emphasis in Rivers State. N-Power Programme concerned, prepared and packaged as a grass root economic programme particularly for the youth. The introduction N-Power Programme under the umbrella social empowerment safety net represents a strategy of alleviating poverty amongst youth through training in vocational jobs and the provision of micro-credit in a sustainable manner as a tool for self-actualization and empowerment (Enyioko, 2006). Specifically, the study examines the socio-economic characteristics of the schemes’ beneficiaries, examines the effectiveness of the scheme

and highlights the problems militating against the scheme in the study area. The study also postulates a hypothesis for testing which states that there is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics (age and educational level) of the respondents and their involvement in the empowerment scheme.

### *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical foundations of empowerment relate to two transitions, On the one hand are those who see empowerment as something related to founding and growing a business enterprise (Schumpeterian entrepreneurs) (**Enyioko, 2006**). On the other hand, are those who see an opportunity and gather all the resources required to pursue it (Kirznerian entrepreneurs). The different perspectives put forward by various schools of empowerment thought have provided insight into empowerment tendencies.

However, based on the above categorizations two broad schools of empowerment thoughts emerged: The Empowerment Traits also known as Psychological Characteristics School of thoughts and the Managerial Skills School of thought. The Empowerment Traits School believes that entrepreneurs are 'born' and that the behaviour of an individual is determined by his/her attitudes, values, beliefs and drives. This indicates that certain values and needs are pre-condition for empowerment. This essential approach has led many people to assume that entrepreneurs are 'born' not 'made' and that it is not possible to teach empowerment (Azam, 2016). The Management Skills School on the other hand, argues that empowerment can be trained and developed, and that the technique of empowerment is a discipline that can be taught or learnt. Hence, entrepreneurs are made not born. However, this study will be concerned with Managerial skills school of thought because of its relevance to the present study.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The survey research method, generally regarded as the selection of representative samples whose analysis can be readily generalized. In this study the survey design, is to be used. Asawo (2016) insists that the survey research studies large and small population by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interactions of sociological and psychological variables. The survey method (quasi experimental) gives the researcher freedom to have a first-hand information on the study and allows him the option of generalizing his findings. The study population comprises the youth in all the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Rivers State. All the youth in Rivers State have been selected in order to elicit valid, reliable and comprehensive data for the study and as well achieve the generalizable of the study. There are 2,673,026 males and 2,525,690 females totaling 5,198,716 people in Rivers State based on 2006 population census figures. However, youths in Rivers constitute 45.43% of the population based on 2006 census i.e 2,361, 776. This figure 2,361, 776 comprises the population for the study. The sample selection of the people recognized by our population definition was done randomly. This study therefore determined its sample size through the Taro Yemane's sample size technique. Having defined the study's population to be 2,361, 776 youths, (i.e 45.43% of 5,198,716 Rivers population) the sample size determination using the Taro Yemane's formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{\text{_____}}$$



$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = level of significance (our level of significance is chosen at 5%)

Applying the formula at significant level of 5% the

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{2,361,776}{1 + 2,361,776(0.05)^2} = 400$$

Therefore, the sample size = 400 youths.

The basic research instrument to be used in this study for data collection is the questionnaire. In essence, questions contained in the questionnaire shall be structured / designed to include open ended, close-ended, dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. Personal observations/experiences were utilized to gather more information for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse data in this study included: frequency distribution, rating scales, ranking and summations. Equally, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) has been used to test some of the hypotheses in this study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula is given as:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

For 't' we have:

$$t = \frac{r}{\sqrt{1-r^2}} \sqrt{n-2}$$

Where;  $\Sigma$  = Summation sign

r = correlation coefficient

n = number of observations

x = independent variable

y = dependent variable

### *Decision Criterion*

Reject (Ho) if computed t is greater than or equal to the t value obtained from the statistical table at a corresponding level of significance of 5% then the alternative hypothesis (Hi) is accepted; but, if otherwise (Hi) is rejected and Ho accepted ([Ali, 2006](#)).

## **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### *Data Presentation*

A sample of 400 respondents from the Rivers State youths was studied. Accordingly, 400 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondent youths in Rivers State. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 387 copies were retrieved and after going through them 381 copies (i.e. 95.25% response rate) were found useful for data analysis. The details of the administration and retrieval of the data are shown below:

**Table1:**Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaire from the Respondents

Options	Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Retrieved from Respondents	Number of questionnaire found useful for the study	Response Rate
Port Harcourt Metropolis	94	92	91	97 %
Ikwerre/Emohua/Ahoada /Etche/Omuma	83	80	78	94%
Omoku/egbema/Ndoni	64	61	60	94%
Kalabari/Okirika Areas	80	78	77	96%
Bony/Opobo/Andoni/Obigbo / Eleme/Ogoni	79	76	75	95%
Total	400	387	381	95%

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

Table 1 reveals how the copies of questionnaire were distributed to the sampled elements of youths, the number generated there from and the number found useful/relevant/valid for the data analysis. The data analysis indicated that 94 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents from the Port Harcourt Metropolis and 92 copies of them were actually retrieved, while 91 copies of questionnaire were found relevant, and this represents 97% response rate of this segment. Equally 83 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents from Ikwerre/Emohua/Ahoada/Etche/Omuma, and 80 copies were collected from them, but after going through them only 78 copies (i.e. 94% response rate) were found useful for the study. From the youths in Omoku/egbema/Ndoni; 64 copies of questionnaire were administered on them, and 61 copies retrieved, while only 60 copies (representing 94% response rate) were found useful for the study. Also, 80 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents from the Kalabari/Okirika areas and 78 copies were retrieved from the respondents and after going through them 77 copies of questionnaire (i.e. 96% response rate) were found useful in this segment. For the respondent youths from Bony/Opobo/Andoni/Obigbo/Elemé/Ogoni; 79 copies of questionnaire were administered on them, and 76 copies returned while only 75 copies of questionnaire (representing 95% response rate) were found useful for the study.

In all, the study administered 400 copies of questionnaire on the respondents from youths in Rivers State, while 387 copies of questionnaire were actually retrieved from the respondents. However, after editing the copies of questionnaire only 381 copies (representing 95.25% response rate) were found useful for the data analysis in this study.

### *Research Question 1*

1. What are the activities of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Assessment of the activities of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State

Options	Respondents rankings with the rating marks 1 – 5 and the number of respondents in each segment							
Activities of N-Power	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Undecided)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)	Total	$\bar{X}$	Rs
N-Power Agro	1 x 72 = (72)	2 x 60 = (120)	3x 100 = 429)	4 x 61 = (244)	5 x 88 = (440)	1176	3.09	4 <sup>th</sup>
N-Power Tech Hardware	1 x 75 = (75)	2x64 = (128)	3 x 95 = (385)	4 x 62 = (248)	5 x 85 = (425)	1161	3.05	7 <sup>th</sup>
N-Power Creative	1 x 62 = (62)	2 x 63 = (126)	3x 104 = (312)	4 x 65 = (260)	5 x 87 = (435)	1195	3.14	3 <sup>rd</sup>
N-Power Tech Software	1 x 74 = (74)	2 x 62 = (124)	3 x 94 = (382)	4 x 65 = (260)	5 x 86 = (430)	1170	3.07	5 <sup>th</sup>
N-Power Tax	1 x72 = (72)	2 x 65 = (130)	3 x 90 = (270)	4 x 67 = (268)	5 x 85 = (425)	1165	3.06	6 <sup>th</sup>
N-Power Teach	1 x 59 = (59)	2 x 60 = (120)	3x 105 = (315)	4 x 68 = (270)	5 x 89 = (445)	1211	3.18	1 <sup>st</sup>
N-Power Build	1 x 60 = (60)	2 x 62 = (124)	3x106 = (318)	4 x 67 = (268)	5 x 86 = (430)	1200	3.15	2 <sup>nd</sup>
N-Power Health	1 x72 = (72)	2 x 65 = (130)	3 x 90 = (270)	4 x 67 = (268)	5 x 85 = (425)	1165	3.06	6 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

Rs = State of rating

Table 2 shows the ranking of the major the activities of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State as indicated by the respondents. The data show that “N-Power Teach” constitutes the 1st major the activity of N-Power programme towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State; hence the option had an aggregate score of 1211 marks and mean score of 3.18 as indicated by the respondents. Another major activity identified by the respondents as part of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State is “N-Power Build” instituted by Federal Government. The respondents indicated this through a total score of 1200 marks and weighted score of 3.15 which rated the option 2nd. ‘N-Power Creative’ constitutes another strategy identified and rated by the respondents as one of the major activities of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State because the respondents rated this factor 3rd with 1195 marks and mean score of 3.14.

Equally rated by the respondents is the fact that ‘N-Power Agro’ as another of N-Power programme towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State. The respondents scored this activity 1176

marks and mean score of 3.09 and this places same option 4<sup>th</sup> in the rating. 'N-Power Tech Software' constitutes another activity used in of N-Power programme towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State as indicated by the respondents because the option scored 1170 marks/mean score of 3.07 and rated 5<sup>th</sup>. The respondents indicated that *N-Power Taxis* and N-Power Health are the other major activities of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State. The options scored 1165 marks with mean score of 3.06 and rated 6<sup>th</sup>. Finally, N-Power Tech Hardware has been indicated by the respondents as another major activity used in N-Power programme towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State hence a total score of 1161 marks and mean score of 3.05, thereby placing the option 7<sup>th</sup> in the rating. It is therefore evident and conclusive from the analysis above that the itemised N-Power schemes help to alleviate poverty alleviation in Rivers State (even at varying degrees) if they are effectively used, Bennel, (2017) agrees on these findings.

**Table3:** N-Power programmes generate Empowerment of the people in Rivers State

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage/Response
Yes	232	61%
No	149	39%
Total	381	100%

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

Table 3 shows that 61% of the respondents indicated that N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State, while only 39% of the respondents indicated 'No' to the question.

## Research Question 2

To what extent do N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State?

**Table4:** The Extent to which N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage Response
Very large extent	107	28%
Large extent	91	24%
Moderate Extent	80	21%
Low Extent	61	16%
Very low extent	42	11%
Total	381	100%

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

The data in table 4 reveal that 28% of the respondents ticked to a very large extent that N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State. Equally, 24% of them indicated to a large extent while 21% of the respondents indicated to a moderate extent that the N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State. The data further reveal that 16% of the respondents indicated that to a low extent N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State while only 11% of them indicated to a very low extent to the question.

*Research Question 3*

How would N-Power Programmes alleviate poverty in Rivers State?

**Table5:**Distribution of Beneficiaries by some Socio-economic Variables

<b>Socio-economic Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	242	63.5
Female	139	36.5
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 21 (19.50)	117	30.6
22 – 25 (23.50)	88	23.0
26 – 29 (27.50)	99	26.0
30 – 33 (31.50)	59	15.5
34 – 37 (35.50)	19	4.9
<b>Household Size</b>		
1 – 2	225	59.1
3 – 4	86	22.7
5 – 6	31	8.2
7 – 8	33	8.7
9 and Above	6	1.3
Total	381	100
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
None	27	7
Primary	36	9
Secondary	72	19.40
Technical / Vocational	104	27.30
Tertiary	142	37.30
Total	381	100
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Below N10,000	25	25.5
N10,000- N19,000	70	18.4
N20,000-N29,000	85	22.4
N30,000-N39,000	82	21.4
Above N40,000	46	12.2
Total	381	100
<b>Area of Beneficiaries</b>		
computer operator	101	26.5
Farming	85	22.4



Carpentry	39	10.2
Hair Dressing / Tailoring	96	25.1
Metal Fabrication	60	15.8
Total	381	100

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

The study revealed that there were more males (63.5%) than females (36.5 %) involved in N-Power Programmes in the study area. This implies that the males are more empowered than female. It is however noteworthy to state that gender, cultural and religious considerations militate against the participation of some females in key activities of N-Power Programmes. These are fundamental issues in empowerment of females. In table 5, the study showed that 30.60% of the respondents are between (18 – 21) years, 23% are between the age ranges of (22 – 25) years, 26% are between the age ranges of (26 – 29) years, 15.5% are between the age range of (30 – 33) years and 4.9% of the respondents are between the age ranges (34 – 37). This shows that majority of the respondents were within the active age group of (25-37) years, while the average age of the respondents is 27.50 years. It is believed that if respondents at this age are properly empowered, this could foster economic growth and development of Rivers State and ultimately curb social menace. Most respondents are singles (83.7%) and very few are married (16.3%). This implies that most respondents had no early marriage and not sufficiently empowered to face marital responsibilities. The household size of the respondents indicates that 59.1% have small family size less than three members and 22.7% have 3-4 family members. Very few respondents (18%) have above five family members. The family size ultimately showed the level of dependence on respondents.

With respect to educational status of the N-Power Programmes beneficiaries, table 4.5 shows that majority of the respondents are tertiary certificate holders as represented by 37.30%, followed in this order are technical / vocational school certificate holders represented by 27.30% of the respondents, secondary school certificate holders indicated by 19.40% of the respondents equally participated in the N-Power Programmes scheme. Only 9% of the respondents have primary school educational qualification. It is obvious that some of the respondents have no formal educational qualifications and ultimately there was considerable level of illiteracy among the respondents as represented by 7% of the respondents. This reflects low level of education among the youth in Rivers State. This is also in conformity with the assertion made by Egware, (2007) that Rivers State falls among the educationally less disadvantaged states (ELDS) in Nigeria. The scheme is therefore a step in the right direction in youth empowerment. The annual income distribution of the beneficiaries on the Youth Empowerment Scheme revealed that most of the respondents have an annual income which is less than N40, 000. This shows that the respondents have an average income of N3, 300 per month and N110 per day which is less than the United Nations recommendation to spend N1, 350 on feeding per day. This means that most of the respondents are living below poverty line. The study revealed that the highest segment of the beneficiaries were computer operators representing 26.50%, followed by those engaged in Hair Dressing / Tailoring represented by 25.10% and farming indicated by 22.40%. The scheme witnessed the low interest in metal fabrication which attracted 15.80% and carpentry represented by 10.20% of the respondents. Bennel (2017) made the assertion that farming profession must be made attractive for large number of young people rather than white collar jobs' if the developing

nations were going to be able to feed themselves and encourage youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

#### *Research Question 4*

What are some of problems affecting N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State?

**Table6:**Problems affecting N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State

Options	Number of Respondents N = 381	Percentage Response	Rating
Insufficient information	354	93%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due	366	96%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Bribery and corruption	293	77%	6 <sup>th</sup>
Wrong Bank Verification Number (BVN)	354	93%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Overbearing hands of politicians in the programme	324	85%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
High transportation fare paid by the participants to work	354	93%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Website and internet hiccups	312	82%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Poor funding of the programme	316	83%	4 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

Table 6 shows that one of the major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State is ‘Non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due’ as 96% of the respondents indicated this, thereby placing the option 1<sup>st</sup> among others. ‘Insufficient information’ ‘High transportation fare paid by the participants to work’ and ‘Wrong Bank Verification Number (BVN)’ ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the rating as 93% of the respondents indicated them. Followed in the major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State is “Overbearing hands of politicians in the programme” indicated by 85% of the respondents, thereby placing them 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ranking. The 4<sup>th</sup> major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State is ‘Poor funding of the programme’ identified by 83% of the respondents. The 5<sup>th</sup> major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State is ‘Website and internet hiccups’. Finally, the respondents (through 77% of them) identified ‘Bribery and corruption’ as the 6<sup>th</sup> major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

#### *Test of Hypotheses*

Having presented and analyzed the data generated for this study this section is devoted to testing of the four hypotheses formulated in the study. They have been tested using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

*Hypothesis 1 (Ho1)*

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State

**Table7:**Statistical Relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State

Extent of Relationship	The activities of N-Power Agency/programmes (X)	Poverty alleviation in Rivers State (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
Very large extent	89	91	7921	8281	8099
Large extent	162	103	26244	10609	16686
Moderate extent	85	76	7225	5776	6460
Low extent	32	65	1024	4225	2080
Very low extent	13	46	169	2116	598
Total	381	381	42583	31007	33923

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

$r = 0.945$  (positive relationship)

$t = 5.16$  (very significant)

$t_{crit} @ 3;0.05 = 3.18$

The data in table 7 are drawn to see whether there is significant relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State. From the statistical presentations above and the values of  $r$  computed (i.e. 0.945) and  $t$  computed (i.e. 5.16) it is obvious that the computed  $t$  value is greater than the figure obtained from the table, which is 3.18. Therefore, 'there is positive/ significant relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

*Hypothesis 2 (Ho2)*

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State.

**Table8:**Significant Relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State

Extent of the Relationship	N-Power programmes (X)	Empowerment of the youths and poverty alleviation in Rivers State (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
Very large extent	87	91	7569	8281	7917
Large extent	159	103	25281	10609	16377
Moderate extent	83	76	6889	5776	6308
Low extent	29	65	841	4225	1885
Very low extent	23	46	529	2116	1058
Total	381	381	41109	31007	33545

**Source:** Survey Data, 2018

$r = 0.917$  (positive relationship)  
 $t = 4.06$  (computed) Very significant  
 $t_{crit} @ 3; 0.05 = 3.18$

From the data in table 8 and the computation of the  $r$  value (which is 0.917) and  $t$  value (which is 4.06); it is conclusive that the computed value of ' $t$ ' is greater than the one obtained from the table, which is 3.18. Therefore, the study has rejected the null hypothesis ii and accepted the alternative hypothesis ii  $H_{i2}$  which says "There is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State".

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the respondents agreed that youth empowerment via the activities of N-Power programmes encourages quality decision on youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State. These findings support the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making that suggests environmental conditions and events that influence the choice of career pursuits (McGrath, 2009). In particular, the events and experiences noted by the respondents in this study were more closely related youth empowerment via the activities of Rivers State Ministry of N-Power programmes and occupational conditions within the rural settings.

The study found that there is necessarily a specific relationship between youth empowerment through the activities of Rivers State Ministry of N-Power Agency/programmes and job mobility even if youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State reflect a move to better empowerment matches. Kwaghe (2006) discusses how youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State matching in urban areas may produce either a positive or an inverse relationship between youth empowerment via the activities of Rivers State Ministry of N-Power Agency/programmes and mobility.

The reality of the finding of this study is that jobs are not freely available, especially in Nigeria where unemployment is high. This has been corroborated by Sachs (2005) who submits that the current practice is to take what is available, which might mean accepting a second or third youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State. This eventually leads to youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State in the area of provisions. In his study, Sachs (2005) found that only a third of the urban dwellers found jobs reflecting their aspirations prior to leaving school. According to UN World Youth Report (2015) the decrease in availability of jobs might lead to an increase in compromises in a person's values more especially on family issues. This could lead to reshaping one's needs and values in order to fit available circumstances. Farmanesh *et al* (2005), indicated that the matter of compromises in career development could be relevant to many people in the future. It was found that people tend to adapt by compromising their needs and values as they become mature.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: A study of Rivers State. The survey design was used in this study to generate data. The study population

comprised the youth in all the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The youths in Rivers constitute 45.43% of the population based on 2006 census which made the study population to be 2,361, 776 youths. The sample selection of the people recognized by our population definition was done randomly. The key instrument used to elicit data in this study was questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse data in this study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient ( $r$ ) was used to test the hypotheses in this study. A sample of 400 respondents from the Rivers State youths was studied. Accordingly, 400 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondent youths in Rivers State. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 387 copies were retrieved and after going through them 381 copies (i.e. 95.25% response rate) were found useful for data analysis.

The study found that the major activities of N-Power programmes towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State include: N-Power Teach, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Agro, N-Power Tech Software *N-Power Taxis*, N-Power Health and N-Power Tech Hardware. The study found that N-Power programmes generate empowerment for the youths in Rivers State.

The study revealed that there were more males (63.5%) than females (36.5 %) involved in N-Power Programmes in the study areas of Rivers State. This implies that the males are more empowered than female. It is however noteworthy to state that gender, cultural and religious considerations militate against the participation of some females in key activities of N-Power Programmes. The study revealed that N-Power Programmes beneficiaries are mainly university and polytechnic graduates.

The study found that the major factors affecting the implementation of N-Power programmes towards poverty alleviation in Rivers State include: Insufficient information, non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery and corruption, wrong bank verification number (BVN), overbearing hands of politicians in the programme, high transportation fare paid by the participants to work, website and internet hiccups, poor funding of the programme.

Youth empowerment and poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria have been in the increase because there is the need to encourage the youths to come out of crime related activities in the country. N-Power is one of the youth empowerment programmes that have elicited remarkable impact in addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria. From the test of the hypotheses, it evident that: There is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State and there is significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State.

### **Contribution/Originality**

This study contributes in the existing literature of poverty reduction investment schemes. This study uses new estimation methodology of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ). This study originates new formula for the assessment of the activities of N-Power programmes. This study is one of very few studies which have investigated N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The paper contributes the first logical analysis on N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The paper's primary contribution is finding that there is significant



relationship between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. This study documents N-Power social investment schemes in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study and the conclusions reached there from the following recommendations have been made:

1. Government should encourage the strengthening of the capability for unemployed rural and urban dwellers. Since unemployed people constitute an increasing portion of the rural dwellers, economic policies should aim at enhancing their youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State performance. Equitable access to financial resources and services should be provided. They will need credit and extension services and assistance in adopting improved youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Rivers State practices and technologies that are suited to their capabilities.

2. Government and the stakeholders should increase the opportunities for empowerment. There should be an increase of opportunities for continued participation of both urban and rural unemployed persons in productive work. Efforts should be made to encourage unemployed persons to engage in self-empowerment, which would not only enable them to do things at their own pace but would also encourage them to introduce innovations for productivity and profit. In addition, the provision of opportunities for job training and continued education would enhance their self-employability. Retraining programmes should therefore be initiated to re-educate the unemployed and update their knowledge of modern techniques and skills so that they can continue in their present occupation or take up a new one.

3. The authorities concerned should promote rural development through N-Power programmes. Integrated rural development is seen as the key for alleviating poverty of the rural dwellers who constitute the greater chunk of the population

4. Government at all levels should reactivate moribund industries and enterprises and expand the horizon of N-Power programmes in that direction. In connection with increasing the job prospects and improving the sources of income of unemployed persons, there is a need to reactivate small-scale industries and enterprises in which the rural dwellers can be more involved. For example, production centres for traditional handicrafts could be set up to be run and self-managed by the rural dwellers to provide for the manufacture of basket work, pottery and various leather works.

5. Government should be providing financial assistance for income generating projects through the N-Power programmes. The establishment of income-generating projects targeted at unemployed persons should be an important element in the N-Power programmes.

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### Appendix A: Computation of the Values of r and t through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t – test for Testing of Hypothesis 1

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

**Table 7B:** Statistical Relationship between the activities of N-Power Agency/programmes and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

Extent of Relationship	N-Power Agency/programmes(X)	Poverty alleviation in Rivers State (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
Very large extent	89	91	7921	8281	8099
Large extent	162	103	26244	10609	16686
Moderate extent	85	76	7225	5776	6460
Low extent	32	65	1024	4225	2080
Very low extent	13	46	169	2116	598
Total	381	381	42583	31007	33923

Source: Survey Data 2018

**r = 0.945 (positive relationship)**

t = 5.16 (very significant)

t<sub>crit</sub> @ 3;0.05 = 3.18

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2] \times [n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{5(33923) - (381)(381)}{\sqrt{5(42583) - (381)^2 \times 5(31007) - (381)^2}} \\
 &= \frac{24454}{\sqrt{67754 \times 9874}} = \frac{24454}{25865} = 0.945 \\
 r &= 0.945
 \end{aligned}$$

Testing for level of significance 't'

$$\begin{aligned}
 t &= r \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}} \\
 t &= 0.945 \sqrt{\frac{5-2}{1-(0.945)^2}} = \frac{1.645}{0.3122} \\
 &= 5.27 \\
 t &= 5.27
 \end{aligned}$$

(High level of significance)

**Appendix B: Computation of the Values of r and t through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t – test for Testing of Hypothesis 2**

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State

Table 8B: Significant Relationship between N-Power programmes and empowerment of the youths in Rivers State.

Extent of the Relationship	N-Power programmes (X)	Empowerment of the youths in Rivers State (Y)	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
Very large extent	87	91	7569	8281	7917
Large extent	159	103	25281	10609	16377
Moderate extent	83	76	6889	5776	6308
Low extent	29	65	841	4225	1885
Very low extent	23	46	529	2116	1058
Total	381	381	41109	31007	33545

Source: Survey Data, 2018

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2] \times [n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{5(34478) - (381)(381)}{\sqrt{5(42579) - (381)^2 \times 5(31639) - (381)^2}} \\
 &= \frac{27279}{\sqrt{67734 \times 13034}} = \frac{27279}{29715} = 0.917 \\
 r &= 0.917
 \end{aligned}$$

Testing for level of significance 't'

$$\begin{aligned}
 t &= r \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-(r)^2}} \\
 t &= 0.917 \sqrt{\frac{5-2}{1-(0.917)^2}} = \frac{1.593}{0.3919} \\
 &= 4.06 \\
 t &= 4.06 \\
 &\text{(High level of significance)}
 \end{aligned}$$