

# **Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

Youth empowerment and poverty alleviation as a measure of sustainable development has for a long time been an issue of concern to past and present administration in Nigeria and has become one of the terms equated with development. This study examined social investment program (N-power scheme) of the Buhari administration between 2019 and 2023, and how it has impacted on the livelihood of the poor and youths in Delta State. The study employed the Marxian political economy theory as propounded by Marx and Engels (1962). The applicability of Marxist theory in addressing unemployment, poverty, insecurity and development in Nigeria stems from the fact that such threats of unemployment (the “reserve army of unemployed”), can only be alleviated via strict regulation of the market. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse data in this study included: frequency distribution, simple percentages and the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient ( $r$ ) with the t-test which was used to validate the hypotheses. at 0.05 level of significance. With a sampled size of 400 determined through the Taro Yemane’s sample size technique and distributed to each of the job roles of N-Power participant (N-Teach, N-Tax, N-Agro, N-Health). The study revealed among others that, there is a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the empowerment level of youths towards poverty alleviation in Delta State. Finally, the study recommended that entrepreneurial or skills development centers should be adequately funded, equipped and be given the due attention by government at all levels in order to serve as a hub for massive employment generation.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Youth, Empowerment, Development, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Successive administrations in Nigeria have applied different policies in their drive towards sustainable development critical to which is the various poverty alleviation initiatives targeted at the improvement of the peoples’ standard of living. Nigeria is endowed with abundant oil mineral deposits of high quality and several other mineral resources. It is such that between 1973 and 2000, Nigeria generated

estimated revenue of about US \$300 billion from the sale of oil (Okonjo-Iweala, et al, 2003). These have been strengthened by the country's large population, estimated at 120 million in 2001 and a relatively high-level manpower (Abdullahi, 2001, p. 86). But despite all these potentials Nigeria reels in poverty. A situation that is vividly characteristic of Nigeria's paradox of development, a country with such huge human and natural resources, ranked as the sixth largest exporter of crude oil, but has been plagued by debilitating socio economic contradiction of high level of poverty, such that in a recent report by World Poverty Clock compiled by the Brookings institute, USA, as at May 2018 about 86.9 million Nigerians are in extreme poverty which is the highest in the globe (Adebayo, 2018). This is with the unenviable reputation as the world's new poverty capital with about 40% of Nigeria's population still living below the poverty line of less than 1\$US per day, according to figures from National Bureau of Statistics(NBS, 2022).

These are huge numbers for a rising unemployment figure for any country; little wonder why Nigeria is taunted as the world poverty capital. Staggering unemployment figures of the youth population is an indication of the non-utility of an essential part of the production process, labour, which should have translated to entrenching economic growth and development in Nigeria as unemployment correlates with poverty (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). Poverty, is the lack of capacity for citizens to meet basic existential needs of food, clothing and shelter; the inability to fulfil basic social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment, skills, assets and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as education, health, potable water and a hygienic environment (NPC, 2017) which is a common and reoccurring reality among Nigerian youths. This worsening scenario is captured by the youth unemployment index of Nigeria between 2015 and 2020 which shows that the index kept a negative progression from 7.81% in 2015, 12.4% in 2016, 13.96% in 2017, 13.7% in 2018, 13.96% in 2019 while the index for 2020 stood at 14.2% (Statista, 2021)

Youth empowerment and poverty alleviation as a measure of sustainable development has for a long time been an issue of concern to past and present administration and has become one of the terms equated with development. The term empowerment should make action to correspond to needs. It is also a concept that does not merely concern personal identity but brings out a broader human and societal development. The absence of viable youth empowerment and failure of public policies in Nigeria to adequately address this concerns results in growing criminality and activities of militants like what we had in the Niger Delta crisis, also communal conflicts, the terrorist Boko Haram sect in North-East part of the country and the incessant farmers-herders crisis, political violence and armed banditry which has not only unsettled the peaceful atmosphere but has made socio-political and economic development difficult (Ayodeji, et al 2014; Salami, 2013). Thus the dialectical linkage between poverty crisis and unemployment have been recognized by successive governments as having implication to social stability and sustainable development, as former President Olusegun Obasanjo had always

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

echoed out this fear when he described the ugly trend as a “time bomb” (Obasanjo, 2013). Of course the attempt to tackle this persistent poverty crisis and growing unemployment figures has attracted the focus of different Federal Government administrations since the inception of the Nigerian State through various programmes after identifying poverty as a monumental barrier to national development in the country.

**Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria prides itself as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of Crude oil with large deposits of other mineral resources, from Gold, iron ore, lime stone, rubber and rich agricultural resource potentials. Despite all these potentials it dazzles the minds of scholars to observe the unending decline of the nation’s development trajectory with an abysmal poverty index. In Nigeria, and around the world empirical studies shows that poverty is intricately linked to unemployment which is the result of absence of youth employment. Many youths after graduation roam the streets in search of work that isn’t available, and that unemployment has maintained a rising trend over the years; because over 50 percent of them are unemployed. The NBS 2020 report shows that unemployed youth in the country now stands at 40.9% during Q2 representing over 84 million Nigerians (NBS, 2022). This study therefore focuses on poverty alleviation and social investment programs (N-power scheme) of the Buhari administration between 2019 and 2023, and how it has impacted on the livelihood of the poor and youths of Nigeria. The research has the following major objectives: to assess the extent to which participation in the N-Power programme is effective in poverty alleviation and sustainable development, and to ascertain the extent which the N-Power programme effectively impacted on the skills and development of beneficiaries

**Research Hypotheses**

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

- i. There is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the development of skills necessary for poverty alleviation
- ii. There is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the empowerment levels of youths towards poverty alleviation

**Conceptualising Poverty in Nigeria**

Defining poverty proves elusive, yet efforts have been made to articulate it, particularly in the context of Nigeria where it is widespread. Aderonmu (2010) contends that poverty signifies a deficiency in the ability to dictate one's consumption habits to meet basic needs easily. This manifests in low consumption levels leading to inadequate provision of food, clothing, and shelter, as well as an inability to maintain a universally acceptable standard of living. However, this definition falls short in illustrating the lived experiences of the impoverished and

the necessary interventions to ameliorate their conditions. Todaro and Smith (2003) conceptualize poverty as a lack of control over essential needs, wherein individuals struggle to satisfy their basic consumption requirements, resembling insufficiencies in food, clothing, and shelter. Ekong (2001) adds depth to this understanding within the Nigerian context, delineating characteristics of poverty-stricken individuals.

These include households and individuals below the poverty line, lacking adequate income to meet existential needs; those deprived of essential services and social support; inhabitants of underdeveloped regions with deficient infrastructure; women-headed households facing nutritional deficits; the unemployed struggling for livelihoods; and marginalised ethnic groups facing economic, social, and political deprivation. The World Bank (2002) defines poverty as the failure to meet basic life expectations, encompassing minimal living standards. It constructs indices based on consumption levels, lack of resources, education, health, political participation, shelter, water and sanitation access, susceptibility to shocks and violence, and marginalisation. Similarly, the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI, 2002) employs metrics such as life expectancy, infant mortality, education, and healthcare access to gauge poverty levels within countries. These frameworks offer multifaceted approaches to comprehending and addressing poverty.

**Table1:** Percentage population poverty by states in Nigeria.

States	Percentage of population in Poverty
Sokoto	87.73
Taraba	87.72
Jigawa	87.02
Ebonyi	79.76
Adamawa	75.41
Zamfara	73.98
Yobe	72.34
Niger	66.11
Gombe	62.31
Bauchi	61.31
Enugu	58.13
Nasarawa	57.3
Katsina	56.42
Kano	55.1
Plateau	55.1
Kebbi	50.2
Kaduna	43.5
FCT	38.7
Cross River	36.3

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

Benue	32.9
Abia	30.7
Imo	28.9
Kogi	28.5
Ekiti	28
Akwa Ibom	26.8
Rivers	23.9
Bayelsa	22.6
Kwara	20.4
Anambra	14.8
Ondo	12.5
Edo	12
Oyo	9.8
Ogun	9.3
Osun	8.5
Delta	6
Lagos	4.5

**Source:** Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1121438/poverty-headcount-rate-in-nigeria-by-state/Retrieved/10/09/2021>

**Poverty and Sustainable Development**

Development is generally conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and eradication of poverty (Todaro, & Smith 2006). As Omotola (2005) has pointed out, the new thinking in development literature emphasizes the sustainability of development, taking human beings as the central object of development. Sustainable development connotes development that endures or lasts, one that will not roll back or recede even in the face of threatening reversal waves. It is one that is self-sustained and meets the needs of present and future generations (World Bank, 2002). The basic indicators of sustainable human development include level of per capita consumption as central to well-being; life expectancy at birth; adult illiteracy rate; percentage of population with access to sanitation; combined enrolment ratio; carbondioxide emissions per capital; communal energy and traditional fuel consumption; school enrolment; percentage of population with access to health facilities and care; etc. (Qizilbash, 2001).

**Effects of Poverty and Unemployment**

Unemployment has been factored as a major precipitating factor of poverty. And this phenomenal case of poverty in Nigeria has led to several challenges including the crisis of insecurity in Nigeria. Scholars however are divided on the relationship between poverty and insecurity. While one group believes that poverty is both a cause and consequence of insecurity, another group believes poverty causes

insecurity, while yet a third group thinks that poverty is the result of conflicts (Taminu 2014).

In further correlating the poverty-conflict nexus, Nigeria as the biggest producer of oil in Africa and the sixth oil producer in the world has despite its vast resources is being ranked among the poorest countries in the world. A recent World Bank (2010) report released at a United Nations summit rated her as second poorest country in the world with most Nigerians living below poverty line. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2015) about 60.9% of Nigerians in 2010 were living in 'absolute poverty'. In 2011, the figure rose slightly to 61.9% and the number of Nigerians living in poverty was put at 61% where the highest poverty rates are recorded in the North-West and North-East geopolitical zones with a poverty rate of 77.7% and 76.6% respectively (NBS 2015). The reason is not far-fetched considering that these zones are riddled with conflicts. Absence of basic services, unemployment, bad governance and corruption provide an avenue for disgruntled members of the society to be radicalized. The situation is such that no day passes without news of one form of killing by insurgents or the other. Many properties have been destroyed and lives lost to these insurgents who advocate the jettisoning of western education and the imposition of Sharia law. Insecurity in the North led to the declaration of a state of emergency in three states in the zone namely; Yobe, Adamawa and Bornu states during the Jonathan administration. Despite this, the killing continues and the worst aspect of it is that in recent times, educational institutions have become targets with many male students killed and hundreds of young girls abducted.

### **Effectiveness of Youth Empowerment as Tool for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development**

Merriam- Webster Dictionary (2010) defined sustainable as; a. Able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed; b. Involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources; and c. Able to last or continue for a long time. Rogers, et al (2008), opine that sustainability is the term chosen to bridge the gulf between Development and Environment and that, the term originated from; forestry, fisheries and ground water disciplines; having to do with 'maximum sustainable cut,' maximum sustainable yield,' and maximum sustainable pumping rate. In Nigeria, though different strategies, including youth empowerment have been put in place over the years to sustain economic development, yet the resulting effects seem quite unsatisfactory with the current high rate of poverty and unemployment (Hart, 2010). Fasola (2019) observed that in Nigeria, we have trained artisans, but haven't created an economy for them. Likewise, McDonald, et al (2014) had earlier posited that weak leadership, social conflicts, environmental factors, discrimination against female youth, debt burden and population explosion are factors that hindered the success of Youth Empowerment Program in Nigeria. To this end, measures to improve the social and economic status of Nigerian youths have been taken through policies to addressing

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

existing inequity; thus introducing various youth empowerment programmes. Poverty reduction and economic empowerment strategies have been part of measures deployed by the Federal Government of Nigeria to attaining and achieving sustainable growth and development in Nigeria (Ayedun, et al 2011).

Using the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2014) indices, it is important to acknowledge the fact that good governance is sine qua non to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development which are; economic, social and environmental. Youth empowerment is a significant strategy deployed at national, state and local government levels to achieving and attaining success as regards sustainable development. Consequently, much emphasis is increasingly being placed on empowerment policies in line with poverty reduction and increasing wellbeing in order to better the life of the citizens at large including the disadvantaged youth. Investing early in disadvantaged youths is more beneficial, both economically and socially, Burchard,et al (2002) posited that investment in human capital stimulates national growth and development.

Furthermore, youth empowerment is indeed a key strategy to tackle the challenges created by rapidly changing social, economic, technological and demographic environments in Nigeria. Empowering young people as a promoter, has a greater effect and more long-lasting impact on the communities and national development (Garduño, et al 2013). The consequences of the long years of neglect in Nigeria has reflected in the various regional insurgences which to mention a few are; Niger Delta militant, Boko haram, and New Biafra agitation. Gribble (2010) clearly noted that ignoring the youth population and the major problems faced by this group of individuals in a nation such as Nigeria will have dire global consequences for decades. Thus, to achieve real sustainable development, the youth population must be given attention and they must be empowered in order to meet their needs responsibly, provide for their dependants and contribute their quota to national development.

**Overview of Government Youth Employment Programmes**

Over the past two decades, Nigeria has grappled with a plethora of challenges, including a significant issue of youth unemployment. This surge in unemployment has adversely affected numerous young school graduates and others within the employable age brackets that have been unable to secure job opportunities. Statistics indicate that graduate unemployment constituted approximately 32% of the total unemployed workforce between 1992 and 1997 (Ayodeji et al., 2014). In response, the government has made concerted efforts to address poverty through youth empowerment initiatives, such as the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOU-WIN), among others. These programs, supported by stakeholders like state governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies like the World Bank and the United Nations, aim to empower Nigerian youth. For instance, the YOU-WIN program focuses on creating job opportunities

for graduates by fostering entrepreneurship. Participants are tasked with developing and implementing business ideas to generate employment for themselves and other unemployed youths, whether graduates or not. By 2015, YOU-WIN was projected to create 40,000 to 50,000 new jobs and facilitate business expansion, specialization, and networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs (NPC, 2013).

Similarly, SURE-P, initiated during the previous administration, comprised various schemes like the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), and Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), aimed at providing job opportunities for tertiary graduates. Notably, GIS offered unemployed graduates one-year internships in various sectors to enhance their skills and employability. While significant resources have been allocated to these initiatives, youth unemployment persists, exacerbating poverty levels in Nigeria. Recognizing the critical role of addressing youth unemployment for national development, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari introduced the "N-Power" program. This initiative focuses on large-scale skills acquisition and development to harness Nigeria's youthful population for inclusive growth and productivity. Despite prevailing unemployment challenges, prioritising skill development presents an avenue for economic empowerment and advancement within the country.

### **The N-Power Youth Social Investment Programme**

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment programme of the National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Buhari's administration. 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. 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).

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 actualizing 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, and 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).



**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

**Theoretical Framework**

***Marxian Political Economy Theory***

The study employed the Marxian political economy approach as the theoretical framework. Political economy theory has its roots from the classical works of Marx and Engels (1962) that derived their intellectual stand from the works of great economists such as Smith (1937), Pye (1966) and Mill (1970). Marxist political economy theory is concerned with the distribution of social wealth, class relations and conflicts as well as their impacts on the development of the society from one stage to another. The Marxist political economy theory looks into the interconnection of phenomena, programmes and policies with the sole intention of discovering the class origin, character, composition and the logic of their existence and future.

Thus, this approach is relevant in the analysis of problem of poverty in Nigeria, especially as the social relations emanating from productive forces create room for class differentiation in the society which many times the youths are the major casualties. While some categories of people in the society swim in affluence, others wallow in material poverty. The applicability of Marxist/radical theory in addressing unemployment, poverty, insecurity and development in Nigeria stems from the fact that such threats of unemployment (the “reserve army of unemployed”), can only be alleviated via strict regulation of the market. One of the central elements of Marxist theory is that the primary aim of this state regulation should be to enhance the working conditions of labourers and promote higher wages among them (Adelakun,2017). It is of necessity to observe that the intervention of programme and policies of government to induce employment, reduce poverty is such that it falls within the welfarism of the Marxian political economy.

**Methods and Discussion of Results**

Research design refers to the approaches, framework or plans for carrying out research studies (Olannye 2006). This study adopted an ex post facto research design which includes a survey research for an indebt study of the Buhari administration’s youth empowerment programe, the N-Power. Descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse data in this study included: frequency distribution, simple percentages and the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) with the t-test which was used to validate the hypotheses. The P-value approach was adopted in validating or rejecting the hypothesis. The study area covers the three senatorial districts of Delta State, Nigeria. This study therefore determined its sample size through the Taro Yemane’s sample size technique, having defined the study’s population to be 2,108,056 youths for Delta State (Nigeria Data Portal. <https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/>). The Taro Yemane’s formula is given as:

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

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

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

k= constant (1)

Applying the formula at significant level of 5%

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{2108056}{1 + 2108056[0.05]^2}$$

$$[0.05]^2 = 0.0025$$

$$n = \frac{2108056}{5271.14}$$

Sample Size=399.92 Therefore sample size for the study's population is 400.

**Table 1:** Administered Questionnaire

Job Roles	Number Of Questionnaire Administered	Number Of Questionnaire Retrieved	Number Of Questionnaire Found Useful	Respondents Rate (%)
N-Teach	400	392	381	95.25
N-Tax	400	350	348	87.0
N-Agro	400	370	367	91.75
N-Health	400	300	288	72.0
Total	1600	1412	1384	86.5

**Source:** Researchers field work 2024

Table 1 reveals how the copies of questionnaire were distributed to the sampled elements of youths who participated in the N-Power scheme, and the numbers found useful/relevant/valid for the data analysis. The data analysis indicated that 1600 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents that participated according to their job roles (i.e N-Teach, N-Tax, N-Agro, N-Health) across the three senatorial districts of Delta State. 1412 copies of questionnaire were actually retrieved from the respondents. However, after editing the copies of questionnaire only 1384 copies (representing 86.5% response rate) were found useful for the data analysis in this study.

**Table 2:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
- Male	514	37.14%
- Female	870	62.86%
<b>Marital status</b>		
- Married	965	69.73%
- Single	361	26.08%

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

- Separated	58	4.19%
<b>Qualifications</b>		
- SSCE/WAEC	19	1.37%
- NCE/Diploma	391	28.25%
- HND/B.SC	744	53.76%
- PG	230	16.62%
<b>Age</b>		
- 16-20	15	1.08%
- 21-25	355	25.65%
- 26-30	532	38.44%
- 31-35	482	34.83%

**Source:** Researchers field work 2024

Table 2 above reveals the demographics analysis of gender, marital status, qualifications and age. The study indicates that female dominated the study with 870 representing 62.86% respondents while male is 514 representing 37.14%. For respondents' marital status, the study indicated that, married respondents are 965 representing 69.73% while singles are 361 respondents representing 26.08% and separated are 58 respondents representing 4.19%. For respondents' qualifications, the following data was derived: SSCE/WAEC 19 representing 1.37%, NCE/Diploma 391 representing 28.25%, HND/B.SC 744 representing 53.76% and PG 230 representing 16.62%. In age intervals the following data was derived: 16-20 with 15 representing 1.08%, 21-25 with 355 representing 25.65%, 26-30 with 532 representing 38.44% and finally 31-35 with 482 representing 34.83%.

**Test of Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the development of skills necessary for poverty alleviation

**Results**

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.1	2.7925
Variance	0.027866667	0.018291667
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	-	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	2.647560252	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.038577363	

t Critical one-tail	2.353363435
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.077154726
t Critical two-tail	3.182446305

To test this hypothesis, computed indexes of the main constructs (Effectiveness of N-Power as a tool for poverty alleviation and skill acquisition/development) were correlated, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a test of hypotheses was conducted using the Excel spreadsheet to determine the p-value. In rejecting or accepting the hypotheses, we reject the null hypotheses if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 and if the p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05 we accept. The results revealed a positive relationship since, where  $P(T \leq t)$  one-tail = 0.038577363. Thus, there is a significant relationship between that N-Power social intervention programme and youth's skill acquisition and development since P-value is less than 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted since the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between participation in the N-Power programme and the empowerment levels of youths towards poverty alleviation.

## Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	3.1	3.66
Variance	0.027867	0.053533
Observations	4	4
Pearson Correlation	0.169153	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	-4.28452	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.011682	
t Critical one-tail	2.353363	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.023363	
t Critical two-tail	3.182446	

To test this hypothesis, computed indexes of the main constructs (Effectiveness of N-Power as a tool for poverty alleviation and empowerment levels of participants) were correlated, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a test of hypotheses was conducted using the Excel spreadsheet to determine the p-value. The results revealed a positive relationship

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

since the P-value is 0.01162. There is also a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the empowerment level of youths towards poverty alleviation. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted since the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance

**Discussion**

Measures to improve the social and economic status of Nigerian youths have been taken through policies to addressing existing inequity by introducing various youth empowerment programmes which the N-Power programme is one of such. Thus, this study raised relevant hypotheses to guide the discussion of findings that is in line with the stated objectives, by first revealing that there is a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention programme and youth's skill acquisition and development since P-value is less than 0.05. This finding is in agreement with Burchard, et al. (2002) which asserts that good governance and policies are sine qua non to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development which are; economic, social and environmental. Youth skill empowerment is a significant strategy deployed at national, state and local government levels to achieving and attaining success as regards sustainable development. Consequently, much emphasis is increasingly being placed on empowerment policies in line with poverty reduction and increasing wellbeing in order to better the life of the citizens at large including the disadvantaged youth. Investing early in disadvantaged youths is more beneficial, both economically and socially; investment in human capital stimulates national growth and development. Furthermore, youth empowerment is indeed a key strategy to tackle the challenges created by rapidly changing social, economic, technological and demographic environments in Nigeria. The finding also aligned with Gribble (2010) who clearly noted that ignoring the youth population and the major problems faced by this group of individuals in a nation such as Nigeria will have dire global consequences for decades. Thus, to achieve real sustainable development, the youth population must be given attention in skills development and they must be empowered in order to meet their needs responsibly, provide for their dependents and contribute their quota to national development.

Secondly, the study revealed that there is also a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the empowerment level of youths towards poverty alleviation. This finding aligned with Odoh and Innocent (2014) who posits that, collaborating with youths and making them initiators of change require attention in their wellbeing which cuts across security, basic materials for good life, freedom of choice and actions, health services, and good social relations. However, it is also important that the provision of these essentials of wellbeing is approached from their socio-economic levels as they possessed different socio-economic backgrounds. The finding also agrees with Garduño, et al, (2013). Who posited that, reviewing the application of youth empowerment as an effective strategy for sustainable development in Nigeria attempts to identify the challenges

militating against its success and solutions to the problems of youth empowerment and sustainable development in Nigeria. Empowering young people as a promoter, has a greater effect and more long lasting impact on the communities and national development.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined the impact of N-Power Programme on Poverty Alleviation and sustainable development in Nigeria by relying on data drawn from the three senatorial districts of Delta State. The sample selection of the population definition was done using the Taro Yemane sample size technique which arrived at 400. The key instrument used to elicit data in this study was questionnaire while the descriptive and inferential statistics used to analyse data in this study are means, simple percentages as well as Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, t-test and Excel spreadsheet which was used to test the hypotheses in this study at 0.05 level of significance.

Thus, the hypotheses tested were positive and revealed that:

1. There is a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention programme and youth's skill acquisition and development since P-value is less than 0.05.
2. There is also a significant relationship between N-Power social intervention and the empowerment level of youths towards poverty alleviation.

In view of the above findings the study recommends the following:

1. Given the success rate of the N-Power scheme, government should expand the age frame work from its current 18-35 years to 18-45 years in order to accommodate more unemployed youths. This is because there are youths who are yet to assume full responsibilities of their lives due to unemployment.
2. Entrepreneurial or skills development centers should be adequately funded, equipped and be given the due attention by government as all levels in order to serve as a hub for massive employment generation.
3. The National Social Investment scheme particularly the N-Power programme should be enacted into laws to provide a legal framework for youth mainstreaming in the national development plans and strategies.
4. Policies aimed at youth empowerment should be broad-based, cutting across all sectors of the economy and the private sector should be encouraged in same regard. Other empowering agents and tiers of government participation could create a support structure on the sustainability of the empowerment initiatives so that youths can take advantage of these initiatives to empower themselves on a long-term basis.

**Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development:  
An Assessment of N-Power Programme in Delta State, Nigeria**

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