

Challenges of implementation of Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) on Employment Generation

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Abstract

Unemployment among youths remains a critical socio-economic challenge in Nasarawa State despite the establishment of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) as a strategic intervention for employment generation. This situation necessitates a systematic assessment of the challenges confronting the implementation of NAYEA programmes in the state. The objective of this study was to examine the institutional, financial, and operational challenges affecting the effective implementation of NAYEA, with a view to identifying gaps in policy design, implementation strategies, and beneficiary participation. The study was anchored on the Structural-Functionalism theory to explain the phenomenon under review. A mixed research design was adopted, involving the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of questionnaires, while qualitative data were sourced from secondary materials such as scholarly literature, official reports, time-series data, and other relevant written documents. The study population consisted of three thousand one hundred and twenty-five (3,125) respondents drawn

from NAYEA staff members, beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders across nine selected local government areas in Nasarawa State, namely Lafia, Keana, Doma, Nasarawa Eggon, Akwanga, Wamba, Keffi, Toto, and Karu. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, yielding a sample size of 400. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed across the nine local government areas, 387 were returned, while 13 were not returned. A purposive sampling technique was employed. The findings

revealed that the effective implementation of NAYEA programmes in Nasarawa State is largely constrained by inadequate and delayed funding, alongside weak institutional and structural frameworks characterized by poor monitoring and evaluation systems, insufficient training infrastructure, and inadequate legal and regulatory support. Based on these findings, the study recommends increased and timely government funding, enhanced partnerships, robust monitoring and evaluation systems, improved training infrastructure, and strengthened legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure sustainable youth employment generation in Nasarawa State.

Keywords: Youth, NAYEA, Youth Empowerment, Employment Generation, Underemployment

Introduction

Youth unemployment constitutes one of the most enduring socio-economic challenges confronting contemporary societies, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. Although young people represent a critical demographic for economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion, a significant proportion continues to experience limited access to decent, productive, and sustainable employment. This challenge is intensified by rapid population growth, weak industrial capacity, skills mismatches, and broader structural constraints within the economy (Adamu, 2025). At the state level, these pressures are particularly evident in Nasarawa State, where rising youth unemployment poses serious implications for economic development, social stability, and public security, thereby necessitating targeted and effective youth-focused employment interventions.

Youth empowerment has therefore emerged as a key policy response to the challenge of youth unemployment. It is broadly understood as a process that enhances the capabilities of young people through education, skills acquisition, access to productive resources, and opportunities for meaningful participation in economic and social development (Ajeh, 2024). In operational terms, youth empowerment initiatives often encompass vocational and technical training, entrepreneurship development, public works programmes, and access to finance. When effectively implemented, such interventions can promote self-reliance, reduce unemployment, and mitigate social problems associated with joblessness (Opeyemi, 2020). However, weak implementation frameworks, institutional inefficiencies, and policy incoherence can significantly undermine these objectives, limiting the employment outcomes of empowerment programmes.

In Nasarawa State, successive administrations have pursued youth empowerment as a strategy for addressing unemployment. Early interventions under Governor Abdullahi Adamu (1999–2007) emphasized vocational training and skills acquisition as pathways to self-

employment. These initiatives were further expanded during the administration of Governor Aliyu Akwe Doma (2007-2011), with increased attention to youth access to financial resources for entrepreneurial activities. A more structured and institutionalized approach emerged under Governor Umaru Tanko Al-Makura (2011-2019) with the establishment of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Scheme (NAYES) in 2014, which integrated youth engagement into public service delivery, community development, and security-related functions (Jibrin, 2019).

Building on this foundation, the administration of Governor Abdullahi Sule restructured NAYES into the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) in 2024, thereby transforming it from a programme-based initiative into a formal agency with an expanded mandate. NAYEA is tasked with the recruitment, training, and deployment of skilled and unskilled youths across key sectors, including environmental management, traffic regulation, community security, and social services. Through these functions, the agency is expected to play a pivotal role in employment generation, youth inclusion, and community development within the state. This paper will examine the challenges associated with the implementation of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) in relation to employment generation. By interrogating these challenges, the study aims to proffer policy discourse by providing evidence-based insights and recommendations for strengthening youth empowerment initiatives as instruments for addressing unemployment and promoting socio-economic development in Nasarawa State.

Statement of the Problem

According to the National Population Commission's projected figures (2024), Nasarawa State has an estimated population of 2,931,724 people and is richly endowed with crude oil deposits, solid minerals, and vast agricultural resources. Despite this resource potential, the socio-economic conditions of a large segment of the population have deteriorated over time, particularly among the youth. Unemployment has emerged as a critical development challenge in the state, contributing to rising levels of social insecurity, including youth restiveness, violent crimes, kidnapping, militancy, and other forms of delinquent behaviour. As of 2023, the unemployment rate in Nasarawa State stood at approximately 27.5%, while youth unemployment was estimated at about 40%, according to reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and state government sources. These figures underscore a persistent disconnect between existing development policies and their effectiveness in addressing the employment needs of the youth population.

In response to the growing unemployment crisis, the Nasarawa State Government established the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) to design and implement programmes aimed at enhancing youth employability and promoting job creation. However, despite these interventions, youth unemployment and underemployment remain pervasive, with many young people confined to informal and insecure forms of work due to inadequate skills acquisition, limited access to productive resources, and insufficient infrastructural

support for entrepreneurship. Although NAYEA has introduced several empowerment initiatives, their impact appears limited in terms of sustainable employment generation and long-term economic stability for beneficiaries. Furthermore, existing literature reveals limited scholarly attention to the effectiveness and implementation challenges of NAYEA's employment generation strategies. This gap necessitates a systematic examination of the agency's programmes to assess their effectiveness, identify implementation challenges, and propose sustainable strategies that align youth empowerment initiatives with labour market demands. Consequently, this study seeks to contribute to empirical and policy discourse by providing actionable insights for strengthening employment generation efforts for youth in Nasarawa State.

Research Questions

- i. What are the challenges in the implementation of NAYEA's programs on youth employment generation?
- ii. What are the strategies implemented by Nasarawa State Youth empowerment Agency (NAYEA) to address youth unemployment in Nasarawa state?

Objectives of the study

- i. To identify the challenges in the implementation of NAYEA's programs on youth employment generation
- ii. To analyses the strategies implemented by Nasarawa State Youth empowerment Agency (NAYEA) to address youth unemployment in Nasarawa state.

Literature review

This segment focuses on issues relating to subject of investigation starting with conceptual framework, empirical review of related studies and theoretical framework.

Conceptual framework Youth

Youth is widely recognized as a transitional stage between childhood and

adulthood, characterized by developmental, social, and psychological changes. Fan, Agwu, and Akpan (2022) define youth primarily in temporal and developmental terms, emphasizing its role as a period of transition. Similarly, Yappy (2023) highlights the vibrancy and vigor of youth, focusing on its biological and temporal dimensions. However, both definitions are limited, as they overlook the socio-cultural, economic, and psychological factors that shape young

people's experiences and fail to account for the heterogeneity of youth populations across different contexts.

Bamidele (2021) further notes that definitions of youth vary across cultural and contextual settings. While the Nigerian National Youth Policy and the National Youth Council of Nigeria define youth as individuals aged 18 to 35 years, this rigid age-based classification may inadequately reflect the complexity and dynamism of youthhood, which also encompasses socio-economic status, education, and psychological development. For the purpose of this paper, youth refers to young persons within the officially recognized age bracket as defined by national and state youth development policies, who are eligible beneficiaries of government-led empowerment and employment generation programmes. These individuals are typically faced with structural challenges such as unemployment, underemployment, limited access to productive resources, and inadequate skill development opportunities.

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment has been widely conceptualized as a process aimed at enhancing young people's capacities to actively shape their personal and collective futures. Omeje, Chikere and Onuoha (2020) view youth empowerment as fostering self-confidence, critical thinking, and a sense of agency that enables youth to effectively engage with and influence their socio- environmental contexts. While this perspective highlights the importance of individual capacity development, it has been critiqued for its limited engagement with the broader structural and systemic conditions that shape youths' access to opportunities and resources. Consequently, youth empowerment is more appropriately understood as a dynamic and context specific process that integrates both the development of individual competencies such as self-efficacy and critical consciousness and the transformation of socio-political and economic structures to promote equitable access, inclusive participation, and sustained involvement in decision-making processes.

Employment Generation

Nteegah (2021) conceptualizes employment generation primarily as a byproduct of increased access to financial services, such as credit and deposit facilities, which enable small businesses to expand and hire additional workers. This perspective emphasizes the importance of resource availability in stimulating economic activity and employment; however, it may underestimate the complexity of factors that influence job creation, including

labor market policies, infrastructure development, sectoral dynamics, and institutional support. Complementing this view, Bappah, Ibrahim, and Tanko (2024) define employment generation as a direct outcome of effective entrepreneurship education, highlighting how the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, competencies, and knowledge equips individuals to establish and manage business ventures, thereby creating employment opportunities and contributing to broader economic development. While this framework underscores the centrality of individual capacity in fostering job creation, it does not fully account for the enabling environment required for entrepreneurial initiatives to thrive, such as regulatory frameworks, public sector interventions, and technological innovation. Taken together, these conceptualizations suggest that employment generation should be understood as a function of both resource accessibility and human capital development, operating within a supportive institutional and infrastructural context that collectively facilitates sustainable job creation and economic growth.

Empirical review of related literatures

In view of the challenges hindering the implementation of youth empowerment programmes, several empirical studies have been conducted. Ebelechukwu, Chidi, and Ebele (2021), in their appraisal of the N-Power scheme, highlight systemic and institutional constraints that limit the effectiveness of youth empowerment initiatives. Their study demonstrates that, despite Nigeria's youthful demographic advantage, the implementation of such programmes is weakened by factors including corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, delayed stipend disbursement, politicization of programme administration, and the absence of clear post-programme transition frameworks. Similarly, Amadi and Ogidi (2024), in their assessment of the N-Power programme in Rivers State, identify mismanagement, technological inadequacies, and irregular payment of allowances as major impediments to achieving the programme's objectives of reducing youth unemployment. Both studies converge on the argument that weak governance structures, poor accountability mechanisms, and inadequate sustainability plans

significantly reduce the employment generation potential of youth empowerment initiatives.

Beyond programme-specific analyses, broader empirical studies on social development interventions in Nigeria further reinforce these findings. Tochukwu and Molmela (2023) reveal that challenges such as inadequate funding, corruption, limited institutional capacity, weak stakeholder coordination, and insufficient beneficiary participation consistently hinder

the successful implementation of social development programmes. These systemic barriers not only compromise programme effectiveness but also diminish their impact on employment creation and socio-economic development. Within the scope of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA), these empirical insights suggest that similar implementation challenges, if unaddressed, could constrain the agency's ability to generate meaningful employment for youth. Consequently, the literature underscores the need for transparent governance, effective monitoring, stakeholder collaboration, adequate funding, and structured post-intervention pathways as critical conditions for enhancing NAYEA's effectiveness in addressing youth unemployment and promoting sustainable employment generation in Nasarawa State.

Theoretical framework

This paper adopted the Structural-Functionalism theory as its analytical framework. Structural-functionalism is primarily associated with Talcott Parsons, a prominent American sociologist who advanced the theory in the mid-twentieth century, particularly during the 1940s and 1950s. The theory viewed society as a system made up of interrelated parts or structures. Different parts performing different but interrelated functions. These parts are always in harmony and in agreement with each other, and anything that will disrupt the normal functioning of the system will bring disequilibrium to the entire society. The system has certain needs for it to survive which is known as functional requisites. The function of any part is its contribution to the maintenance of the system. Nasarawa State youth empowerment agency is one of the governmental structures, agencies established to perform specific functions. It was set up to work out strategies for dealing with mass unemployment especially among youths in the state. Unemployment is seen as devastating that afflicts the stability of the society and requires government's action through the establishment of NAYEA. Therefore, NAYEA is seen as a part and unemployment is a threat to the normal functioning of the system. As a link to Structural-Functionalist Theory, Nasarawa State Youth empowerment agency is a structure established to

perform specific functions such as providing employment opportunities to the teaming population.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed research design. This design involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through the administration of questionnaires, while qualitative data were sourced from secondary

materials such as scholarly literature, official reports, time-series data, and other relevant written documents. The rationale for adopting a mixed research design was to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information from diverse and relevant sources, thereby enhancing the robustness of the study findings.

The study population comprised a total of three thousand one hundred and twenty-five (3,125) respondents. The target population included beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders drawn from nine (9) selected Local Government Areas in Nasarawa State. These Local Government Areas and their respective population distributions are as follows: Lafia (776), Keana (265), Doma (298), Nasarawa Eggon (336), Akwanga (333), Wamba (283), Keffi (302), Toto (213), and Karu (289).

The sample size representative of the target population in this study is 400. It is determined using Taro Yamane formula as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N= population

e= level of significance. This is a constant figure of 0.05

In applying the formula to determine the sample size, this process is followed

$$n = \frac{3,125}{1 + 3,125 (0.05)^2} n = \frac{17,703}{1 + 3,125 (0.0025)} n = \frac{3,125}{1 + 7.8125} n = \frac{3,125}{7.8126}$$

$$n = 399.9948$$

$$n = 400 \text{ (sample size)}$$

The method of data collection adopted for this study is both primary method, involving questionnaire and interview and secondary method of data collection. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 387 were returned while 13 were not returned. Secondary data entailed Report on Youth empowerment on employment generation. In carrying out this research, data analytical tool used was the use of simple percentages



and table and content

analysis for the secondary data. This choice of methodology used in the study enabled the researcher to get objective information about the subject matter. The information generated from the secondary sources, content or textual analytical tool was used to analyse the data.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

Below is the analysis of responses as well as the data supplied through the questionnaire distributed and interview questions administered to the respondents.

Table 1.1 Showing Number of Questionnaire Distributed

S/N	Name of LGA	Population	%Percentage	Questionnaire distributed	Questionnaire returned	Questionnaire not Returned
1	Lafia	776	24.83%	99	97	2
2	Keana	265	8.48%	34	33	1
3	Doma	298	9.54%	44	42	2
4	Nasarawa Eggon	336	10.75%	43	42	1
5	Akwanga	333	10.66%	43	40	3
6	Wamba	283	9.06%	30	29	1
7	Keffi	302	9.66%	39	38	1
8	Toto	213	6.82%	27	27	0
9	Karu	289	9.25%	41	39	2
Total		3,125	100%	400	387	13

Source: Field Work, August, 2025

Table 1.1 above presents the distribution of respondents across selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Nasarawa State and the rate of questionnaire administration and retrieval in the study. The beneficiaries in Lafia LGA has a total population of 776 respondents, representing 24.83% and 99 questionnaires were distributed in which 97 were returned. Keana LGA had a population of 265 respondents representing 8.48% with 34 questionnaires distributed and 33 returned. Similarly, Doma LGA had 298 respondents representing 9.54% where 44 questionnaires were administered and 42 retrieved. Nasarawa Eggon

LGA, with a population of 336 respondents representing 10.75% recorded 42 returned questionnaires out of 43 distributed. Akwanga LGA constituted 333 respondents representing 10.66% with 43 questionnaires distributed and 40 returned, indicating a slightly higher non-response rate compared to other LGAs. Wamba LGA recorded a population of 283 respondents

representing 9.06% with 29 questionnaires returned out of 30 distributed. Keffi LGA had 302 respondents representing 9.66%, and 38 questionnaires were retrieved from the 39 administered. Toto LGA, which had the lowest population of 213 respondents representing 6.82% achieved a 100 per cent response rate, as all 27 questionnaires distributed were returned. Karu LGA had a population of 289 respondents representing 9.25% with 41 questionnaires distributed and 39 returned. Overall, out of the 400 questionnaires distributed across the nine LGAs, 387 were returned, representing a response rate of 96.75 per cent, while only 13 questionnaires (3.25%) were not returned. This high response rate enhances the reliability and validity of the data and suggests that the findings adequately reflect the perceptions of youths regarding the challenges facing the implementation of NAYEA in employment generation across Nasarawa State.

Table 1.2 challenges hindering the implementation of NAYEA's programs in Nasarawa state

S/N	Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate funding constitutes a major challenge to the effective implementation of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA).	Strongly Agree	174	44.96%
		Agree	150	38.76%
		Strongly Disagree	29	7.49%
		Disagree	31	8.01%
		Disagree Undecided Total	3 387	0.78% 100%
2	Delays in the disbursement of financial support and stipends to beneficiaries significantly undermine the effectiveness of NAYEA programmes.	Strongly Agree	201	51.94%
		Agree	149	38.50%
		Strongly Disagree	18	4.65%
		Disagree	16	4.13%
		Disagree Undecided Total	3 387	0.78% 100%
3	Political interference and patronage in the selection and administration of	Strongly Agree	106	27.39%
		Agree	122	31.52%

	NAYEA programmes pose serious challenges to equitable and transparent implementation.	Strongly	102	26.36%
		Disagree	57	14.73%
		Disagree	0	0.0%
		Undecided	387	100%
		Total		

Source: Field Work, August, 2025

Table 1.2 above reveals that 174 respondents representing 44.96% strongly agreed and 150 respondents representing 38.76% agreed to the assertion that inadequate funding constitutes a major challenge to the effective implementation of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA). Conversely, 29 respondents representing 7.49% strongly disagreed, 31

respondents representing 8.01% disagreed, and 3 respondents representing 0.7% were undecided. Regarding delays in the disbursement of financial support and stipends to beneficiaries significantly undermine the effectiveness of NAYEA programmes, 201 respondents representing 51.94% strongly agreed, and 149 respondents representing 38.50% agreed with the statement. On the other hand, minimal dissent was observed: 18 respondents representing 4.65% strongly disagreed, 16 respondents representing 4.13% disagreed, and 3 respondents representing 0.78% were undecided. On the issue of Political interference and patronage in the selection and administration of NAYEA programmes pose that serious challenges to equitable and transparent implementation, 106 respondents representing 27.39% strongly agreed and 122 respondents representing 31.52% agreed that political interference poses serious challenges. The absence of undecided responses suggests that respondents hold firm views on this issue. A notable 102 respondents representing 26.36% strongly disagreed and 57 respondents representing 14.73% disagreed. No respondent selected undecided. Drawing from the above analysis, the overriding opinion aligns with the interview conducted with Aliyu Adamu, a beneficiary of the scheme in Lafia Local Government Area, on 7th August, 2025. According to him:

Beneficiaries frequently experience delays in the payment of stipends, which, in his view, discourages participation and negatively affects their morale in carrying out assigned duties. He further explained that, given the prevailing economic challenges and the rising cost of commodities in the market, such delays make it difficult for beneficiaries to meet their basic personal needs.

However, this situation underscores the need for timely and consistent disbursement of stipends, as prompt payment is essential for sustaining beneficiaries' commitment, enhancing their productivity, and ensuring the overall effectiveness of the scheme.

In a related analogy, Obajama (2025) argued that issues associated with

delays in the disbursement of financial support and stipends in the Nigerian public service significantly undermine the effectiveness of public programmes. Delays in financial support often impose substantial economic and psychological burdens on beneficiaries. Many participants in public empowerment and social intervention programmes depend on stipends to cover basic necessities such as transportation, feeding, accommodation, and training materials. When payments are delayed, beneficiaries may experience financial hardship, leading to absenteeism, withdrawal from programmes, or reduced commitment to assigned tasks. In

some instances, beneficiaries may resort to informal or precarious income-generating activities, thereby undermining the objectives of skills acquisition and capacity development initiatives. Persistent delays may also erode trust in government interventions and reduce beneficiaries' willingness to participate in future public programmes.

Table 1.3 strategies implemented by Nasarawa State Youth empowerment Agency (NAYEA) to address youth unemployment

S/N	Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
4	The absence of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms hampers the ability of NAYEA to systematically assess programme performance and employment outcomes.	Strongly Agree	107	27.65%
		Agree	121	31.27%
		Strongly	62	16.02%
		Disagree	95	24.55%
		Disagree	2	0.52%
		Undecided	387	100%
		Total		
5	Inadequate infrastructure and poorly equipped training facilities adversely affect the quality of skills acquisition among beneficiaries.	Strongly Agree	138	35.66%
		Agree	116	29.97%
		Strongly	34	8.79%
		Disagree	95	24.55%
		Disagree	4	1.03%
		Undecided	387	100%
		Total		
6	Existing laws and regulations are insufficient to support the smooth operation of NAYEA programs.	Strongly Agree	118	30.49%
		Agree	125	32.30%
		Strongly	41	10.59%
		Disagree	101	26.10%
		Disagree	2	0.52%
		Undecided	387	100%
		Total		

		Total		
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Source: Field Work, August, 2025

Table 1.3 above shows that 107 respondents representing 27.65% strongly agreed and 121 respondents representing 31.27% agreed that the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms hampers the ability of the Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) to systematically assess programme performance and employment outcomes.

Conversely, 62 respondents representing 16.02% strongly disagreed, 95 respondents representing 24.55% disagreed, while only 2 respondents representing 0.52% were undecided. With respect to infrastructural adequacy and the condition of training facilities, the table shows that 138 respondents representing 35.66% strongly agreed and 116 respondents representing 29.97% agreed that inadequate infrastructure and poorly equipped training centres adversely affect the quality of skills acquisition among beneficiaries. On the contrary, 34 respondents representing 8.79% strongly disagreed and 95 respondents representing 24.55% disagreed with the statement, while 4 respondents representing 1.03% were undecided. This distribution suggests a strong consensus among respondents that infrastructural deficiencies constitute a major impediment to effective skills development under NAYEA programmes. Similarly, findings on the sufficiency of existing laws and regulations indicate that 118 respondents representing 30.49% strongly agreed and 125 respondents representing 32.30% agreed that existing legal and regulatory frameworks are insufficient to support the smooth operation of NAYEA programmes. In contrast, 41 respondents representing 10.59% strongly disagreed and 101 respondents representing 26.10% disagreed, while 2 respondents representing 0.52% were undecided.

In view of the above analysis, an interview conducted with staff member of NAYEA on 11th September 2025 revealed that, while the establishment of NAYEA represents a commendable youth empowerment initiative that generates employment and reduces street unemployment, the existing laws and regulations governing its operations require review and strengthening. He emphasized that clearer mandates are necessary to enhance the Agency's institutional autonomy, noting that staff often face constraints in making operational decisions and enforcing regulations, such as controlling traffic violations along major roads within the metropolis. This observation aligns with the views of scholars such as Ajayi and Bumi (2024), who argue that without institutional autonomy, organizations are unable to independently enforce their policies, guidelines, or statutory provisions. Consequently, rules may be ignored,

selectively applied, or overridden by external authorities, thereby undermining compliance, discipline, and the overall effectiveness of the institution.

Discussion of findings

- i. One major finding from the study is that inadequate funding, coupled with delays in the disbursement of financial support and stipends, constitutes a critical challenge to the effective implementation of NAYEA programmes in Nasarawa State. Evidence from the

analysis indicates overwhelming agreement among respondents on this issue. The implication of this finding is that insufficient and untimely funding limits NAYEA's capacity to implement programmes at scale, sustain empowerment initiatives, and meet beneficiaries' expectations.

- ii. A second major finding is that weak institutional and structural frameworks particularly inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, poor training infrastructure, and insufficient legal and regulatory support significantly hinder the effectiveness of NAYEA programmes. As shown in the findings, a majority of respondents revealed that the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation systems, inadequate and poorly equipped training facilities, and insufficient existing laws and regulations negatively affect the implementation and smooth operation of the scheme.

Conclusion

The Nasarawa State Youth Empowerment Agency (NAYEA) was established as a strategic policy instrument to address the persistent and multifaceted challenge of youth unemployment within the state. The agency is mandated to recruit, train, and deploy both skilled and unskilled youths into critical sectors, including environmental management, traffic regulation, community security, and social service delivery, thereby enhancing their practical competencies and employability. Beyond workforce placement, NAYEA's interventions are designed to foster active youth participation in socio-economic development, promote social inclusion, and strengthen community resilience. By integrating capacity-building initiatives with structured employment opportunities, the agency is expected to serve as a catalyst for sustainable employment generation, poverty alleviation, and broader developmental objectives, positioning youth empowerment as a central component of Nasarawa State's policy agenda.

Recommendations

- i. In view of the finding that inadequate funding and delays in the disbursement of financial support significantly undermine the effectiveness of NAYEA programmes, it is recommended that the Nasarawa State Government should increase and institutionalize budgetary allocations to the Agency. Adequate and predictable funding should be ensured through dedicated budget lines and, where possible, supplemented with partnerships involving the private sector, development agencies, and non-

governmental organizations. In addition, mechanisms should be established to guarantee timely disbursement of funds and stipends to beneficiaries, such as streamlined financial management processes and strengthened oversight. This would enhance programme continuity, improve beneficiary participation, and increase the overall impact of NAYEA on employment generation.

- ii. Given the finding that weak institutional and structural frameworks hinder effective programme implementation, it is recommended that NAYEA's institutional capacity be strengthened through the development of robust monitoring and evaluation systems. This should include the establishment of clear performance indicators, regular programme assessments, and data-driven reporting mechanisms to track outcomes and inform policy adjustments. Furthermore, investment in modern and well-equipped training infrastructure is essential to improve the quality and relevance of skills acquisition. Finally, existing laws and regulations guiding NAYEA operations should be reviewed and strengthened to provide clearer mandates, enhance institutional autonomy, and ensure effective programme coordination. These measures would collectively improve accountability, programme quality, and the sustainability of NAYEA's youth empowerment initiatives.

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