



Effect of Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) in addressing youth unemployment in Taraba state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted on effect of Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) in addressing youth unemployment in Taraba State Nigeria the specific objectives were to; describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the beneficiaries; determine the extent in which the scheme empower the youth and identify constraints faced by the youth in the course of the scheme in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selection of eighty (80) respondents from the study area. Primary data were obtained through the use of structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency, percentage and likert type scale were used to analyze objectives i, ii and iii respectively. The result on socio-economic characteristics of the respondents revealed that the average age of the respondents were 30years with standard deviation of 5.0. Majority 65.2% of them were male, while 34.8% were female; most 65.2% of the respondents were married, while 34.8% was single. The mean household size of the respondents was 6 persons with standard deviation of 1.79. Majority 78.8% attained one form of education or the order. Skills/vocational training; 50% Hairdressing/barbering, 22.5% Tailoring, fabricating 20% and computer operators 7.5%. The minimum income was N200, 000 while maximum income was N350, 000 per annual. The findings indicated that the scheme had impacted positively in the livelihood of the beneficiaries in the study area. It also indicated that inadequate funding; wrong selection of beneficiaries and no follow up after training of beneficiaries were the majors' constraint faced by the beneficiaries in the study area. Recommendations include; the government should provide adequate funding for the scheme to achieve its predetermined goals and objectives, the government should select the targeted population for the scheme that is the youth between the ages of 18-35 years old base on the objective of the scheme and facilitators should endeavor to follow up the participants to observe whether the items given to them have been put to use appropriately or not and also proffered solution to areas of challenges.

Keywords: effect, Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), unemployment

1. Introduction

Nigeria is referring as the most populated black nation in Africa continent with an estimated population of 225,889,621 million people based on world meters elaboration of the latest United Nation Data (UND, 2023). The country population is equivalent to 2.78% of the total world population and rank the number 6 in the list of countries by population (UND, 2023) When compared to other African nations, the share of youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) stood at 26.2 per cent in 2019 (ILO Youth Country Brief (Nigeria), 2023) ^[4]. Young people who spend much time not in employment, education, or training tend to experience varying degrees of social and economic marginalization and are more likely to be left behind.

The country is blessed with abundant human and material resources capable of transforming the country's economy and to improve the living condition of its citizens in all sectors like; oil, agriculture, gold, coal, and abundant resilient human capital among others (Adegami & Uche, 2016; Chindo, Naibbi, & Abdullahi, 2014) ^[2, 3]. Despite all these resources, statistics indicated that since the attainment of its political independence, unemployment in the country has been on the increase with the consequent rise in the population (Abdussalam, 2015) ^[1].

The Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan 2021-2024 report identifies youth as an important factor in economic

growth and national development. According to the report, the country's ageing population is one of the "Development Constraints" in the agricultural sector, which accounts for 24% of Nigeria's GDP. In other words, to sustain economic growth through the agriculture sector, youth must be involved. In line with the National Youth Policy (NYP) in Nigeria, the term "youth" refers to people between the ages of 15 and 29. The World Health Organization (2020) defines youth as anyone 15 to 34 years old. The World Health Organization's age bracket for youth is adopted for this study to reflect the distinctiveness of Nigerian society. National Youth Survey (2020) in its report breaks the unemployment rate down according to the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Accordingly, "(26.3 percent) of youth in North West could not secure job followed by South West (23.4 percent) while North-East and South-South (14.2 percent) and (14 percent) respectively could not secure job. In the same vein, Youths in South East (12.5 percent) and North Central (9.5 percent) were unemployed." In Nigeria, about 53.40% of youths are unemployed according to youth unemployment rates released by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2022.

However, the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development's report, Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan 2021-24, published in August 2021, confirms that unemployment rates are rising. "As of 2020 (Q2), youth unemployment (15 - 34 years old) stood at 35%," the report

states. A further 28% of young people in the labour force were considered underemployed (working 20 - 39 hours a week), and 37% were working full time (40 or more hours per week)" (Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan, 2021) [9].

Since the return of Nigeria to civilian rule in 1999 after sixteen years of military dictatorship, numerous initiatives, policies, and programs have been implemented by the government at all levels, particularly the Federal government, to empower the teeming Nigerian youth. These include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Subsidy Readjustment and Investment Programme (SURE-P), You-Win, and the National Social Investment Program.

On his assumption of office in 2015, former President Muhammadu Buhari promised to create jobs through youth empowerment initiatives. The former president implemented the Presidential Youth Empowerment Scheme (P-YES) to fulfill his promise. Before his election in 2015, the youth unemployment rate had become a major threat to Nigeria's social and economic development. Many young Nigerians are unemployed despite having a degree or its equivalent. The number of unemployed graduates is higher than ever, and many have entered the dreaded professions of robbery, kidnapping, and money rituals. Indeed, the trend was so concerning that the World Bank conducted a population and unemployment rate analysis in 2020 and concluded that Nigeria's population at the time stood at 206,139,587, with roughly 60% of the population being young, energetic working-age people capable of growing the country's economy.

The programs or scheme was flag off in Taraba state during formal Governor Darius Ishaku Dickson in 2018 the broad objective of the scheme is to trained the youths by empowering them socially, and economically in order to become self-reliance and to enhance their income for economic productive. The Youth Empowerment Scheme is a form of human development intervention that offers a wide range of vocational skills training opportunities for the youths due to their socio-economic situation in the society (Kuti, 2006) [5]. Some of the benefits and activities under the YES programme in Taraba State include provision of training skill, working tools, vocational job and micro-credits for self-reliance, self-actualization and employment opportunity. Despite the various Government interventions, initiative and policies, the rate of unemployment is increasing, however, the study is imperative to assess the effect of Youth Empowerment Scheme in addressing youth unemployment in Taraba State. The specify objective of the study were to;

- Describe the socio-economic Characteristics of the beneficiaries
- Determine the extent in which the scheme empower the youth and
- Identify constraints faced by the youth in the course of the scheme.

2. Methodology

The study area

The study was conducted in Taraba State, Nigeria. Taraba State is located at the north eastern part of Nigeria. It lies between

latitude 8° 00' and 0° 00' north of the equator and longitude 10° 30' and 10° 500' east of the Greenwich meridian The state shares boundaries with Bauchi and Gombe states in the north, Adamawa state in the east, and the Cameroon Republic in the south. The state is bounded along its western side by Plateau, Nassarawa and Benue states. The state has a land area of 58,795 km² with a population of about 3,609,800 million people (projected at 2.9% from the 2006-2022 National Population Census). It is divided into sixteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) and three senatorial districts (Taraba north, central and south). The state has an average annual rainfall of 100.64mm with a temperature of about 30°C – 40°C. It is characterized by dry and rainy season common to tropical region. Taraba State is regarded as Nature's Gift to the Nation because of its abundant natural resource endowment. The state is well endowed with abundant solid mineral resources, surface water resources, arable and grazing land. The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. The state is blessed with good climate and vegetation types that cut across the State, ranging from a more humid climate to a forest vegetation in the south to a more seasonal wet and dry climate and savanna vegetation in the north. These favours the growth of cereals crops like rice, maize, millet, sorghum and guinea corn while tree crops such as palm oil, banana/plantain and orange. Root crops grown in the state include cassava, potato and yam, while Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea and groundnuts. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along the Benue and Taraba river valleys (Oruonye and Abbas, 2011) [10].

Method of data collection

Data for this study was collected from primary source using structured questionnaire administered.

Sampling procedure and sample size

The population of study comprises of the beneficiaries of YES in Taraba State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for selection of respondents. In first stage, five (5) Local Government Area were been randomly selected. This includes; Ardo- kola, Bali, Jalingo, Takum and Wukari LGA. Second stage, twenty (20) respondents were been randomly selected from each LGA to give a total of one hundred (100) respondents out of it only 80 were properly filled and retrieved as a sample size of for the study.

Method of data analysis

The study employed descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, likert scale and mean we're been used to analyses objective i, ii, and iii respectively.

3. Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondent

The result in Table 1: shows that the average age of the respondents was 30 years with standard deviation of 5. This indicates that the respondents were young, who were at their youthful age which is in line with the aims and objectives of

YES which is youths inclusive. Age has been found to determine how active and productive the individual would be, which implies that majority of the beneficiaries in the studied area are energetic and still able to do manual work. This finding is in collaboration with that of Inyang *et al.* (2021) who reported that majority 78.9% of the beneficiaries were youth. Majority 65.2% of the respondents were male, while 34.8% were female. This implies that male were the dominant participants than female in the YES in the study area. This finding disagreed with that of Inyang *et al.* (2021) who reported that female was dominate in the YES than their counterpart. Most 65.2% of the respondents were married, while 34.8% was single. This indicates that most of the beneficiaries were married; they have responsibilities to shoulder as a married couple. This finding agreed with that of Inyang *et al.* (2021) who reported that majorities 51.7% were married and therefore they have to provide their family needs. The mean household size of the respondents was 6 persons with standard deviation of 1.79. This is an indication the households number was high then the parent have to be engage in scheme like this in order to take care of their children. The beneficiaries in the scheme were reasonably educated with 53.8%, 5% and 20% who attained secondary, tertiary and primary education while 21.3 % didn't attain any formal education. This implies that most 78.8% of the respondents attained one form of education or the other. The finding of this study affirmed with that of Gabriel *et al.* (2020) who reported that majority 97.2% of the beneficiaries were educated which enable them to understand and accepted the empowerment scheme. The beneficiaries were involved in the following skills hair dressing/barbering 50%, tailoring 22.5%, Fabricating 20% and computer operators 7.5%. This indicated that all the beneficiaries of the YES participated on one skill or the other. The mean annual income of the respondents was 29,167.00 with standard deviation of 79644.78. The minimum income was N200, 000 while maximum income was N350, 000 per annual. This is an indication that the schemes had impacted positively in the livelihood of the beneficiaries, in term of increase in income of the beneficiaries and make them to be productive and self-reliance in the study area.

The extent in which the scheme empowered the youth

The result of the study (Table 4.2) shows the distribution of mean and standard deviations the extent in which the scheme empowered the youth. This include: Increase the income of

beneficiaries mean score (MS) of 3.6, standard deviation (S.D) of 0.63, Increase the assets of beneficiaries MS=3.43 S.D=0.82, Improved their standard of living MS=3.33 S.D=0.50, Empowering Farmers with knowledge and skills to make them expect on their field MS=2.76 S.D=1.05. This indicated that the scheme had positively impacted the livelihood of the beneficiaries because the means were > 2.5 while Enable them to be self-reliance MS=2.25 S.D=1.19 and Enable them to be employers of labour MS=1.59 SD=0.71 revealed that the scheme had negative impact on the beneficiaries because the means were < 2.5. The data shows that beneficiaries expressed positive impact toward (4) statements out of (6) statements and negative impact toward (2) statements. These findings indicated that the scheme had impacted positively in the livelihood of the beneficiaries. The finding of this study concurred with that of Gabriel *et al.* (2020), they reported that most 90% of participants attested that the scheme impacted positively on the livelihood of the beneficiaries in the study area.

Constraints faced by the youth in the course of the scheme

The major constraints faced by youth in the scheme were presented in Table 3 Constraints encountered by the respondents were ranked according to their relative severity. The finding revealed that Inadequate funding had mean of 3.9 with standard deviation of 0.0337526, Wrong selection of beneficiaries had mean of 3.79 with standard deviation of 0.049343, No follow up after training of the beneficiaries had mean of 3.61 with standard deviation of 0.0824731, Lack of qualified and experience trainers had mean of 2.93 with standard deviation of 0.0770808, Inadequate provision of working materials had mean of 2.78 with standard deviation of 0.1179667 and Lack of soft loan. This implies that inadequate funding; wrong selection of beneficiaries and no follow up after training of beneficiaries were the majors' constraint faced by the beneficiaries in the study area. This finding agreed with that of Gabriel *et al.* (2020) reported the respondents' opinion regarding challenges of the programs. 36.9% of them opined 'inadequate funding'; 26.8% opined that shortage of qualified and experienced trainers presented a major setback; 19.6% were of the opinion that lack of soft loans or credit facilities necessary to expand their enterprises was an issue; and 16.7% viewed inadequate provision of working materials (starter packs) as a major challenge.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondent

Variables	Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev.
Age			30	22	50	5.02
Sex						
Male	52	65.2				
Female	28	34.8				
Married Status						
Married	52	65.2				
Single	28	34.8				
Household size(persons)			6.34	1	12	1.79
Educational Status						
Non formal education	17	21.3				
Primary Education	16	20				
Secondary Education	43	53.8				
Tertiary Education	04	5.0				
Skills/Vocational training						
Hairdressing/barbering	40	50				
Tailoring	18	22.5				
Fabricating	16	20				
Computer operators	06	7.5				
Annual income			29,167	200,000	3500,000	500,000

Source: Field survey, 2024.

Table 2: The extent in which the scheme empowered the youth

S/N	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Increase the income of beneficiaries	3.6	0.63
2	Increase the assets of beneficiaries	3.43	0.82
3	Improved their standard of living	3.33	0.50
4	Empowering Farmers with knowledge and skills to make them expert on their field	2.76	1.05
5	Enable them to be self- reliance	2.25	2.25
6	Enable them to be employers of labour	1.59	0.71

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3: Constraints faced by the youth in the course of the scheme

S/N	Variables	Mean	S. D.	Rank
1	Inadequate funding	3.9	0.0337526	1
2	Wrong selection of beneficiaries	3.79	0.049343	2
3	No follow up after training of the beneficiaries	3.61	0.0824731	3
4	Lack of qualified and experience trainers	2.93	0.0770808	4
5	Inadequate provision of working materials	2.78	0.1179667	5
6	Lack of soft loan	2.76	0.1128511	6

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The scheme has impacted positively on the livelihood of beneficiaries in the study area. Participation in YES has enhanced their income, assets, living standard and their knowledge remarkably. The minimum income was ₦200,000 while maximum was 350,000 per annum. The beneficiaries were able to acquired assets such as motorcycle, land, house, tricycle etc. The major constraints faced were inadequate funding; wrong selection of beneficiaries and no follow up after training of beneficiaries were the majors' constraint faced by the beneficiaries in the study area The recommendations were made; government should provide adequate funding for

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the scheme to achieve its goals and objectives, government should select the targeted population for the scheme that is the youth between the ages of 18-35 years old base on the objective of the scheme and facilitators should endeavor to follow up the participants to observe whether the items given to them have been put to use appropriately or not and also proffered solution to areas of challenges.

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