
**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF SUBSIDY RE-INVESTMENT AND
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME (SURE-P) ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION AMONG
YOUTHS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract: This study assessed the effect of SURE-P among youths in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to describe the socio-economics characteristics of the respondents, examine youth perception of the SURE-P and identify the problems affecting SURE-P in the study area. Primary data were collected from 82 respondents using purposive and simple random sampling techniques and were analysed using descriptive statistics. The analysis revealed that, majority (91.5%) of the respondents was below 40 years of age, 82.9% were males and 67.1% were singles. Most (82.9%) of the respondents have household size of less than 5 children. Also, majority (76.8%) had formal education and 67.1% had a monthly income earnings of less than ₦20,000 per month. The major components of SURE-P were identified as: computer training, tricycle (Keke-NAPEP) and Taraba Marshals. The result on youth perception of SURE-P scheme indicated that, it has improved the income, health care, and farm output of the beneficiaries in the study area. Inadequate training, poor infrastructural facilities, irregularities in the selection of SURE-P beneficiaries, mis-management of SURE-P equipment/materials as well as distribution of sub-standard materials to the beneficiaries were among the major constraints to SURE-P scheme in the area. Recommendations were made based on the foregoing findings that SURE-P beneficiaries should be well trained by experts to effectively operates the equipment/machineries distributed to them. Also, basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, stable power supply should be made available in the study area.

Keywords: Assessment, SURE-P, Effects, Poverty and Youth

INTRODUCTION

Globally and Nigeria in particular, poverty has always remained an enormous challenge for the Nigerian Government suffice to say that the current trends indicate a significant growth in crimes, unemployment and illiteracy thus linked with the high level of poverty in our society (Okorie, 2003). In Nigerian about 70.2 percent of the populace live on an income of one US Dollar per day which is below the poverty line (Lenten Campaign, 2009). In the hit of it, the Nigeria government both past and present have promulgated schemes and programmes aimed at reducing the poverty level in the society, yet the scourge of poverty hold it grip on every strata of the Nigeria populace. Currently, the scheme on board aimed at reducing poverty both at present and in the near future is the subsidy re-investment and empowerment programme (SURE-P) which was adopted in 2012 when the Federal Government under the administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan withdrew subsidy particularly on fuel products. The SURE-P was later flagged off in May 2013 in Jalingo Taraba State to deliver it democracy dividends to Tarabans. The Federal Government through the SURE-P want Nigerians to understand that it is committed to re-investing it shares of withdrawn subsidy on fuel products into developing the teeming youth to be self-reliant thereby reducing poverty in the country to a barest minimum (Abdullahi, 2013, and Federal SURE-P, 2013). This study therefore intends to find out

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whether the subsidy re-investment and empowerment programme SURE-P which has been implemented has actually alleviated poverty among youth in the study area or not, considering the laudable objectives behind this programme. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents
- ii. Identify the SURE-P components as well as examine youth perception of the programme and
- iii. Identify the constraints to SURE-P in the study area

METHODOLOGY

The study Area

Jalingo Local Government Area lies between longitude 11°90' and 11°30' East and between latitude 8°47' and 9°01' North. It shares common boundaries with Lau Local Government Area to the North, to East by Yorro Local Government Area and Ardo-Kola Local Government Area. The study area occupies a land mass of approximately 3 871 square kilometers. It has a population of about 39, 845 people (NPC, 2006). It holds the prime position of being the headquarters of the Muri Emirate Council and Capital City of Taraba State. Jalingo Local Government Area has an average annual rainfall of 1260mm with a temperature of about 20°C - 30°C. It is characterized by dry and rainy season common to tropical region. The ethnic groups of the study area are: Kona, Mumuye, Hausa, Fulani, Jukun, Jenjo and Yandang among others. Hausa language is the predominant language in the area as a medium of communication and little Fulani for social and economic interactions.

Sampling Techniques

Youth beneficiaries of SURE-P constituted the population of this study. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed in the selection of the respondents. Three components of the SURE-P, out of the 12 components were selected based on youth involvement in these components viz: Tricycle (Keke-NAPEP), Computer training and Taraba Marshal. Out of each component 30 beneficiaries were randomly drawn to give a sample size of 90 respondents for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for this study.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics which include frequency, percentage and mean were used to analyze the specific objectives i, ii and iii of the study. Based on four point liker scale, any items that received a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered positive effect of SURE-P on the beneficiaries

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of Youths

The result in Table 1 revealed that majority (91.5%) of the youth was less than 40 years of age; only 80.5% were above 49 years of age. This agreed with the findings of Fasina and Okurolo (2004). This implies that, most of the SURE-P beneficiaries were young, agile, and strong in their productive years, which will positively influence their productivity thereby uplifting their living standard. It also affirmed that SURE-P is basically targeted on youths in the stud area. The result in Table 1 also shows that majority (82.9%) of the SURE-P beneficiaries were males

whereas female constituted only 17.1%, by implication, males predominated in the programme. This disagreed with the findings of Onyeon (2002). About 32.9% of the respondents were married, while majority (67.1%) was singles. This implies that most of the beneficiaries were unmarried youths who were not financially buoyant to take up marriage responsibilities.

The findings in Table 1 further indicated that majority (82.9%) of the respondents had a household size of not more than 4 persons. By implication, most of the youths were still dependent on their parents/guardians and might not want to give birth to more children that they would find difficult to cater for their feeding, health care and education. About 76.8% of the youths in the study area had formal education ranging from primary to tertiary education, whereas only 23.2% had no formal education. This is contrary to the view of Fasina and Okurola (2004). Education has been found to contribute positively to the socio-economic empowerment of a person; this would have positive effects on their business investment. About 30.5% of the SURE-P beneficiaries were farmers, 24.1% were traders, 17.1% were students and 18.3% were artisans. This implies that, the beneficiaries were from diverse occupations which might widen their scope of investment. The result in Table 1 also revealed that majority (67.1%) of the youth earned less than ₦20,000, 20.7% earned between ₦21,000 – ₦40,000 per month while only 16.1% earned above ₦60,000 per month. This implies that most of the youths were low income earners who might be eager to involve in the SURE-P in order to enhance their income earnings.

The Major Functional Components of SURE-P in the Study Area

The findings in Table 2 indicated that majority (48.79%) of the youths benefitted from SURE-P in having access to Tricycle (Keke-NAPEP) for transportation business while 32.92% of the youths were trained in Computer operation as well as provided with computers before business operations and 18.29% of the youths were trained as Taraba Marshals and posted to ministries and parastals as security guards, sanitation officers as well as Traffic controllers within the metropolis. This implies that all the youth beneficiaries of SURE-P were engaged in various productive ventures to uplift their standard of living and alleviate poverty among them in the study area.

Youths Perception on the Efforts of SURE-P in the Study Area

The data presented in Table 3 revealed the six items had their mean score ranging from 2.56 to 2.87. This shows that SURE-P had positive effect on the youth in all the items analysed viz: improved income, improved health care, better living standard, better housing, access to formal education and improved farm output. This is in agreement with the appriori expectation. This implies that youth perceived the aforementioned items as benefits of SURE-P to them.

Constraints to SURE-P in the Study Area

The result presented in Table 4 indicated the major constraints to SURE-P as revealed by the beneficiaries: distribution of substandard equipment/materials (82.24%). Diversion of SURE-P items (90.24%), irregularities in the selection of beneficiaries (74.39%), mismanagement of SURE-P items (96.34%), political sentiments (89.02%) and non-payment of training allowance to SURE-P beneficiaries (80.48%).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, youths had benefitted from SURE-P in the study area thereby reducing their poverty level and checking the problem of social vices in the area, Male youths predominated the programme and were mostly single but formally educated and were low income earners. The major components of SURE-P implemented in the study area were:

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computer training, Tricycles (Keke-NAPEP) and Taraba Marshals. Distribution of substandard SURE-P materials, political sentiments and non-payment of training allowances to SURE-P beneficiaries were among the major constraints of the programme in the study area. Recommendations were made that; selection of SURE-P beneficiaries should be devoid of political sentiments but should be based on equity and fairness, so that every eligible youth will benefit from the programme. Government should also provide the basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, stable power supply and logistic facilities for the smooth operation of the programme in the study area.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Melon Farmers (n = 82)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
20-29	47	57.3
30-39	28	34.2
40-49	07	8.5
50 and above	-	-
Gender		
Male	68	82.9
Female	14	17.1
Marital Status		
Married	27	32.9
Single	55	67.1
Household size (no. of persons)		
1-4	68	82.9
5 and above	14	17.1
Educational Level		
No formal education	19	23.2
Primary education	02	2.4
Secondary education	21	25.6
Tertiary education	40	48.8
Main Occupation		
Farming	25	30.5
Trading	28	34.1
Student	14	17.1
Artisan	15	18.3
Monthly Income (₦)		
<20,000	55	67.1
21,000 - 40,000	17	20.7
41,000 - 60,000	05	6.1
61,000 and above	05	6.1

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 2: Major Functional Components of SURE-P in the Study Area (n = 82)

SURE-P Components	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Computer training	27	32.92
Tricycle (Keke-NAPEP)	40	48.79
Taraba Marshals	15	18.29

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 3: Means Rating of Youth Perception on the Effect of SURE-P in the Study Area

Items	Total score (TS)	Mean	Remarks
Improved income	235	2.87	S
Improved health care	210	2.56	S
Improved living standard	225	2.74	S
Better housing	215	2.62	S
Access to formal education/skills	220	2.68	S
Improved farm output	211	2.57	S

Source: Field Survey, 2014

NB: S = Significant (that is, effective)

Table 4: Constraints to SURE-P in the Study Area (n = 96)

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Provision of substandard items/poor infrastructural facilities.	68	82.93
Diversion of SURE-P items/inadequate training.	74	90.24
Irregularities in the selection of SURE-P beneficiaries.	61	74.39
Mismanagement of SURE-P items		
Political sentiments	79	96.34
Non-payment of SURE-P training allowances.	73	89.02
	66	80.48

Source: Field Survey, 2014

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