Social Welfare Programmes and Socio-Economic Development: A Study of N-Power Programme in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the impact of the N-power programme on socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State employing a survey method. Using the empowerment theory as its frame of analysis, the paper adopted the Morgan table to determine a sample size of 384 from a population of 3,826,000. Both stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to collect data from primary and secondary sources. The research major findings included the fact that there is an impact of the N-Teach programme on job creation in Akwa Ibom State; N-Agro programme has an impact on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State, and N-health programme has a significant impact on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State. It was therefore concluded that the programme had demonstrated a potential to drive meaningful change in the state through job creation, food security, and healthcare delivery, among other initiatives. Thus, the study recommended that the Federal Government should review the programme to accommodate more unemployed graduates and transform the beneficiaries to full time staff with a proportionate salary; the Federal and State governments should improve on the programme through effective monitoring and boost measures that would encourage more involvement (particularly in the input and processing area) of the N-Power Agro programme to improve food production in Nigeria, among others.

Keywords: Social welfare programmes, Socio-economic development, N-power, job creation, food sufficiency and healthcare delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The World Bank (2012) and UNDP (2016) hold the view that social welfare, known also as social security or social protection, goes beyond accessing key social services such as education, healthcare, social work, and social care to embrace other measures like labour market policies and laws that can create an enabling environment for individuals and household economic survival and sustainability. Like other developing countries, Nigeria has faced the challenges of socioeconomic development, where high poverty rate, unemployment, lack of access to good healthcare, food insecurity, lack of basic skills and inequality have constituted major concerns for policymakers and development practitioners.

In contemporary Nigeria, as in many other sub-Saharan African nations, young people face profound barriers in securing essential services and sustainable employment opportunities. The country continues to occupy a low position on the Human Development Index of the United Nations, with nearly one-third of its citizens (30.9%) living in poverty, concentrated largely in northern regions and rural communities (UNDP, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Youth unemployment is a particularly pressing issue: about 35% of Nigerians aged 15 to 34 are without stable work, even while actively looking for employment, or are employed fewer than 20 hours a week. Another 28% of the youth workforce fall into the category of underemployment, meaning they are engaged in jobs that provide only 20 to 39 hours of work weekly (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2022).

In response to persistent socio-economic difficulties, successive Nigerian governments have launched a series of intervention programmes to address poverty, unemployment, poor health delivery and food insecurity. President Muhammadu Buhari's administration established the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) in 2016, officially implemented in 2017, as a comprehensive strategy for reducing unemployment and alleviating poverty (Abin, 2018). The programme sought to support citizens through skills development, financial assistance, and investment opportunities. N-SIP is an aggregation of four main elements: N-Power (Employment Generation and Youth Empowerment), National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP). Collectively, these initiatives emphasise raising household incomes, strengthening resilience to economic shocks, and improving overall livelihood security (Abin, 2018). The N-Power programme, in particular, emerged as the flagship initiative, equipping young Nigerians with vocational training, entrepreneurial skills, and practical experience to enhance their employability and capacity for self-reliance (FGN, 2018).

In Akwa Ibom State, the beneficiaries of the programme between 2016 and 2017 in the graduate category were 3,415, Batch B (2017 and 2018) were 9,529 and Batch C stream 1 & 2 had a total number of 21,000 beneficiaries before the programme was suspended in 2023. In the non-graduate category, between   2017 and 2020, 290 youths were trained, accommodated and fed by the Federal Government through the programme. In 2021, 3,000 youths benefited from this category on sewing, painting, tilling and woodwork. etc., while in 2023, 1,500 youths were trained in script writing, hardware and animation. A total of 34,634 Akwa Ibom State youths benefited from the programme between 2016 and 2023, before it was suspended in 2023 by the administration of President Bola Tinubu (N-power Information Guide, 2023 & Office of the State Focal Person, 2023). Although Akwa Ibom State has been a beneficiary of the N-Power programme, the state has witnessed its fair share of the recurrent development challenges, including poverty, unemployment, lack of good healthcare, lack of basic skills among the youths, food insecurity and inequality. Hence, this study aims to investigate the N-Power programme's impact on the socio-economic well-being of the beneficiaries in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

Although Nigeria stands as one of Africa's largest economies, it continues to struggle with deep-rooted socio-economic issues such as widespread poverty, high unemployment, food shortages, weak healthcare systems, and growing inequality. Several interlinked factors, including constrained access to quality education and vocational training, scarcity of decent job opportunities, and insufficient social welfare structures, have slowed progress in the country's development and in Akwa Ibom State in particular.

Core social problems such as poverty, inadequate healthcare delivery, unemployment, and food insecurity remain particularly pressing (Asaju, 2014). Responding to such persistent

challenges, consecutive Nigerian governments have introduced a variety of poverty reduction and employment creation programmes. Examples include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), among many others. Despite the ambitious scope and good intentions of these interventions, their implementation has yielded limited results, as poverty and unemployment rates have continued to rise rather than decline.

The N-Power initiative serves as the employment generation aspect of the social welfare programmes designed to alleviate poverty and unemployment, focusing on Nigerian youths. In spite of the programme's promise, there are doubts regarding its effectiveness in tackling the country's socio-economic issues. With this context in mind, this study assesses the potential or likelihood of the N-power programme achieving some specific socio-economic development goals outlined in its objectives.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate how social welfare programmes, particularly N-Power, contribute to the socio-economic development of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The subsidiary objectives were:

i. To examine the impact of N-Teach programme on job creation in Akwa Ibom State.
ii. To ascertain the effect of N-Agro programme on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State.
iii. To examine the impact of N-Health programme on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated as guidance to the study:

i. Is there any impact of the N-Teach programme on job creation in Akwa Ibom State?
ii. Is there any effect of the N-Agro programme on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State?
iii. Is there any impact of the N-Health programme on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were framed to guide this work:

i. **Ho:** There is no impact of N-Teach programme on job creation in Akwa Ibom State.
ii. **Ho:** There is no effect of N-Agro programme on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State.
iv. **Ho**: N-health programme has no impact on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Concept of Social Welfare Programmes

The United Nations (2021) define social welfare as "a set of policies and programmes intended at averting or protecting all people against paucity, susceptibility and social exclusion throughout their existence on earth". Also, it is viewed by the Asian Development Bank (cited in Ekpo et al., 2023) as "a set of policies designed to reduce poverty and susceptibility by stimulating efficient labour market, diminishing the people's exposure to risks, and improving the ability of the people to protect themselves against threats or loss of income".

The concept of social protection centres on policy measures designed by the government, targeted at providing socio-economic benefits to the citizens in cash or kind, with

the aims of improving their income security, and access to education, healthcare services and also an advancement of the welfare of the populace in the state (Ekpo, 2023). World Bank report (2024) defines social welfare or protection programme as "a set of policy actions that a society or government provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income as a result of various contingencies or natural disasters such as sickness, maternity, employment damage, joblessness, old age etc.". It involves instruments like social insurance, social support, labour and economic inclusion initiatives to help the people, especially women, youth, physically challenged persons, the poor and vulnerable persons in the state (World Bank, 2024).

Concept of Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development is defined as a progression of improving prosperity by expanding the manufacturing, supply, and consumption of goods and services. In contrast, social development highlights the complexity of social structures, processes, and relationships, with an emphasis on two key aspects: (1) addressing the social needs of people as central goals of development, and (2) adopting participatory, people-centred approaches to achieving those goals. It is closely tied to values such as inclusivity, social justice, and collective well-being. Its progress is often measured through indicators covering areas like income, poverty reduction, employment and job security, education, healthcare, crime rates, and civic engagement. (Owumi, 2022).

N-power

This is a youth empowerment and employment programme established by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The programme attempted to create an opportunity where most Nigerian Youths can acquire skills and training. The programme was targeted at the Nigerian youths between the ages of 18 and 35. The segmental sequences under the programme guarantee that each applicant learns and practices the utmost of what is vital to acquire or generate a job. The N-Power programme was essentially divided into two main groups: N-Power Graduate Categories and N-Power Non-Graduate Categories (FGN, 2018).

N- Teach Programme and Job Creation

Okafor (2016) explains that employment generation is an inherent aspect of social development, typically shaped by government policies aimed at lowering unemployment through the expansion of job opportunities within the economy. From the early stages of Nigeria's development, policymakers identified full employment as a critical mechanism for aligning economic growth with the nation's broader developmental goals. Job creation has thus been viewed as central to economic recovery programs, encompassing both short-term opportunities in the public sector or private sector and more sustainable long-term strategies. For such initiatives to succeed, it is essential to differentiate between temporary interventions and policies designed to achieve enduring impact.

One of the unique parts of the programme was the N-Power Teach scheme, introduced specifically to tackle two critical issues: the dearth of basic education-level teachers, resulting in high pupil–teacher ratios, and the growing youth unemployment, which fueled social vices. The programme operated as a two-year paid volunteer scheme, deploying young people as teaching assistants in public primary schools to both address teacher shortages and improve the livelihoods of unemployed graduates. According to Akujuru & Enyioko (2019), these volunteers not only support classroom instruction and student development but also extend educational access to underserved communities. They also help promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, through prime emphasis on computer science, applied mathematics, as well as engineering.

The N-Teach scheme was introduced to generate employment, build youth capacity, strengthen teaching support in public schools, and curb rural–urban migration among youths seeking white-collar jobs. It also aimed to transfer employable skills in the form of entrepreneurial abilities and technical creativity, making it a widely commended initiative. This aligns with the arguments of Okoro & Bassey (2018) and Bisong (2019) that the scheme equiped participants with the required skills for creating self-employment opportunities as well as service provision to their communities, rather than relying on the limited and often unavailable public sector jobs in Akwa Ibom State

According to Inyang et al. (2020), one of the primary contributions of the N-Teach Programme to job creation in Akwa Ibom State was the recruitment and placement of additional teachers in public schools. Beneficiaries are equipped with transferable skills in diverse areas such as healthcare, education, technology and agriculture. By offering both structured training and practical work experience, the programme provided participants with valuable exposure to real-world environments. This experience not only strengthened their competencies but also authenticated their individual ability to apply acquired knowledge, thereby improving their chances of securing sustainable employment.

Echoing this view, Ekong (2019) emphasised that the initiative helped reduce teacher turnover and improved retention, while N-Power also facilitated job placements by collaborating with various institutions and government agencies. Such efforts ensured that participants gained a direct pathway into employment. For Udoh et al. (2020), the programme successfully reduced graduate unemployment in the state, demonstrating its role in alleviating youth joblessness, which remains a major challenge across emerging economies. By integrating young people into the labour force, the initiative not only enhances the lives of individual recipients but also plays a crucial part in promoting overall socio-economic progress and stability.

Table 1: Number of Youth Graduates Employed by N-Power in Akwa Ibom State

Years	Numbers
2016- 2017	9,874
2017- 2018	3,760
2018-2023	21,000
Total	**34,634**

Source: Office of the State Focal Person (2024); N-power Information Guide (2023).

Table 2: Number of N-Teach Graduates Employed by N-Power in Akwa Ibom State.

Years	Numbers
2016- 2017	4,330
2017- 2018	3,547
2018-2023	714
Total	**8,591**

Source: Office of the State Focal Person (2024); N-power Information Guide (2023).

N-Agro Programme and Food Sufficiency

In response to the persistent challenge of food sufficiency, the federal government introduced various agricultural initiatives aimed at improving rural livelihoods, expanding employment, and ensuring food security. Over the years, several programmes have been implemented, including the Directorate of Food, Rood, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1985, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, YouWIN, and recently, the N-Power programme (Ezeanokwasa & Nwachukwu, 2014).

One of the key components of the N-Power programme, N-Power Agro, specifically targets agriculture. Beneficiaries act as liaisons between research institutions and farmers, serving as facilitators, communicators, and extension agents. Their responsibilities include helping farmers make informed decisions, applying modern knowledge to improve yields, and strengthening agribusiness capacity (Aderonmu, 2017). Participants received training, stipends, and entrepreneurial development opportunities, allowing them to save toward future business ventures (Nwaobi, 2019). The programme's broader aim was to instil in youth the skills, attitudes, and aspirations necessary for self-employment and to enable them to generate jobs (Adesina, 2011). Evidence suggests that the programme positively affected food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State. Okoro & Bassey (2018) report that it boosted productivity and improved food availability, while Essien et al. (2019) found that household food insecurity declined as access to crops and livestock products increased. Udoh et al. (2020) highlight improved crop yields and livestock production, while Akpan et al. (2020) note reductions in food prices and improvements in household purchasing power.

Thus, Inyang et al. (2019) emphasise that by expanding access to essential inputs like subsidised fertilisers, the scheme enhanced production of staples such as cassava, yam, and maize, which also raised farmer incomes and strengthened rural livelihoods. Overall, the programme has the potential to transform agricultural productivity and food availability in Akwa Ibom and beyond. However, as Essien (2020) cautions, the long-term success of the scheme depends on overcoming implementation challenges and ensuring sustained government commitment.

N-Health Programme and Healthcare Delivery

The difficulties in delivering reachable and inexpensive healthcare services in emerging nations, such as Nigeria, have consistently raised concerns for international organisations (WHO 2016). This is largely due to the inadequate state of health facilities and nutritional needs (Owumi 2022), making it a fundamental challenge to maintain a healthy lifestyle, alongside numerous other issues that persist, including limited access to cost-effective healthcare, uneven distribution of medical resources, regular shortages of medications, negative attitudes from healthcare professionals, and high service costs that many impoverished citizens find unaffordable, all contributing to the dilemma. These issues are further worsened by insufficient infrastructure and ineffective health education strategies (Jegede, 2024).

In Nigeria and specifically in Akwa Ibom State, three primary healthcare structures deliver medical care to the people: Primary Healthcare (PHC), General Hospitals (which represent secondary healthcare), and Specialist Hospitals (which represent tertiary healthcare). These different healthcare systems play a crucial role in advancing widespread health coverage and have garnered significant attention in recent years (WHO, 2016). Current circumstances reveal that Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State in particular, is far from achieving universal health coverage and effective healthcare delivery. The lack of a fully developed and functional healthcare system continues to pose a developmental challenge for Nigeria. This situation jeopardises the attainment of health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) alongside other health objectives.

To address some of these issues, the government introduced the N-power Health Programme through the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP). The N-Power Health programme placed volunteers in underserved communities to deliver preventive care, particularly to vulnerable groups such as women and children, improving citizens' well-being while strengthening community-based health systems (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2019). Evidence from different scholars shows that N-power health promoted healthcare delivery in Nigeria and many states across the country. For example, Obukohwo & Patricia (2020) reported improved healthy living conditions among rural women who participated in a renewal education

programme. This positive attitude agrees with the view of Jibrin et al. (2023) that N-power programmes are important gatekeepers in disseminating health messages. Commenting on the impact of the programme on healthcare delivery in the state, Udoh (2020) affirmed that N-Power Health enhanced healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State by providing additional manpower to healthcare facilities and promoted community participation in healthcare delivery through awareness campaigns and education on several health-related issues. On his part, Essien (2020) averred that N-Power Health enhanced the healthcare quality in Akwa Ibom State through improved access to healthcare delivery, particularly in non-urban communities.

More so, on the impact of the programme, N-Power Health has contributed to the mitigation of infant as well as maternal mortality rates in Akwa Ibom State by providing trained birth attendants and improving emergency obstetric care in the primary health centres (Inyang, 2019). Agreeing with the views of other scholar on the effect of the programme on healthcare delivery in the state Udoh (2020) and Akpan (2020) state that the N- power health programme improved the accessibility to healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State, particularly in rural areas through the renovation and equipping of primary health centres and also strengthened community-based health services, including health education and outreach services, which has improved community engagement and participation in healthcare services in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the empowerment theory. Barbara Solomon introduced this theory in 1976. It is a theory of economic practices that suggests that the best way to improve the economic conditions of a State is by freeing individual entrepreneurial talents and capabilities within a system defined by robust private property rights (Wendy et al., 2004). This theory became a tool for economic development in Nigeria and other African nations after the Great Depression in the late 1980s. The theory states that empowerment is focused on liberating marginalised and disadvantaged segments of the community so they can meet basic social needs and contribute positively to society's overall development.

This study applies the empowerment theory because the N-power, a government initiative, serves as a platform for engaging youths in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State, enabling them to secure meaningful employment that increases their well-being and offers them the chance for a better life. Nigeria cannot claim to be achieving sustainable economic progress while over sixty per cent of its population is without access to job opportunities, healthcare delivery and goes to bed hungry. This was the primary aim of the federal government while developing N-power and other initiatives to reduce poverty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research Design and Population

The paper employed a survey design method. This method uses various research tools to collect and analyse data from a sample within the community. The youths of Akwa Ibom State constitute the population of this study. Although the projected population of Akwa Ibom State is 7,632,000, the youths constitute 45.43%, i.e 3,826,000 of the projected population, according to Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Economic Development (2024), involving individuals between the ages of 18 and 35.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study's sample size is 384 participants selected using Krejcie and Morgan's Table of 1970. The respondents for this research are the youths between the ages of 18 years and above who are knowledgeable about the subject matter in Akwa Ibom State. 384 respondents were drawn and administered a structured questionnaire in the selected local government areas.

Stratified and simple random sample approaches were used in this study. The strata of this study included Akwa Ibom State's three senatorial districts. These senatorial districts are divided into tiers based on local government areas.

Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. The primary data collection was conducted through questionnaires. In contrast, the secondary data was derived from various official documents, including the N-Power Information Guide, academic textbooks, magazines, journals, articles, internet resources, and previous studies conducted by other researchers.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was the main tool for gathering data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of two distinct sections. Section A aimed to collect demographic data about participants, while Section B gathered data on insights regarding social welfare programmes and socio-economic development.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In this investigation, criterion validity (or criteria-related validity) was used. Thus, the study instrument's validity was undertaken by having the supervisor analyse the items to determine their suitability. The internal consistency method was used for determining the reliability of the instrument (Questionnaire). This was done by questionnaire administration to 20 respondents randomly selected from the population of the study, but previously excluded from the study sample. The Cronbach Alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87, signalling good reliability.

Method of Data Analysis

For this study, tabular presentations, percentages, and multiple regressions were used to analyse the data. To test the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, using version 20.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this section, data are presented and evaluated, leading to the study results and findings.

Hypothesis 1

H_o: There is no impact of N-Teach Programme on job creation in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Multiple Regressions

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regressions	48688.578	8	6086.072	372.396	.000[b]
	Residual	5000.965	306	16.343		
	Total	53689.543	314			

N = No. of Respondents

Source: Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-Ver.20.0, 2011)

The model summary is very useful in the analysis. The R-squared value of 0.907 represents the coefficient of determination. It means that about 91% variation in the dependent variable (y) was explained by all the independent variables. The results from the ANOVA table show an F-value of 372.396 and a significant value of 0.000. However, since the P-value is greater than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is hereby rejected, and it can be concluded that, N-Teach programme has a significant impact on job creation in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2
Ho: There is no effect of N-agro programme on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Estimate Error	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.969ª	.940	.938	.14437	0.940	594.902	8	306	0.000

N= No. of Research Respondents   Significant at 0.05 Significance Level
 Source: (SPSS- Ver. 20.0,2011).

The model summary with an R-Square value of 0.940 indicates that a predictor (independent variable) accounted for a 94% effect on the dependent variable. Furthermore, the table indicates an F-value of 594.902, degree of freedom (df) of 8 and a significant value of 0.000 (H_o rejected). This therefore implies that N-Agro programme has a significant effect on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3
Ho: N- health programme has no impact on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regressions	48688.578	8	6086.072	372.396	.000ᵇ
	Residual	5000.965	306	16.343		
	Total	53689.543	314			

N= No. of Respondents: Significant at 0.05 Error Level
Source: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-Ver.20.0, 2011).

The R- square value of 0.907 represents coefficient of determination. It shows that, about 91% of the variation in dependent variable (y) was expounded by independent variable. Result from the ANOVA table shows F-value of 372.396 and a significant value of 0.000 However, as P-value is greater than the error level of (0.05), the null hypothesis is overruled, and it can be concluded that, N-Health programme has a significant impact on healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: ANOVA
Multiple Regressions
Results/Findings

Findings of the first hypothesis on Multiple Regression analysis on N-teach programme and job creation in Akwa Ibom State revealed a high regression coefficient of 372.396. The implication of this regression value, based on the decision rule, is that the relationship between the two variables is significant. This finding underscores the programme's importance in job creation, though emphasising the necessity for constant evaluation and upgrading in Akwa Ibom State. Corroborating the finding, Inyang et al. (2020) averred that one of the major ways in which N-Teach Programme contributes to job creation in Akwa Ibom State is through increased recruitment and deployment of teachers to public schools in the state. The programme provided participants with valued abilities and proficiencies in various fields such as healthcare delivery, technology, agriculture and education. This expertise expressively enhances the employability of the beneficiaries.

The finding also aligns with the thoughts of Ekong (2019), that the programme improved teacher retention and reduced teacher turnover; and with the finding of Udoh et al (2020), that it increased teacher employment and reduced unemployment among graduates in Akwa Ibom State. It was not different from the findings of Zainab et al. (2024), who affirmed that, N-teach programme had a positive impact on job creation among its beneficiaries, efficiently tackling the demanding concern of youth joblessness and temperately abridged poverty by offering employment chances, facilitating skill development and thereby, improving the economic welfare of its beneficiaries.

Findings of the second hypothesis on the Multiple Regression analysis of N-Agro and food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State revealed a high regression coefficient of 594.902. The implication of the regression value, based on the decision rule, is that the relationship between the two variables is momentous. Corroborating the above, (Anyanwu, 2017) viewed that though the Nigerian government aaimed at the realization of sustainable nationwide food self-sufficiency through the N-agro volunteers, it will also build the beneficiaries for a long lasting profession on agriculture or in similar fields with destinations such as Agricultural extension workers, consultancy, seeds, fertilizers and other input aggregators, farm managers, public sector works in agriculture, several industries and producers of agrarian products, farming cooperatives management, pest control companies, self-employment or employed as a farming consultant

Also, Essien et al. (2019) had averred that the programme enhanced food access and reduced food insecurity among households in the state. The N-Agro programme was found to improve agricultural productivity, increase crop yields and improve livestock production in Akwa Ibom State. Considering the important nature of the scheme on food availability and access in Akwa Ibom State, the study's result aligns with the findings of Akpan et al. (2020) that the programme increased the availability of staple crops, improved food access among households, reduced food prices and improved the purchasing power of households. The N-Agro programme has been found to have a positive impact on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State.

The finding of the third hypothesis on Multiple Regression analysis of N-health and skilled healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State revealed a high regression coefficient of 372. 396. The implication of this result, based on the decision rule, is that, relationship between the two variables is significant. This finding underscores the importance of the programme on healthcare delivery, although emphasising the necessity for constant evaluation and upgrading. This positive attitude agrees with the finding of Udoh et al (2020) that, N-power Health scheme enhanced effective healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State by providing additional manpower to healthcare facilities and promoting community participation in healthcare delivery through awareness campaigns and education on several health-related issues. Udoh (2020) and Akpan (2020) also affirmed that the programme improved the accessibility of healthcare services in Akwa Ibom State, particularly in rural areas, through the renovation/equipping of primary health centres and strengthened community-based health services, including health education and outreach services, which have improved community engagement and participation in healthcare services in Akwa Ibom State. The finding further aligns with the views of Ekong et al. (2019) that the programme increased the number of healthcare specialists in the rural areas, improved access to healthcare services, equipped healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to provide quality healthcare services and encouraged community participation in healthcare initiatives, promoting health awareness and education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Conclusion

From the study findings, conclusions can be drawn regarding social welfare programmes and socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. First, when it comes to N-teach programme and job creation, the majority of respondents expressed positivity towards the effect of N-teach and job creation. It is essential to stress that the N-Teach programme generated employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Akwa Ibom and Nigerian youths, reducing unemployment rates and stimulating economic growth. The programme also improved education outcomes in Akwa Ibom State through the deployment of qualified volunteers, enhancing the learning experience for millions of pupils in the primary school.

Participants also confirmed the existence of a significant impact of the N-Agro programme on food sufficiency in Akwa Ibom State. This implies that the programme enhanced food sufficiency and security through the training and deployment of agro-based volunteers, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and increasing food production in the state. Consequently, respondents affirmed that, N-health programme improved healthcare delivery in Akwa Ibom State through improved healthcare access, enhanced healthcare quality, increased community engagement, increased healthcare awareness and enhanced healthcare quality. In conclusion, the research findings underscore the impact of the programme in Akwa Ibom State. This conclusion highlights the programme's role in addressing the issues of socio-economic development among the youths in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Judging from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are advanced:
1. The Federal Government needs to review the programme to accommodate more unemployed graduates and transform the beneficiaries into full-time staff with a proportionate salary. For instance, the N-Teach beneficiaries should be absorbed into the Federal and State Ministries of Education during the recruitment of Teachers.
2. Federal and state governments should improve the programme through effective monitoring and boosting measures that would encourage more involvement (particularly in

the input and processing area) of the N-Power Agro programme to improve food production in Nigeria.

3. Federal and state governments should incorporate the N-health programme into the state's health systems to ensure sustainability and greater impact of the programme on healthcare delivery in the state.

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