



Social Investment Programme and Livelihood of the Vulnerable: A Focus on Nigeria Post COVID-19 Pandemic

Onyekachi Chibueze Onuoha^{1*}, Nnamdi Ikemefuna Okafor²

¹*Department of Cooperative Economics and Management, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria*

²*Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of the Western Cape, South Africa*

**Corresponding author email: oc.onuoha@unizik.edu.ng*

Abstract

In an effort curb the effect and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries' governments took firm decisions and actions to ensure that the pandemic was contained before vaccines were developed including the closure of sea, land, and airport borders, banning all gatherings, closure of schools, and all forms of gathering, social distancing as well as locking down their economies to restrict vehicular and human movement. Nigeria was one of the most affected African countries, the Government therefore adopted strategies to minimize the effect of the lockdown on the citizens which included the distribution of relief materials and the re-engineering of its social investment programme that was earlier established in 2016, targeting the vulnerable people including the youths, children, and women. However, lack of transparency, and accountability of the funds by the assigned government personnel have been highly reported. Therefore, this research aimed at carrying out an in-depth investigation and evaluation of the social investment programmes on the livelihood of the vulnerable in Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was adopted as the research design for the study. The primary data from strategic community leaders who are privy to information on all financial and material support provided to any member of their communities were generated. Seventy-nine (79) communities were studied across all six geopolitical zones in the country using a structured questionnaire. The data generated were analysed using simple percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The results for the N-power programme, conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme, government enterprise and empowerment programme (GEEP), the home-grown-school feeding programme (HGFP) were established. The obtained results in general demonstrated a low and a moderate impact or effect of the government social programmes on the livelihood of the targeted Nigerians (vulnerable). This was evident enough across all the results discussed below with a low mean value which is a clear indication of the misappropriation, little or no transparency, dishonesty and corruption involved by the assigned government agencies or officials to carry out these tasks.

Keywords: Social, Investment, *Programme*, Livelihood, COVID-19, Vulnerable, Beneficiary

1. Introduction

The entire world recently battled with the global Coronavirus pandemic otherwise known as COVID-19 in which millions of cases were reported around the globe and millions of deaths recorded according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The economies of many countries were affected, and various economies are gradually moving into recession. As much as it was a health-related crisis, the economic implications were far-reaching. The United Nations Development Program predicted an estimated US\$220 billion decline in revenue in most of the developing countries with COVID-19 expected to derail the economy of most of the developing countries for years to come. A number of countries' governments took firm decisions and actions to ensure that the pandemic was contained before vaccines were developed.

Countries have experienced different phases of the pandemic including the closure of sea, land and airport borders, banning all gatherings, closure of schools, and all forms of gathering, social distancing as well as locking down their economies to restrict vehicular and human movement in order to ensure that all forms of community contamination were forestalled. These lockdown situations were largely unbearable to many African countries as a large number of the population depend on their daily income for survival.

With a focus on Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (2017), in its national survey of Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, estimates that 41,543,028 Micro, Small and Medium Scale enterprises exist in Nigeria constituting over 96 percent of all businesses in Nigeria. With a population of around 202 million people in Nigeria,

survival becomes quite difficult for Nigerians during the economic restrictions as hunger became almost as deadly as COVID-19. On the part of the Government, it took several measures to cushion the effect of the lockdown on the citizens which included the distribution of relief materials and the re-engineering of its social investment programme that was earlier established in 2016, targeting the vulnerable people including the youths, children and women.

Before the Pandemic, the number of Nigerians living below the poverty line was less than 80m. Interestingly, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics has published that 62.9% of people — nearly 133 million people — are multidimensionally poor in the Nigerian Poverty Map. This suggests that millions of Nigerians have been pushed into poverty.

The essence of a strong and viable social investment programme became more imperative given the high level of poverty in the land, however, Nigerians seem to be uncertain about the depth of impact of the Nigerian version of the programme and its capacity to pull the large number of Nigerians who are suffering in abject poverty away from poverty. Civil society organizations and citizens have accused the government with regards to the said targeted people (the vulnerable) of not being included in the social intervention programme while the funds enter the coffers of some implementers of the programme while still leaving the intended beneficiaries impoverished. However, the impact of this research is to provide more effective and sustainable measures or methods that include the majority of the targeted vulnerable Nigerians in any subsequent social investment programmes. Therefore, this project is intended to critically evaluate the Social Investment Programme of the Nigerian government.

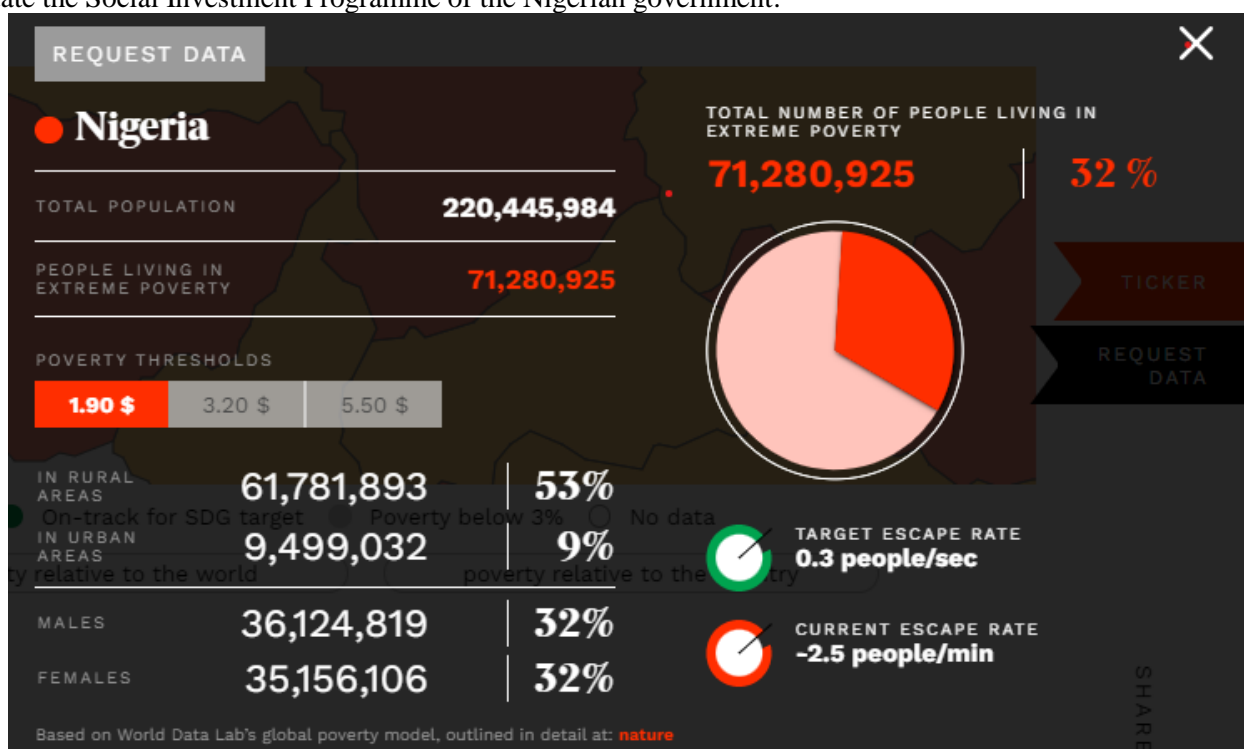


Figure 1: Nigeria poverty index as of 2020 (World Poverty Map, 2020)

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess the effect of social investment on the livelihood of vulnerable groups in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study would achieve the following objectives.

- Assess the effect of the N-power programme on the empowerment of youths with sustainable livelihood skills.
- Evaluate the influence of the conditional cash transfer on pulling the poorest of the poor out of poverty.
- X-ray the relevance of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) on the livelihood of the micro and small-scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria.
- Assess the role of the homegrown school feeding programme in improving learning in primary schools.

2. Literature Review

The National Social Investment Programme

In order to combat poverty and hunger throughout the nation, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the National Social Investments Programme (NSIP) in 2016. The NSIP's range of projects is designed to make sure that resources are distributed more fairly to vulnerable groups like children, youth, and women. Since 2016, the Ministry

of Budget and National Planning (MBNP) and other significant MDAs with congruent objectives have helped more than 4 million beneficiaries nationwide through the joint efforts of these projects (National Social Investment Programme, 2023).

The National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has been in existence since 2016, however, attention has not been on it for a long while until the COVID-19 pandemic shook people and created further economic hardship in Nigeria. Nigerians started looking around to see how to support their livelihood through interventions by the government. This led to more attention being given to the programme by citizens.

A fairer distribution of resources to vulnerable populations, including as children, youth, and women, is a key goal of the NSIP's array of activities. With the help of the Ministry of Budget and National Planning (MBNP) and other significant MDAs with related objectives, these activities claim to have helped more than 4 million beneficiaries nationwide since 2016 (National Social Investment Programme, 2023).

The programme was designed with four sub-programme which were.

- a) N-power programme
- b) Conditional Cash Transfer
- c) Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme
- d) The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme

N-Power Programme

Unemployment, most importantly graduate unemployment, constitutes one of the major economic developmental concerns in every country but poses a much bigger concern, especially in developing countries, hence it is seen as one of the major threats and setbacks to the economic growth of many underdeveloped countries. In Nigeria, according to reports by Eneji (2013) and Chimaobi (2019), the unemployment or underemployment rate among young adults in Nigeria from 2016 to 2018 involving the active economic population and mostly the qualified graduates has been on the increasing side ranging from 52.2%, 52.6% and 55.7% respectively. According to The National Bureau of Statistics - NBS (2019), over 24,000 million Nigerians are unemployed. In the last quarter (Q4) of 2020, NBS published that the unemployment rate in Nigeria was 33.3%.

This alarming rate of unemployment has contributed to an extent to the underperforming or underdevelopment of the Nigerian economy. In an attempt to tackle and curb the increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the government has established some social investment programmes such as the N-Power Investment Programme. These social investment programmes are designed towards building human capital and acquiring different skills in order to minimise unemployment as the beneficiaries are expected to be equipped with work experience and basic skills to become more employable and more productive once employed and as well develop some individual entrepreneurs (Abdulwaheed et al. 2019; Nwaobi 2019). N- Power, therefore, is one of the Social Investment Programmes in existence currently in Nigeria geared towards minimising unemployment among young graduates and non-graduates by providing basic skills, tools and livelihood towards entrepreneurship and innovation.

The N-Power social investment programme is categorised into three major components namely, graduate teacher's corps, targeting about 500,000 graduate recruitment, N-Power Knowledge targeting 25,000 non-graduates' recruitment and N-Power build looking at 75,000 non-graduates' recruitment. Through this initiative, the selected individuals (graduates and non-graduates) are expected to be given the necessary computing devices containing necessary information during the course of their training and development. They are expected, especially the graduates, to render assistance in teaching and giving instructions in the major sectors like agriculture, health, power technology and community education (NASIMS, 2023, Akujuru 2019; Obadan 2017; Samuel et al., 2019). Non-graduates on the other hand with the acquired skills, knowledge, experience and financial assistance are expected to become active entrepreneurs, especially in agriculture by establishing their own little farms This programme has been reported to show a promising impact in the fight to curtail the increasing rate of graduates and non-graduates' unemployment in Nigeria, who also form part of the vulnerable in the nation. However, several loopholes and gaps are bound to exist which can hamper the full potential impact on the beneficiaries. Therefore, there is a need for the evaluation of the N-power programme to ascertain the effects on vulnerable Nigerians, especially post-Covid period.

The volunteers under the N-power programme are expected to provide support and gain skills in four key areas;

- a) N-power Agro- Volunteers are to provide advisory services to farmers across the country. They are to assist the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to disseminate knowledge in the area of extension service.
- b) N-Power Health: This is targeted at pregnant women and children as well as other vulnerable members of society. Volunteers are therefore to help to promote preventive healthcare among these target groups in their communities.
- c) N-Power Teach: In this area, volunteers are deployed as teacher assistants in schools in Nigeria. This will help to improve basic education delivery in the country.
- d) N-Tax: In this area, volunteers work as community tax liaison officers in their states of residence with the state's tax authorities. They assist in creating awareness of tax compliance, answering online enquiries, etc.

Conditional Cash Transfer

Most African countries still have the highest rate of poverty in the world, though there has been a substantial decline in the poverty rate from 54% - 41%, however, due to rapid growth in the African population, the number of individuals living in poverty has been on increasing end from 278 to 413 million from 1990 to 2015 (Chimere & Urama 2019). This has affected many of the Sub-Saharan population with the number of poor people shown to have immensely increased. Nigeria as one of the Sub – Saharan countries in 2018, was named the capital of poverty by the World Poverty Clock as over 87 million people are living in extreme poverty, thereby overtaking India as the World's ravaging country (Okezie & Ifeanyi 2019). Currently, an estimated 133 million Nigerians are living in extreme poverty (NBS, 2023).

Economic growth is seen as a long-term effective measure for the alleviation of poverty mainly in African countries, however, economic growth in Africa and most recently have not been strong or sufficient enough in tackling the rampaging poverty challenge in Africa (Musa et al., 2019; World Resources 2005). This could be attributed to continuous growth in population, high corruption concerns, and over-dependence on some resources like crude oil which has seen a constant decline in price over the years. Various global leaders and international organisations have continuously engaged in the implementation of several macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and social policies in order to curb the high risks posed by high rates of poverty (Musa et al., 2019). Nigeria has demonstrated efforts towards curtailing the poverty menace through the implementation of several social investment policies and programmes like Conditional cash transfers.

The Conditional cash transfer programme was established as an effective and potential measure for the reconciliation of safety nets or social assistance policies (Kakwani et al., 2005). This anti-poverty programme was first created in Mexico in 1997 as PROGRESA, which involves a traditional cash-transfer program with financial incentives for positive behaviour in health, education, and nutrition. This targets numerous households engaging in all sets of behaviour designed in a way to enhance and improve health, and nutrition which includes baby care immunisation, nutrition monitoring, prenatal care, preventive check-ups, nutrition check-ups and educational sensitization on health, hygiene and nutrition. It was designed to render monetary and moral incentives to these vulnerable families in order to enhance human capital among the households (Gertler 2004; Okoli et al., 2014).

Conditional cash transfer was introduced in Nigeria in 2017 as one of the social investment Programmes geared towards providing similar financial assistance to the aged, widows, destitute and some other vulnerable Nigerians and as well as financial help to children from poor backgrounds in order to boost their educational and career development, promote and enhance pregnant women participation in the maternal and child healthcare of the rural communities, and also to deal with the lack of utilisation of public service (Okoli et al., 2014; Musa et al., 2019). Families in communities plagued by poverty receive a stipend of N5,000 which was equivalent to \$13.89 in 2017 when the Programme was introduced and currently the same as \$6,217.50 in 2023 each month, plus an additional N5,000 for those deemed to be priority or exceptional cases. This sum can barely feed a family for a single day let alone support families with living expenses. It is claimed that over 297,000 beneficiaries were receiving payments as of 2018 with the help of 2,495 community facilitators (NASIMS, 2023).

Conclusively, it is imperative to examine the stipend of the conditional cash transfer to understand the impact of the conditional transfer investment Programme on the vulnerable. This will enable the provision of more effective and long-term measures for tackling poverty in any futuristic situation like the COVID-19 pandemic case or war economic pressures like the Ukraine-Russian War.

Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)

As part of the Social Investment Programme, the government has a component of the Programme expected to capture the micro and small business owners and entrepreneurs known as the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme. It was created to help enterprises and entrepreneurs at the base of the economic pyramid. The Federal Government has explained the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) to be a micro-lending intervention that targets traders, artisans, enterprising youth, farmers and women in particular, by providing loans between 10,000 and 100,000 at no monthly cost to beneficiaries (NSIP, 2020). The Programme has three items which make it up including the TraderMoni, FarmerMoni and MarketMoni implemented by the Bank of Industry (BOI)-GEEP loan scheme (NASIMS, 2023).

The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme supports the growth of otherwise low-productive sectors of the population, bringing millions of people into the modern economy and removing communities from poverty. This is done by offering low-cost microloans to women, ambitious youths, agricultural workers, and other vulnerable economic producers. In order to reach over a million women, 200,000 MSMEs and artisans, 260,000 young businesses, and 200,000 farmers and agricultural workers, it was claimed that N140 billion had been invested in the programme.

National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP)

The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme was developed to offer a healthy and balanced meal to 5.5 million school children in grades 1 through 3 (NASIMS, 2023).

The objectives of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) are to:

- a) Improve the enrolment of primary school children in Nigeria and reduce the current dropout rate from primary school which is estimated at 30 per cent. It is also to address the poor nutrition and health status of many children arising from poverty, which have affected the learning outcomes of the children.
- b) Stimulate local agricultural production and boost the income of farmers by creating a viable and ready market through the school feeding programme. It aims to create jobs along the value chain and provide a multiplier effect for economic growth and development (National Social Investment Office, 2023)

The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSP) aims to deliver school feeding to young children with a specific focus on increasing school enrollment, reducing the incidence of malnutrition (especially among the poor and those ordinarily unable to eat a meal-a-day), empowering community women as cooks and by supporting small farmers that help stimulate economic growth.



Figure 2: The former Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, during the launch of National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP) in Ondo State. Source: Presidency

Social Investment Programmes in Other Countries

Social Investment Programme (SIP) is an initiative that has been adopted by the governments of both developed and underdeveloped countries, designed for the appropriate and effective financial and health support to the vulnerable and poor people in society. This section shall take case studies from the SIP in the Philippines, Brazil, and South Africa settings. The global economic crisis has threatened and created economic imbalance mainly in all developing countries like South Africa, the Philippines and Brazil. The alarming increase in the number of poor families, the population, the high unemployment rate, and inadequate health schemes for vulnerable citizens have prompted the rapid implementation of several social policies for these vulnerable people in society.

Philippine

In Asia, the Philippines was one of the first countries to establish a social investment Programme (SIP) but later got stopped around the 1960s when the governments in charge solely depended on the army, civil service, and landlords for support and paid little or no attention in meeting the social needs of the population, however, the SIP was reinstated decades later (Ramesh, 2014). In an attempt to mitigate the high level of the crisis, the government of the Philippines then designed, relaunched, and tightened some SIPs to help the citizens of the country especially the less privileged or the most vulnerable in the society.

Currently there are about fourteen or more social investment schemes in the Philippines established specifically for the vulnerable and poor people of which only a few have promoted and enhanced significant impact or effectiveness towards poverty alleviation in the country based on coverage and expenditures. Some of these social schemes include:

- I. The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4P) is primarily designed to target poor households from the poorest Philippine municipalities involving children within fourteen years of age and pregnant women (Ramesh, 2014; Manasan Rosario, 2009; Manasan, 2009).

II. The Supplementary Feeding Programme/Food for the School Programme. These Programmes were launched to provide lunches to malnourished children for 120 days annually and as well for the provision of daily ration of a kilogram of rice for school attendants (Celia et al., 2018; Ramesh, 2014).

III. The Para Kay Lolo Programme is designed for elderly indigenous people of the Philippines over the age of seventy where they are given a monthly subsidy of PHP500.

IV. The National Health Insurance Programme administered by the PhilHealth Sponsored Programme was formed in 1997. This Programme was designed to provide health insurance to households under the bottom quartile of income (Ramesh, 2014; Manasan Rosario, 2009).

V. Rice subsidy Programmes. The rice subsidy Programme was launched in the Philippines in the early 1970s as rice is one of the major sources of income in the Philippines. This Programme allows the National Food Authority (NFA) to indirectly purchase rice from the market and sell it at a cheaper rate of around 25 percent (Ramesh, 2014; Celia, Aubrey & Ronina, 2018; Ramesh, 2014).

VI. Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (KALAHI-CIDSS) was formed in 1994 but was relaunched and renamed Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Service in 2003. This is a community development and empowerment Programme funded with loans from the World Bank, targeting the family, community, and infrastructural development within over forty provinces with a high rate of poverty. The Programme has been reported to generate an average of 21 percent of the internal return with varying returns from different forms of the project (Celia et al., 2018; Ramesh 2014; Manasan Rosario, 2009; Manasan Rosario, 2009;).

Brazil

Brazil is a country with over 200 million people with Per capita gross domestic product of around US\$14,890 (PPP). There has been a massive turnaround in Brazil in terms of economic stability and growth, however, there are still over 50 million people in Brazil living in poverty with more than 10 million still living in extreme poverty despite the increased jobs and rising incomes. However, there has been some massive stability and economic growth due to some social protection policies from the government to alleviate people from poverty and eradicate hunger in the society among the poor and vulnerable population and at the same time had fostered economic growth and reduction of inequality. The established policies were for the coordination and enhancement of the actions in three aspects or fields: social assistance, food and nutrition, and conditional cash transfers (Paes-Sousa et al., 2011) Some of the major existing social protection policies for the vulnerable in Brazil includes:

a) The National System for Food and Nutrition on Security (SISAN)

The SISAN policy has been in existence for decades, but the legal establishment was in 2006. It is designed to foster the adequate and effective human right to food through the actions of the public Programme and policies but with repercussions at the municipal and state levels. This policy has thus promoted the steady provision of food and nutrition in Brazil (Barrientos 2002; Leubolt 2014; Paes-Sousa et al., 2011).

b) Unified system of social assistance (USSA)

The policy consists of the systemic model of various types of facilities and initiatives designed around the complementary and compensation fashion. The policy is regarded as a constitutional obligation intended for the creation of public structures and for the protection of poor people through the holistic system of social protection and guarantee of social rights. Some of the existing social protection policies under the USSA include basic social protection and special social protection (Mourão & de Jesus, 2012; Paes-Sousa et al., 2011).

c) Bolsa Familia Programme

The Bolsa Família family grant Programme was created in 2003 and backed by the law as a conditional cash transfer Programme for the main reason of transferring income to the poorest families in Brazil. This was in an attempt to eradicate hunger and minimize the rate of poverty and also provide access to health, education and social welfare to the public. (Barrientos 2013; Barrientos et al. 2017). The Bolsa Familia programme acts as a substitute for poor families having varying amounts based on the number of children and the situation of income in the family. According to the law, the Bolsa Familia is paid to the head of the family predominantly women by definition then allowing women to have a huge budget at their disposal (Leubolt 2014). The Bolsa Familia Programme has improved the living conditions of over 50 million poor Brazilians or 25% of the total and has been accredited as a leading factor that promoted Brazil as the leading country in Latin America in poverty reduction and inequality (Andrade de Oliveira e Silva, 2017; Barrientos, 2013).

South Africa

South Africa is an upper-middle-income country with an over 55 million population and high levels of inequality of income and wealth with USD6,001.40 GDP per capita. Although there is still a high rate of unemployment and poverty in South Africa, the country has been one of the leading developing countries in the world with strong social protection programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and improving the living standard of the vulnerable citizens of the country (Goldblath, 2014). In 1994 when democracy was achieved in South Africa, the social assistance Programme was reformed and named developmental welfare. This has resulted in a massive expansion in terms of beneficiaries from 3 million to 16 million from 1995 to 2013, hence helping to curb the widespread rate of poverty. The social security system in South Africa has a small social insurance component and a large social assistance Programme (Devereux 2011; Goldblath, 2014). The insurance Programme concept ensures that workers are insured against the risk of income loss and are majorly financed out of premiums and contributions. Today in South Africa,

there are about five major social assistance grants set up by the government to assist the vulnerable in society Figure 3. This includes; the State Old Age Pension (primarily designed for income-qualified persons over 60 years of age), the Disability Grant (for income-eligible prime-age adults that are not able to work either temporarily or permanently due to disability or poor health conditions), the Child Support Grant (mainly for children under the age 16 years but extended up to 18 years) and the Foster Care Grant (for children that have been placed under the care of the foster parent by the court order). The implementation of these social assistance grants has seen a huge impact with around 14 million people in 2014 out of 49 million population benefitting from these grants. The aged people in South Africa, have two primary sources of income: old-age pensions and private pensions (Kaniki & Babatunde Omilola 2014; Woolard et al., 2011). Huge beneficiaries of these social grants have been the child support grant reaching over 11 million, the old age grant with 2.8 million and disability grant at around 1.1 million with old age pension and disability receiving R2080 monthly and the child support grant offering the children R500 monthly (approximately 102.41, and 24.62 Euros) respectively.

A. Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). The UIF is responsible for the provision of short-term unemployment insurance and the provision of the benefits resulting from unemployment, illness, adoption of a child or death, and maternity. In this Programme, all the private sector, formal sector workers and employers contribute 1 percent of their salary to the UIF, and it is given in the period immediately after the loss of employment with a maximum period of 238 days.

B. The Compensation Funds (funds provided to workers who are injured when at work or who had developed occupational diseases and also pay survivor benefits to the families of a worker who was critically or severely injured at work).

C. The Road Accident Fund covers compensation due to loss of earnings, loss, and compensation for the general damages, medical and funeral costs to victims of road accidents as a result of negligent or wrongful driving of another motor vehicle. However, they receive their medical care either through the public health system or by the contributory schemes which fund the health services for its members either in private or public healthcare sectors. Although free primary healthcare has been extended to the entire population since April 2006 in most of the clinics and public hospitals across South Africa (National Treasury of South Africa 2012; Woolard et al., 2011).

In conclusion, the social intervention Programmes in sample countries of the Philippines (Asia), Brazil (South America) and South Africa (Africa) seem to be well planned and implemented which have lasted for several years and still stand with interesting impact on the vulnerable households in those countries.

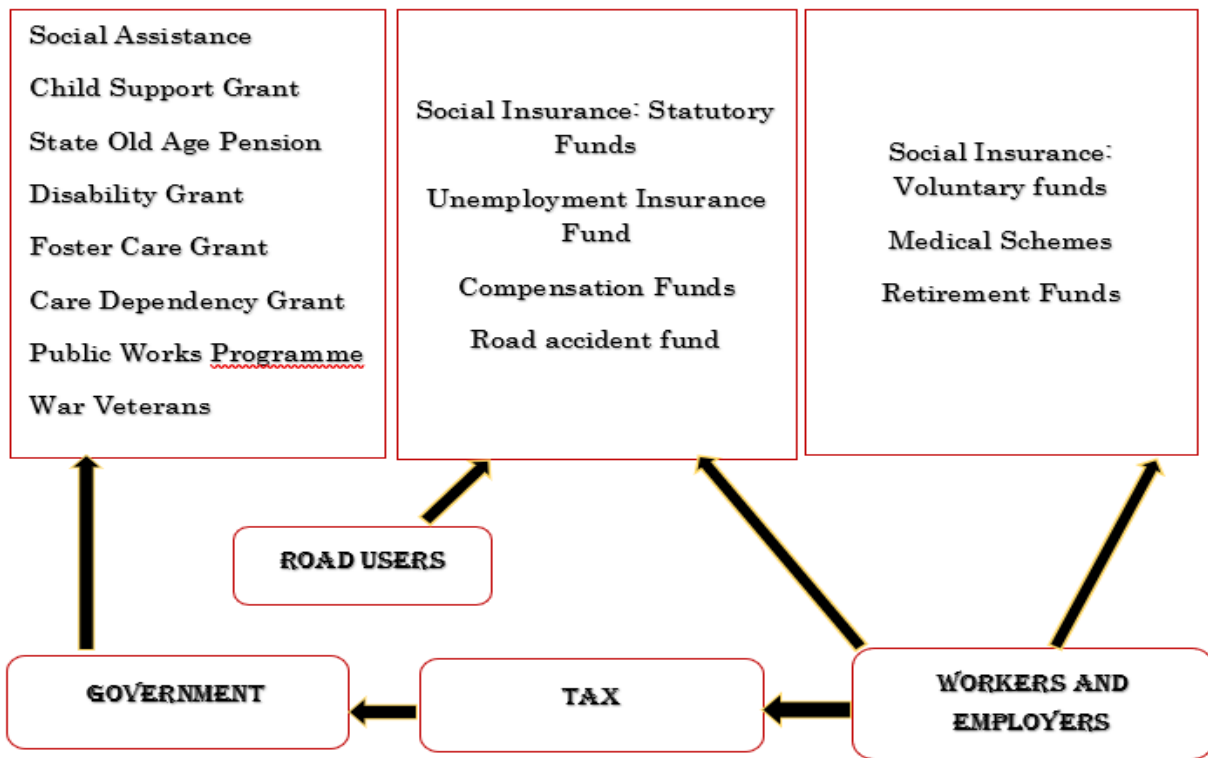


Figure 3: Social Security programmes in South Africa adapted from Woolard, Harttgen, and Klasen 2011

3. Materials and Methods

The descriptive survey method was adopted as the research design for the study. The researchers generated primary data from strategic community leaders who are privy to information on all financial and material support provided to any member of their communities. Seventy-nine (79) communities were studied across all six geopolitical zones in the country using a structured questionnaire. The data generated were analysed using simple percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

4. Results and Discussion

A sample of 79 respondents from the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria as well as the different independent variables from these respondents including respondents of different sex, occupation, marital status, different household sizes and monthly income were considered and utilized in this work as clearly depicted in Table 1. The statistical analysis was then carried out across all the investigated social investment Programmes using SPSS data analysis software.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Female	23	29.1
	Male	56	70.9
Occupation	Civil/Public servant	17	21.5
	Studentship	8	10.1
	Business Owner/Entrepreneur	22	27.8
	Self Employed	20	25.3
	Artisan/craftmanship/Farming	3	3.8
	Others	9	11.4
Household Size	Less than 4 household members	35	44.3
	4 to 6 household members	21	26.6
	7 household members and above	23	29.1
Household Monthly Income	Less than 50,000 Naira	32	40.5
	50,000 -150,000 Naira	35	44.3
	150,001- 250,000 Naira	4	5.1
	250,001-350,000 Naira	3	3.8
	Above 350,000 Naira	5	6.3
Marital Status	Married	43	54.4
	Single	36	45.6
	Total	79	100.0

The respondents constitute 70.9% male. This is mainly because most community leaders in Nigeria are male. Emphasis was on being able to get responses from the right stakeholders who are aware of any government intervention in their communities. The respondents' occupations were widely spread with 54% of them married.

N-Power Programme

The effectiveness and impact of the N-power Programme among the youths in Nigeria were investigated through the 79 participants across the six geopolitical zones as shown in Table 2 and obtained data statistically analyzed. The emanating result from N-power data analysis demonstrated moderate and high contribution and impact of the N-power social investment programme. This is evident enough in the first two N-power research questions on the benefits and impact of N-power on youth's skill development and improved source of income which showed a high mean of 3.78 and 3.59 respectively hence suggesting a high impact of N-power on youth's skills and means of income for their livelihood. A moderate and average impact of the N-power with a mean of 3.42 – 2.68 for research questions 3 – 7 was reported. Generally, the N-power Programme as per the data obtained has illustrated a moderate impact in most of the raised N-power research questions as Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the Effect of the N-power Programme

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you agree that the N-Power programme is beneficial to the Youths in skill development?	7 9	3.78	1.151
Do you agree that the N-Power programme has improved the income of the youths in society?	7 9	3.59	1.092
Do you agree that the N-Power programme is essential for building life-long skills?	7 9	3.42	1.150
Do you agree that the N-Power programme has improved consumption and expenditure?	7 9	3.39	.966
Do you agree that the N-Power Programme has reduced unemployment in Nigeria?	7 9	3.25	1.276
Do you agree that the N-Power programme has improved the ability of beneficiaries to save and invest?	7 9	3.04	1.160
Do you think that monitoring and evaluation of the N-power Programme are effective enough to ensure that youths are able to gain lifelong skills?	7 9	3.00	1.261
Do you agree that the stipend allocated to the N-Power beneficiaries is adequate to improve their living standard?	7 9	2.78	1.288
Do you agree that there was transparency and accountability in the management of N-Power funds?	7 9	2.68	1.225

With an overall mean of 3.21 in each of the areas of the questions on the effect of the N-power programme which is considered above 3.0 suggesting that the Programme has a relatively high effect on the empowerment of youths with sustainable livelihood skills.

Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme

The result generated from the conditional cash transfer programme (CCT) from the 79 respondents on the awareness of the programme as well as the descriptive data analysis is shown in Tables 3 and 4. The result from the awareness indicates that more than 72.2% of the participants are not aware of the beneficiaries of the CCT programme with 57 high frequency while only 27.8% of the respondents knew about the people who have benefited from the programme with a low frequency of 22 as Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Level of Awareness of Beneficiaries of the CCT

		Frequency	Percent
Do you know anybody who has benefited from the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme	No	57	72.2
	Yes	22	27.8
	Total	79	100.0

The very low level of awareness of the beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme is quite worrisome as the respondents are key community stakeholders who are always are of any interventions in their communities as Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent do you agree that the conditional cash transfer has increased the income of the poor masses in society?	7 9	2.7 3	1.288
To what extent do you agree that the Conditional Cash Transfer is beneficial to the poorest households in the communities?	7 9	2.6 3	1.242
To what extent do you agree that the Conditional Cash Transfer increases the standard of living of the vulnerable households in the communities?	7 9	2.5 4	1.196
How high do you think the conditional cash transfer ensures transparency and accountability in its implementation?	7 9	2.3 5	1.177

How high do you think the Conditional Cash Transfer has reduced the level of poverty in the community?	7 9	2.1 9	1.241
To what level do you think the most vulnerable households have been reached in the conditional cash transfer?	7 9	2.1 5	1.220
Do you think that the government should increase the stipend given as a Conditional Cash Transfer?	7 9	.95	.221
Do you know anybody that has benefited from the programme?	7 9	.28	.451
Valid N (listwise)	7 9		

The descriptive statistical data showed a moderate and low impact of CCT on the most vulnerable people and communities in Nigeria. The results suggest that people have little knowledge about the beneficiaries, low transparency of the programme, and little accountability in the distribution and implementation, with poor and little impact on poverty alleviation across the poor communities in Nigeria. These results provide significant evidence that the conditional cash transfer has very low influence in pulling the poorest of the poor out of poverty.

Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)

The obtained responses from the awareness of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) as well as the responses on the beneficiaries of GEEP and the descriptive statistics on GEEP research questions shown in Tables 5, 6 and 7. A higher percentage (69.6%) of responses from the respondents and a frequency of 55 showed that they are aware of the GEEP while 29.1% with a frequency of 23 have no idea about the Programme. More also, of all the 79 respondents, only 32.9% knew people who have benefited from the GEEP while 67.1% have no idea who has benefited from the programme as Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents on their Awareness of the GEEP

		Frequency	Percent
Have you heard about the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme Before?	No	23	29.1
	Yes	55	69.6
Total		79	100.0

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents on their Awareness of Beneficiaries of the GEEP

		Frequency	Percent
Do you know anybody that has benefited from the Programme?	No	53	67.1
	Yes	26	32.9
Total		79	100.0

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme

	N	Me an	Std. Deviation
To what extent do you agree that the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme is beneficial to provide financial support and training to businesses and Entrepreneurs?	7 9	3.1 4	1.141
To what extent do you agree that the beneficiaries of the GEEP funds make use of these funds judiciously?	7 9	2.9 1	1.076
To what extent do you think that the training provided by the GEEP has positively impactful on Women and Youths?	7 9	2.9 0	1.116
How much development do you think GEEP provides to agricultural workers and other vulnerable economic producers?	7 9	2.7 6	1.089
To what extent do you agree that the beneficiaries of this Programme are really the people who need it?	7 8	2.6 9	.997
To what extent do you think that the GEEP Programme is transparent and accountable?	7 9	2.5 6	1.118
Valid N (listwise)	7 8		

The statistical analysis data presented in Table 7 has demonstrated a low impact, support of the programme on businesses and entrepreneurs, misuse of the funds by the beneficiaries, the poor positive impact of the programme on women and youths, low development to agricultural workers and other vulnerable economic producers, unmerited beneficiaries, and lack of transparency in the programme. This is clear with the low mean score between 3.14 – 2.56 across all the raised research questions on GEEP. With an overall mean of 2.82 which is less than the benchmark of 3.0, sufficient evidence is provided that the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) has a low relevance on the livelihood of the micro and small-scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGFP)

The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGFP) results from the awareness of the programme, the benefits to the beneficiaries, as well as the descriptive statistical analysis from the obtained data from the 79 respondents across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, are presented in Table 8, 9 and 10. From the results retrieved from the respondents, only 10.1% with a frequency of 8 have not heard about HGFP while 89.9% with a frequency of 71 have knowledge about HGFP. Only 41.8% of the respondents with a frequency of 33 agreed to know the pupils who have benefited from the programme while 58.2% with 46 frequency have no idea about the beneficiaries of the programme as Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents on Awareness of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGFP)

		Frequency	Percent
Have you heard of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme?	No	8	10.1
	Yes	71	89.9
	Total	79	100.0

Table 9: Distribution of respondents on Awareness of Beneficiaries of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGFP)

		Frequency	Percent
Do you know any pupil that has benefited from the Programme?	No	33	41.8
	Yes	46	58.2
	Total	79	100.0

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGFP)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent do you agree with the public opinion that the government is using the school feeding platform to embezzle funds?	79	3.59	1.276
To what extent do you agree that the school feeding project improved the enrollment of primary school children and reduce dropout rates?	79	3.19	1.241
To what extent do you agree that the meal HGFP provide is well Nutritious and balanced?	79	2.92	1.141
Do you agree that the Home-Grown Feeding Programme is well organized and managed by the government?	79	2.44	1.174
Do you agree that the Home-Grown Feeding Programme is transparent and accountable?	79	2.33	1.174
Valid N (listwise)	79		

The descriptive data analysis from the responses to the research questions depicted an average of 3.59 suggesting that a high number of the respondents are of the opinion that the government is embezzling the public funds using the school feeding platform. A moderate mean average between 3.19 – 2.33 was recorded from the respondents on whether the HGFP improved the enrolment of primary school children, reduced school dropouts and whether the meal provided by HGFP is nutritious and balanced. A low number of the respondents believed that the HGFP programme is not properly managed and not transparent enough with a low mean average of 2.44 and 2.33 between the two research

questions. With an overall mean of 2.89, which is less than the 3.0 benchmark, it is obvious that the role of the home-grown school feeding Programme in improving learning in primary schools is low.

5. Conclusion

The study set out to evaluate the Social Investment Programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which was introduced in 2016 with 4 forms of N-power Programme, conditional cash transfer, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), Home-Grown School Feeding Programme relative to their impact on the vulnerable in Nigeria. The findings reveal that there is a fairly high impact of the N-Power Programme on the empowerment of youths with sustainable livelihood skills. However, the rate of youth unemployment has continued to grow over the years. The conditional cash transfer has very low influence in pulling the poorest of the poor out of poverty. The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) has a low relevance on the livelihood of the micro and small-scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The role of the home-grown school feeding Programme in improving learning in primary schools is low.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. On the N-Power Programme, the findings suggest that there is a relatively high impact on the empowerment of youths, however, the Programme can be scaled up. A comprehensive restructuring of N-Power is recommended. The N-Power Programme should be a grooming ground for two years with strict supervision so that those who are successful can be mainstreamed (employed) in the industry that they served in. However, jobs created should be functional jobs in the private and public sectors.

2. The conditional cash transfer has been seen by the respondents as a non-performing Programme as it has not contributed towards pulling anybody from poverty. The stipend given (5,000 Naira) is grossly inadequate to cater for the feeding of a family for a day, let alone for one full month. The Programme's operations have been opaque and accountability poor. The system in which the beneficiary list is generated should be comprehensively reviewed and the system of payment overhauled. An audit trail should be seen by all. It is arguable that the poorest of the poor are financially excluded, however, the empowerment of this Programme should start with financial inclusion. When all participants in the beneficiary list get financially included, then all payments should be made through their bank accounts for accountability purposes. A continuous audit system should be instituted in the Programme so that any traces of embezzlement by the implementers are detected early and the perpetrator should be prosecuted.

3. The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) has low impact on the livelihood of micro and small-scale entrepreneurs. The aspect of the GEEP involving graduates should be fully restructured. The National Youth Service Corps should serve as a platform for conscious skill acquisition for one of the Programmes for both soft and hard skills. At the end of the skill acquisition period, a take-off loan with zero interest should be provided to the participants adequate to let them kick off the trade, business or venture. As the young graduates are likely not to have any collaterals, their tertiary institutions' certificates should serve as collateral.

4. The home-grown school feeding Programme has been strongly criticised and this research has confirmed some of the areas of weaknesses of the Programme. There are questions about the quality of food provided to the pupils and the transparency in the management of the funds and the vendors for the food supply. One thing that could be very useful is to review the budget for each child. The original N70 budget per child is no longer sufficient to feed a child. An upward review is needed, however, that is not the only problem. An issue of transparency and accountability in the entire supply chain for the food is required. The head teacher should cease to be an active participant in the recruitment system of the vendor, rather should just serve as a watchdog. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) executive should be involved more actively in the procurement of the food vendor and monitoring of the quality of food provided to their children, however, the PTA executive must not handle any funding or payment of the vendor. All payments therefore should be made to vendors directly by the Federal government. This means that a food vendors list across all schools involved should be built and utilised for direct payment. Lastly, a seamless reporting system should be established to enable the monitoring team.

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