

DESCRIPTIVE ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN KUJE AREA COUNCIL, FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT) ABUJA

BY

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Abstract

The fundamental issue this research seeks to address is to examine whether Youth empowerment has effect in reducing poverty among youth, this is very critical in Nations Building and Development especially in FCT Abuja with particular reference to Kuje Area Council. Empowerment provides young people with the desired skills, resources and opportunities necessary to improve their socio-economic conditions. KEKE-NAPEP program which is one of the Youth Empowerment Schemes (YES) for the youths is the main empowerment focus for this study as it is one of the sustainable programme in the Area. Poverty which is the outcome of inadequate investment in Youth is a major challenge in Kuje. The category of beneficiaries for the programme is the semi-skilled youths. The study applied qualitative and quantitative research design, questionnaires and interviews were sources of data collection, primary and secondary data sources which include documentaries from National Poverty Eradication Programme were also used. The study found out that youths need empowerment which includes access to education, skills acquisition, access to employment and investment opportunities, social protection in order to fully develop, tackle poverty and have exposures leading to greater awareness, access to credit facilities. Human Capital Development Theory was adopted to explain the dynamics of youth empowerment as youths are critical elements in nation building. The population for the study is 3,000 drawn from the wards in the Area Council, while the sample size is 353. The study found that the major factors that affected the success of youth empowerment programmes in the area include lack of exposure to empowerment information and insufficient information, corruption, lack of funds, misappropriation, poor monitoring etc. The research recommended that: government should widen the coverage of the programme to enable it capture more people, there is need for youth empowerment, and this will lead to poverty reduction thereby benefitting their families and the society at large, both

economically and socially with guided efforts to make empowerment programs more impactful and sustainable.

Keywords: National Poverty Eradication Programme, Empowerment, Poverty Reduction, Skills, Youth

Introduction

Poverty is a global phenomenon which affects nation and people differently and it is a major challenge in Nigeria; it is viewed as the outcome of inadequate investment in education, training, skill acquisition, manpower development and health which constrains productivity and employability. Poverty is not merely the absence of income, but a reflection of insufficient education, skills, and health that restrict economic participation (Becker, 1993)

Poverty remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges undermining national development and threatening the well-being of its citizens. Since poverty cannot be eradicated, then it should be reduced to the barest minimum. Despite Nigeria's vast natural and human resources, the incidence of poverty has remained very high. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2020), more than 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with unemployment and underemployment being key drivers. Youths constitute over 60% of the country's population, they are critical elements in Nation building and are disproportionately affected by poverty due to limited access to productive resources, lack of employable skills, and weak labour market opportunities. Youth unemployment and underemployment fuels cycles of poverty, insecurity and social unrest. This situation does not only exposes young people to economic vulnerability but also increases the risk of social vices such as youth related crimes e.g. political thugs and drug abuse.

In addressing these challenges, successive governments in Nigeria have designed and implemented various youth empowerment strategies. Such

prominent initiatives were the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), focusing on Keke-NAPEP program which is under National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and it was introduced in 2001. Youth Empowerment Scheme has been instrumental to advancing youth empowerment in Kuje, and this has helped to combat unemployment. Empowering youth with vocational and entrepreneurial skills equips them with the capacity to escape poverty and contribute meaningfully to societal progress. Thus, Youth Empowerment which is a pathway to tackle poverty reduction is relevant to this context and widely recognized as a sustainable strategy and instrument for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Kuje is among the Area Council in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja that used Keke-NAPEP as a means of transportation. The need for empowerment programs in such area is more critical as it represents a typical Nigerian community with a predominantly youthful population facing challenges of unemployment, underemployment and limited access to livelihood opportunities. The National Poverty Eradication Programme was introduced to centrally coordinate all anti-poverty efforts from the local government through the state to the national levels, the Keke-NAPEP programme for Youth Empowerment introduced and aimed at capacity enhancement through provision of job training opportunities to graduates and non-graduates was implemented nationally to tackle poverty, deal with capacity acquisition, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology development and enterprise promotion. The question regarding the extent of KEKE-NAPEP effectiveness in reducing poverty among youth in Kuje remains a concern. Some reports highlight successes in youth empowerment, skill acquisition and micro-credit provision, while others point to problems of poor funding, inadequate monitoring and limited sustainability of the initiatives.

Previous studies have primarily focused on general outcomes of poverty reduction initiatives across Nigeria, often overlooking the unique socio-economic landscape of Kuje in FCT Abuja. Though some of the activities

of NAPEPs exist, the efficiency of NAPEP's KEKE-NAPEP programme as youth empowerment scheme in enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Kuje Area Council from 2015-2025 has not been descriptively examined and documented.

With the above realities, it becomes imperative to critically examine the effect of youth empowerment on poverty reduction using evidences from NAPEP's interventions in Kuje Area Council. This study is motivated by the need to evaluate the contributions, challenges and prospects of youth empowerment initiatives under NAPEP in reducing poverty in Kuje Area Council. The findings of this study will provide useful insights for policymakers and government agencies responsible for poverty reduction and youth empowerment in Nigeria by highlighting the successes and limitations of NAPEP impacts in Kuje Area Council; it will help in design implementation, monitoring of future empowerment programs at both national and local levels. The research will shed light on how youth empowerment can serve as effective tools for addressing poverty at the grassroots. It will underscore the importance of skills acquisition, entrepreneurship and self-reliance as pathways to poverty reduction while analyzing the extent to which NAPEP has empowered youths. The study will contribute to existing literature on poverty reduction and human capital development in Nigeria. It will provide empirical evidence on the effect of youth empowerment in poverty reduction at the Area Councils. NGO's and community-based groups engaged in development work can draw lessons from the findings of this study.

Statement of the Problem:

Poverty is one of the most serious problems in Nigeria today. Despite the various efforts of government from independence to date, poverty has been on the increase, poverty and unemployment remains a persistent challenge among youth in Kuje Area Council even with the abundant natural and human resources of Nigeria, with young people being among the most vulnerable groups. The expectation was that by equipping young people through NAPEP's programmes with entrepreneurial and

employable skills, poverty would be reduced and self-reliance would be promoted.

However, over two decades since its establishment, the effectiveness has been widely debated whether the programme has meaningfully address the root causes of youth poverty and unemployment particularly at the grassroots level. In Kuje Area Council a semi-urban community within the Federal Capital Territory has widespread of youth unemployment despite the presence of NAPEP initiatives. This situation raises critical questions: what challenges have constrained the NAPEP's effectiveness? To what extent has the programme empowered youths in Kuje Area Council? This persistence of poverty among youths points to a gap between programme intentions and actual success outcomes. This problem underscores the need for an empirical investigation into the role of youth empowerment as a tool for poverty reduction with specific reference to KEKE-NAPEP's initiatives in Kuje Area Council. The beneficiaries of the programme are the semi-skilled while none educated are not considered.

Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) is an empowerment programme aimed at providing for training opportunities, skills acquisition, employment opportunities and wealth creation through enhanced income generation, improved social status and rural development. The scheme primarily aimed at economically empowering the youth. The introduction of KEKE-NAPEP a tricycle passenger vehicle for transportation business, offered at a discount price on and owner-operator basis has targeted hundreds of individuals through various training on handling, repairs, and cash grants to youths. A study of youth empowerment initiatives across FCT identified 170 KEKE-NAPEP drivers registered and successfully trained as beneficiaries within Kuje Area Council as recorded in NAPEP bulletin. The FCT-Wide Empowerment (2020) indicates that over 300 individuals in Kuje FCT were presented with empowerment items and cash grants to boost their socio-economic status. Kuje youth also benefitted from the Presidential Youth

Empowerment Scheme (P-YES) launched in 2020 which targeted over 1000 youths per local government which essence is to combat unemployment. The youth were also among the 960,000 beneficiaries of Vocational Training TVET (2025). While these schemes aim at creating self-reliance, evaluations show that beneficiaries often faced challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of soft loans, and a shortage of qualified trainers. Despite these challenges a significant number of youths in Kuje are living above poverty with visible increases in income levels.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has NAPEP Youth Empowerment affect the level of poverty reduction in Kuje?
2. To what extent has the KEKE-NAPEP programme help to increase the income of beneficiaries?
3. How affordable is the KEKE-NAPEP tricycle to beneficiaries of the Programme?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to ascertain the effect of NAPEP Youth Empowerment Scheme on Poverty reduction.

1. To determine the extent to which NAPEP youth empowerment has affected the level of poverty reduction of beneficiaries in Kuje.
2. To ascertain the extent to which KEKE-NAPEP programme has help to increase the income of beneficiaries.
3. To ascertain the extent to which KEKE-NAPEP tricycle is affordable to beneficiaries in Kuje.

Conceptual Issues

Youth Empowerment

This is the abstract process by which young people gain the authority, agency, and abilities to make informed decisions, control their own destinies, and implement transformative change in their own lives and society. It is a foundational concept in sustainable development and human growth.

This is the support given to youth by NAPEP in terms of training, loan facilities, grant, and tools to participate in economic and civic life, expands young people's ability to real freedom to be and do what they can do best. Anders, (2020) defined youth empowerment as an increase in the person's control over the determinants of their quality of life, through (necessarily) an increase in either health (e.g through self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy), or knowledge (self-knowledge, consciousness raising, skills development, competence), or freedom (or positive). Kabeer (2023) defined empowerment as an ability to make choices. To be disempowered means to be denied choice, while empowerment refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability.

Poverty

This is living a condition in which an individual is faced with economic, social, political, cultural and environmental deprivations. (Ajakaiye, 2002).

Haralambos and Heald (2020) identified poverty to be relative, subjective or absolute. Relative poverty is measured by what members of the society consider desirable and acceptable standard of living within the context of their situations, circumstances, environment and culture. Subjective poverty on the other hand refers to individual or group subjective feeling of being poor. Under subjective poverty, poverty is not measured by the level of income or living standard but by individuals feeling of contentment and sense of fulfilment in life.

Poverty is a global phenomenon which is a major policy concern at both domestic and international level. It is a form of deprivation that creates

inequality and which requires an address urgently because it is possible to do so with sincerity of purpose. The increasing level of poverty and inequality particularly in the developing world compelled for researches by scholars and international agencies on how to resolve the menace. There is an increasing concern that economic growth is not leading to declining poverty and inequality in most developing countries and the gap between the rich and poor countries is widening (Sachs, 2024).

Poverty Reduction

This is reducing the outcome of inadequate investment in education, training and health which constrains productivity and employability. It means making poverty less prevalent (Ike, 2020). It means removal of the causes of the pain, to reduce poverty, wealth has to be created. Wealth creation is all encompassing, and should be for every home, family community and every local government. Mofuoa, (2020) stressed that successful poverty reduction requires sustained wealth creation.

Human Capital

The economic value of a worker's knowledge, skills, experience, competencies, health, and other attributes in individuals that enable them to be productive. It is considered an intangible asset, built through education, on the job training, and wellness investments, driving both individual earning potential and broader economic productivity.

Understanding and investing in human capital is crucial because it directly translates into competitive advantage for organizations and sustained economic growth for nations.

Income - This is financial value added to a beneficiary as a result of participating in any of the mentioned programme. It is money, goods or services received in exchange of labour, services or the investment in capital such as dividends, interest, gains and royalties. It acts as a foundational financial flow, funding and individual's lifestyle, savings, or business operations. It is money actively worked for, including wages, salaries, bonuses, and commissions.

Empirical Review

Ode et al (2021) examined contribution of NAPEP programme to youth empowerment in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted cross sectional survey design while cluster random sampling was used to select beneficiaries. Questionnaires were used to collect data as Key Informant Interview was also used to compliment Questionnaire. Furthermore, the study used percentages for analysis of data. The study discovered that the beneficiaries of NAPEP programme were mostly composed of N-Teach strand of the programme, followed by N-Health strand, N-Agro and Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) strands respectively. The study also found that NAPEP contributed to empowerment of youth through poverty reduction, proficiency skills in ICT, financial empowerment, on the job experience and investment in small scale businesses. However, there were challenges faced by the programme in empowerment of youth which included delay in payment of allowance, unpaid allowances, distance to working places and teacher training for most of N-Teach beneficiaries. The study therefore recommended for prompt and timely payment of the stipends to beneficiaries of the programme by Federal government, timely sorting of problems of unpaid allowances, posting nearest to place of residence and teacher education for N-Teach categories.

Kujeda et al. (2021) examined NAPEP and Poverty Alleviation among Nigerian Youths. The study revealed that, Nigeria being a developing state has in the recent time forced with the initiation of interventionist programmes aimed at alleviating the sufferings of the teeming population. Meanwhile, the source of worry is the awkward implementation of the social schemes by government characterized by institutional in capabilities and lack the needed executive capacity to achieve the philosophies of the programmes. The study also shows that, social intervention packages by government had help in alleviating the vulnerable youths. The study strongly recommends among others; the strengthening of executive capacity and institutions involved.

Okonkwo (2022) examined the impact of government poverty alleviation programmes in the south east zone of Nigeria, taking into consideration that poverty profile in Nigeria displays zonal differences, which of course is a reflection of the different agro-climatic conditions, economic zones and natural resource endowments. Despite the huge funds earmarked by Government for the various poverty alleviation programmes in the zone, poverty still abounds. The study employed primary data which was collected using questionnaire as the alternative response form. The researcher employed chi-square statistic to analyze data generated in the survey. The study revealed that poverty alleviation programmes of government have no significant impact in the South East Zone. Hence, the study concludes among others that, the government poverty alleviation programmes did not have significant impact on the poverty needs of the south-east zone. The study recommended among others that sustainable poverty reduction strategy should not focus narrowly on social welfare measures, rather assets redistribution and creation of incentive structures that can enhance the rate and pattern of economic growth should be seen as essential component.

Fernanda (2023) evaluated the impact of conditional youth empowerments on public education expenditures from a political perspective using data gathered from Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. Results show that while NAPEP programs may cause a slight initial decrease in education expenditures per student, this trend is reversed for larger values of the transfer for Brazil and Mexico. The simulation results explain the increase in education expenditures observed in Mexico and Brazil following the implementation of NAPEP programs. In Colombia, the pivotal voter is not eligible for the NAPEP program, which led to the relative stability in education expenditures per student. This study shows that NAPEP programs may contribute to increasing enrolment and also to improving education quality through the political economy of education expenditures.

Keetie (2024) observed the benefits and harms of NAPEP programs, the provision of cash or other forms of transfers holds promising potential for children care. Supporting families' abilities to make ends meet can prevent the loss of parental care, improve quality of care, and encourage preferential care options. However, it is important not to turn a blind eye to the potential perverse incentives. The availability of and access to high-quality services is imperative for the success of NAPEP programs, particularly given that the theory of change is built on the use of services like education and health care.

Theoretical Framework

The Human Capital Development Theory emerged in the 1960's through the works of an economist Gary S. Becker (1964, 1993) in his book Human Capital it emphasized that the quality and quantity of human capital determine not only personal earning but also the aggregate growth and competitiveness of nations just like machines or land, education, skills and health matters are forms of capital. The theory sees human as not just labourers but asset that can be developed when invested in them, this will raise their productivity and earnings which contributes to national development. The assumption of this theory is investing in people yields higher productivity, individuals who are more education/skills earn higher wages over their lifetime and society benefits from reduced poverty, innovation and economic growth. The relevance of this theory to poverty reduction is that individuals through education and skills raise employability, earnings and reduce poverty risk. A well-educated youth population enhances innovation, productivity and reduces unemployment and poverty in the country. Youths are in their productive and formative years, investing in them yields high returns. Empowerment programs like skills acquisition, entrepreneurship training, ICT skills, and Nigeria's programs like NAPEP, N-power, and YouWiN are based on Human Capital Development Theory. This theory remains highly relevant to the study of youth empowerment and poverty reduction in Nigeria as it provides a useful

lens for understanding why governments implement programs such as NAPEP, N-power, and other vocational and entrepreneurial schemes targeted at young people. By equipping youths with marketable skills, which promote self-reliance and break the vicious cycle of poverty. Thus, this study adopts the Human Capital Development Theory as its theoretical anchor.

Adams (2016): education, health and skills are a “capital” embodied in people that raise productivity, employability, entrepreneurship leading to lifetime earnings potential, economic independence, much like physical capital. Individuals and firms invest in human capital, such as through schooling and on-the-job training, expecting a future return in the form of higher wages or increased profits. This theory explains why workers with more education and skills often earn more, and it highlights the importance of these investments for individual and national economic growth, nurturing the potential of youth through investments in their capabilities is a direct and effective path to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

This theory emphasizes on increasing labour efficiency and productivity, the influence of education on youth’s level of cognitive skills and how such skills translate into improving the level of productivity. Youths should be improved in order to attain good educational standards aimed at enhancing their level of knowledge, skills and capabilities. To increase and sustain the deposits of already stored human capital, the amount of gross investment is expected to exceed depreciation in youths thereby reducing poverty of knowledge, skills, nutrition etc.

The possible downside of relying too heavily on human capital is that it is portable. Human capital is always owned by the employee, never the employer. Not all economists agree that human capital directly raises productivity, but that it acts as a signal about talent and ability, real productivity comes through training, motivation and capital equipment.

Relevant of the theory to the study

Human Capital Development Theory helps in transforming individuals' skills and knowledge into economic assets, it provides a framework for empowering young people to escape poverty and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable societies. Investing in a young person's education, vocational training enhances their skills and knowledge, making them more attractive to employers and increasing their chances of securing better-paying jobs. It equips youth with the financial, technical and managerial skills necessary to start and grow their own businesses, creating economic opportunities and self-sufficiency. It is a significant asset in transforming ability to generate income and reduce their reliance on aid. It has a broader societal impact as empowered youth can contribute to economic growth and innovation, which are crucial for sustainable poverty reduction. They become active participants in creating a more prosperous and inclusive society.

Empowerment theory provides an effective support system for individuals and communities that have been blocked from achieving collective goals and overcome social barriers and self-fulfillment within existing social structures (Payne, 2020; Okala & Uche, 2024). However, the initiation of multifarious social schemes in Nigeria by different political regimes have become a source of empowerment to the citizens especially the vulnerable youths who are jobless and roaming the streets. Social schemes and packages like Graduate Internship Scheme, NAPEP and Conditional transfer of money to the youths have become succour and empowerment. The beneficiaries are bent on using the acquired knowledge to develop themselves and the entire society. The implication is the involvement of the youths in the decision making process and imparting economically to the growth of the economy.

Methodology

This study applied survey design; this is a suitable design as it involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, derived from secondary sources. This design deals with the provision of substantive overview and contribution of current knowledge about concept of the

topic, documentaries on NAPEP, to describe, review and authenticate the nature, activities and state of NAPEP and Poverty reduction among youth as one can analytically assess facts and data regarding the subject matter were used. The source of data collection is Primary (questionnaires, interviews) and secondary (NAPEP reports, academic articles). This study therefore focuses on getting information on the effect of poverty reduction through KEKE-NAPEP's programme and how it impacts the youths. The population of this study is 3,000 drawn from 10 wards in Kuje Area Council which include: Peggi, Kuje central, Chibiri, Chukuku, Kayarda, Passali, Shetigo, Gaube, Sauka and Sundaba, which are randomly selected and the implementation of the tricycle programme cuts across the villages in the area council, this was obtained from NAPEPs office Abuja. The sample size for this study is 353 and the beneficiaries are semi-skilled. This group is particularly relevant as they are often among the most impoverished in the region and are more likely to be impacted by poverty reduction interventions, the population of the study were divided into subgroups (strata) based on relevant characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, gender, or location, and then randomly selecting a sample from each stratum. This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the diversity of the population and provides more accurate estimates of the relationships between Youth Empowerment and poverty reduction across different subgroups.

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

Where n = Sample
Size

N = Total
Population

e = Margin of error (0.05) ²

1 = Constant

$$N = 3,000$$

$$e = (0.05)^2$$

$$1 = \text{Constant}$$

$$\frac{3,000}{1 + (3,000 \times 0.0025)} n =$$

$$\frac{3,000}{1 + 7.5} n =$$

$$\frac{3,000}{8.5} n =$$

$$n = 353$$

Data Presentation

Table 1 Respondents response to whether there was NAPEP intervention in the area of empowerment

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	261	74
No	92	26
Total	353	100

Source: Field Survey 2026

The above table clearly shows that 261 beneficiaries, representing 74% of the whole respondents do attest that they were NAPEP youth empowerment intervention in Kuje while 92 beneficiaries, representing 26% refute the fact that there were no interventions. From the responses above, respondents attesting to the Yes option concludes the fact that empowerment actually took place.

Table 2 Respondents responses to whether their incomes before NAPEP intervention program help to reduce poverty

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
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Yes	54	15.3
No	299	84.7
Total	353	100

Source: Field Survey 2026

From table 2, it can be said that the income of beneficiaries before NAPEP program intervention was low and as such could not reduce poverty of the youths in Kuje Area Council, 299 beneficiaries, representing 84.7% of the whole respondents do attest that their income before empowerment was low while 54 beneficiaries, representing 15.3% said their income before empowerment was better. The huge response of low income is an indication that KEKE-NAPEP empowerment programme is very much needed.

Table 3: Respondents responses to whether NAPEP Youth Empowerment has effect on the level of poverty reduction in the Area.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	219	62.0
High	53	15.0
Low	36	10.2
Very low	45	12.8
Total	353	100%

Sources: Field Survey 2026

The table above shows the responses of the respondents concerning the effect of level of poverty reduction as regards empowerment received under NAPEP, 219 respondent representing 62% said the level of poverty reduction is very high, 53 respondents representing 15% said it is high, 36 respondents representing 10.2% said the rate of poverty reduction is

low while 45 respondents representing 12.8% said the level of poverty reduction is very low. This is a testament that youth empowerment has great effect on poverty reduction.

Table 4: Respondent responses to the extent in which KEKE-NAPEP tricycle programme has help to increase the income of beneficiaries.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	256	72.5
High	56	15.9
Low	20	5.7
Very Low	21	5.9
Total	353	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

According to the responses of respondents as to the increase in the income of beneficiaries as a result of youth empowerment training on KEKE-NAPEP tricycle, 256 respondents representing 72.5% said the increase in the income generated is very high, 56 respondents representing 15.9% said that the income generated is high. On the other hand, a low significant percentage of respondents (5.7%) and (5.9%) rated low and very low indicating that they do not accept the fact that the programs have a significant effect on beneficiaries income increase.

Table 5: Respondent responses to the extent of affordability of KEKE-NAPEP tricycle to beneficiaries of the Programme in Kuje?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
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Very High	208	58.9
High	81	22.9
Low	56	15.9
Very Low	8	2.3
Total	353	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 5 shows the responses of respondents concerning how affordable the beneficiaries can access the tricycle after empowerment. 208 respondents representing 58.9% said that its affordability is very high, 81 respondents representing 22.9% said that the affordability of the tricycle is high, 20 respondents representing 5.9% said it is low and 8 respondents representing 2.3% percent said it is increasing very low. The finding from the study provides substantial evidence to support the notion that KEKE-NAPEP youth empowerment have a significant positive impact on the poverty reduction of beneficiaries. The results indicate that the implementation of these programs has been successful, effectively improving the lives of individuals and potentially opening doors to enhanced employability and income-generation opportunities.

Discussion of Findings

NAPEP provided skill acquisition, training, and empowerment opportunities for some youths. Many youths reported limited success due to insufficient information, funding, corruption, mismanagement or poor follow-up mechanism. Youth unemployment and poverty remain relatively high in Kuje despite NAPEP efforts.

Youth training without adequate resources and job creation does not fully reduce poverty. National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) as a means of training and empowering youth to be self-reliant for poverty

reduction failed to fully actualize its desired effect because of problems associated with it. Many youths were trained but could not be given adequate skill required for empowerment after the training in terms of capital for a start. The beneficiaries were not fully better than before training since no bold measures were taken to ensure that they depend on themselves after the programme is finished.

It is also discovered that despite the increase in revenue generation capacity in Nigeria, the poverty rate has not decrease instead, it has increased. There is population explosion which the policy-makers are not paying attention to. Policy of poverty reduction like NAPEP needs to consider population projection which it failed to do. While NAPEP target youth and majority male section of the populations, the old ones, children and women were neglected and these are the portions mostly affected by poverty. The procedure for the selection of beneficiaries for NAPEP is faulty. Majority of the respondents agreed that beneficiaries were chosen mainly on the ground of access to influential people who enlisted them into the programme particularly for the sake of allowances given monthly, not necessarily for the training session which aimed at making them self-reliant and gainfully employed after the programme. The implementation process of NAPEP is not appropriate for poverty reduction. A trainer interviewed revealed that, the trainees attached to him absconded and failed to acquire the skill they are meant to obtain. The lack of political will is a factor leading to the poor implementation. NAPEP looks like one of those policies initiated by the government not for genuine purpose but, to gain popularity among the masses for the policy later to be abandoned halfway. The policy is not ideal for poverty reduction in Nigeria except if it will be revisited. Challenges also observed at the course of the research include and not limited to corruption, poor monitoring, lack of continuity etc.

Conclusion

The tricycle programme of National Poverty Eradication Programme has contributed to youth empowerment thereby reducing poverty in Kuje,

with limited effectiveness and with close monitoring, its effort will yield greater efforts.

Youth empowerment remains a veritable tool for sustainable poverty reduction. Youth empowerment refers to the process of enabling young ones to have control over their lives and destinies, by giving them access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and political representation. It is a process that involves the removal of structural and cultural barriers that prevent youth from achieving their full potential. Empowering youth has numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. Studies have shown that when youths are empowered, they have better access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, which leads to improved health, reduced poverty, and increased economic growth. Empowered youth also tend to have greater political representation, which can lead to more inclusive and equitable policies. However, despite progress in some areas, youth still face numerous challenges in achieving empowerment as the older men look down on their capabilities. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that involves legal and policy reforms, community engagement, and education. Youth empowerment is very vital for creating a just and equitable world. By enabling youths to achieve their full potential as the leaders of tomorrow, it can improve the lives of individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

Recommendations

Youths should be provided with adequate information, funding and follow-up mechanism which will lead to their successes. Adequate resources and start off capital, grants and loans facility should be made available for the youths after empowerment and jobs creation should be increased. This will allow for self-reliance, employability and poverty reduction in the community and society at large.

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) should be fully funded in order to actualize their aims and goals. The beneficiaries

should be monitored to ensure that they depend on themselves after the programme is finished and ensure evaluation checks. Appropriate criteria in the selection process of beneficiaries should be considered in order to eliminate favoritism. And interest of beneficiaries should be considered during selection.

Policy makers should pay adequate attention to population explosion/projection thereby increase the number of youths for empowerment. NAPEP needs to consider women and older ones for empowerment as these are mostly affected by poverty. NAPEP policy should be revisited for proper effectiveness and efficiency. The institution should have zero tolerance for corruption, ensure adequate monitoring and programme continuity etc.

The study advocate for increased community participation in program design and implementation, Progress report of trainees should be ensured to fish out those that are not serious, so that government resources will not be wasted. Ensure transparency and accountability in fund management and integrate modern skills (ICT modern technologies, digital economy) into youth empowerment schemes.

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Appendix

Instructions: Please tick (✓) the box that best represents your opinion for each question.

(Research Question)

1. Was there NAPEP intervention programme in the area of empowerment in Kuje Area Council?

| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

2. Does your income before NAPEP intervention programme help to reduce poverty in Kuje Area Council?

| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

3. To what extent has NAPEP Youth Empowerment affect the level of poverty reduction in Kuje?

| ☐ Very High | ☐ High | ☐ Low | ☐ Very Low |

4. To what extent has KEKE-NAPEP programme help to increase the income of beneficiaries?

| ☐ Very High | ☐ High | ☐ Low | ☐ Very Low |

5. How affordable is the KEKE-NAPEP tricycle to beneficiaries of the programme?

| ☐ Very High | ☐ High | ☐ Low | ☐ Very Low |