

# Post Covid-19: National Social Investment Programme as an Agent of Socioeconomic Recovery, N-Power Perspective

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**Babatunde Yunus Oyewale**

Department of Educational Management, Obafemi Awolowo University,  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
oyewalebabatundeyunus@yahoo.com

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**Abstract** - COVID-19 is the latest disease affecting all and sundry, the adverse effect is felt on all works of life; educational, health, social, economic, and general wellness of people. The consequences of this disease will linger on for a very long period as nations across the globe are trying hard to devise means of ameliorating the negative effect and putting adequate plans together to get out of it safe and balance. The negativity has in no small measure affect all with every nation looking for diverse ways to step down the consequential loss and set on track visible and viable socioeconomic recovery, robust and productive agricultural system, creation of profitable businesses, balancing political calculation, quality education delivery and good health services. Nigeria as a developing nation is blessed with verse population of over 200,000,000 with majority falling within the productive age is ahead with recent effort on human investment and development through mass engagement of 500,000 youths between the ages of 18-35 under National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), a programme that is locally known as N-Power and acknowledge by the world as Nigeria Federal Government poverty alleviation programme. With the introduction of N-Power programme in 2016, their organizational commitment has made them to become a household name due to their impact stories in different ministries across the nation. Therefore, with this numerical strength, it is expected that the country should be able to navigate from disease struck nation to a wealth one if these youths are rightly channelled. Therefore, this study intends to point out to government the areas of commitment where N-Power can be useful during and after this trying period. This would be an eye opener on the commitment of the huge number across areas of deployment that have over the years worked and gained significant experience during their internship in various ministries and departments which is already over the stipulated period. The study employed survey research design. The population of this study consisted of all N-Power volunteers across Nigeria. A sample of one hundred and eighty participants coordinating N-Power activities was selected from the population of the study. Data were collected using interview guide, newspapers, journals and web articles as well as the researcher personal observations and experiences. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings revealed that moral obligation and permanency are still part of the reasons why many volunteers continue to work and that they have few opportunities to consider if ask to leave N-Power programme. The study was concluded by offering developmental stakeholders like the Federal Executive Council (FEC), Upper and Lower Chambers of Federal and State houses, seasoned economic managers, educational administrators as well as policymakers at different levels to integrate and include N-Power volunteers into their recovery plans.

**Key Words:** COVID-19, Socioeconomic, N-Teach, N-Agro, N-Health, N-Tax and Stakeholders

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, the emergence of coronavirus otherwise known as COVID-19 as become a great threat to agriculture, education, health, social, religion and economic wellbeing of people. This threat has contributed to issues of unemployment and poverty in Africa and Nigeria in particular. According to reports

from the National Bureau of Statistics [1] shows how the “population in poverty has maintain a steady increase from 17.7 million in 1988 to 66.7 million in 2004.” In 2010, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that 60.9% of Nigerians were living in poverty [2].

The world poverty clock in 2018 stated that Nigeria assumed the ignoble position of being the poverty capital

of the world after overtaking Brazil and India, with about 86.9 million of her population in extreme poverty [3]; [4]. To corroborate this assertion, the National Bureau of Statistics in the 2012 National Baseline Survey, posits that more than half of the Nigerian youths' population in the country are unemployed. No doubt current pandemic has in no small measure added to the poverty line and increased the unemployment rate.

With the advent of COVID-19, unemployment and poverty rate have continue to climb vertically, translating into more social complications. Before now, every government since the end of military rule in 1999 has had one programme or the other targeting unemployment and poverty alleviation. Example of such programme was witnessed during the government of former President Olesegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), the government as at that time initiated the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) to reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty. This according to [5], NAPEP was established in 2010 as the primary agency of the federal government to reduce unemployment rate and eradicate extreme poverty in Nigeria. The core programme under the scheme includes the Youth Empowerment Scheme and National Resource development and Conservation Scheme. [5] further disclosed that despite the huge financial implication of the schemes, youth unemployment and poverty continued unabated.

Another of such programme was the Subsidy Reinvestment Scheme (SURE -P) scheme that was designed and implemented by former President Goodluck Jonathan administration (2012-2015). The core programme of SURE-P includes; the Mass transit Scheme, Vocational Training Scheme and Community Service/Women and Youth Employment (CSWYE) [6]. This initiative has been severally criticized for lack of transparency and large scale corruption. This criticism was supported by [7] in a study on Subsidy Reinvestment Programme and Employment Generation in Nigeria concluded that the programme has not let to employment generation in Nigeria, youth unemployment and wide scale poverty in the country still remain high. However, studying the weakness of previous government the Administration of present government of President Muhammadu Buhari designed and implemented the National Social Investment Scheme (NSIP) as strategy for combating unemployment and poverty. The NSIP scheme was created to enable citizens' exit from the persistent unemployment and poverty through capacity building, investment, and direct financial support.

The danger posed by COVID-19 as brought every activity across different ministries and parastatals to a

standstill with un-quantified pressure mounted on health practitioners, educationist, agriculturist, and other works of live. For example, the health workers are day-in day-out battling with treatment of the affected persons and at the same time working tirelessly by searching for the cure and devising means of constantly creating awareness and sensitizing people on the dare need to stick and abide by the laid down precautionary mechanism. It is obvious from the daily infections and the total number of persons that required medical care across states, that there is an urgent need to look elsewhere for help.

As reported by [8] as at 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2020, the Nigeria COVID-19 status indicated that all the confirmed cases of affected persons was put at 7,016, the active case stand at 4,898 while the recovered/discharge persons was reported to be 1,907 and the death estimated toll stands at 211. Within a couple of weeks, report from [8] as at 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 2020 indicated that the pandemic estimate now explode with the current figure put at 37,801 while the active case stand at 21,319, the discharge persons was at 15,677 and the number of death recorded stands at 805 [9]. The explosion of active case as put more pressure on available human and material resources in the health sector. Therefore, it is no more news that more hands must be employed, so all hand must be on deck to ease the stress and quickly come out of it. No doubt N-Health volunteers are needed to provide the required helping hand in care giving and consequently easing the workload of the very few available experts (Doctors and Nurses). The assistance will allow the Doctors and Nurses have more time to concentrate and focus on severe cases. The services of this category of volunteers can also be engage in contact tracing, testing and possibly be engaged in intensifying public campaign and awareness among communities.

The above effort is complemented by Federal Government of Nigeria by putting up a formidable Presidential Task Force (PTF) team led by the Secretary General of the Federation (Boss Mustapha) on March 9, 2020 to coordinate and oversee Nigeria's multi-sectoral inter-governmental efforts to contain the spread and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PTF are charge with the responsibility of providing overall policy direction, guidance and continuous support to the National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC). They also enable the delivery of national and state level outbreak control priorities with effective and safe treatment centres to ensure capacity to manage outbreaks and coordination of National and State Emergency Operation Centres (NSEOC).The duties of

the PTF is also extended to diagnostic laboratories and development strategies as well as sensitization and awareness campaigns for the general public on prevention measures and response activities. They also keep the public abreast of strategic progress with Nigeria's response and emerging developments regarding preparedness and response among others [10]. Till date the PTF keep informing and flourishing citizens with needed information on various areas of concerns.

COVID-19 update as made various media outlets such as radio and television stations, online reporters, newspapers and bulletins as well as musical and movies industries to be immense with the awareness campaign and rigorous sensitization programmes on the cause, effect and possible ways to avoid contacting this scary disease. Emphases are still ongoing on what to do and what to avoid, curtailing the spread and increasing the level of public awareness remain priority. For example, there are many published columns of write-ups in different dailies (Punch, Vanguard, Nigeria Tribune, Guardian, The Nation among others) to educate Nigerians on precautionary measures as well as what to do in case of an outbreak, which office to contact and number to call during emergency especially with suspected cases.

Furthermore, religious bodies (Churches and Mosques), television and radio stations have also made frantic efforts by dedicating programmes to intensify and update knowledge of this disease and have also make it compulsory to relay COVID-19 messages at interval with the aim of increasing public awareness and possibly to prevent community spread. The resultant effect of the disease has greatly affect people individually and collectively from local to international level making everything very difficult, hence, pushing everyone to confinement with little or no help in meeting physiological needs and fulfilling basic financial obligations like feeding, payment of rent, water and electricity bills.

The confinement is well pronounced with the stay at home order which as adversely affect educational institutions, holding all levels of schooling to a standstill and teaching and learning has become impossible due to physical distancing measures. Education stakeholders (Policy makers, Administrators, Teachers, Parent and Community Members) are greatly concerned and students are at the receiving end because no knowledge is transferred or imparted over the weeks and now months with no visible date of resumption. The

stakeholders are obviously unrest and are looking for quick intervention to safe the education system.

This made government at State and Federal level to put up a salvaging system to rescue education from verge of collapse. The idea of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources inform of Electronic Learning (E-learning) and Mobile Learning (M-learning) has been introduced to public and private educators, a strategy that met resistance by education givers especially at government owned schools due to issues ranging from staff training, incentives, remunerations, infrastructure decadence among others. For example, the federal government of Nigeria through the Honourable Minister of Education (Mallam Adamu Adamu) has directed all tertiary institutions (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) in the country to activate their virtual learning environment to enable their students to continue their studies through digital devices. Hence, lecturers are advised to start working out modalities of taking their course contents to online for delivery. Though the directive was not perceived as government achievement, rather it is seen as positive response to minimize the negative effect of schools' closure due to COVID-19 [11]; [12]; [9].

This directive has compelled governors in Southwestern states to have started teaching student through media houses using government owned radio and television stations. For example, Lagos state have begun teaching Junior Secondary School Students (JSSS) core subjects like English Language, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology as well as Civic studies on Naija (102.7) FM for about an hour on daily basis usually between 12 noon and 1 p.m. [13]; [14]. In the same vein States like Osun, Ondo, Oyo and Ekiti have recruited and trained few teachers for On-Air programmes. For example, Ondo State government has engaged the services of some teachers in training and development programme and are in partnership with the managing board of Ondo State Radiovision Corporation (OSRC), so students are engaged on Channels 22, 23 and 27 ultra-High Frequency (UHF), Orange (94.5) FM and Sunshine(96.5) FM. Also, in Ekiti State parents and guardian are advised to tune to a state-owned Ekiti (91.5) FM radio where their wards in primary schools are taught for about 30 minutes daily between the hours of 3.30 pm and 4.00 pm [15]; [16].

Similarly, in Osun and Oyo State, the respective state government under the ministry of education has directed all the state-owned radio and television stations like Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC on 104.5 FM and Channel 32 UHF) and Broadcasting Corporation

of Oyo State (BCOS on Channel 28 UHF and Oluyole 98.5 FM) to reach out to students in Junior Secondary school III and Senior Secondary School III who are preparing for their terminal examination like Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) [11]; [17].

No doubt, the teaching category of N-Power (N-Teach) and many of their students are already keying into using technology for their daily activities. It is easy to learn when students are taught with what they use often. These students use different social media twenty-four seven provided there is electricity source, wifi, data and android (smart) phones. They surf various social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Skype, Google plus etc even to the extent of searching for their teachers' names, sending friend request and adding teachers' phone numbers to their friends list and engaging them on different aspect of life for career counseling and educational mentorship. The twenty-first century education demands should be the fundamental basis for the absorption and integration of the N-Power (teach) volunteers to embrace the use of technology based teaching strategies that are capable of making things happen in our education sector. For example, the form the teachers were trained for in the early centuries may not be able to achieve educational goals for 21<sup>st</sup> century societies.

Therefore, twenty-first century teaching demands 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers in matching digital skills required in education and societal needs as well as learners' interest and potentials. Hence, subject lesson notes can be summarized and uploaded by these volunteers while students can log on to read, listen and possibly download video session of demonstration at convenient time. The primary aim of N-Teach inclusion is to utilize their vast knowledge of expertise in groomed technology knowhow in monitoring students' weaknesses and strength as well as proffering lasting solution that will equip students academically for better performance in future examinations. Though, as good as the education solution is, it was nevertheless greeted with some challenges such as epileptic power supply, website and internet hiccups, poor economic status of parents and guidance and non-availability of equipment [18]; [6].

In a separate analogy, the stay at home order has in no small measure make agriculture and food production difficult, farmers now have limited access to farming inputs like fertilizers and seeds, thus farming activities remain hectic to carry out. Also, market men and women are adversely affected because buying and selling of

goods and services remain unachievable due to lockdown arising from COVID-19 emergence; hence, there is limit to their trading activities. This affects the end users who now pay exorbitant prices for goods bought and services rendered. The outrageous hike might be as a result of extra cost implication incurred during procurements and the dream of every businessmen and women is to be making profit at every transaction. Therefore, mitigating this negative effect, the agric division of N-Power known as N-Agro volunteers must lead the revolution in agriculture with assistance from relevant and related Federal and State Ministries and other partner agencies. They should provide and supply farmers with needed pre-planting, planting and post-planting materials and equipment as well as providing technical and extensional services to farming communities to boost agriculture activities. Their engagement would ensure adequate food security to get out of poverty especially amongst marginalized and vulnerable individuals particularly youths and women.

### **Statement of the Problem**

COVID-19 has exposed the deficiencies in number of areas. Among these areas are science and technology, education, health, and agricultural sector. For example, the gross shortage of employees in the health sector has been exposed coupled with decadence in infrastructure which has affect quality education delivery and inability to meet demand for food and basic amenities. Despite the observed, data from [2] showed that more than half of Nigerians population are majorly youths and are currently battling with unemployment. This assertion remains worrisome and indeed requiring urgent attention. Job insecurity and poverty have remained one of the biggest social problems in Nigeria. The pandemic has contributed in no small measures to the poverty rate with many job loss and had remain unabated which gives room for other social vices such as social disturbances and armed robbery attacks, kidnapping, burglary, rape cases etc.

To ameliorate this problem, different government in Nigeria has implemented a range of measures, including NAPEP, SURE-P and currently the NSIP initiative. The NSIP initiative addresses a range of individual and societal problems such as curbing poverty, reducing unemployment, improving healthy living, increasing school enrolment and mass food production. The N-Power initiative which is the job creation component of the policy aims at reducing unemployment and poverty and is targeted at the Nigerian youth. With the above, the aim of this study is to assess the commitment of N-power

volunteers during and after COVID-19 for national socioeconomic stability and development.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The following are the specific objectives guiding the study, to ascertain the affective commitment of N-Power volunteers; determine the normative commitment of N-Power volunteers; and examine the continuance commitment of N-Power volunteers.

### **Literature**

Unemployment in Nigeria remains a major challenge resulting from poor enterprise culture; the unemployment situation is now the wheel on which the tyre of poverty and social vices rotates. According to [19] even the most developed nations have not shown exception to this frightful social problem. In Africa, the average unemployment rate is generally high as corroborated by [20] when he posited that, unemployment in South Africa, Botswana and Angola was 21%, 17.5% and 25% respectively.

The unemployment situation in Nigeria has assumed a multi-dimensional phenomenon cutting across all facets of peer groups, educational strata and geographies. Unemployment is distributed across the age groups with youth carrying the greatest burden. More disturbing today is the ever-rising trend of youth unemployment in the country even before the emergence of COVID-19. According to [21], Nigeria has one of the highest levels of youth unemployment in the world (60-65%). These are mostly young adults that have graduated from universities and polytechnics or institutions of higher learning. Available estimate shows that about 1.6 million persons, mostly young adult, graduate annually. In addition to this number, about 3.8 million others are certificate carrying youths that have no formal education, or have completed primary or secondary school, or dropped out from tertiary institutions all of which are annually poured into an already saturated labour market [21].

Besides, COVID-19 has crippled businesses and made it even more difficult for people to find employment. In fact, the skyrocketing rate of unemployment in Nigeria is disturbing. According to [22]; [2]; [23] the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2015 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008; 19.7% in 2009; 21.1% in 2010; 23.9% in 2011; 24.7% in 2012 and 25.1% in 2013; 26.5% in 2014 and 27.1% in 2015 respectively. The figures above show

that 2000-2015 witnesses a vertical climb of unemployment rate in the country.

However, Nigeria experience slight decrease in unemployment rate in 2016 with 19.1%, 25.5% in 2017 and 25.7% in 2018 [25]. This decrease maybe due to the introduction of the NSIP and now the figure may be back on the increase with the emergence of COVID-19 and ongoing plans to disengage the N-Power volunteers as revealed by the Hon. Minister overseeing the affairs of the programme [26]. The statement of the minister validates the work of [27] who identify and enumerated structural factor as unemployment problem due to inadequacies, poorly coordinated interventionist schemes with unprecedented and uncomplimentary consequences.

### **History of National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)**

The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) is a portfolio of programmes created in 2015 and launched in 2016 by the Federal Government of Nigeria to deliver socioeconomic support to the disadvantaged Nigerians across the Nation by providing 9.76 million direct beneficiaries through Job Creation and Youth Employment (N-Power) targeting graduate category of 500,000, non-graduate category of 100,000, 8 regional innovation hubs and 1,000,000 N-Power junior pupils who will serve as software developers, animators, graphic artists, hardware service and building services professionals, artisans and others. N-Power also focuses on providing non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood [28]; [29].

Also, the National Home School Feeding Programme (NHSFP) was targeted at 5.5 million children, development of community, value chain and secondary beneficiaries (cooks and farmers). Furthermore, the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) was targeted at 1 million poorest households and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) was targeted to assist 1.66 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) [30]. The National Social Investment Offices (NSIOs) were centrally coordinated and strategically hosted within the Office of the Vice President but today it has been moved to a separate office under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Disaster Management and Social Development head by Hon. Minister Sadiya Umar Farouq to ensure proper coordination and synergy amongst key ministries, departments and agencies, as well as with States and LGAs [9].

## **Focus of National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)**

N-Power is the employability and enhancement programme aimed at imbuing the learn-work-entrepreneurship culture for Nigeria youth between the ages of 18-35. These youths are paid a stipend of N30,000 monthly and were given workable devices with relevant content for continuous learning, just to facilitate their ability to successfully implement the selected vocation and enable them take ownership of their lives [31]; [9]. These graduates take on responsibilities to address public service shortcomings in their communities to provide teaching, instructional and advisory solutions in four important areas of national growth and economic development. The four areas are enumerated below:

**N-Power Teach Program:** The N-Power Teach is a program designed to help and improve basic education at local levels in Nigeria. Volunteers are deployed mainly as teachers' assistants to regular teachers in primary and secondary schools. They are designated to engage with students, foster relationships and build confidence while supporting their educational development. In addition, these volunteers bring education solutions to underserved communities, helping the most marginalized members of their communities to get access to the education they need to participate in the modern workforce. As part of this program volunteers help to implement Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs in schools with focus majorly on science related subjects like computer science, engineering, applied mathematics, and other tech information knowledge [31]; [32].

**N-Power Health Program:** The N-Power Health Program is designed to deploy volunteers to health centers to provide care and aid care givers with a focus on preventative measures and the most vulnerable, including pregnant women and children. Their engagement is tailored to increase access to basic health services in underserved communities. The N-Health serves the double purpose of increasing the overall wellbeing of millions of citizens and supporting the development of healthcare infrastructure with community-based solutions [[31]; [32].

**N-Power Agro Program:** N-Power Agro is designed to provide services to farmers across the country. Part of the focus is to support the development of efficient farming techniques and practices to maximize productivity in the agricultural sector. The other side of the N-Agro program is that it provides technological and institutional development to farming

communities in rural areas and places where the public service sector is particularly underrepresented. They help in creating a stronger link between rural and urban communities and centralizing the knowledge base while incorporating local knowledge and practices. The N-Agro is built to link the diverse communities of Nigeria while promoting a modern economy [31]; [32].

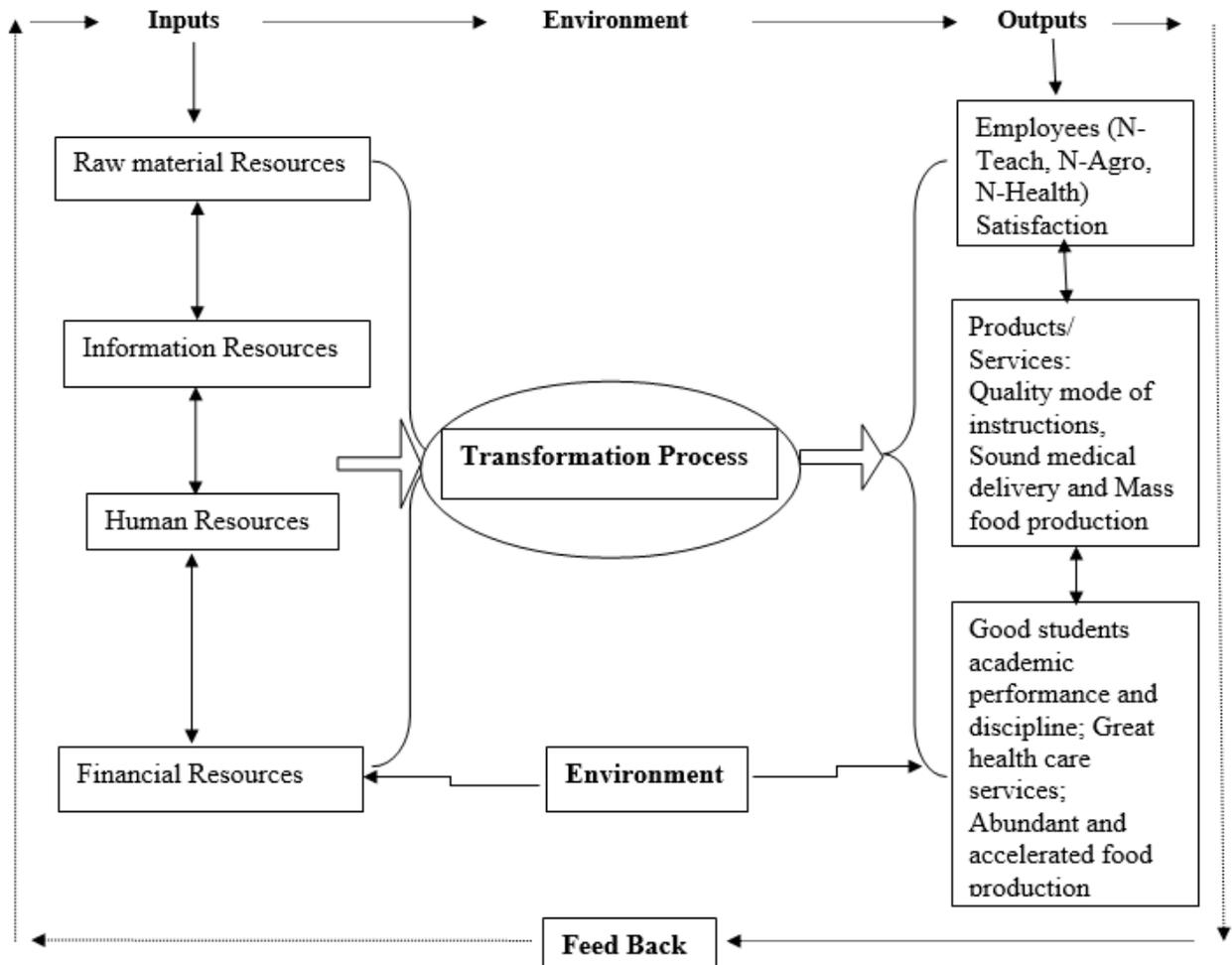
**Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS):** The Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme otherwise known as N-Tax is government attempt to ensure compliance with the nation's tax protocol and asset declaration. Volunteers seek to encourage businesses and individuals to voluntarily declare their correct income and assets and to pay the appropriate taxes to the government. Over 3,700 N-Tax volunteers work with the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Joint Tax Board as community liaison officers, providing services like document review, record keeping, responding to citizen inquiries and interacting with the community [31]; [32].

## **Objectives of N-Power**

The main objectives for the creation of the four areas of N-Power (N-Teach, N-Agro, N-Health and N-Tax) include to: Increase the poor and vulnerable households with access to income/livelihood by providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shocks; Reduce inequalities and wide disparities; Increase access to education and health services, as well as empowering vulnerable sectors thereby improving the quality of life index; Reduce rate of youth unemployment, linking interested volunteers to address existing gaps; Provide affordable credit for MSMEs thereby increasing business revenue and facilitating market linkages; Stimulate productivity and growth, especially in our rural communities; Bringing into visibility those who have never before been registered on any platform by capturing identities as required by our laws, for proper planning; and Promote access to financial services and increase rate of financial inclusion.

The objectives above require changes to economic and social policies with focus on employment, empowerment, health, education, agriculture and MSMEs in order to invigorate the economy and enhance human capital [28]; [33]; [34]. Nigeria has huge deficit and issues around capacity building therefore, if Nigeria as a developing country is to achieve the goal of being a top economy by 2030, the need for strategic plans to support the most vulnerable in the society and catalyze productivity especially in our youthful N-Power workforce.

**Government-N-Power Relationship**



**Figure 1: Systems Theory; Source:** Adapted from [35].

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework was hinge on System Theory. The theory maintains that an organization does not exist in a vacuum. It does not only depend on its environment, but it is also part of a larger system such as the society or the economic system to which it belongs. The systems approach is concerned with both interpersonal and group behavioral aspects leading to a system of cooperation [35]. It suggests that organizations must be studied as a whole taking into consideration the interrelationships among its parts and its relationship with the external environment. That is, the theory shows how government reacts to people’s plight in terms of provision of basic necessities of life, highlights how demands of the people are presented to government, the government actions on the said demands and how

fulfilling the demands will enhance the well-being of the people.

The basic system theory consists of five basic components which are interrelated and interwoven. These components include inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback and the environment. Therefore, Figure 1 below explains the interrelated and interwoven basic components of the theory using government and N-Power interlink.

1. Inputs are the resources provided by the government inform of materials (like government establishment such as schools, health centers and farms where volunteers are deployed to); human aspect is the continuous effort of government in enrolling the huge number of N-Power volunteers across batches with the another batch enrollment currently ongoing. The information resources are gadgets given to these

volunteers to produce quality service delivery. For example the N-Teach use it to prepare their lesson notes, N-Health uses same to upgrade health related learning and N-Agro used it to search for entrepreneur and employment opportunities. The financial aspect involves the motivation given inform of monthly stipends which volunteers use for general upkeep like feeding, transportation and other physiological needs to enhance positive transformation.

2. The transformation process is the use of production technology and guided means through heads of agencies and ministries to change the inputs into outputs. These inputs go through a process where they are planned, organized, motivated, monitored and controlled, ultimately to meet national goals.
3. Outputs include the organization's products and services. In N-Teach, the output is subsumed under tangible measures of improved students' level of discipline, performance of students' in terminal examination like Common Entrance Examination (CE) for primary school pupil, Basic Examination Certificate Examination (BECE) for junior secondary school, West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) for senior secondary school. In N-Health system, the output is measure with the quality health delivery for general human health with the sole aim of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity but sustaining increased survival rate of adolescence while in N-Agro, the output is majorly concerned with ways of increasing and multiplying food for the nation through creation and sustenance of improved variety of crops and animals.
4. The environment surrounding the organization is uncertain; it may be favourable or otherwise. If favourable, productivity is certain at the highest level and if otherwise, the sole aim might be defeated. Whether or not the different levels of the environment include the social, political and economic forces.
5. Feedback is knowledge of the results that influence the selection of inputs during the next cycle of the process. This has not only assist the government to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of N-Power volunteers involved in the NSIP programme but also base future actions on their assessment on set standards which made the government not only to extend the duration of the first batch but also design means of extending the

benefits to more Nigeria youths in subsequent batches.

The analysis above shows that the relationship between the government, PPA heads and volunteers is mutual and complementary which enable them to operate more efficiently and effectively. This might be connected to the fact that, the government needed the youth and the youth also needed the government to create an enabling environment. Therefore, developments in social theory have provided greater insights into how strong the connections between government and youth enhance achievement.

### Effectiveness of N-Power to National Development

According to [36] these N-Power volunteers were distributed into 124,007 Place of Primary Assignment (PPA) across local government areas. For example, in Southwestern Nigeria comprising Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo state, the N-Power impact statistics indicated that volunteers of N-Teach, N-Agro and N-Health are distributed across 25,734 PPAs.

**Table 1:** N-Power Impact Statistics Using PPA Count in Southwest

States	N-Teach	N-Agro	N-Health	Total
Ekiti	2452	502	679	4053
Lagos	2264	90	214	2668
Ogun	4090	43	626	4769
Ondo	3196	1037	531	4764
Osun	3470	148	651	4269
Oyo	5076	172	520	5768
<b>Total</b>	<b>20521</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>3221</b>	<b>25734</b>

**Source:** Adapted from National Statistics of N-Power PPA [36].

It is observable from the Table that N-Power volunteers are mostly designated to public schools, followed by health sector while very few are engaged in the agricultural sector and are technology savvy. More to that, there is hardly anything the N-Powerites engages in without making use of modern technology devices. They use Smartphone for communication, businesses and transportation, printing and designing, security and health, recreation and research work as well as entertainment. The device supplied with monthly data subscription enables and provides access to various downloads of applications through the Google Play Store to aid commitment and increase efficiency and effectiveness. Such applications include Zoom, Instagram, Duo, WhattsApp among others that can be used for screen shorts, sharing of pictures and

conversations, sending of audio information and videoconferencing that enables audiovisual discussion. This is what is expected in this era of 21<sup>st</sup> century because societal needs continue to change from analog to digital form.

Majority of PPA heads who are more experienced on the job but are not conversant with the use of technology evolutions depend on volunteers for assistance and are now getting used to it. All thanks to these volunteers for teaching and demonstrating how it works. Therefore, by deploying a trained force of 500,000 graduates in to communities, the N-Power Program will continue to be a community-sourced solution to the unabated unemployment rate as well as nation's under-developed public services like education, healthcare, agriculture and general civic engagement. This N-Power program can now serve to build and prepare young Nigerians with skills and certifications for a modern globalized; education, agriculture, health and economy [30]. Through continuous effort, government in no distance time will move Nigeria out of the poverty line and will cease to be the headquarter of poverty has been reported by [3].

So it is a good thing to show and direct the government on what the next action of planning should look like and what is expected as a result of these set of young and vibrant individuals who are fully engaged to lead the campaign in all fronts. It is high time for government to go a step further by ensuring that concerned ministries and agencies across states move to the implementation stage of placing this volunteer on a permanent deal. This is very important because it would be of no use training and investing heavily on these graduates without fully engaging them to maximum capacity, so employing them is obviously the right thing to do.

The rightness may be the reason why the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, disclose that about 109,823 beneficiaries of the N-Power programme now have their own businesses and some others have been gainfully employed. The statistics represents about 22% of the 500,000 Nigerians that have benefited from the programme since inception [26]. The success rate already gave room for the ongoing enrolment of another batch (Batch C). The enrolment will continue to create more opportunities that would improve the productivity of Nigerian youths for entrepreneurship and employment. This aligns with the vision of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of unemployment and poverty line in the next 10 years as envisaged by the government [37].

## METHODS

To generate qualitative data for this study, the survey research design was employed. The justification for adopting the survey design was its ability to allow the researcher investigate the perspective of N-Power during and after COVID-19 which has to do with eliciting response from large number of respondents who are volunteers of N-Power programme. The population of this study consisted of all N-Power volunteers across Nigeria. The researcher adopted purposive sampling technique in selecting the sample for this study to include five representatives who are coordinating the affairs of volunteers from each state in Nigeria. The researcher created a social platform using whatsapp and named it N-Power News and Discussion Group (NNDG) to get opinion and feedbacks from these representatives on areas of activities and needs across places of primary assignment (PPA). This technique was adopted due to the nature and timing of the study to allow physical and social distancing. A sample of one hundred and eighty respondents was selected from the population of the study. When the sample was reached, the researcher concluded the survey with an interview guide as the instrument for data collection. The interview guide was structured on opinion and perception of volunteers' commitment using Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment based on the general objective of the study. Both the primary (interview) and secondary (journal, web articles, newspapers etc) methods of data collection were adopted. Also, the researcher personal observations and experiences were also utilized to gather more information for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Affective Commitment:** Majority of the volunteers 144(80%) agreed that they prefer to spend the rest of their career in the programme if job security is introduced. This response agreed with [38] who reported that programme of N-Power nature provides unemployed youth motivation, knowledge and skills essential for launching a successful venture. Also, many of the volunteers 137(76%) agreed that they enjoyed discussing about N-power programme with people outside the programme. Furthermore, majority of them 135(75%) disagreed that they could become easily attached to another occupation aside the options of choice and that, they already feel a strong sense of belonging while rendering services at their place of work. The findings reflect the work of [27] who identify and enumerated five major factors of

unemployment as; structural, cultural, lack of political will, skewed budgetary allocation and poorly coordinated intervention programmes. Also, the findings support [39] that unemployment reduces economic output and erode human capital. The implication is that the economic benefit that should have accrued from the maximization of the human capital is usually lost if target is not met.

**Normative Commitment:** Larger percentage of the volunteers 117(65%) now thinks that been a beneficiary is not sensible anymore due to the way they are been treated especially as it concerns their constant delay of monthly stipends coupled with no clarity of hope as it concerns their status. Also, they were of the opinion that it is now right to leave N-power and that, they are ready to get another offer for a better job elsewhere because they are already feeling that there work is not acknowledge by the government. However, they informed that moral obligation and permanency are part of the reasons why many continue to work as a volunteer. Though, majority still believe that despite the treatment volunteer must be loyal to the programme. These findings accords with [27] postulation that, “most intervention programmes have been poorly coordinated and in some cases either overlap or contradicts one another” indeed, it has been observed that most of these unemployment mitigation measures have been implemented on an interim bases or have been abused by it handlers by making good with its proceeds and where implemented are marred by inefficiency.

**Continuance Commitment:** Many of the volunteers are afraid of what might happen if they quit the programme without having another one line-up. Also, they were of the opinion that much will be disrupted in their life if they decided to leave this programme. Furthermore, they totally 180(100%) agreed that staying on this N-Power programme is a matter of necessity as much as desire for them. Finally, majority reported that they have few opportunities to consider if ask to leave N-Power programme. The findings support [40] who relate the unemployment in Nigeria to lack of national employment policy, sub-optimal quality of graduates, educational system not tailored and aligned to industrial needs and inappropriate educational curricula.

Now, the time has come and there is urgent need to point out to government the areas where N-Power volunteers can be useful during and after this trying period. It would be an eye opener on the commitment of the huge number of 500,000 volunteers across areas of deployment who have over the years worked and gained significant experience during their internship in various

ministries and departments which is already over the stipulated period and still counting for the first batch of about 200,000 and almost closing on the agreeable time for the second batch who are also about 300,000 in number.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Evidence have proven that every sector in Nigeria is grossly understaffed when comparing the ratio of employees available to the actual number required. No doubt, it is a far cry from what it should be and what we are witnessing. Adjusting this gap is to look inwards and create alternatives from what is on ground. Luckily, the government has invested heavily and are having huge staff strength of N-Power volunteers to rely upon that can make the dream of delivering quality education, reduced unemployment rate, increased empowerment, boom agriculture and sound health system to become achievable. The government efforts agreed with [41] position, that creating and supporting enabling conditions involves creation of sustainable economic and social base; political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; stable environment of equality, peace and democracy; and access to knowledge, information and skills as well as positive value system. From these foundational issues, [42] insists that any transformational agenda for young men and women in Nigeria must of necessity, address these areas to empower youth and in return to make their much-needed contribution to the overall national development.

Therefore, Government and other relevant stakeholders should increase N-Power opportunities for employment in relevant ministries and departments; help creating an enabling environment for empowerment in area of choice. There should be an increase opportunity for continued participation of N-Power in productive work in areas of neglect especially rural areas and villages. Rural dwellers constitute the larger part of Nigeria population, therefore the authorities concerned with the distribution and utilization of the NSIP programmes should use the N-Power volunteers to promote rural development through posting of beneficiaries to rural schools, health centres and farms. Efforts should also be made to encourage N-Power to engage in self-empowerment, which would not only enable them to do things at their own pace but would also encourage them to introduce innovations for productivity and profit and ultimately be an employer of labour.

In addition, the provision of opportunities for job training and continued education would enhance their

self-employability. Retraining programmes should therefore be initiated to re-educate beneficiaries and update their knowledge of modern techniques and skills so that they can continue in their present occupation or take up a new one. Also, Government at all levels should reactivate moribund industries and enterprises and expand the horizon of N-Power programmes in that direction. In connection with increasing the job prospects and improving the sources of income, there is a need to reactivate small-scale industries and enterprises in which N-Power volunteers can be more involved. Achieving this, the Government should be providing financial assistance for income generating projects through the N-Power programmes. The establishment of income-generating projects targeting N-Power should be an important element in the NSIP programmes. Furthermore, Government should encourage and strengthen the capability for more enrollments. Since unemployed people constitute the majority of Nigeria population, therefore economic policies should aim at engaging and enhancing their skills for employment and poverty reduction. However, the limitations of the study include time and research materials which are the major setback to the study.

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