



Youth empowerment against poverty in Yobe State, Northern Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history Received: 2023-06-09 Revised: 2023-06-27 Accepted: 2023-08-14 Published: 2023-09-07</p> <p>Keywords Empowerment Government Poverty Yobe State Nigeria Youth</p>	<p><i>Global efforts to end poverty and unfair development should focus on the empowered youth as the cornerstone. In Nigeria, the youth form 60 percent of the population. The majority of them are unemployed and ultimately poor. Poverty reduction requires empowerment to overcome the barriers to a better life. This study examined the nature of youth empowerment and its impact on the well-being of the youth in Yobe State, Nigeria. It used a quantitative method and administered questionnaires to 393 randomly selected respondents. Data was collected on youth's attitudes, views and experiences on various aspects of their lives and well-being and the nature of empowerment programmes in Yobe State. The study findings show that many empowerment programmes have been implemented but have had low impact on the youth. Poverty and unemployment remain high, mainly among the youth. In addition, youth attitudes and experiences show a lack of satisfaction with the nature of youth empowerment. Disempowered youth lack the confidence and belief that they have the opportunities to develop themselves or escape poverty and such disempowerment compromises their citizenry roles as the youth. Therefore, there is a need to improve the infrastructure and strengthen empowerment programmes to improve the well-being of the youth.</i></p>
<p>Kata Kunci Anak muda Kemiskinan Negara Bagian Yobe Nigeria Pemberdayaan Pemerintah</p>	<p>Pemberdayaan pemuda melawan kemiskinan di Negara Bagian Yobe, Nigeria Utara. Upaya global untuk mengakhiri kemiskinan dan pembangunan yang tidak adil harus berfokus pada pemuda yang berdaya sebagai landasannya. Di Nigeria, kaum muda merupakan 60 persen dari populasi. Mayoritas dari mereka adalah pengangguran dan pada akhirnya miskin. Pengentasan kemiskinan memerlukan pemberdayaan untuk mengatasi hambatan menuju kehidupan yang lebih baik. Studi ini mengkaji sifat pemberdayaan pemuda dan dampaknya terhadap kesejahteraan pemuda di Negara Bagian Yobe, Nigeria. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan menyebarkan kuesioner kepada 393 responden yang dipilih secara acak. Data dikumpulkan mengenai sikap, pandangan dan pengalaman remaja mengenai berbagai aspek kehidupan dan kesejahteraan mereka serta sifat program pemberdayaan di Negara Bagian Yobe. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa banyak program pemberdayaan telah dilaksanakan namun berdampak rendah terhadap generasi muda. Kemiskinan dan pengangguran masih tinggi, terutama di kalangan generasi muda. Selain itu, sikap dan pengalaman remaja menunjukkan kurangnya kepuasan terhadap hakikat pemberdayaan remaja. Kaum muda yang tidak berdaya kurang memiliki rasa percaya diri dan keyakinan bahwa mereka mempunyai peluang untuk mengembangkan diri atau keluar dari kemiskinan dan ketidakberdayaan seperti ini membahayakan peran mereka sebagai warga negara sebagai kaum muda. Oleh karena itu, perlu adanya perbaikan infrastruktur dan penguatan program pemberdayaan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan generasi muda.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Copyright © 2023, Ibrahim, et al., This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>

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INTRODUCTION

The proportion of youth in global unemployment is 47 percent while developing countries like Africa are projected to rise to 89.5 percent by 2025 (International Labour Organization, 2008). In Nigeria, the youth constitute 60 percent of the 160 million national population (Adebowale, 2015). Nevertheless, these youths are more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment (Bello, 2008; Akande, 2014; Jega, 2017). Nigerian youths face enormous challenges such as unemployment, underemployment, poverty, hunger and diseases, especially sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and a higher rate of immune deficiency virus (HIV) infection (Jega, 2017; Bello, 2008). Other vulnerability indicators are lack of appropriate self-sustenance skills, primary education, and access to information communication technology (ICT) facilities. These challenges threaten the Nigerian youth to adapt to contemporary realities, leading to increased crime such as armed robbery, thuggery, and insurgency, among other crimes. This contradicts their expected citizenry roles enshrined in being responsible and law-abiding citizens. Therefore, to overcome these challenges, the Nigerian youth need to be educated, employed and have relevant skills for jobs and capital for businesses for their self-reliance and well-being (Bello, 2008; Jega, 2017; Omeje, Jidefor, & Ugwu, 2020). Since its independence, the Nigerian government has designed and implemented various poverty alleviation programmes to empower the youth and promote national development. However, there is a disconnect between the various empowerment programmes, the desire to provide youth employment, relevant skills, education, and poverty alleviation for the youth and other Nigerians to be empowered and self-reliant (Omeje, Jidefor, & Ugwu, 2020). However, the purpose of these programmes for alleviating poverty is arguably failing, considering the high level of 21 percent of youth underemployment and 42.5 percent of general unemployment in Nigeria, and 72.3 percent of poor people in Yobe State, respectively (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics 2021).

Empowerment has no single accepted definition because various scholars define it differently. At the same time, the various empowerment programmes of the Nigerian government focus on different empowerment strategies. For example, the Directorate of Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) targets rural areas focusing on Feeder Roads, Rural Water Supply, and Electrification. At the same time, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) targets youths focusing on training, finance, and guidance. Furthermore, Better Life Program (BLP) targets women and focuses on Self-help and rural development programmes, skill acquisition, and health care. In addition, the Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) targets the underprivileged in urban and rural areas focusing on encouraging savings and credit facilities.

In contrast, the Family Support Program (FSP) targets families in rural areas, focusing on Health care delivery, child welfare, youth development, and other programmes (Fidelis, 2002). Zimmerman (2000) and Reininger et al. (2001) consider empowerment strategies a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon and Zimmerman (2000) further posits that the concept of empowerment has two components of theory and value. The theory identifies many social problems due to structural differentiations, while the value orientation component promotes goals, aims, and strategies for implementing change. Therefore, defining empowerment as a multidimensional concept is about both individual and collective capacities and actions to solve inequalities that cause poverty.

Furthermore, empowerment stresses that the causes of poverty are social exclusion and lack of access to power, voice and security, rather than only low incomes (Luttrell et al. 2009). Effective empowerment is a societal process allowing people to control their own lives. This process develops people's ability to participate in decisions that affect their lives, communities, and society by allowing them to act on issues that they deem essential (Page and Czuba, 1999). In his theory of empowerment, Zimmerman (1995; 2000) argues that policy measures taken by the state determine youth empowerment programmes that encourage youth participation, enhance decision-making and increase their opportunities for learning and skills acquisition. In addition, the neo-theory of empowerment adopted and reviewed by Reischl et al. (2011) argues that engaging youth in community-oriented programmes enhances decisions making and provides the platform that ensures active participation of youths in decisions that affect their lives, employment, relevant skills and a sense of security and belonging.

The youth empowerment approach develops a positive and stable identity where youths take societal roles. It also aims at transforming risky youth behaviours into positive and meaningful skills and competence for self-empowerment to improve their livelihoods and promote economic growth and development (Maigida, Saba, & Namkere, 2013). However, Nigeria's definition of youth has changed from citizens aged 18-35 to those aged 15-29 (Nigeria, 2019; 2021). Furthermore, Nigeria's Government defined youth empowerment as providing employment or jobs to the youth through large-scale and relevant skills acquisition and development to fix inadequate public services, which enhanced the economy, or as creating youth employment through education, relevant skills acquisition, training, and providing an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, and the quality of work available for young people (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2019; 2021).

Since 1977, Nigeria has implemented 15 different Poverty Alleviation Programmes. These programmes included National Accelerated Food Production and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, the Green Revolution of 1980, the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1986, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1987, and Community Bank in 1988. Also, the Better Life Programme (BLP) in 1989. People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) in 1989. In 1996 Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and Poverty Alleviation Programme in 2000. Others

are the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) of 2001, which is divided into four parts as follows; Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS)—the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2003 and the Seven-Point Agenda of 2007. In 2008 Micro-Credit Fund, You-Win, Sure-P in 2010, and N- Power was introduced in 2015 and is ongoing (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009; Taiwo & Agwu, 2016). These empowerment programmes aim to enable the youth to fight unemployment, poverty, and deprivation to different degrees (Reininger et al., 2001). However, poverty and unemployment remain high despite implementing such poverty programmes.

Globally, world leaders through the United Nations adopted the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 to address various environmental, social, and economic challenges manifested in inequality, poverty, unemployment and lack of sustainability that threatened humanity (Sianes et al., 2022). The MDGs aimed at cutting poverty by half by 2015, and each country was supposed to allocate at least 0.7% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) towards poverty alleviation. By the end of 2015, most of the MDGs had not been achieved hence the need to review them (Sianes et al., 2022) and introduced a different development agenda. Consequently, the 2030 Agenda of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Sustainable Development was adopted with formal endorsement by the UN General Assembly (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs aim to inform and guide government and non-government initiatives in various areas, including birth rates, intelligent cities, and labour markets, among many others, to address global concerns and build a more sustainable and better future for all nations (United Nations, 2015). The United Nations (2017) provided indicators for each target to track progress towards their attainment. The SDGs and their distinct objectives impact one another and are interconnected. Each objective of the SDGs tackles issues related to the environment, society and the economy (Kleespies & Dierkes, 2022). Operations of the 2030 Agenda are based on the "5 Ps", i.e. people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships (Sianes et al., 2022). The Agenda, which will be pursued over 15 years, has defined 169 specific goals and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting this new Agenda's scope and deep aspiration (United Nations, 2017).

Since ratifying the 2030 Agenda for the SDGs in 2015, Nigeria has mainstreamed its poverty alleviation efforts to include the 17 SDGs in its National Development Plan (NDP). Though efficient budget execution is essential to realising the NDP and accomplishing the SDGs, the budget reality and credibility remain problematic since the government of Nigeria does not consistently implement its budget as authorised by the legislature (Olaniyi, 2022). The analysis of the federal budget of Nigeria's execution of seven crucial areas linked to ten SDGs implemented from 2018 to 2020 shows that the seven sectors of agribusiness and food production, education, the environment, gender issues, health, social protection, and water and sanitation are affected (Olaniyi, 2022). Furthermore, there is a difference between the budget authorised for the government to spend and what is spent. On average, over the three years, the government underspent and, by implication, under-implemented its budget by 32 per cent. Comparatively, there was higher underspending in agriculture, water and sanitation, and the environment than the overall budget. Hence, as Olaniyi (2022) argues, the SDGs in these sectors may not be achieved without a reasonable budget and when the legislature's plans and priorities are disregarded. In addition, over the years, there may be a shift in the government's priorities from the SDG-related targets and goals outlined in development plans and budgets. Therefore, this article examines the nature and impact of various poverty alleviation programmes on youth and how they have addressed the magnitude and intensity of youth unemployment and poverty in Yobe State, Nigeria.

METHOD

This article is based on a study that collected quantitative data on the nature of youth empowerment in Yobe State from a randomly selected sample of 393 respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire. Qualitative data on the youth's perceptions of the empowerment programmes' effectiveness was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). The 17 local government areas in the three geo-political zones containing the 17 Local Government Areas are clustered and chosen randomly. The zoning criterion on the ethnic and cultural disposition is contained in the state constitution for political and policy implementation purposes. The youth population in Yobe State as of 2020 is 25,925 (International Organization of Migration, 2017). We used an average confidence level of 95% error tolerance of 0.05% to determine the sample based on Yamane's (1973) statistical formula. The secondary data was drawn from a critical review of scholarly articles, youth policies, reports, and government publications to support the findings. In order to analyse the results, we coded the quantitative data and analysed it using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 to derive the frequencies and percentages from generating the mean and cumulative average for the social indicators of the rating for the youth empowerment and status for youth employment. Pie charts, Tables, and correlations were also generated to analyse the needs of unemployed youth and the relationship between their marital status and employment, among other indices, to describe and analyse the impact of youth empowerment programmes on youth in Yobe State. The qualitative data collected was prepared and organised into themes and categories. After a careful review, the relevant themes are coded and presented coherently in line with the study's objective: the nature and impact of various poverty alleviation programmes on youth and how

they have addressed the magnitude and intensity of youth unemployment and poverty in Yobe State, Nigeria. Q-D Miner generated the ideas and information to write the article. The Yobe State University Centre for Research, Innovation, and Linkages approved the Survey RN-YSU/REC/00037-18/19 ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we present the findings, interpretation, and discussion on the nature of youth empowerment programmes to make sense of the collected data and give insight into youth empowerment against poverty in Yobe State, Nigeria. These include youths' social and economic well-being and access to education. In addition, other indicators such as youth awareness of the empowerment programmes, the orientation of the programmes, the contribution of youth and communities to the programmes, youth income, access to education, and skills are also examined. Examining these indicators would determine the extent of the disconnect between the various youth empowerment programmes and rising poverty and unemployment and the successes recorded from the programmes. Understanding the nature of youth empowerment is crucial to understanding the relevance of the implemented content to the needs of the youth in the state. It also helps to understand whether the implemented programmes meet their needs and aspiration hence the state's level of program success. This section of results helps shed light on the findings concerning that aspect. The Nigerian government has implemented several developments or intervention programmes since the 1970s to improve welfare and empower its citizens, especially the youth. However, poverty and unemployment remain high despite implementing various empowerment programmes, especially in Yobe State.

Youth Perceptions of Benefits from The Empowerment Programmes

Various poverty alleviation programmes were implemented in Yobe State from 2000 to 2020, which aimed at poverty reduction among the citizens through employment, skills acquisition and access to capital to start a business. Understanding the impact of these programmes on the individual youth helps in understanding the program that works best for the youth over time. The empowerment programmes include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP), Micro Credit Scheme (You Win), Sure P and N- Power, respectively. The NDE was established in 1986 by Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Act CAP 250, to deal with mass unemployment under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Employment, labour and Productivity with the technical support of the International Labour Organization (NDE, 2000; 2001) The directorate's goal was to concentrate its efforts on reactivating public works, promoting self-employment, organising artisans into co-operatives, and encouraging a maintenance and repair culture (NDE, 2000; 2001).

The directorate's responsibilities include developing and implementing programs to combat unemployment, articulating policies for work programs with the potential to be labour-intensive, gathering and maintaining data on employment and vacancies in the nation, acting as a clearing house by connecting job seekers with open positions in collaboration with other government agencies, and implementing any other policies that may be established from time to time (Afolabi, 2016). NAPEP was established in 2001 by the stakeholders in Nigeria's poverty eradication: the federal, state and local governments, civil society organisations, research institutions, the organised private sector, women groups and concerned individuals (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009). NAPEP is divided into four parts: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS). The program aimed to address and eradicate all aspects of absolute poverty. The stakeholders recognised certain fundamentals.

The inadequacy of anti-poverty initiatives has been blamed on various factors, including insufficient involvement, lack of a policy framework, weak implementation arrangements and a lack of stakeholders' insufficient coordination (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009). Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), on the other hand, was introduced in 2012 to cushion the effect of Petrol subsidy removal in Nigeria by the federal government. (Amakom, 2013). SURE-P was designed to complement all the other development programmes in the three tiers of government, namely, federal, state and local governments. SURE- P's goals are to mitigate the immediate impact of the removal of petroleum subsidies on the population, particularly the poor and vulnerable; accelerate economic transformation by investing in critical infrastructure projects to drive economic growth and achieve Vision 20:2020; and lay the groundwork for the successful development of a national safety net program that is better targeted at the poor and vulnerable (Amakom, 2013).

The qualitative findings show that most youth have benefited directly or know some people who benefitted from such programmes. In addition, most youth benefitted from the N-Power program, which took off in 2015. N-Power Programme is the Federal Government's National Social Investment Program, which focuses on employment creation and youth empowerment through human capital development. One of the program's goals was to improve the Nigerian labour force's human capital (N-Power Information Guide, 2017; Odey & Sambe, 2019). The increase in human capital appears to be in youth employment, addressed through youth empowerment. The acquisition of skills and development of the young in vital sectors such as education, health, and agriculture was to assure youth empowerment. The program's primary goal was to acquire and develop skills among educated and uneducated

Nigerian youth with little hope of finding work, even at the minimum of survival and raising a family. The Federal Government has introduced N-Power as a structure for large-scale and relevant work skill training and development and for utilising a large volunteer workforce to address some of the problems in public services while also boosting the economy. The Federal Government of Nigeria engaged and deployed 200,000 young Nigerians in public primary schools and primary healthcare facilities across Nigeria in 2016 under the N-Power programme (N-Power Information Guide 2017). While answering the question on the poverty alleviation programme from which they have benefited, one participant said,

Yes, to some extent, because I have seen many programmes being undertaken by the government that youths are benefiting directly from them. First, there is this youth empowerment Programme through N-Power, a government initiative in which the government pays monthly stipends to unemployed youths and assigns them to various jobs like teaching, traffic, etc. The government would pay the youth stipends while tapping their talents (**IDI 8 Male Youth Participant**).

Another participant also said,

I benefitted from a government program through NAPEP. During this conditional cash transfer, beneficiaries receive money to invest and give back a certain percentage to the government after a certain period. They remain with the largest share of the investment to sustain them (**IDI 10 Male Youth Participant**).

In the FGD of the youth from Zone A, "There are few people in my LGA. I know that benefits from the N power. Some of them are employed to teach while some enrol for computer repair and other skills under monthly stipend" (Youth FGD 9 of Zone A).

From the qualitative findings, most youth participants acknowledge the impact of some of the poverty alleviation programmes. Most youth agree that N- Power has benefitted many youths in the state. At the same time, few other youth mention the NDE and Sure P as programmes that some youth benefitted from. The result could be attributed to the focus on the various poverty alleviation programmes. While other programmes generally focus on the citizens, the N Power Programme focuses on the youth. The nature of youth empowerment programmes assesses the perception and experiences of the youth being the target audience. The social indicators used are the expectation of the youth from the government, the content of the programmes, youth and communities' contribution as beneficiaries, and how the government manages the programmes generally. Table 1 shows the Likert scale rating of the youth on the nature of the empowerment programmes.

Table 1. Rating of the Nature of Youth Empowerment in Yobe State

Indicators for Nature of Youth Empowerment Programmes	Youth Empowerment Rating (<i>Freq and Percent</i>)					Mean	Average rating
	SA	A	NS	D	SD		
The Youth know what to expect from the state	99(32.8)	102(33.8)	45(14.9)	31(10.3)	25(8.3)	2.27	Agree
State empowerment programmes are youth-oriented	73(24.2)	109(36.1)	47(15.6)	57(18.9)	16(5.3)	2.44	Agree
Youth contributed to the success of the empowerment programmes	77(25.5)	93 (30.8)	72(23.8)	40(13.2)	20(6.6)	2.44	Agree
Many youth benefited from the state empowerment programmes	62(20.5)	97(32.1)	61(20.2)	56(18.5)	26(8.6)	2.63	Not sure
Government solves managerial problems in the course of programmes implementation	50(16.5)	85(28.1)	70 (23.1)	59 (19.5)	38(12.6)	2.83	Not sure
Government perform well for the programmes to be a success	42 (13.9)	98 (32.3)	63 (20.9)	66 (21.9)	33(10.9)	2.83	Not sure
Communities contributed to the success of the empowerment programmes	46 (15.2)	96 (31.8)	56(18.5)	49(16.2)	55(18.2)	2.90	Not sure

KEY: SA= Strongly Agreed A=Agree NS= Not Sure D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

The findings in Table 1 show that the youth agree to three facts: i) the youth in Yobe state are aware of government obligations. Secondly, the state empowerment programmes are youth-oriented, and thirdly, the youth contributed to the success of the various empowerment programmes by the government. However, the findings reveal that many youth are unsure of how they have benefited from the empowerment programmes implemented by the government. The youth are unsure if the government can solve managerial problems by implementing various programmes and if the government is committed to the success of the various programmes. The youth are unsure about the contribution of the respective communities where the programmes were implemented. Despite the perception that most of the state's youth know what to expect from the government and that the empowerment programmes are youth-oriented, their expectations are often unmet. Especially in implementing youth empowerment programmes that can help improve their livelihoods in the state. The youth knowing well what to expect from the state implies that they are aware of their needs and aspirations even though they fall short of realising them in implementing the various government empowerment programmes. However, the findings that many youth have not benefited from the empowerment programmes explained the consistent rise in unemployment and poverty among the state's youth, despite implementing various poverty alleviation programmes from 2000 to 2020.

These findings relate to Banks (2015), who argues that it is not about solving the difficulties that youth face but about successfully identifying the resources and support they require at various times and enhancing their access to them. Cunningham & Villasenor (2016) also stress that youth need empowerment by developing their soft skills and space for autonomous decision-making, creativity, and self-advocacy. Sometimes, soft skills development conflicts with traditions, especially in autocratic patriarchal societies stratified by age. Conservative societies tend to put barriers against young women stressing goal orientation and self-assertiveness but are more liberal with young men. Involving youths in designing and implementing empowerment programmes ensures their success. Wit & Orvis (2010) assert that comprehensive or multi-component youth empowerment programmes on soft skills development are more effective than other skills. However, due to the structure of the evaluations, no evidence exclusively attributes success to soft skills intermediation. Consistent with other meta-analyses of skills training programmes that connote social skills interventions are more effective in low-income nations and female participants. This analysis also shows more significant effects on employment versus income outcomes. In addition, the inability of the government to solve managerial problems regarding the implementation of empowerment programmes implies that the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes yields the less desired result of youth empowerment. Trucco & Ullmann (2016) argue that it is crucial to acknowledge youth as key players in the measures taken and play decisive roles in the design and implementation to take ownership of those actions to achieve any desired results.

The qualitative results, on the other hand, reveal that the poverty alleviation programmes are youth-oriented and have helped many youth to start businesses for self-reliance, as one of the respondents explained in the FGD of the youth from Zone B.

In my community, poverty alleviation programmes such as the N-Power have helped many people find jobs and become self-reliant. However, before this intervention, many people, especially the youth, were jobless and could not afford to start any business due to lacking capital or skills (**Youth FGD 4 of Zone B**).

Another youth FGD from Zone A also explained,

I am aware of quite some people that were empowered. For example, about 20 of my friends were jobless before introducing the poverty programmes. However, after implementing them, they were empowered with at least one skill that made them self-employed (**Youth FGD 11 of Zone A**).

This finding implies that many people find it helpful due to the poverty alleviation programmes in the state. However, hitherto implementing these programmes, many youths could not start any business since many had no skills to start and sustain such businesses. However, government programmes' intervention helped the youth attain economic empowerment and self-reliance. Abdussalam (2015), empowerment means extending socioeconomic and political development benefits to the poorest rural dwellers. Furthermore, empowerment is a socioeconomic or political action taken by the government or its agencies, private persons, or corporations to improve the socioeconomic well-being of the disempowered. This group includes the rural-urban poor, small-scale farmers, landless people, and the unemployed, whose wages are insufficient to cover basic needs. In addition, the sick and maimed who cannot access excellent treatment, the uneducated who do not have access to educational institutions, and the destitute who cannot afford adequate meals and shelter are all included in the group. More so, the above findings also imply that some youths in the state are out of poverty due to the state's implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes. Moreover, the skills acquired to enable them to be self-employed help them earn some economic empowerment, improving their lives.

Abdussalam (2015) explains that poverty alleviation programmes implemented in Nigeria, like Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), have a statistically significant impact on people's standard of living and equally reduce their poverty level.

The qualitative findings also reveal that youths access start-up capital and skills through poverty alleviation programmes, as explained by one of the Participants,

Here in Yobe State, the government empowers youths through skills acquisition. For example, when the government took hundreds of youth to a skill acquisition centre in Kano, they were trained in various skills such as carpentry, welding, electrician and furniture making. In addition, all the trainees were supported with starter kits and money to start their businesses in their chosen careers. The government also distributed livestock and cash to support people that chose to farm **(KII 7 Male Participant)**.

This finding implies that the youth are greatly empowered by providing start-up kits and capital for those trained in various skills and ones that go into farming. Training the youth in different skills and farming will help the youth of the poverty hook have a job and be self-reliant. Many youths are also trained to improve their capacity to sustain the ventures they started. According to Odeh & Okoye (2014), one of the economic features of the poor and poverty is that they are younger than older individuals. As a result, young empowerment is critical in any economy. One of the issues facing many developing countries' governments is to reduce economic disparities between haves and have-nots rather than high- and low-income earners and alleviate poverty in their societies. The Nigerian government has made numerous efforts to address the problem of poverty in society through various programmes and institutions.

The Qualitative findings on the youth contribution to the success of the programmes reveal that the implementation of youth empowerment programmes decreases the rate of crime, as explained by one respondent,

Poverty alleviation programmes help many youths, particularly in our community, because most of the youths living in that community are youths, but they are jobless. There are many crimes in that community, including prostitution, armed robbery, and kidnapping, among other crimes. The people responsible for these crimes are the youths. However, due to these poverty alleviation programmes, they started looking at the youths given these programmes or jobs to accept that program to depend on themselves and stop going to other people **(KII 12 Female Participant)**.

This implies that many idle youths commit crimes due to poverty and unemployment before implementing the youth empowerment program. However, with the implementation of the youth empowerment interventions, many youth have changed for the better, embracing the youth empowerment programmes for self-reliance. Moreover, the available empowerment programmes have enabled the youth to understand that it is their responsibility to participate in the empowerment intervention meant for them instead of resorting to crimes and relying on others for their development. Gergis (1999) says that nations must first identify the varying demands and then concentrate on creating more complex policy responses to address them. The era of "one size fits all" solutions are long gone. It is suggested that government empowerment should not be imposed from above as a top-down strategy. Equal access to economic possibilities must instead be presented to each person as a goal to work toward, with the will and interest of the populace serving as the foundation. On government solving the managerial problems, the qualitative findings revealed some challenges of originality with the implementation of the empowerment programmes, as explained by one of the respondents,

No, youth are not involved in the design of the programmes. Most programmes are armchair, copied from elsewhere, which is unsuitable for our societal context. The youth are only involved in implementation, whether it suits our needs or not **(IDI 9 Female Participant)**.

Another KII participant also said,

Poverty alleviation managers always come in handy with their designed programmes and implement them without considering whether the young man is interested in undertaking the program. Left to me, any program designed to help a young man should be designed from the input of the young man himself because interest matters in everything you do **(KII 3 Male Participants)**.

This implies that despite implementing youth empowerment programmes, the youth are not part of designing such programmes. Failure to involve the youth in designing empowerment programmes implies that critical views that reflect their needs are neglected. This causes a mismatch of what the youth in the community want vis a vis the government presents for implementation. Suhaimi et al. (2020) argue that youth decision-making leads to better results by protecting the youth, promoting the well-being of the youth in society, and leading to more effective empowerment of such youth. If the youth collaborate in nation-building, it is critical to empower them with decision-making skills and opportunities in development programmes (Meng, 2017). The youth stage of growth and development is transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. Therefore, youth need empowerment for confidence building and enhancing decision-making abilities so their needs fit into the policy development processes.

Moreso, it implies that the government implements empowerment programmes for the youth and other poor citizens, using the top-to-bottom approach, where state officials decide on their behalf. This is challenging because some programmes are irrelevant to some youth, and this does not solve the empowerment challenges of the youth. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the youth believe that programmes that benefit them should involve them in the planning and implementation process. Meng (2017). explains that active, informed, and voluntary involvement of youth in decision-making and the life of their communities is vital if this is to be achieved. Youth can participate as beneficiaries, partners, and leaders. Participation means working with and by youth, not merely working for them. To be able to participate, youth need to be empowered. It involves developing group work, public speaking skills, and confidence to communicate and interact with various stakeholders. The process of participation and empowerment is not about actions prescribed by others. Instead, it cultivates opportunities for youth to develop skills and competencies in a mutual respect and understanding climate. The above findings reveal the nature of youth empowerment in Yobe State, which is skills acquisition centred with few mentions of agro empowerment. One respondent believes that alleviation programmes are euro-centric, which means they are not indigenous-oriented policies, so they can hardly empower them. This relates to Mohammed & Ibrahim (2011), who explains that youth empowerment is essential to economic growth and development. Youth represents a significant number of Nigeria's population with a limited portion of life; effectively harnessing their skills can expand its production possibilities immensely. However, it is worth mentioning that the unchangeable youth age is only a tiny part of life (Jimba, 2007). Unlike capital productivity, human capability diminishes with age; as a result, if not previously utilised. The previous productivity cannot be used afterwards, resulting in an increase in undesirable social disorders such as political thuggery, kidnapping, delinquency, and prostitution, among other things (Mohammed & Ibrahim, 2011).

Many respondents lament non-involvement in designing and implementing poverty alleviation programmes. This indicates the imposition of poverty alleviation programmes on the youths without their input on decisions shaping their lives. Moreover, the implication is that the program's success is compromised if the stakeholders do not meet their needs. On the other hand, involving youth in decision-making provide contexts for the development of competencies that will help youth succeed in today's world, including those referred to as twenty-first-century skills, social-emotional skills, and non-cognitive skills (Durlak et al. 2011; National Research Council, 2012; Meng, 2017). For example, program decision-making could serve as a springboard for establishing strategic thinking, defined as proactive planning and regulation of actions to attain objectives (Larson & Angus, 2011). Youth learn how to get things done in an organisational context by participating in program decision-making activities, providing powerful contexts for developing strategic thinking abilities. The findings also reveal that all the youths engaged in the interview and FGD have not benefitted from any youth empowerment programmes under review. However, despite the youths' involvement in designing and implementing the poverty packages and not being beneficiaries, they agreed that the programmes' results helped their empowerment in their respective communities. This could be attributed to the high and ever-growing population of the state resulting in the number of empowered youth being insignificant in raising the empowered youths' level.

Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) posit that youth intervention policies and decision-making practices may affect youth's motivation and learning in the empowerment processes. Mitra (2004) also found that several skills are learned through participation in youth problem-solving, facilitation, social, and public speaking. Larson and Angus (2011) found that youth reported developing leadership, planning, and self-confidence skills. In terms of communities' cooperation in the success of the poverty alleviation programmes, the findings indicate a success story due to the community's cooperation towards the programmes' success because of their roles in various stages to aid the program implementers. Generally, these are the nature of the poverty alleviation programmes in Yobe State. This relates to O'Higgins (2017), who explains that community systems are not always stable enough to respond to youth demands. Even with helpful information about youth's needs and wants, adult allies in power positions cannot make meaningful changes. Long-term funding is rarely secure in neighbourhoods with a long poverty history, and administrations often change yearly. Thus, while youth voice can make many adults' work more manageable, the funding structures are not supporting the required long-term vision and planning.

Impact of Yobe State Empowerments Programmes on Youth Well-Being

It is vital to assess the impact of the state's empowerment programmes on the youth through various interventions aimed at their empowerment for self-reliance. When youths are self-reliant and financially independent, they are out of

poverty. Therefore, various social and economic indicators are used to assess the impact of empowerment programmes on youth in Yobe State. These indicators include the youth's source of income, employment status, the ability of the employed youths to meet basic needs and employ others, and unemployed youth dependence. Other indicators include access to education, an obstacle to self-reliance, roles of relevant education, and vocational training centres. Undoubtedly, assessing these indicators will give an insight into the impact of the empowerment programmes on the youth in Yobe State.

Impact on Youth Employment

The youth's income sources depend on their status in terms of whether they are formally employed, self-employed or unemployed. These indicators reveal the number of employed and unemployed youth concerning the impact of the implemented empowerment programmes. Table 2 shows the youth's employment status and subsequent source of income.

Table 2. Status of Youth Employment

What is Your Status of Employment?	Frequency	Percentage	Cum. Percentage
Formal Employment	114	37.6%	37.6%
Self Employed	120	39.6%	77.2%
Unemployed	69	22.8%	100%
TOTAL	303	100.0%	

Table 2 shows that most youth are self-employed, followed by those formally employed. Those who are unemployed are 23 percent. The findings also reveal that despite the substantial investment in empowerment programmes, gaps still leave some youth unemployed and others self-employed. The findings further reveal a lack of enough formal jobs due to a lack of large-scale institutional job creation. The informal sector, which includes trading, street hawking, farming, livestock rearing, and working for micro or small businesses, remains the primary source of economic engagement. Many young individuals begin these economic activities while still in school, which could have affected their further education and formal employment opportunities. In Yobe State, the youth consider empowerment as being formally employed rather than engaging in other work due to a lack of formal employment. The education of the youth facilitates them to have the right qualifications to get the required formal jobs. Education promotes peace and social cohesion and instils knowledge and skills that enhance empowerment in the youth. The knowledge that they acquire enables them to get employment hence self-independence. According to the International Labour Organization research, 75 percent of youth aged 15 to 29 work in the informal sector. Working in the informal economy is the only alternative for most youth in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2013; Shenu & Nilsson, 2014; Elder & Kone, 2014, cited in Mastercard Foundation, 2015). Youth engaged in some form of employment are active members of society and no longer idle. Skills are essential in facilitating self-reliance in the youth through self-employment. Vocational training institutions such as polytechnics are necessary for imparting practical skills to the youth. The findings also show a significant relationship between the marital and employment statuses of the youth (see Table 3),

Table 3. Relationship between Marital Status and Employment Status

Marital Status of the Respondents	What is your Status of Employment?						Total	
	Formal Employment		Self Employed		Unemployed		Freq	Percent
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent		
Single	61	38.9	59	37.6	37	23.6	157	100.0
Married	46	36.5	53	42.1	27	21.4	126	100.0
Widowed	4	36.4	3	27.3	4	36.4	11	100.0
Separated	2	22.2	6	66.7	1	11.1	9	100.0
Total	113	37.3	121	39.9	69	22.8	303	100.0

The results in Table 3 show a significant relationship between employment and the marital statuses of the youth. The relationship indicates that most formally employed youth are single, while those in self-employment are married. However, the unemployed are still single and widowed. Most youth prefer to have employment before having a family. Most youth, especially the male youth who are not employed, may not get a spouse because they believe they can not cater to their needs. Likewise, most married men are either employed or self-employed because of the responsibility of taking care of their families. The widows and separated, as breadwinners, have sources of income through formal or self-employment to take care of the families under their care. Most formally employed single youth work in various civil service sectors, while the single and married, self-employed youth are into farming, businesses, trading, or other menial works.

During the Focus Group Discussion with youth in Zone C, a participant said,

I am aware of quite some people that were empowered. For example, about 20 of my friends were jobless before introducing the N-Power poverty programmes. However, after implementing the program, they were empowered with at least one skill that made them self-employed (**Youth FGD 20 of Zone C**).

Another female youth participant explained,

The Yobe State Government empowers youths through skills acquisition. The government took hundreds of youth to a skill acquisition centre in Kano, where they were trained in various trades and soft skills such as painting, plumbing and carpentry. At the end of the training, they were handed some starter kits and money to invest in their chosen businesses. The government also gave the farmers free livestock and other farm implements, giving them cash ranging from N5,000 to 50,000 to take care of their lives (**IDI 5 Female Participant**).

Hence, although many youths may not feel the positive impact of the empowerment programmes, their ability to be self-employed implies that they have acquired the necessary survival and resource-harnessing skills that other disempowered youth may not have.

Impact on the Ability of Employed Youths to Meet their Basic Needs

Addressing the ability of the employed youth to meet their basic needs determines the impact of the various empowerment programmes on the empowerment of the youth in the state. It is common to find youth in Yobe State depending on their parents, siblings, or guardians, even when employed or self-employed. The culture in the state encourages youth to remain under their parents' care, pending when they will get married and own their family. Even if youth are employed but cannot meet their basic needs, they may not be considered empowered. Out of 303 respondents, only 123 youth are formally employed.

Empowered youths are either employed or self-employed and can meet their basic needs. Study findings revealed that most formally employed youth could meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and other social needs. However, despite implementing youth empowerment programmes between 2000 to 2020, 26.8 percent of the youth cannot afford basic needs despite being employed or self-employed. Eberhard et al. (2019) assert that the empowerment process encourages economic and social involvement by the vulnerable and marginalised groups to meet their basic needs like shelter, food, and medical supplies. Therefore, empowering youths provides a platform to easily take advantage of opportunities to be self-reliant. Utilising such opportunities give room for additional sources for households. This increased income flow to households helps people meet their basic needs, eradicating poverty. In addition, empowered persons make better decisions in deploying their individual and collective assets. However, there is no correlation between the ability of youth to meet their basic needs and their demographic features.

Impact on the Ability of Self-Employed Youth to Employ other Youth

The ability of self-employed youth to employ others gives an insight into the impact of the poverty alleviation programmes on the youth in the state. The multiplier effect of self-employment through providing opportunities to others shows the impact of the empowerment programmes in the state. If these are improved, the multiplier effect will reduce unemployed youth in the state. The study revealed that most of the 108 self-employed youth had employed other people. This implies that most self-employed youth have employed fellow youth, reducing the state's unemployment. Thus, if the state government could effectively implement youth empowerment programmes to empower youth to be self-employed, the multiplier effect of employing other youths by the self-employed youth will drastically reduce poverty and unemployment, hence complementing government efforts to improve the well-being of the youth. Bennell (2007) explains how disempowered individuals lack the courage to express their abilities or opportunities necessary to overcome poverty or that they have the potential to improve themselves. They also lack the self-belief that change is possible. As a result, youth in yobe are trapped in a vicious cycle of dependency, disempowerment, and poverty. The first step in achieving permanent poverty reduction is to assist youth in growing their sense of self-worth, valuing themselves, recognising their abilities and resources, and see a world where they are not living in poverty. Empowered people can utilise their skills to gain self-employment and access their rights. They may also advocate for their neighbourhoods by organising young people to lobby and pressure the government to set up social infrastructures that will enable them to escape poverty. Youth who feel empowered may recognise the resources in their community and use them to pursue their goals. There is no correlation between the demographic features of the respondents and their ability to employ others.

Basic Needs of Unemployed Youth and Dependency Status in Yobe State

The basic needs and level of dependence of the unemployed youth are one of the social indicators to determine the impact of the empowerment programmes. Therefore, it is essential to understand the level of unemployed youth dependence and perspective on the factors that hinder their empowerment from understanding the impact of the various youth empowerment programmes. When youths are unemployed, they depend on others to fend for a living in their society. The pie chart in Figure 1 presents the response of seventy unemployed youth out of the 303 samples on their sources of basic needs.

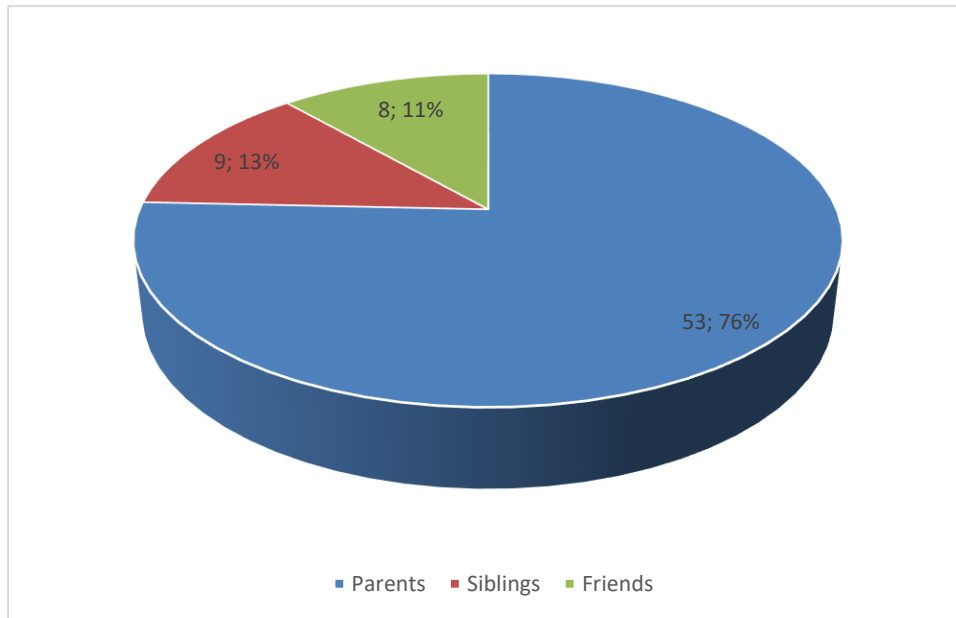


Figure 1. Source of Basic Needs for the Unemployed Youth

Findings in Fig 1 show that most unemployed youth participants solely depend on their parents for their basic needs, while others depend on siblings and friends. Thus, from most participants, the result shows a high level of dependency on parents. By implication, despite the many programmes implemented in the state, many youths are still poverty-dependent on their parents for survival. This also puts more pressure on the family economy, affecting the upbringing of their younger ones in terms of feeding, school fees, and other basic needs. Therefore, as a matter of priority, the government needs to devise more programmes towards creating more employment and revamp the youth empowerment programmes to discourage youths' culture of dependence on their basic needs and contribute to the development of their community. Griffin (2001) asserts that giving more attention to and prioritising the basic needs of vulnerable people and families affected by poverty, hunger, and unemployment from society's basic units and economy in developing countries is handy. Education in home economics skills, like resource management, time management and household finances, combined with the family's psychosocial stabilisation, leads to the productive and regenerative capacity of the otherwise disenfranchised. Well-being and regeneration in the private area at home is a fundamental social goal to use one's potential for education and paid work. The finding also shows a significant relationship between the marital status of respondents and the 70 unemployed youth basic needs and dependence (see Table 4).

Table 4. Relationship between Marital Status and Unemployment Dependence

Marital Status of the Respondents	If Unemployed, on whom do you depend for your Basic Needs?						Total	
	Parents		Siblings		Friends		Freq	Percent
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent		
Single	31	83.8	4	10.8	2	5.4	37	100.0
Married	19	67.9	4	14.3	5	17.8	28	100.0
Widowed	3	75	1	25	0	0.0	4	100.0
Separated	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	1	100.0
Total	53	75.7	9	12.9	8	11.4	70	100.0

In Table 4, findings show a significant correlation between marital status and dependence on parents and relatives for securing basic needs. It is mainly the single unemployed youth who depend on their parent on their parents

compared to other marital statuses. This is because, based on the tradition in northern Nigeria, young people are cared for by their parents until they find a livelihood. In some cases, parents take responsibility to the extent of marrying a spouse to their wards while still under their care. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the unemployed youth who depend on siblings are mainly the married and widowed, while the married and separated depend on friends.

Perception of Unemployed Youth on the Factors that Hinders their Empowerment

Understanding the perception of unemployed youth regarding their long-term experiences will give insights into the impact of the implemented empowerment programmes as an indicator. Moreover, understanding the youth's perception will allow the adjustment in the empowerment policies to consider their concerns. Table 5 depicts the perception of the unemployed youth on what they understand as their hindrance to self-reliance.

Table 5. Perception of Unemployed Youth on Obstacles to Self-reliance

Obstacles of Unemployed Youth to Self-Reliance	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of Funds to start Business	44	62.9	62.9
Lack of Relevant Education and Skills	7	10.0	72.9
Lack of Employment Opportunities	19	27.1	100.0
Total	70	100.0	

Table 5 reveals that most unemployed youth participants believe that lack of funds or capital to start a business hinders their desire for employment or self-employment to attain self-reliance. At the same time, others believe that the lack of relevant educational skills to empower them to be either employed or self-employed hinders their chances of being self-reliant. Other categories of unemployed youth participants report that lacking employment opportunities hinders them from being self-reliant. Therefore, unemployed youth in Yobe State are unemployed or self-employed to attain self-reliance because there is a lack of funds to start a business, relevant education and skills, and employment opportunities. Therefore, the findings concerning the source of basic needs and obstacles to youth self-reliance indicate no significant impact of the various empowerment programmes implemented by the government on youth in the state. Maclean, Jagannathan and Sarvi (2013) emphasise robust policies that ensure education and skills development among vulnerable youth empowerment.

Furthermore, the author affirms that valuing everyone for their talents and skills creates a society where everyone can be creative and participate in nation-building. Elders are honoured and seen as contributors. Youth aged 12 to 14 can be empowered through Junior Youth Empowerment and unleash their need to improve the world and contribute to the spirit of service. The youth needs to be taught and honoured so that society can benefit from that outlook instead of eradicating traditional values and culture and forcing people to fit into a monoculture whole. Let the real benefit from the diversity of the parts rather than eradicating differences. The findings also show a significant relationship between the marital status of the respondents and the perception of the unemployed youth on what hinders them from becoming empowered and self-reliant, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Relationship Between Marital Status and Obstacle to Being Self-reliant

Marital Status of the Respondents	If unemployed, what obstacles hinder you from being Self-reliant						Total	
	Lack of Funds to start Business		Lack of Relevant Education and Skills		Lack of Employment Opportunities		Freq	Percent
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent		
Single	22	59.5	3	8.1	12	32.4	37	100.0
Married	19	67.9	3	10.7	6	21.4	28	100.0
Widowed	2	50	1	25	1	25	4	100.0
Separated	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Total	44	63	7	10	19	27	70	100.0

Table 6 indicates that most youth who acknowledge a lack of capital to start a business and lack relevant education and skills are obstacles to their self-reliance attainment. This could be attributed to how women are married off in their early stages and that most men do not allow their wives to work, go to school, or enrol as apprentices in the state. While the married men could not wait endlessly to get formal employment because of the responsibility they are shouldering, they resort to capital to start a business or farming or have the skills to ensure their daily sustenance. The result also indicates that most youth agreed that the lack of employment opportunities and obstacles are single. In most cases, they prefer to wait for formal employment instead of engaging in skills acquisition or capital to start a business; because they depend on parents or relatives, they have no responsibility that forces them to look for whatever option is available to them.

Education as a Strategy for Youth Empowerment

Undoubtedly, education is one of the most vital strategies for youth empowerment. It is critical to assess the role of education concerning its ability to empower youth interns in their employability in the labour market and measures to be taken by the government to make it relevant and competitive in the labour market. The government must convince the youth that education is vital for empowerment. However, some people in the state did not believe in Western education, while others avoided schools out of fear because of Boko Haram's ideology prohibiting circular education. The results of Boko Haram prohibiting secular education are the killings of many school teachers, destroying schools, and abducting of students in their schools. This has affected the rate of enrolling in schools. Understanding the youth's perception of the education strategy for empowerment is vital to guide the government in improving the role of education in the state. Therefore, Table 6 below shows the youth rating on education and employability in Yobe State.

Table 7. The Education and Youth Employability

Is Education System Empowering Youth to be Employable?	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	52	17.2	17.2
Agree	154	50.8	60.0
Undecided	44	14.5	82.5
Disagree	47	15.5	98.0
Strongly Disagree	6	2.0	100.0
Total	303	100.0	

Findings in Table 7 show that many youth participants agree that the education system in Yobe State empowers youth to be employable. In contrast, other youth respondents disagree that the education system empowers the youths to be employable, whereas few other respondents are unsure about the statement. The results mean that the state's education system trains youth for employment and self-reliance. The education system's content is vital in preparing the youths for the role that awaits them after graduation. Implementing youth empowerment through education will enable the youth to acquire essential skills in ensuring youth employability in this state. Okeke et al. (2013), youth empowerment through higher education achieves through teaching, research, creation, dissemination, and services to the community. They further elaborate that this can be possible if successfully pursued and complete actualisation of youth empowerment is always assured. Therefore, the educational usefulness of youths should cover intellectual and practical uses such as the attainment of knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills that ensure competence and self-reliance and improve economic progress and personality development (Okpete, 2005).

Education is one tool that empowers youth to be either employed or self-employed to achieve self-reliance and contribute to nation-building. However, when education is not affordable to most youths, no significant impact of any empowerment program could be achieved, especially by the youth in the state. This section addresses the youth's rating of the availability and affordability of education as a tool of empowerment to understand the impact of the various empowerment programmes implemented in yobe State—also youth's perception of measures to take by the government to improve education affordability and youth participation. Table 8 below depicts the youth rating of access to education and how to make it affordable for youth empowerment in Yobe State.

Table 8. Youth's Rating of Access to Education

Do You Agree that Education is Affordable for Youths?	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	62	20.5	20.5
Agree	133	43.9	64.4
Undecided	43	14.2	78.6
Disagree	49	16.1	94.7
Strongly Disagree	16	5.3	100
Total	303	100.0	

Findings from Table 8 reveal that most youth participants from the 303 sample agree that education is affordable. In contrast, few youth participants disagree with the affordability of education in the state others are not sure about the statement. Most respondents' affirmation of education affordability could be attributed to some youth empowerment interventions implemented by the state government. However, the reports by other youth participants in disagreement and not sure about the affordability of education in the state are also a pointer to challenges in implementing the various youth empowerment programmes, especially regarding education, its access, and youth involvement in the design and implementation of such empowerment programmes. Achor (2015) argues that education is critical to global development and improving young people's lives. It has been designated a priority area in international development goals such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Programme of Action for Youth. Education

is critical for reducing poverty and hunger and supporting long-term, inclusive, equitable economic growth and development. Access to, quality, and education affordability are critical components of global development efforts. Therefore, empowering youths who live in poverty through education and training takes charge of their journey out of poverty's cobwebs and inspires others to follow suit in the community. People take action by themselves and become active in the change, not just a help subject, contributing to their empowerment process. To make people realise their strength and potential to solve their problems, they can improve their lifestyle by increasing their income. Through training for income-generating activities, orient them to profit from Government schemes and resource mobilisation. However, the finding did not show any significant relationship between the demographic features of the respondents and their rating of access to education.

Education is critical to any youth empowerment scheme to attain employment and self-reliance. Therefore, education affordability to youth undoubtedly determines the impact of every empowerment program by the government and other donor agencies. Therefore, the pie chart in Figure 3 below shows the perception of the fifty-nine youth who disagree with education affordability and how the government can make education affordable for every youth in yobe State to benefit from empowerment and self-reliance.

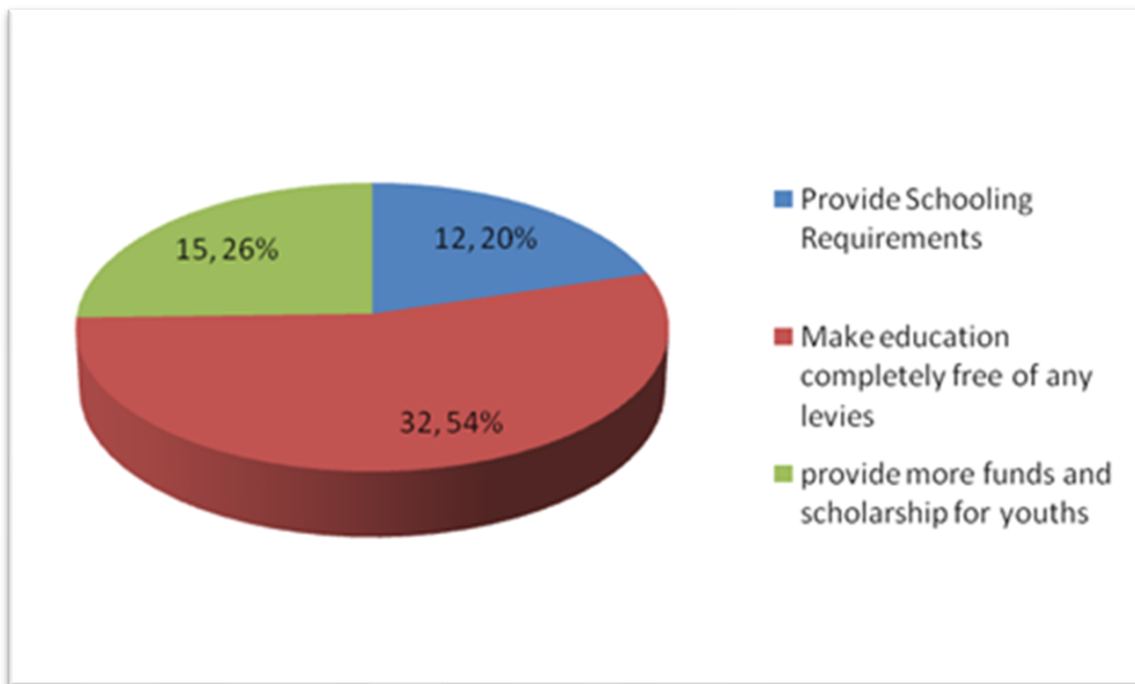


Figure 2. How Government can make Education Affordable in Yobe State

Figure 2 reveals that most youth participants suggest making education accessible and affordable. In contrast, some suggest the need that there is a need to provide more funds and scholarships for youth. Moreover, few others recommend providing schooling equipment to all learners in the state. However, this emphasises the need to make education entirely free to ensure that all youth and children can access education in the state. Making education accessible while providing school requirements will enable education to be accessed by all more affordably. Ekpiken et al. (2015) argue that education is a crucial tool that drives youth empowerment. It helps the youth gain skills used to attain survival skills, for example, entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education contributes to nation-building through its ability to provide training that will develop individuals to adjust and cope in their immediate communities, appreciating and understanding the operation and functions of the economic system as a result of its proficiency-based nature. Entrepreneurship education introduces Nigerian higher institutions, particularly in the business education program. Business education is education about business and training in business and entrepreneur skills. Therefore, business education graduates acquire business competencies from these courses. These competencies enable them to set up and manage their own business effectively. However, the result did not significantly relate to the youth's choice of options and demographic features.

CONCLUSION

The youth, who are males and females within the age bracket of 15 to 29, are citizens of a state. Empowerment aims to gain power and mastery individually and collectively to make positive changes in a given society. Youth empowerment means wealth creation and employment development through education, relevant skills acquisition,

training, job creation, enabling an atmosphere for entrepreneurship, and the quality of jobs available to young persons. For nations to prosper, they need to consider future generations' requirements, such as youth empowerment and utilising the increasing size of the working-age population. Despite the youth's contributions to the growth and accomplishments of the country, their contributions to society are sometimes overlooked, and they are not given enough voice or participation in decision-making processes. In addition, most young people frequently lack access to school for basic functional education. Subsequently, such youth face high rates of unemployment and prejudice. They will be severely impacted by the climate catastrophe and environmental deterioration in the future. However, drawn from their attitudes, opinions and experiences, the youth in Yobe State have not appreciated the positive impact of the empowerment programmes to improve their well-being despite the government's implementation of various empowerment programmes. The well-being of youth cannot improve unless they are empowered. Lack of empowerment implies social exclusion and discontent, which are further responsible for most social crimes young people commit. The prevalence and consequences of unemployment and poverty might be directly linked to the rise in insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, prostitution, armed robberies, rape, and other forms of violence. Therefore, to reverse these ugly trends, the government needs to prioritise the laws and policies that promote conditions where youth may reach their full potential, fulfil their ambitions, and help Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals to succeed. The government should also prioritise access to affordable education, seed capital provision to unemployed youth and training on soft skills/ICT. These measures will undoubtedly give the youth access to relevant skills, affordable education, and sources of jobs that will make them self-reliant and responsible citizens. In addition, the government should also strengthen the empowerment programmes' policy guidelines to achieve effective service delivery and youth involvement in designing and implementing the programmes. In order to get a broader picture of the situation in the country, similar or related research is recommended in other federation states.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts concerning this article's research, authorship, and publication.

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