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Government Social Intervention and Job Creation in Nigeria: A Study of SURE-P and N-POWER Programmes, 2012- 2018

Eze Kierian Tochukwu

Abstract- One of the foremost challenges facing the Nigerian state today is the problem of unemployment among Nigerian youths and this problem has contributed to lot of social vices among Nigerian graduates, such as robbery, prostitution, cybercrimes, hoodlums, political thuggery, etc. This paper aims at investigating Government Social Intervention Schemes and Job Creation in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on former President Good luck Ebele Jonathan social intervention program (SURE-P) and President Muhammadu Buhari social intervention program (N-POWER). This is because the high rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates is now becoming alarming on daily basis. The paper will therefore examine the extent to which these Governments social programmes have created job opportunities among Nigerian graduates, and also to ascertain whether the rate of unemployed graduates has hindered the Government in creation of jobs in Nigeria. The employment theory would be adopted for the purpose of this study while documentary method will be used to gather data. The findings of the study will be revealed and followed by policy options on addressing the Government social intervention programmes in Nigeria which will be analyzed through content analysis which will indicates whether Government social intervention programmes has really created jobs opportunities among Nigerian graduates and which will also ascertain whether the rate of unemployed Nigerian graduates has hindered Government in jobs creation in Nigeria. Thus, the paper will therefore recommend possible solutions to the state of unemployment in Nigeria.

Keywords: government, social intervention, job creation, SURE-P, N-POWER.

I. Introduction

Humanity from time immemorial has been sustained by the economic components of the society in which it exists. These economic components satiates the primary, secondary and tertiary needs of man when it is in adequate supply, but when it is in short supply, the reverse is the case. Hence, human beings are seen scampering and seeking for the economic resources that would increase their welfare from any means possible both positive and negative.

In contemporary times, human needs to a great extent are satisfied by earnings derived from many divergent sources such as entrepreneurship, employment and even thievery and other illegal sources. It is in a bid to curtail and prohibit the indulgence of people into illicit means of earning a living that the government is seen embarking on social intervention programmes to economically empower the citizens with veritable sources of living especially through employment creation. In the words of Alemu (2015), despite the structural transformation and growth of the Nigerian economy from 2000 to 2011 (only plundering into recession in 2016), this growth isn't translated into the reduction of unemployment in Nigeria as unemployment surged from 11% in 2000 to 23% in 2011. According to Osalor (2012), Nigerian tertiary institutions graduate a minimum of 300,000 students every year and this number grows arithmetically if not geometrically, and translates into more unemployed people that roam the streets of Nigerian cities. The implication of this mass unemployment in the Nigerian society is not farfetched as it is nothing but poverty which is a negative force that drives people into illegal ventures to earn and sustain their living. As a matter of fact, the world poverty clock in 2018 stated that Nigeria assumed the ignoble position of being the poverty capital of the world after overtaking India, with about 86.9 million of her population in extreme poverty (Vanguard, 2019). To corroborate this assertion, the National Bureau of Statistics in the 2012 National Baseline Survey, stated that more than half of the Nigerian youths population in the country are unemployed.

Unemployment seems to account for most of the social crimes perpetrated by graduates in the Nigerian society today. The accelerating level of prostitution, armed robbery, oil bunkering, cyber-crimes, drug addiction, trafficking, rape, kidnapping and all facets of social vices can be largely attributed to the incidence of unemployment (Okeke and Ngonadi, 2017). An examination of most of the apprehended criminals seems to signify that a large number of Nigerian graduates that engage in criminal activities are those without gainful employment. Some of these criminals are people who have the potentials for gainful employment but have been deprived such opportunities. Job creation in Nigeria is a responsibility that is carried out by both the private and public sectors of an economy. However, it is worthy to note that it is a more integral duty of the government forming part of their

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constitutional obligations to the citizens (FRN Constitution, 1999). Job creation which entails the creation or establishment of new jobs in such a way that no economic activity is displaced is undoubtedly, a means through which the government ofthe federation intervenes in the socio-economic plights of its citizens.

Onuoha and Woghiren (2019) noted that with the worrisome nature of unemployment in the Nigerian society, the government of Nigeria has been seen putting up many different policy measures over the years to reverse this unwanted societal phenomenon. Among the policy measures adopted to tackle the hydra-headed malaise of unemployment in Nigeria through job creation as social intervention effort of the Nigerian government include the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) adopted in 2003; Vision 20:2020 of 2009 which later inspired successive national development plans and the Transformational Agenda of 2011-2015 thereby making job creation an integral part of sector level reform; the Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (You-WIN); Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and more recently, the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) popularly known as N-Power programme.

The SURE-P and N-Power programmes are two programmes that can never be trivially considered in the light of government social intervention and job creation in Nigeria in recent times. Whereas the former was a conscious effort of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's regime to provide employment to graduates through re-investing money derived from fuel subsidy removal in job creation for the Nigerian citizens. The latter was a social intervention programme of the President Muhammadu Buhari led-administration geared towards combating the twin socio-economic demons of poverty and unemployment especially among youths between age 18 and 35years (N-SIP, 2018). These two social intervention programmes of recent governments which are geared towards job creation and amelioration of the menace of unemployment in Nigeria constitute the focus of this paper.

It is crystal clear that from the motive of initiating the SURE-P and N-Power programmes as succinctly enunciated above, that the programmes are laudable in purpose and are keys to closing the doors of unemployment problems in Nigeria. However, the problems of unemployment persist within the Nigerian social environment and are even tremendously increasing despite the existence of these programmes; thus, leaving all beholder with the question of how and why is this possible. It is in a bid to answer this overlying question that this research paper was undertaken to ascertain the extent to which these programmes have solved the problems of unemployment in Nigeria through job creation and to determine the factor responsible for the persistent unemployment in Nigeria in the face of the existence of these programmes.

II. Conceptual Operationalization of Terms

The thrust of this paper hinges on quite a number of terminologies having wide varieties of meanings to different persons and in different contexts. Therefore, to consummate the achievement of the purpose of this paper and ensure comprehensive clarifications and understanding, this paper attempts a succinct scholarly review of terminological concepts within the context of this discourse. The concepts reviewed and operationalized include: Social intervention, Job creation, Unemployment, SURE-P and N-Power.

Social Intervention: Social intervention as a term does not enjoy consensual definition as it has been approached from different standpoints and purviews. In the words of Bonnie (2006), it is the activities by the government, social agencies and volunteers designed to change and improve social situations of individuals, groups and communities, strengthen their social bonds and encourage internalization of social control. This is in no way false, as social intervention is concerned with enhancement of existing social status-quo and social order within a defined society or territory. However, this is definition is not operationally generic as it only reflects sociological perspective to the concept. According to Badu (2018), it is the provision of effective and appropriate means of alleviating social and economic difficulties being faced by people. This definition is multidisciplinarily suffice-able as it does not view social intervention from the school of thought of one discipline, rather from a generic purview. For the purpose of this discourse however, social intervention is seen as any conscious effort of anybody or institution (be it government or otherwise) that is geared towards providing solutions to existing societal problem of general or particularistic nature, which is bedeviling the members of the society from any aspect of life.

Job Creation: Job creation according to James clement (2014) is nothing but the increment in the number of employment in an economy. This is outrightly correct since job creation literally is concerned with establishing more employment opportunities to augment the existing ones. According to the online Lnvestopedia (Business encyclopedia), it is a political rhetoric that indicates that jobs are created in response to some sort of events or situations. This is of the notion that job creation is not only an activity but one with a purpose. It holds that job creation is the establishment of jobs as a result of certain identifiable situations in the society that has a need for jobs to be established. In cognizance of the aforesaid, contextually operational within this paper is that job creation is nothing more than the provision of

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new jobs or expansion of existing ones in such a way as to accommodate more unemployed persons, usually for socio-economic purposes.

Unemployment: According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9th Ed.), unemployment refers to the fact of having no job as well as the number of people in a country who do not have a job. In the words of James clement (2016), it is nothing but the difference between available workforce and productive workforce within an economy. Unemployment in the context of this discourse is seen as a socio-economic problem which arises as a result of having no regular paid work and consequently leading to poor standard of living and in extreme cases poverty.

SURE-P: SURE-P is simply an acronym which stands for Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment programme. This programme according to Nwosu and Ugwuerua (2014) is a making of the Nigerian national government aimed at ensuring that part of its savings from fuel subsidy removal or reduction is applied to critical mitigate the spate of youth unemployment in the country through the re-investment of the subsidy funds. In a nutshell, it is a public policy instituted by the federal government of Nigeria as a social intervention programme to fight against poverty and unemployment by re-investing the profit that it made from the removal of fuel subsidy into citizens' empowerment schemes.

N-Power: According to Voice Nigeria (2019), N-Power is a youth empowerment scheme sponsored by the federal government of Nigeria which addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large-scale and relevant work skill acquisition and development, while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. It is a well articulated policy effort of the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari that is aimed at combating the twin evils of poverty and unemployment among Nigerian youths of age bracket 18-35years through capacity building, investment and direct financial support by the federal government of the Nigeria.

III. Theoretical Foundation

There's no scintilla of doubt in the fact that any idea not subjected to a theoretical support is a disgrace to philosophical truth (Nwafor-Orizu, Okolo and Eze, 2019). In cognizance of this, unemployment in Nigeria has been an inter-decadal issue that its trend might not be outweighed if nothing is done. With the Nigerian national government's attempt to curtail this through social intervention programmes like SURE-P and N-Power being the focus of this paper, there is need to underpin the correlation justifying the reason for the continual existence of unemployment in the face of these programmes with a theoretical framework. Sequel to this, this paper adopts the employment theory to underpin the thrust of the discourse.

The employment theory which exists in two perspectives – sociological and economic perspective, is a theory that establishes the position and functions of institutions in relation to employment while instituting the mechanism through which these institutions will achieve optimal employment creation.

The sociological perspective to this theory was enunciated by Emile Durkheim in his book "*The Division of Labour"* in the year 1893 and is referred to as the functionalist employment theory. The Functionalist employment theory posits that function is an unclear term which defines the logical and social place of roles, institutions and structures in terms of the production and reproduction of a society as a social system (Bessant and Watts, 1999). The proponents of this theory believe that everything serves a specific function in the society and these functions need to be understood. They assume that balance and societal functionality is attained if all societal actors diligently perform their various functions and the reverse is the case when they do not. In this regard, both the citizens and the government have well defined roles to play within the society. In the words of Anyaele (2002), one basic role of the government is to ensure that the welfare of their citizens is catered for. Anikeze (2018) in the analysis of social welfare indicators of development stated that one of the parameters for measuring social welfare of the citizens is employment rate. This implies job creation within the society is a function of government while efficient job performance is the function of the citizens. Since imbalance and societal dysfunctionality or problem is created when an actor does not perform his function, it then means that government utilizes job creation as a social intervention scheme to keep the parlance of societal orderliness.

The economic perspective to the employment theory was modeled by a renowned English economist - John Maynard Keynes in the year 1936. This perspective which could be best described as the Keynesian theory of employment determination posits that supply creates its own demand. Hence, so far that government uses its available fund to embark on social intervention programmes (no matter in what dimension) as facilitated by the multiplier effect of demand by the citizens, the resultant effect is a high tendency of creating employment and a moderate tendency of increasing investment and profitability. The theory holds that effective demand equals total expenditure which is equivalent to national income and national output especially in a short run where factors of production and distribution remain unchanged while determining the level of employment. The implicit of this is that the level of employment is dependent on national income and output. Thus, an increase in national income is followed

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proportionately by an increase in unemployment and vice versa.

IV. Government Social Intervention and Job Creation in Nigeria: A Theoretical Nexus

One very categorization of the content of this work is the attempt to explain the theory that links government social intervention and job creation in Nigeria. As earlier pointed out in the conceptualization of key components or terms, government social intervention is a consequent of government's attempt to solve or resolve any social problem bedeviling the social population within that period in time. This attempt manifests itself in differing forms as schemes, programmes and even grants etc. Job creation on the other hand is simply the provision of employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed or underemployed populace.

From an economic perspective, public expenditure is an exogenous factor which can be utilized as a policy instrument to promote economic growth. In the words of J.M. Keynes (1936), a foremost economist in exposing public expenditure and economic growth, he opined that an increase in the expenditure of government is likely to lead to an increase in employment, profitability and investment through multiplier effects on total demand.

Consequent upon this, government social intervention which could be any of public expenditure, government social investment or even transfer of payment adopted to solve a social problem, can lead to job creation in Nigeria. Hence, we could posit by theoretical evidence that the nexus between government social intervention and job creation is positive.

V. Historical Perspectives to Sure-P and N-Power Programmes in Nigeria

For every human inclination whether it concerns the government or not, concerns the general society or a particular segment, there is an origin and a known history. In fact, the society and human organization itself follows a historical and histographic antecedent. Subject to this, government programmes are no sacred cow as they tow this line of existence.

Having said this, it is worthwhile to have an indwelling exploration of the historical line of the two government social intervention programmes under study – SURE-P and N-Power; and this are presented below:

a) The History of SURE-P in Nigeria

The establishment of SURE-P can be traced back to the deliberations of the Economic Management Team chaired by the then Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in the last quarter of 2011 on phasing out the oil subsidy. According to Okonjo-Iweala (2018), the debate took place in early December 2011 and it was agreed that there would be further debates and communications with the public, with a tentative implementation of the subsidy phase out in April 2012. Albeit such was the expectation, the President Goodluck Jonathan announced the subsidy phase out on January 1, 2012. This created social turbulence in Nigeria, nationwide strikes and massive extremely well organized demonstrations with Lagos being the epicenter of the public agitations. The tense situation led the President to call for negotiations with labour and civil society and as part of their demands; a program which would be known as the Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) was to be established, which would comprise a committee headed by an eminent and trusted Nigerian including labour, civil society and a cross-section of Nigerians who would oversee and manage the subsidy funds.

By 16th January, 2012, after the labour called off the nationwide strike on subsidy removal, SURE-P was established, having Dr. Christopher Kolade as its pioneer chairman. The scheme became one of the pivots of the Transformation Agenda of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's led-administration after being inaugurated on the 13th of February, 2012.

b) The History of N-Power Programme in Nigeria

Following the quest to combat wide-scale poverty, high crime rate and increasing rate of unemployment, the civilian administration of President Muhammadu Buhari designed and implemented its own strategy as National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP). This programme consists of four major components, one of which was job creation and empowerment initiative otherwise known as N-Power. The N-Power programme was the job creation and youth empowerment initiative of the National Social Investments Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria designed to help young Nigerians acquire and develop life-long skills to become solution providers in their communities and to become players in the domestic and global markets (NSIP, 2016).

As captured in the N-Power selection and deployment plan in NSIP (2016), the whole idea of N-Power was to ensure that young Nigerians will be empowered with the necessary tools to go on and create, develop, build, fix and work on exceptional ideas, projects and enterprises that will change our communities, our economy and our nation. Hence, the N-Power establishment committee strategically designed the programme for all eligible Nigerians looking to work gainfully. This was however after the initial programmes have been designed for young Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35 before being implemented.

The implementation of N-Power was marked with the launching of the programme on June 12, 2016

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when its application process commenced through an online process and closed on August 31, 2016. By December 1, 2016, all successful applicants of the N-Power scheme were engaged and the scheme began its operations fully.

VI. SURE-P and N-Power Social Intervention Schemes: A Comparative Analysis

SURE-P and N-Power are practical illustrations of social intervention schemes in Nigeria aimed at specific social target. This section examines the both schemes from comparative frontiers. In this section, we shall compare both schemes across the underneath ties:

- Objective of Establishment
- Duration of Operation
- Social Impact Assessment
- Shortcomings

a) *An Analysis of SURE-P*

Objective of establishment: The objectives of SURE-P can be under-listed as

- To mitigate the immediate impact of the petro subsidy removal on the population to accelerate economic transformation
- To lay a foundation for the successful development of a natural safety net programme that is better targeted at the poor and most vulnerable on a continuous basis.
- To carry out the mandate of the president to mitigate the spate of youth unemployment in the country.

Duration of Operation: SURE-P was short-lived with the expiration of former President Goodluck Jonathan's tenure. Its operation began on the 13th of Feb. 2012 after the inauguration of the committee and expired in May 2015. By span, SURE-P lasted for 3 years.

Social Impact Assessment: SURE-P impacted on various sectors and activities of the economy. To evaluate the impact of SURE-P on the social sector of the Nigerian economy, we would consider CP-Africa (2012) reports on 2012 SURE-P budget breakdown for one of the projects and allocations. From the Report, SURE-P fund was budgeted on sectors such as works, Agriculture & Rural Development, Transport, Education, Health, Aviation, Federal Capital Territory Administration, Water resources etc.

Also over the period 2012-2015, an additional N205.5 billion naira was estimated to be invested in rural water scheme, water supply scheme, irrigation scheme and other water related projects from SURE-P (CP-Africa, 2012). On the other hand, SURE-P equipped young Nigerians with skills in three broad areas: Vocational/technical skills, life skills and entrepreneurship. By statistical corroboration of the social impact of SURE-P, we would consider its impact on the following:

- Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET): This was developed and managed by a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in the Ministry of Labour and Productivity with the mandate to equip young Nigerians with skills in three broad areas: vocational/technical skills, life skills and entrepreneurship. It is targeted at bridging the demand gaps in some industry areas: ICT/Telecoms, Creative (e.g. movies, music, fashion, etc) others are Hospitality and Tourism, Agro-business, Mass Housing/Construction, Artisans, Marine, Oil and Gas and Mechanical Fabrication/Woodwork.
- Mass Transit : In 2012, SURE-P in order to reduce the cost of transport for citizens and cushion the effects of partial fuel subsidy removal, disbursed in the year 2012 N8.9 billion for the Mass transit programme. Successes of 18 registered transport companies with 809 buses for use by Nigerians was recorded.
- Maternal and Child Health Programme: In 2013, the total number of healthcare workforce recruited by SURE-P was 6,630 and they were deployed to provide quality antenatal, skilled birth delivery at birth and post-natal services.
- Monitoring and Evaluation/Performance Management: 223,786 pregnant women in 2013 have received antenatal care services in SURE-P Maternal Health supported facilities.
- Conditional Cash Transfer: As at 30th June 2013, over 2150 beneficiaries were enrolled into the CCT programme.

Shortcomings: The following were shortcomings that affected SURE-P in achieving its main objective:

- Rapid population growth
- Funding of abandoned programmes and projects (Federal roads and bridge construction) without SURE-P coming up with its own brand new programme
- Fund shortage
- Overconcentration of funds on expansion of poorly equipped educational institutions
- Corrupt Leadership
- Poor Economic growth rate
- Poor Enabling environment.

b) *An Analysis of N-Power*

Objective of establishment: The specific objectives of N-power are:-

- To help young Nigerians acquire and develop life-long skills to become solution providers in their communities and to become players in the domestic and global markets.

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- To empower young Nigerians with the necessary tools to go on and create, develop, build, fix and work on exceptional ideas, projects and enterprises that will change our economy and our Nation.

Duration of Operation: N-power is a paid volunteering programme with a 2-year duration. However fitting its commencement of operations was in December 2016, and it lasted for over 2years and some months.

Social Impact Assessment: N-power impact assessment cuts across 3 main segments; N-Power Volunteer corps, N-power Knowledge and N-power Build. These segments dovetailed into different components and sectors such as N-Tech, N-Health, N-Agro, N-Teach and community etc.

- On N-Power Health: 20,000 health applicants were selected into the scheme. The NPHCDA (National Primary Health Care Development Agency was saddled with the responsibility of executing specific capacity building exercises within the states.
- On N-Power Agro: N-power Agro applicants of 23,201 were selected nationally and a total number of 6,799 residue of specific crop, fish and livestock based targets were applied by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Development.
- On N-Power Teach & Community: Initially a total of 140,992 applicants were selected nationally. However there was a special additional consideration of 4800 for the North East States (Borno-1200, Adamawa-800, Yobe-800,Taraba-800, Bauchi-600, Gombe-600) And also an additional consideration of 4,208 applicants were selected to bolster specific states with paltry application numbers such as Bayelsa, Jigawa, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara.
- On N-Power Knowledge: There is no specific published data at the moment regarding selection of applicants into the N-power knowledge yet it is undeniable that a lot of Nigerians benefited from the scheme.

In general, the Federal government spends over N15 billion monthly as stipends on 500,000 volunteers of the N-power scheme.

Shortcomings: As has been the tradition of malady in Nigeria, corruption eats deep into the fabrics of the economy and it has manifested itself in various forms affecting N-power. Some of these evils are:

- Ghost workers who get paid all to the coffers of some top officials.
- Beneficiaries who get paid regularly without reporting for work
- Massive fraud with regards to impersonation and fraudulent practices by officials handling the programme.
- Poor Management with specific emphasis on the owing of beneficiaries.

Having under-studied the both schemes across similar frontiers, we could infer that although both schemes are of different administrative epochs, they are geared towards the achievement of similar goal. Also deducible is that their shortcomings are relatively similar.

VII. Sure-P, N-Power and Job Creation in Nigeria: A Retrospective Watch (2012-2018)

There has been a plethora of government social intervention schemes in Nigeria which were geared towards job creation over the years. Unarguably, with the growth pace of unemployment which marred the economy of Nigeria despite their existence, these schemes can best be described as colossal failures as they were unable to achieve the objective for which they were fashioned.

However, with the introduction and implementation of SURE-P and N-Power as recent social intervention programmes geared towards job creation in Nigeria for over some period of time, there is need to assess these two programmes to ascertain the extent to which they have achieved their objectives. This retrospective assessment is done under the headings below:

a) An Assessment of SURE-P from 2012 till expiration in 2015

February 13, 2012 marked a memorable day in the history of Nigerian social intervention following the inauguration of SURE-P committee by former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. This committee whose mandate was to `deliver service with integrity' and `restore people's confidence in the government expressed its utmost desire to ensure that the objectives of the programme will be achieved. To consummate the achievement of the objectives of SURE-P, the Federal Government of Nigeria also called for a public-private collaboration in addressing the unemployment situation in the country (SURE-P, 2012).

The SURE-P programme modeled out the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) in October 2012 under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, as an instrument to facilitate the achievement of its goal. To this, the government collaborated with the universities in the country to provide attachment for internship for their graduated students who are to enjoy a monthly stipend of #18,000 (Nwosu and Ugwuerua, 2014). This was geared towards providing working experience to graduates in order to enhance their employment opportunity.

In 2013, The Project Director of GIS, Mr. Peter Papka stated that the programme has had beneficiaries numbering 83,000 which was far beyond the 50,000 persons threshold allotted for the scheme in a given year. In 2014, the GIS facilitator Mr. Abubakar Orumah disclosed in an interview with the News Agency of

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Nigeria that no fewer than 41,161 graduates have benefited from the scheme in that year, with 68% being males, 31% females and 1% vulnerable. He stated also that since inception of the policy in Nigeria, that over 35,000 have exited the scheme with thousands of them having secured jobs and others credit cards and grants to expand businesses they set up using GIS stipends (Premium times Editorial, September 18, 2014). According to the National Ministry of Planning (2015) in the statistic of employment report, SURE-P created 6,000 jobs for skilled labour and 1,000 jobs for technicians in 2015 before its expiration which augments it jobs created to be over 185,000 from the time of its initiation in 2012.

From state analysis, 3,000 jobs was created by SURE-P in Oyo state in 2013 as stated by the state coordinator Mr. Dare Adeleke; in Benue state, the first batch of job creation saw the employment of 3,000people from 23 local governments; Alh. Bode Oyedele the Lagos state coordinator also noted that 5,000 jobs were created for the first batch of SURE-P job creation in the state; 5,000 jobs in Ekiti according to Mr. Femi Akinyemi; 3,000 in Yobe according to Mr. Muhammad Alka; 3,000 in Enugu according to Mr. Nnamdi Asomugha; amongst others.

According to Okeke and Ngonadi (2017), unemployment rate reduced in the first quarter of 2014 under the implementation of SURE-P and in the first quarter of 2016, labour force population increased to 78.4 million from 769million seen in the 4th quarter of 2015. This is a 1.99% increase in labour force amounting to an addition of 1,528,647 economically active people into the labour force between January 1 and March 31, 2016 under the implementation of SURE-P.

Financially, GIS under SURE-P was estimated to cost the federal government, #900million monthly amounting to #10.8billion annually following the #18,000 stipend to be paid to about 50,000 graduates. However, complaints abound over the non-reception of this stipend among the participants/beneficiaries. Whereas some say that the programme was hijacked to favour their people, others like the current Vice President of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo believe that it is nothing but a colossal failure.

b) An Assessment of N-Power programme from 2016 to 2018

According to FGN (2018), the N-power programme has provided a veritable platform for engaging unemployed graduates. The scheme has engaged about five hundred thousand graduates in different sectors of the economy such as education, agriculture and health. Interview with some beneficiaries of the scheme showed that they have been engaged at their places of primary appointment in different capacities (Bisong, 2019).

The N-power programme which adopts integrative implementation approach is one that undertakes employment at each state in the federation in batches. Having started in 2016, it had a cumulative employment creation of 200,000 jobs in the year with 150,000 being teachers, 30,000 being agricultural workers and 20,000 working under healthcare delivery (The Punch Newspaper – Olalekan Adetayo, p.3, November 21, 2016). In 2017, 300,000 jobs were created by N-Power and 500,000 in 2018.

Financially, the programme was allocated the sum of #1 trillion for year 2016 and 2017 (i.e. #500 billion for each year) by the budget, but was only received #175 billion. In the year 2018, the NSIP generally was allocated #350 billion of which N-Power was proportionately allocated 37%.

The N-power programme has also been acclaimed to be guilty of failed administrative practices ranging from poor management, non-payment of salaries, lack-lustrous attitude of employees, poor funding to the politics of political elite interference.

VIII. Government Social Intervention and Job Creation in Nigeria: Deductive Challenges from Sure-P and N-Power

The analytical exposition above has proven beyond measure that there is a positive and significant relationship between government social intervention programmes (SURE-P and N-Power) and job creation in Nigeria. However, high unemployment problem still persist within the Nigerian societal milieu. The co-existence of unemployment and these intervention programmes simply denotes that the extent to which these programmes have created jobs in the country is not optimal, and as such there are defects hampering the functionality of the government social intervention programmes in job creation.

This paper segment undertakes an exposition of the challenges bedeviling government social intervention programmes in job creation in Nigeria as deducted from the analysis conducted in the prior segment of this paper.

Uniformly, the SURE-P and N-Power programmes as well as other government social intervention programmes aimed at mitigating unemployment in Nigeria have been faced by a series of challenges and among these challenges include:

- *Rise of Graduate Population:* Nigeria produces at average a turnover of 300,000 graduates on yearly basis. The constant cumulative of this outweighs the employment carrying capacity in job creation no matter the nature of government intervention programme embarked upon. This is because since previous government could not provide employment

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for existing unemployed people, their population tends to increase by accumulation on yearly basis making it difficult for present government to employ them all at once since financing their remuneration will bankrupt such government. Similarly, Okeke and Ngonadi (2017), noted that since the graduate population rises on yearly basis, it will be impossible for government social intervention programme planners to ascertain the correct size of the population that the programmes can cover.

From another perspective, the rate of creation and expansion of educational institutions outstrips the rate of jobs created. The exacerbation point is that, these institutions are usually poorly equipped and under-staffed, thus making them produce half-baked graduates who are outrightly barons of incompetence in search of white-collar job. The consequence of this is that these graduates become unemployable and as such cannot match the employment criteria set by government social intervention programmes like SURE-P and N-Power.

- *Poor funding:* In as much as programmes such as SURE-P and N-Power are government social intervention programmes which means that they are to be funded by government, they are usually subjected to politics of poor funding where the fund allocated to them by the national budget are usually not released to them. A typical case was that of SURE-P which made the then Minister of Labour and Productivity Mr. Emeka Wogu to call on the National Assembly to expedite action on the implementation of budgetary provision for SURE-P as some part of the fund allocated to it by the budget are yet to be made available for utilization. This is capture in Premium Times Newspaper Editorial of March 18, 2013 as thus: "…there is need to amend the budgetary provisions for the project… the financial requirement to sustain the project in terms of stipends payment, running cost to states, and project management for 2013 is #29 billion… the ministry only received #5billion which is grossly inadequate".
- *Corruption:* Corruption can be said to be the highest social problem in the Nigerian society. It is an *anguis-inherba* – a snake hidden in the grass of the Nigerian social scene. It has affected the government social intervention scheme from multidimensional ways. On the part of those in position of authority, corruption manifests itself in their attitude as they tend to see their assignment as an avenue to share national cake at the expense of the people. As a result the funds and other resources for job creation are embezzled by them. Similarly, plethora is cases of bribery and *insider-game* manifesting as forms of nepotic corruption as a means of getting employment. On the part of the citizens seeking employment or even employees, corruption manifests itself in form of indiscipline, ghost worker syndrome and earning salaries without reporting to duty. The effect of this is the frustration of government social intervention efforts at job creation.
- *Lack of Monitoring:* This is another tantamount problem of government social intervention programmes in creating employment in Nigeria. Nearly all government social intervention programmes does not have progress evaluation report or programme monitoring committee. Hence, re-strategizing to adapt to social dynamics of the society seems impossible.
- *Poor Management:* This is practically a problem to most Nigerian government policies and programmes if not all. Laudable as the government social intervention schemes aimed at job creation are, they are poorly managed. This is usually because those involved in the management of these programmes places their self interest above the aim of the programmes. Issues of logistics, dearth of programme target population data, poor feedback mechanism amongst others also facilitate this. The consequence is ineffectuality of the government social intervention programmes as the impact will be grossly passive and underactive.
- *Continuity Deficiency Problem:* This is a core problem bedeviling the government social intervention programmes in Nigeria. The Nigerian public policies and programmes are usually deficient in continuity, this is as a result of change of regimes, influence of strong individuals and godfathers etc. In the words of Nwafor-Orizu, Okolo and Eze (2018), policy and programme sustenance is a war that Nigerian government is not willing to win as each successive government is bent on establishing new policies and programmes without implementing those established by the former governments. The consequences of this are abandoned projects and programme inefficiency; and government social intervention programmes aimed at job creation are not devoid of this.

IX. Government Social Intervention and Job Creation in Nigeria: Policy Alternatives and Prospects

The perceived challenges of the effort of the Nigerian government to rid it society of unemployment problems or at least, drastically reduce it to the barest level through social intervention programmes such as N-Power and SURE-P is one that needs an addressing touch if the country is to achieve its employment aim. To this end, this paper segment recommends the

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underlying policy alternatives as the way forward to alleviate the observed challenges.

1. Job creation programmes should be established subject to statistics of graduates provided by all tertiary educational and technical institutions present within the country. To this, a law should be promulgated mandating all of such institutions to submit the record of graduates to the government on yearly basis.
2. Programme continuity should be ensured at all cost. Every succeeding government should evaluate the social intervention programmes of the preceding government, adopt, implement and sustain the positive impacting ones and abrogate the negative ones.
3. Investment enabling environment should be created by the government to help bring in private sectors into job creation since it is virtually impossible for the Nigerian government to create jobs for all unemployed people in Nigeria owing to finance and population.
4. A policy/programme monitoring committee should be created by the Nigerian government at each level of government to monitor all job creation programme and gather performance report.
5. Disciplinary measures such as compulsory dismissal from service should be adopted and implemented against anyone whether within the programme implementation body or an employee or job seeker found wanting of any corrupt practice within the government social intervention programme. This will deter people from corrupt practices and ensure credibility within the framework.
6. The finance of government social intervention should be consolidatedly issued into an account which can easily be accessed by them, but subject to the approval of the president or vice president and the Minister in-charge of the controlling ministry of such programme.

X. Conclusion

Government social intervention programme undoubtedly is a sine-qua-non for job creation in Nigeria as it has been evidently proven by SURE-P and N-Power that their activities has led the decrease in unemployment rate in Nigeria. However, their performance has been hampered by certain maladroit eventualities culminating into the rising of the rate of unemployment despite their existence. It is against this backdrop that this research paper recommended the above policy alternatives as a panacea to the raging problem inhibiting the success of government social intervention programmes on job creation. Therefore, urgent and responsible step should be taken in the line of the above recommendation to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in job creation programme systems within the Nigerian society.

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