



**Impact of N-Power Scheme on Poverty Reduction in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State (2016 – 2020)**

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**Abstract**

*Over the years, poverty rate in Nigeria has surged beyond considerable point in spite of different interventions and poverty reduction strategies. It is against this background that this study examined the effectuality of the N-Power programme, a youth empowerment and poverty reduction program among its beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The study adopts human capital theory. Data were qualitatively and quantitatively collected using 320 questionnaires from a population of 1598. Out of the 320-instrument distributed, only 285 was returned and used for analysis. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the samples from the study area. Data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study reveals that most of the disengaged beneficiaries of the N-Power programme affirmed that the programme did not contribute to poverty reduction in their lives. As such, poverty and unemployment are still prevalent as majority of the N-Power beneficiaries were not adequately equipped with financial remuneration and necessary skills to develop capacity. The study suggests that subsequent poverty reduction programmes should provide fair remunerations that reflects prevailing cost of living. The study further recommended that State and Locals governments on their parts should establish sustainable anti-poverty schemes similar to the N-Power scheme in their various states and local government areas in tandem with the Federal Government anti-poverty programmes.*

**Keywords:** Poverty, N-Power, Programme, Scheme

**1. Introduction**

Poverty is a global phenomenon, which has become a major discourse in most academic and political setting as a result of its far reaching effects on majority of the world populace. Poverty, as a universal plight, for age long has its negative footprints in developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations of the world especially Nigeria. For instance, among the myriads of current problems bedeviling Nigeria such as hunger, high cost of living, insecurity, inflation, increased acts of moral decadence, rising cost of tertiary education, petroleum price increase, endemic diseases and among others, arguably, poverty and underdevelopment happen to be top of the list. Evidentially, even after six decades of gaining independence, these indexes of underdevelopment still remained a prominent feature of Nigeria's economic profile and has glaringly militated against her human, political and socio-economic development. This has unfortunately put Nigeria on the



negative sides of world poverty index, indicating that majority of the Nigerian populace especially youths are living below poverty line and lack access to basic amenities of life. However, in an attempt to reduce or eradicate poverty, successive Nigerian governments have embarked on constituting and implementing series of social welfare and poverty reduction programmes. In spite of these poverty-reduction strategies and efforts devoted towards poverty alleviation, these programmes have not actually impacted positively on the people, in the process, the country is sliding deeper into the pit of economic backwardness and poverty. Substantiating this, according to National Bureau of Statistic report (2019), 83 million Nigerians lived in poverty as of 2019. The NBS report (2022), further posited that the number of Nigerians living in poverty as of 2022 stands at over 133 million. This shows increase in poverty level over the years in spite of the existence of poverty reduction programmes. Another report from UNDP (2023) asserted that in Nigeria, over 160 million people lived in poverty between 2020 and 2023. This figure tends to increase and worsen as the population increases geometrically in years to come.

Without doubt, the political desire to reduce poverty has been a topmost agenda of previous governments and particularly the current President Muhammadu Buhari led government with vast amount of financial capital and laudable programmes such as The N-Power, The Conditional Cash Transfer Program (CCT), The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP), The Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSF); all established to address poverty among Nigerian youths. However, poverty in Nigeria persists. It shows that these anti-poverty programmes in Nigeria have now become poverty inducing programmes with incidence of poverty levels escalating (Omidiji, 2023). The persistence of poverty in the nation, therefore, elicits concerns over the policies being pursued in its alleviation. Specifically, the N-Power scheme is a poverty reduction programme under The Social Investment Programme designed to empower young Nigerians through skills acquisition with the intent of developing human capacity and reducing poverty in Nigeria.

For ages, it is a known factuality that millions of Nigerians are currently living in abject poverty. The National Bureau of Statistic reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate stands at 33.3 per cent in the fourth quarter 2020 compared to 27.1 it recorded in second quarter 2020. This translated to 23.19 million unemployed people in Nigeria, further revealing that the most adversely affected are mainly youths with over 37 per cent of Nigerian youths currently unemployed (Punch Newspaper, 2021). In response to this current poverty quagmire, the President Buhari led government introduced N-Power programmes, to help alleviate poverty, develop human capacity and improve the social welfare of Nigerians, especially the youths.

In spite of the different interventionist policies such as N-Power as well as other social welfare and poverty reduction programmes, poverty is still on the upswing. This is evidential in the data released by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2020) stating that, in 2020, despite the plethora of poverty reduction programmes in place, 40% or 83 million Nigerians are living in poverty. The World Bank further projected the number of Nigerians living in poverty to hit 95.1 million in 2022 (The Premium Times, 2022), which



shows an increase in poverty level when compared with the previous years. In lieu of this, it is strongly perceived in some quarters that the N-Power program has not lived up to the purpose of its establishment. Hence, the need to probe into the viability of the N-Power scheme in reducing the poverty index in Nigeria. This study seeks to fill the lacuna created by the previous researches by critically investigating the role of N-Power programme in reducing poverty in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State from income cum human welfare and geographical perspective as most of the previous studies on N-Power focuses on poverty reduction in the southern and northern region of the country, neglecting the Middle Belt region especially Niger state which happens to be the poorest in the region (The Premium Times, 2020). The objective of the study is to evaluate the efficacy of the N-Power programme on the study area as relating to reduction of poverty. Specifically, the research intends to determine the extent to which the N-Power programme has contributed to poverty reduction.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *Concept of Poverty*

Over the years, plethora of scholars who have written extensively and immensely on the concept of poverty and have given their idiosyncratic views on how poverty is to be expounded owing to the fact that from individual experiences, poverty means different things to different people. This was affirmed by Kunle (2008) when he opined that, poverty has become a major problem in Africa, and particularly, this has engaged the attention of the international community, including African scholars. Scholars have conceptualized poverty from divergent perspectives such as religious, economic, social, and political (Jebbin & Osu, 2014). This is because the different nature of poverty been experienced by people mirrors the difficulty in conceptualizing poverty. This has led to no uniform international standard definition of poverty. This proves that poverty is a universal human dilemma. Hence, this work will be conceptualizing poverty from the perspective of the following: Income Poverty, Exclusion Poverty, and Psychology Poverty.

The first conceptualization of poverty is based on income and human welfare. This simply depicts poverty as a situation where most individuals have insufficient financial resources to meet or purchase basic necessities for a wholesome life. This concept of poverty covers monetary aspect. Substantiating this, Chen (2023) posited poverty to be a state or condition in which people lack the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. On key facts and figures on poverty, World Bank Global Monitoring Report (2015) stated explicitly 900 million of the world population live in dire poverty based on an income poverty line of \$1.90 a day in 2015. However, this definition of poverty is economically oriented and not encompassing as poverty transcends beyond being an economic condition but a product or result of multiple factors. Corroborating this, Imam in Goga (2013) observed that poverty denotes more than a condition of materials searching. Coupled with the reality that basic needs of people differ from place to place and time to time, and this need cannot be met through income based approach or measures.



The second conceptualization of poverty is based on exclusion. It is the inability to effectively participate in the society one lives in as a result of political setting, one's inadequacies, status, identity and background. Here, people are left out of what will bring out or result in their all-round wellbeing. Borja & Miguel (2022) asserts that poverty as exclusion involves the denial of resources, rights, goods, and services. Here, poverty is man-made as it is a result of man's actions through the use of societal structure, culture, institution or power to exclude people. Substantiating this, Levitas *et al* (2007) posits that poverty in form of social exclusion involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the ability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. Furthermore, people live in poverty because they are excluded from what they are entitled to benefit from as result of their religion, skin color, gender, tribe, race, economic status, age, physical disability. In an atmosphere of exclusion, the opinion, voice, and dignity of an individual is sidelined. In this light, once again, poverty connotes discrimination. In summary, this conceptualization of poverty depicts that people's opportunity, rights and entitlements to attain or live a good life is being denied.

The third conceptualization of poverty is based on psychology. Poverty is a psychological state. It is the state of the mind. James (2022) sees it as "poverty mentality". It is the way an individual thinks that reflects the poverty state of such an individual. This individual lacks the intelligence, zeal, vision and self-worth to live a good life. According to Boyden *et al* (2003), poverty is a mental attitude. If an individual adjudges him or herself to be destitute or possess behaviors and mindset that further sustain poverty, it is apparent such an individual will be poverty stricken throughout his or her life. This further proves that poverty is a condition of the mind that translate into reality. In the words of Ben Carson in an interview on SiriusXM Radio with Armstrong Williams, cited in Mazelis (2017), he said:

*"Poverty to a large extent is also a state of the mind. You take somebody that has the right mindset, you can take everything from them and put them on the street, and I guarantee in a little while they'll be back up there. And you can take somebody with the wrong mindset, you can give them the world, they will work their way right down to the bottom".*

Under this conceptualization, poverty is not a lack of money or resources to fulfil one's needs but a lack of a positive mindset. Simply put, from the subsequent review of literatures on conceptualizing poverty, four things are affirmative about poverty: poverty is ubiquitous; poverty is an age long universal conundrum; poverty is a difficult term to accurately explain; and poverty is a difficult situation to be in. (Omidiji, 2023).

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

The word "N-Power" is a contraction of Nigerian Federal Government Programme to empower youth. It is program established by the President Buhari led Federal Government to address youth unemployment, reduce poverty and improve human and social development. Specifically, it is a job creation and empowerment program aimed at providing temporary employment opportunities for the youths (Adedeji, Joseph & James,



2020). The core aims of establishing this program was to create an entrepreneurial culture and instill relevant work skills among Nigerian youths between the age of 18 – 35 with the end goals of improving the livelihoods of unemployed Nigerian youths with the end goal of promoting human capacity, entrepreneurial culture, and improving public service.

Participants in the scheme are divided into two categories: The Graduate Scheme and Non-Graduate Scheme. Selection of participants or beneficiaries into any of the above categories of N-power is based on the applicant interest and meeting the required qualifications. Participants in any of the scheme who are expected to undertake certain key responsibilities in their state of residence are also provided with ICT devices to enhance their productivity at different places of assignment. Also, participants in the N-Power are expected to be trained for the period of 2 years after which they are disengaged from the program to set up themselves for self-reliance. Under the Graduate Scheme, this category consists of N-Power Agro: this compartment of N-Power will empower beneficiaries who are agricultural graduates with field experience in fish farming, livestock farming, and crop farming. This compartment will also provide consultative services to farmers. This will help ensure agricultural development and diversification of the economy (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). N-Power Teach: this compartment of N-Power will aid in developing the capacity and skill of individuals to become competent teachers and at the same time address the shortage of teachers in public schools at basic education level (Primary and secondary schools), thereby improving the standard of the educational sector in Nigeria. (N-Power Information guide, 2017).

N-Power Health: beneficiaries under this compartment of N-Power are graduates of medical related courses. Under the supervision of qualified personnel, they are tasked with the responsibilities of providing medical services to vulnerable individuals living in their immediate community. The end goal is to strengthen public health system in Nigeria (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). N-Power Tax: beneficiaries under this compartment are graduates of information studies and computer science, tasked with the responsibility of educating the citizens on the importance of tax compliance and help to boost revenue from non-compliant taxpayers (N-Power Information guide, 2017). The N-Power Non-Graduate category was created to empower youths without graduate qualification with special training for the purpose of skills development and vocational empowerment. According to Akujuru and Enyioko (2019), the programme offers training and certification programme for all successful candidates. This category consists of the following compartments: N-Power Build: this compartment is a platform created to build a highly skill workforce with civil divisions in the area of building services, construction, environment services, utilities, automotive, as well as aluminum and gas (Lamidi & Igbokwe, 2021). These include service providers, artisans, and technicians. N-Power Knowledge: this is a compartment of the Non-Graduate category that partners with innovation hubs in the country with beneficiaries working as entrepreneurs, freelancers, and employees with the end aim of diversifying to a knowledge economy



Simply put, from the foregoing, large-scale skill development is the main policy thrust of the N-Power Programme (Obadan, 2017). Through a scheme such as N-Power that emphasize much on entrepreneurship, it is a process that will create and facilitate job creation for the qualified unemployed which in turn will positively impact the living standard of the people through increased income generation and distribution, thereby plummeting the dreadful influence of poverty on the citizens. This substantiate the end-goal of federal government that beneficiaries of the scheme will grow into being self-reliant and further create employment opportunities for others thereby reducing unemployment.

#### *Empirical Studies*

Review of literature revealed empirical evidence on the impact and effectiveness of the N-power programme in Nigeria. For instance, most of the previous researches carried out on the effectiveness of the programme in combatting poverty proves that the programme was less effective in abating it. Francisca and Christopher (2022) conducted a study on “N-Power Programmes and Poverty Reduction in Enugu State. The study reveals that majority of the participants in the scheme indicated that the N-Power scheme has not significantly reduced their poverty level as majority of the participant were unable to pay their hospital bills with N-Power programme stipends. Also, large percentage of the beneficiaries indicated that they have not been empowered through skill development. Hence, the beneficiaries do not possess the capacity and resources required for their wholesome living. This attest to the fact that the N-Power programme failed in the aspect of building human capacity. In addition, that there are about 2 million unemployed youths in Enugu State and only about 16,542 youths benefitted, which means that, majority of the youths remains in perpetual poverty (Francisca & Christopher 2022). In another study conducted by Enyioko (2020), on the study reveals that the scheme however improved human capacity for the youths in Rivers State but highlighted some major factors that affected the implementation of scheme towards alleviating poverty in Rivers State. These factors are: irregularity of stipends to beneficiaries, inadequate information, submission of wrong details such as bank verification number, influence of politicians, distance between beneficiaries’ place of residence and place of primary assignment. Furthermore, Obukohwo and Patricia (2020) in their study in Delta State acknowledged that albeit the scheme was formulated to enhance the capacities of it beneficiaries, but majority of the sample population indicated that the scheme has not improved their chances of becoming self-reliant due to inadequate training which would have made them more beneficial to the society in the future.

Umearoukwu and Ilias (2022) in their paper observed that the N-Power scheme is a well-designed scheme targeted at combatting poverty but during the course of implementation the scheme, the scheme was marred with challenges such as influence of politician in the scheme, submission of wrong and inadequate information delayed payment of stipends, which in turn affected the effectiveness of the scheme in empowering youths in the state. However, Odey & Sambe (2019) in their work indicated that N-Power scheme had





significant contribution in the area of empowering youths in achieving self-sufficiency, financial stability, skill expertise and poverty reduction.

#### *Theoretical Framework.*

The theoretical framework utilized in the study is anchored on the Human Capital Theory. The first writings on human capital theory comes from a Scottish economist, Adam Smith. Adam Smith introduced this theory in the 18th century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the 1960s and 1970, Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker later introduced more definite conceptualization of the Human Capital Theory. In the early 1960, The Human Capital Theory set the framework of government policies as it significantly became the most influential economic theory of Western education (Patrick, 2015).

Becker (1962) and Rosen (1983) in their modern conceptualization of the human capital theory, implied that each worker possesses skills or talents. To enhance or accumulate such talent, training and education is essential. Hence, managers must be able to teach, train, and lead their employees. On the account of the above, the human capital theory posits that human can increase their output through skills training and greater education. In other words, Human capital is the building of capacity, skills and knowledge, or attributes, talents, and habits embodied within an individual and needed to perform labor and produce economic value. According to this theory, sufficient investment in people will lead to socio economic growth. For instance, several nations provide their citizens with different kind of empowerment in form of education because they recognize that a better trained cum educated population tends to be innovative, productive and earn more, thereby militating and stimulating development. In summary, the human capital theory emphasizes the need for policy makers to devote considerable resources to the building of human capacity with development as the end goal.

### **3. Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was the survey design. Bida is a Local Government Area located in Niger State, North Central, Nigeria. Bida occupies an area of 51 square kilometers with population of 318,300 (NPC 2016 estimates). Bida is predominately occupied by the Nupe tribe. It shares borders with other towns like Badeggi, Mokwa, and Lavun, among others. Significant land marks in Bida includes: Federal Medical Center, Federal Polytechnic, Federal Government Girls College, Emir Palace and Round About Old Market Road. Population of the study comprised all Batch A and Batch B beneficiaries of N-Power programme in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State. Batch A and B beneficiaries were selected in order to obtain accurate, reliable and comprehensive data for the study and as well achieve the generalizable of the study. There were 863 beneficiaries in Batch A, and 735 beneficiaries in Batch B, totaling 1598 beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area as provided by the National Orientation Agency Bida Local Area office. 1,598 comprised the population for the study.

This study gathered its data from two main sources, namely primary and secondary. The primary data consisted of responses that was obtained from respondents through a well-structured questionnaire (N-Power beneficiaries, Batch A and B) on the field. On the other



hand, this work utilized written materials of the library such as textbooks, journals, internet materials and newspapers as secondary source of data. This study determined its sample size through the Yamane formula. A total of 320 sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's statistical formula from a population of 1,598. The study adopted the use of purposive sampling technique where the researcher chose the respondents at his own discretion from the sampling frame. Here, the researcher relied on his own judgement in choosing the members (respondents) of the population who participated in the study.

Elicited data were analyzed through descriptive techniques (frequencies and percentages) and analytical tables. Thus percentages were used to determine frequency of opinion of the respondent. Equally, T-Test was used as a statistical method deployed for this study, to test the hypotheses in this study.

#### **4. Result**

##### *Data Presentation and Analysis*

Table 1: Questionnaires Returned Analysis

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administered	285	89.1
Not administered	35	10.9
Total (distributed)	320	100

*Source: Field Survey 2023.*

From the table above, finding reveals that 320 questionnaires were distributed among N-Power beneficiaries. Out of these questionnaires administered, 285 (89.1%) were returned. This means that 35 (10.9%) questionnaires, out of 320 questionnaires distributed, were completely discarded from the analysis as a result of no or partial response to the questionnaires administered. Only 285 completed questionnaires were the base for computing and interpreting the results. Some fundamental questions as presented in the subsequent tables below were administered and frequencies of responses scored in the scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) were collated to understand the efficacy of poverty reduction programme on human and national development in Nigeria.

The result depicted in Table 2 shows the data collected from the demographic characteristic of the respondents such as sex, age range, marital status, educational qualification, N-Power compartment, years of engagement working experience, religion and the status of the respondents, the table indicated that 177 respondents representing 62.1% of the total population are male while 108 respondents which represent 37.9% of the respondents are female. Therefore, it could be inferred that majority of the respondents are male. The implication of this is that there were more male beneficiaries than female beneficiaries, denoting the males are more actively involved in the labor force than women in the scheme in Bida Local Government Area. It was also revealed from the age distribution that 21 respondents, indicating 7.3% are within the age of 22-27 years, 175 respondents with a proportion of 61.4% of the total respondents fall within the age of 28-35 years, 89 respondents with a value of 31.3% of the total population are within the age of 35 years and





above. It is however revealed that a largest proportion of the respondents fall within the age of 28 – 35 years, this implies that most of the beneficiaries are still in the youth age bracket.

Table 2.Demographic Data

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	177	62.1%
Female	108	37.9%
Age Range		
22-27 years	21	7.3%
28-35 years	175	61.4%
35-40 years	89	31.3%
Marital Status		
Single	132	46.3%
Married	144	50.5%
Divorce	9	3.2%
Educational Qualification		
SSCE	15	5.3%
NCE	38	13.3%
HND	106	37.2%
B.Sc.	111	39%
M.Sc.	15	5.2%
N-Power Compartment		
N-Power Agro	16	5.6%
N-Power Health	50	17.5%
N-Power Teach	176	61.8%
N-Power Tax	28	9.8%
N-Power Knowledge	8	2.8%
N-Power Build	7	2.5%
Years of Engagement		
1 – 2	183	64.2%
3 – 4	102	35.8%
Total	285	100

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

The marital status of the respondents reveals that 132 are single with percentage of 46.3% of the total population, 144 respondents are married with a value of 50.5% while 9 respondents are divorced representing 3.2% of the total population. This implies that most of the N-Power beneficiaries have a family they are fending for. The educational qualification of the respondents reveals that 15 respondents are SSCE holder's representing the 5.3% of the total population. 28 respondents are NCE holder with a value of 13.3%. 106 respondents have HND with a percentage of 37.2% of the total population, 111



respondents are B.Sc. holder with a value of 39%, 15 respondents which represent 20% of the total respondents are M.Sc. holder. With this result it could be inferred that a large proportion of the respondents are HND and B.Sc. holder's which indicate a higher percentage, denoting they are quite educated, which means they are capable of supplying adequate and reliable information. N-Power compartments of the respondents indicated that 15 respondents which represent 5.6% of the total respondents were in N-Power Agro. 50 respondents which represent 17.5% of the total respondents were in N-Power Health. 176 respondents which represent 61.8% of the total respondents were in N-Power Teach. 28 respondents which represent 9.8% of the total respondents were in N-Power Tax. 8 respondents which represent 2.8% of the total respondents were in N-Power Knowledge. 7 respondents which represent 2.5% of the total respondents were in N-Power Build. This implies that significant proportion of the beneficiaries in the N-Power scheme falls into the N-Teach category. The years of engagement of the respondents in the N-Power scheme indicated that 183 respondents representing 62.2% of the respondents were engaged maximally for 2 years while 102 respondents which represent 35.8% were engaged within 3-4 years. This reveals that the respondents who were engaged maximally for 2 years were Batch B N-Power beneficiaries while respondents who were engaged maximally for 3-4 years were Batch A N-Power beneficiaries.

Table 3: Response rate on how N-Power has reduced poverty among her beneficiaries.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	18	6.3%
Agree	54	18.9%
Disagree	96	33.7%
Strong Disagree	117	41.1%
Total	285	100

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

Table 3 presented the contribution of N-Power to poverty reduction among N-Power beneficiaries in the study area. Out of the 285 beneficiaries, 213 (78.8%, a combination of strongly disagree and disagree) respondents indicated that the programme did not contribute to poverty reduction in their lives, connoting in spite of their participation, the activities of the scheme, it had no meaningful improvement on their finances and physical wellbeing, while 72 (25.2%, a combination of strongly agree and agree) respondents indicated that the programme contributed to the reduction of poverty in their lives connoting the stipend received and experience gained improved the finances and physical wellbeing of the beneficiaries.



Table 4: Response rate on how N-Power has improved the living standard among the beneficiaries.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	36	12.6%
Agree	77	27%
Disagree	104	36.5%
Strong Disagree	68	23.9%
Total	285	100

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4 shows the response rate on how N-Power has improved the living standard among the beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area. Findings reveal that 172 (60.4%, a combination of strongly disagree and disagree) respondents, constituting the majority, indicated that the programme has not improved their standard of living connoting that the benefits derived from the programme did not contribute to an improved way of living in terms of their material wellbeing and comfort during and after their engagement in the scheme, while 113 (39.6%, a combination of strongly agree and agree) respondents indicated that the programme had improved their standard of living denoting the welfare and material wellbeing got better as a result of the benefits derived from the programme.

Table 5: Response rate N-Power stipend structure is enough to sustain beneficiary's personal and family needs.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	31	10.9%
Agree	63	22.1%
Disagree	125	43.9%
Strong Disagree	68	23.1%
Total	285	100

Sources: Field Survey (2023)

Table 5 shows the response rate on if N-Power stipend structure is enough to sustain beneficiary's personal and family needs. Finding reveals that 191 (67.9%, a combination of strongly disagree and disagree) respondents indicated that the monthly stipend paid is not adequate to cater for personal need connoting the income to be insufficient to meet or purchase necessities of life required for daily living while 94 (33%, a combination of strongly agree and agree) respondents indicated that the stipend was enough to cater for their immediate personal and family needs.

To achieve the objective of the study, the responses were recoded to give a numeric value and it was coded from 1 to 4, with strongly disagree SD scaled to 1, Disagree (D) scaled to 2, agree (A) was scaled to 3 while strongly agree (SA) was scaled to 4. The responses to these questions were considered using the t-test and correlation ( $P>99$ ) to compare the effect of N-Power on the poverty reduction in the community.



Table 6: Result of T-test

Research questions	Recoded response Mean $\pm$ Sd	SD	Percentage (%) spread			
			D	A	SA	
N-Power has reduced poverty among beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area.	1.91 $\pm$ 0.920	41.1	33.7	18.9	6.3	
N-Power has improved the living standard among the beneficiaries in Bida Local Government Area.	2.28 $\pm$ 0.968	23.9	36.5	27.0	12.6	
N-Power stipend structure is enough to sustain beneficiary's personal and family needs.	2.21 $\pm$ 0.921	23.2	43.9	22.1	10.9	

Sources: Author's Computation

It was shown that there is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction and the poverty as a result of N-Power and that there is significant improvement in the living conditions of the beneficiaries. There is positive correlation ( $P > 99$ ) between reduction of poverty, improved standard of living and the stipend given to beneficiaries. The analysis shows that the stipend is significantly ( $p > 0.05$ ) enough for the maintenance of the family of the beneficiary thereby having significant effect of the improvement of the living condition of beneficiaries according to the statistical analysis. With the effect of the indices of poverty reduction which include stipend that is enough for the family and improved living condition and get a reduction of poverty, 41.1% of the respondents believe that there is no poverty reduction as a result of N-Power while 33.7% believe that poverty have reduced but 18.9% agreed that N-Power was able to reduce poverty while 6.3% strongly agreed that N-Power is able to reduce poverty in Bida local government of Niger state. 3.9% of respondent strongly disagree there is improved living condition as a result of N-Power while 36.5% disagree that N-Power has improved their living condition 27.0% agreed that N-Power has improved their living condition while 12.6% strongly agreed that N-Power has improved their living conditions and their general standard of living. 23.2% strongly disagree that the stipend paid by N-Power was enough for a decent living while 43.9% disagree that N-Power stipend is enough for a decent living, 22.1% agreed that the stipend paid by N-Power is enough for decent living while just 10.9% strongly agree that the N-Power stipend is good enough for decent living.

#### Discussion of Findings

In answering the study objective, according to the data from Table 3, 4 and 5, most of the respondents indicated that the N-Power programme did not contribute to poverty reduction in their lives. This shows that most beneficiaries of N-Power are still living in poverty denoting their engagement in the scheme did not help in reducing poverty experienced by these beneficiaries. Further, most of the beneficiaries indicated that their standard of living is low. This reveals that the N-Power scheme did not improve the quality of life experienced by the beneficiaries. In addition, large number of the respondents indicated that the monthly stipend paid is not adequate to cater for personal needs signifying the



beneficiaries received insignificant numeration that is inconsequential in helping them settling bills and meeting their personal and family needs.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study examined the impact of the N-Power programme on reduction of poverty in Bida Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the N-Power programme to a reasonable extent in spite of having a well-crafted design failed to reduce poverty as the quality of life and living standard of the beneficiaries did not improve.

Many of past and present poverty reduction programs were introduced by the Federal Government. It is also necessary for state and local governments to take up the responsibility of establishing sustainable anti-poverty programmes. Importantly, the federal, state and local government should adopt uniform poverty reduction programmes. The state and local governments should formulate poverty reduction programmes similar to the N-Power scheme in their various states and local governments respectively. This will ensure massive human capacity building and sufficient and effective participation of the grassroots people as they are the mostly affected by poverty. Hence, the combination of federal, state and local government intervention will help facilitate in accommodating an increased number of beneficiaries, thereby curbing poverty to the minimum. Subsequent poverty reduction programmes should take into consideration the nature of poverty associated with Nigerians when formulating anti-poverty programmes. The nature of poverty that is peculiar to most Nigerians living in poverty is a psychological one. This is also known as poverty mentality where most Nigerians living in poverty possess beliefs and behavior that perpetually keeps them in poverty regardless of how effective government anti-poverty programmes are. Hence, there is need for government to introduce value orientation programmes when implementing anti-poverty programmes for maximal impact. Subsequent poverty reduction programmes should provide remuneration that commensurate with the prevailing cost of living in the country. For instance, a fairly remunerated anti-poverty scheme will contribute greatly in assisting beneficiaries possess sufficient financial resources that will in turn significantly have impact on the quality of lives of those living in poverty especially when most Nigerians fall into this category of income poverty.

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