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Evaluating the Effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme in Reducing Rural Poverty in Kogi West Senatorial District

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Abstract
Rural poverty remains a significant development challenge in Nigeria despite the implementation of various government-led intervention programmes aimed at improving the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. This study explored the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in reducing rural poverty among beneficiary communities in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Sen's Capability Approach Theory, which views poverty beyond income deprivation by emphasising individuals' access to opportunities, choices and capabilities necessary for improved wellbeing. A qualitative case study research design was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with 30 purposively selected participants comprising NSIP beneficiaries, community leaders, and youth and women representatives from three Local Government Areas: Kabba/Bunu, Yagba West and Ijumu. Data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's approach. Findings revealed that NSIP contributed positively to beneficiaries' welfare through temporary income support, improved livelihood opportunities, skills development and enhanced participation in economic activities. However, the study found that irregular implementation, limited programme coverage, inadequate follow-up support and weak sustainability mechanisms constrained the long-term poverty reduction potential of the intervention. The study concludes that while NSIP has contributed to poverty alleviation among rural beneficiaries, its impact remains largely palliative rather than transformative. The study recommends strengthening sustainability frameworks, improving community participation, enhancing monitoring mechanisms and integrating social investment interventions with broader rural development strategies to achieve lasting poverty reduction outcomes.

Keywords: National Social Investment Programme, Rural Poverty, Social Protection, Community Development, Capability Approach.

Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most complex and enduring development challenges confronting developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where economic growth has often coexisted with widespread social vulnerability. Although several African countries have recorded periods of economic expansion, the benefits of such growth have not always translated into improved living conditions for rural populations. Rural households continue to experience deprivation arising from limited access to employment opportunities, inadequate social services, weak productive capacity, and exposure to economic and environmental shocks (World Bank, 2022). Consequently, poverty reduction has increasingly shifted from relying solely on economic growth strategies to incorporating social protection mechanisms capable of improving the resilience and livelihood security of vulnerable populations.

Social protection programmes have become an important policy instrument globally for addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021), effective social protection systems provide vulnerable populations with income security, improve access to essential services and strengthen the capacity of households to cope with economic uncertainties. Similarly, the World Bank (2018) argues that well-designed social protection interventions can contribute significantly to poverty reduction by supporting consumption, promoting human capital development and enhancing opportunities for productive participation in the economy.

Nigeria's experience with poverty reduction reflects the broader challenges confronting many developing countries. Despite being Africa's largest economy and possessing significant natural and human resources, the country continues to face widespread poverty, unemployment and inequality. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) reported that approximately 133 million Nigerians live in multidimensional poverty, with rural communities experiencing a disproportionate share of deprivation. The report highlighted that poverty in Nigeria extends beyond income insufficiency to include inadequate access to education, healthcare, decent employment, housing, and basic infrastructure.

The persistence of poverty has encouraged successive Nigerian governments to introduce various poverty alleviation initiatives. However, many earlier interventions, including the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), and other empowerment schemes, faced challenges relating to sustainability, poor coordination, political influence and weak monitoring mechanisms (Oluwatobi & Ogunrinola, 2011; Onah & Ugwu, 2018). These limitations created the need for a more coordinated social investment framework capable of addressing multiple dimensions of poverty.

In response to these challenges, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in 2016 as a major component of its poverty reduction strategy under the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. The programme was designed to provide social assistance and economic opportunities to vulnerable Nigerians through four major interventions: the N-Power Programme, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), and Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016). The underlying objective of NSIP was to improve livelihoods, enhance human capital development, create employment opportunities and reduce vulnerability among poor households.

Since its establishment, NSIP has attracted significant attention from scholars, policymakers and development practitioners because of its ambitious goal of reaching millions of vulnerable Nigerians. Empirical studies have produced mixed conclusions regarding its effectiveness. For instance, Robert, Essien and Essien (2023) found that the N-Power component contributed to employment creation among beneficiaries but had limited evidence of significant national poverty reduction. Similarly, Musa (2023) reported that N-Power generated short-term improvements in beneficiary welfare but questioned its ability to produce sustainable poverty reduction due to challenges such as delayed payments, inadequate exit strategies and implementation weaknesses.

Other studies have reported more positive outcomes. Anikeze, Onyema and Okoloagu (2024) found that NSIP interventions contributed to employment generation and improved income opportunities among beneficiaries in South-East Nigeria. Salihu (2025) also observed that NSIP improved household welfare among beneficiary communities, although issues relating to targeting, funding and monitoring affected programme effectiveness. These divergent findings indicate that the outcomes of social investment programmes may depend significantly on the local context, implementation processes and the experiences of beneficiaries.

While existing studies have contributed to understanding the broader impact of NSIP in Nigeria, much of the available literature has adopted quantitative approaches that focus on measurable outcomes such as income changes, employment levels and beneficiary numbers. Although these approaches provide valuable evidence, they often provide limited insight into how beneficiaries perceive the programme, the social realities surrounding implementation, and whether interventions have created meaningful changes in everyday community life. Understanding these lived experiences is particularly important because poverty is not merely an economic condition but also a social experience shaped by access, inclusion, dignity and opportunities.

Kogi West Senatorial District provides an important context for examining these issues. The district, comprising Kabba/Bunu, Ijumu, Mopa-Muro, Yagba East, Yagba West, Lokoja and Kogi Local Government Areas, consists largely of rural communities where agriculture and informal economic activities constitute major sources of livelihood. However, many communities continue to experience challenges associated with youth unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to productive resources and declining livelihood opportunities. These conditions make the district an important setting for examining whether federal social investment interventions have contributed meaningfully to rural transformation.

Although NSIP programmes have been implemented in various communities within Kogi West, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding beneficiaries' experiences and community perceptions of these interventions. Existing national-level assessments may not adequately capture the realities of rural communities where social, economic and institutional factors influence programme outcomes. A qualitative investigation is therefore necessary to explore how beneficiaries interpret the effectiveness of NSIP, the changes they associate with the programme, and the challenges that affect its sustainability.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme in reducing rural poverty in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria. By adopting a qualitative case study approach, the study provides an opportunity to capture the voices and experiences of beneficiaries and stakeholders, thereby contributing deeper insights into the relationship between government intervention programmes and community development outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) as a major federal intervention aimed at reducing poverty and improving the welfare of vulnerable Nigerians, rural poverty remains a significant challenge, particularly among communities with limited economic opportunities. While existing studies have examined NSIP outcomes in different parts of Nigeria, evidence remains mixed regarding whether these interventions have translated into sustainable improvements in the lives of beneficiaries (Robert et al., 2023; Musa, 2023).

In Kogi West Senatorial District, where many households depend on subsistence agriculture and informal economic activities, there is limited empirical understanding of how beneficiaries perceive the contribution of NSIP to poverty reduction and community development. Existing evaluations have largely focused on quantitative indicators such as beneficiary numbers, income changes and employment outcomes, leaving limited knowledge about beneficiaries' lived experiences, implementation challenges and the sustainability of programme benefits. This study therefore addresses the need to explore, from the perspectives of beneficiaries and stakeholders, the extent to which the National Social Investment Programme has contributed to reducing rural poverty in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to explore the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in reducing rural poverty among beneficiary communities in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria.
The specific objectives are to:
1. Examine beneficiaries' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme in improving their livelihoods and reducing rural poverty in Kogi West Senatorial District.
2. Identify the implementation challenges affecting the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the National Social Investment Programme in the study area.
3. Suggest practical strategies for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the National Social Investment Programme in reducing rural poverty.

Relevance of the Study

This study is relevant because it provides insight into the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in reducing rural poverty in Kogi West Senatorial District. It highlights the experiences of beneficiaries and identifies the major implementation challenges affecting the sustainability of programme benefits. The study will be useful to policymakers and government agencies by providing evidence for improving NSIP implementation, monitoring, community participation, and sustainability. It will also help programme managers understand the needs and experiences of rural beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the study contributes to academic knowledge by providing qualitative evidence on NSIP at the community level, particularly in Kogi West, where limited attention has been given to beneficiaries' experiences and perceptions.

Finally, the study may support future poverty-reduction efforts by highlighting the need to link social investment programmes with skills development, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, market access, and broader rural development strategies.

Literature Review

The implementation of social investment programmes has become a central strategy for addressing poverty and vulnerability in developing countries. Social protection interventions are increasingly recognised not only as mechanisms for providing temporary relief but also as instruments for improving human capital, strengthening livelihoods and promoting social inclusion (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). In Nigeria, the introduction of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in 2016 represented a shift towards a coordinated approach to poverty reduction through interventions targeted at employment creation, financial empowerment, education support and household assistance.

The effectiveness of NSIP has generated considerable scholarly debate. While proponents argue that the programme has expanded access to livelihood opportunities among vulnerable groups, critics contend that challenges relating to implementation capacity, beneficiary targeting, sustainability and institutional coordination have limited its transformative potential. Erondu and Uzoma (2024) observed that social protection programmes in Nigeria have contributed to poverty reduction and improved human development outcomes; however, they noted that institutional weaknesses and inconsistent implementation remain major constraints affecting programme effectiveness.

Empirical Studies

The empirical literature on Nigeria's national social insurance and social protection programmes including the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), now administered under the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), and the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA) shows mixed outcomes. While these programmes have improved access to health care, poverty reduction, and social protection for vulnerable households, implementation has been constrained by inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, poor targeting, corruption, low awareness, and limited coverage.

Onoka, C. A., Onwujekwe, O. E., Uzochukwu, B. S. C., & Ezumah, N. N. (2013) conducted a comparative case study examining the implementation of Nigeria's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) across selected states. Using document reviews and 48 in-depth interviews with policymakers, programme managers, healthcare providers, and labour leaders, the study found that adoption of the scheme varied significantly among states. Factors influencing implementation included affordability of employer contributions, political commitment, administrative transparency, and employee acceptance. The study concluded that stronger institutional arrangements, increased political support, and improved stakeholder engagement are necessary for expanding social insurance coverage in Nigeria.

Aregbeshola and Khan (2020) investigated implementation challenges associated with the National Health Insurance Scheme using qualitative interviews with policymakers, insurance providers, and healthcare managers in Oyo State. The findings revealed that low public awareness, poverty, inadequate administrative capacity, irregular drug supplies, and weak supervision limited the effectiveness of the scheme. The researchers concluded that comprehensive reforms aimed at strengthening governance, improving financing mechanisms, and increasing public enlightenment would enhance the effectiveness of Nigeria's social health insurance system.

ActionAid Nigeria (2019) carried out an independent third-party monitoring of the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP), covering N-Power, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). Using field monitoring across 21 states and the Federal Capital Territory, the study reported that the programmes contributed to poverty alleviation, employment creation, and school enrolment. However, implementation challenges included inadequate transparency, delays in beneficiary payments, weak monitoring mechanisms, political interference, and inconsistencies in beneficiary selection. The report recommended stronger accountability systems, improved monitoring, and enhanced community participation.

The World Food Programme (2022), in collaboration with UNICEF, ILO, and UNDP, evaluated Nigeria's Joint Social Protection Programme for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The evaluation found that cash transfer interventions significantly reduced financial vulnerability among poor households, encouraged access to healthcare services, and strengthened collaboration among federal and state institutions responsible for social protection. Nevertheless, the evaluation identified weak institutional coordination, targeting challenges, and sustainability concerns as major obstacles. The report recommended strengthening nationally owned social protection systems and improving programme integration across government institutions.

Administrative reports from the National Social Investment Programme Agency (2025) indicate significant progress in strengthening Nigeria's social protection architecture. Achievements include expansion of the National Social Register from approximately 10.2 million to 15 million households, integration of National Identification Number (NIN) and Bank Verification Number (BVN) into beneficiary databases, digital payment systems, and enhanced management information systems. These reforms have improved transparency and efficiency, although challenges relating to funding, data quality, and nationwide coverage remain.

Okim, Chigbu, Christopher, and Oghogho (2026) critically evaluated the effectiveness of Nigeria's National Health Insurance Scheme as a social security mechanism. The study found that although the scheme has contributed to reducing catastrophic health expenditures among enrolled beneficiaries, enrolment remains low, particularly among informal sector workers. Persistent policy fragmentation, weak risk pooling, and financing constraints continue to limit progress toward universal health coverage. The authors recommended expanding mandatory coverage, strengthening institutional coordination, and improving financing mechanisms to enhance social insurance performance.

Anikeze, Onyema and Okoloagu (2024), in their study of NSIP and poverty reduction in South-East Nigeria, found that components such as N-Power and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme contributed to employment creation and improved income opportunities among beneficiaries.

However, the study also highlighted concerns regarding the depth and sustainability of these outcomes. Similarly, Salihu (2025), using evidence from beneficiary communities in Kano State, reported that NSIP improved household welfare, income generation and social inclusion, but identified inadequate funding, targeting challenges and weak monitoring as factors limiting grassroots impact.

Studies examining specific NSIP components have also revealed important insights. Musa (2023), in an assessment of the N-Power programme in Gombe State, found that the intervention contributed to short-term poverty reduction and improved beneficiaries' economic conditions. However, the study questioned the long-term sustainability of these benefits due to issues such as delayed payments, limited exit strategies and dependence on government support. Robert, Essien and Essien (2023) similarly reported that N-Power enhanced employment opportunities among young Nigerians, although its broader contribution to national poverty reduction remained limited.

Beyond measurable economic outcomes, recent scholarship has emphasised the importance of understanding beneficiaries' experiences and community perceptions of social intervention programmes. Poverty reduction is not only about income improvement but also about empowerment, dignity, participation and the ability of individuals and communities to sustain improved livelihoods. Consequently, qualitative approaches provide valuable insights into how beneficiaries interpret government interventions and the extent to which such programmes influence everyday realities.

Despite growing literature on NSIP, limited attention has been given to rural communities in Kogi West Senatorial District. Existing studies have largely concentrated on states such as Kano, Gombe and South-East Nigeria, leaving a contextual gap regarding how rural households in Kogi West experience and evaluate federal social investment interventions. This gap justifies the need for a qualitative exploration of NSIP implementation, beneficiary experiences and perceived poverty reduction outcomes within the district.
The present study therefore contributes to the literature by shifting attention from aggregate programme assessment to community-level experiences, examining whether NSIP interventions have translated into meaningful livelihood improvements among rural beneficiaries in Kogi West Senatorial District.

Gap in Literature

Existing studies on the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) have largely focused on measurable outcomes such as income, employment, welfare, and beneficiary numbers. While these studies provide useful evidence, they give limited attention to beneficiaries' lived experiences, perceptions, and the community-level realities of programme implementation. There is also a contextual gap, as limited research has examined NSIP in rural communities of Kogi West Senatorial District. Previous studies have concentrated mainly on areas such as Kano, Gombe, and South-East Nigeria, leaving limited evidence on the experiences of rural beneficiaries in Kogi West. In addition, existing studies have identified challenges such as irregular payments, weak monitoring, limited coverage, and poor sustainability, but there is limited qualitative evidence on how these challenges affect beneficiaries' ability to achieve lasting improvements in their livelihoods. This study therefore addresses these gaps by providing a qualitative, community-level assessment of NSIP, focusing on beneficiaries' experiences, perceived outcomes, implementation challenges, and the sustainability of poverty-reduction benefits in Kogi West Senatorial District.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Sen's Capability Approach Theory (1985, 1999), which argues that poverty should be understood beyond income deprivation to include the lack of opportunities, choices and capabilities required for individuals to achieve meaningful wellbeing. The theory suggests that effective development interventions should empower people by expanding their ability to access resources, improve livelihoods and participate actively in social and economic activities. The theory is relevant to this study because the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) seeks not only to provide immediate support to vulnerable groups but also to enhance capabilities through employment creation, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship support and social protection. Therefore, the study uses the Capability Approach to explore whether NSIP interventions have improved the livelihood opportunities, empowerment and wellbeing of rural beneficiaries in Kogi West Senatorial District.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study research design to explore the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in reducing rural poverty among beneficiary communities in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand beneficiaries' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of how NSIP interventions have influenced their livelihoods and community wellbeing.

The study was conducted in three selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi West Senatorial District, namely Kabba/Bunu, Yagba West, and Ijumu Local Government Areas. The selected LGAs were chosen because they represent predominantly rural communities where agriculture and informal economic activities constitute major sources of livelihood and where beneficiaries of federal social intervention programmes can be accessed. The study population comprised NSIP beneficiaries, community leaders, and relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of social investment programmes within the selected LGAs. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their knowledge and direct experience with NSIP interventions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to provide detailed accounts of their experiences, perceived benefits, implementation challenges, and sustainability concerns associated with the programme.

The sample size was determined by the principle of data saturation, where interviews continued until no new significant themes emerged from participants' responses. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006), involving data familiarisation, coding, identification of themes, review of themes, and interpretation of findings. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement with participants and careful interpretation of responses, while dependability and confirmability were achieved through systematic documentation of the research process. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the research process.

Respondents' Characteristics and Thematic Analysis
Distribution of Interview Participants

The study involved 30 purposively selected participants drawn from three Local Government Areas in Kogi West Senatorial District: Kabba/Bunu, Yagba West and Ijumu LGAs. The participants comprised NSIP beneficiaries, community leaders, youth representatives, women beneficiaries, and relevant programme stakeholders. The selection ensured diversity of experiences and provided a broader understanding of the effectiveness of NSIP interventions across different rural communities.

Table 1: Distribution of Interview Participants

Category of Respondents	Kabba/Bunu LGA	Yagba West LGA	Ijumu LGA	Total
N-Power Beneficiaries	3	3	3	9
Conditional Cash Transfer Beneficiaries	2	2	2	6
GEEP/Enterprise Support Beneficiaries	2	2	2	6
Community Leaders	1	1	1	3
Youth/Women Representatives	2	2	2	6
Total	**10**	**10**	**10**	**30**

Source: Field Interview Data (2026)

Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

The interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. Three major themes emerged from participants' narratives in relation to the study objective: exploring the effectiveness of NSIP in reducing rural poverty among beneficiary communities in Kogi West Senatorial District.

Table 2: Summary of Emerging Themes from Interview Analysis

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Evidence from Participants' Narratives	Interpretation
1. Improvement in Household Welfare through NSIP Support	Improved ability to meet basic needs; temporary financial relief; support for household expenses	Participants reported that NSIP support assisted them with food expenses, children's education, healthcare needs and daily household responsibilities. However, many described the intervention as short-term assistance rather than a permanent solution.	NSIP contributed to immediate poverty alleviation by reducing household vulnerability, but its ability to create sustained poverty escape pathways remains limited.
2. Skills Development, Employment and Economic Empowerment	Increased employability; business support; improved confidence and participation in economic activities	N-Power beneficiaries explained that the programme provided work experience and skills exposure, while enterprise beneficiaries indicated that financial support improved their small businesses.	NSIP expanded beneficiaries' capabilities and economic opportunities, supporting Sen's (1999) argument that poverty reduction requires enhancing people's choices and capabilities.

3. Challenges Affecting Programme Effectiveness and Sustainability	Irregular payments; limited coverage; poor awareness; absence of exit strategies; dependency concerns	Participants identified delayed payments, inadequate follow-up support and lack of sustainability mechanisms as major limitations affecting programme outcomes.	Implementation weaknesses reduced the long-term transformative potential of NSIP interventions.
4. Community Perception of NSIP Impact	Increased government visibility; improved social inclusion; expectations for stronger interventions	Community representatives acknowledged that NSIP demonstrated government commitment to vulnerable groups but recommended broader coverage and stronger community participation.	Community acceptance of NSIP is positive, but beneficiaries desire more participatory and sustainable intervention models.

Source: Authors' Field Interview Analysis (2026)

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that the National Social Investment Programme has generated noticeable improvements in the lives of beneficiaries across the selected communities in Kogi West Senatorial District. Participants generally acknowledged that NSIP interventions provided temporary relief and improved their ability to cope with economic pressures. This finding supports Salihu (2025), who observed that NSIP improved household welfare among beneficiary communities but was constrained by implementation challenges.

The study further revealed that NSIP contributed to empowerment through skills acquisition, employment exposure and enterprise support. This aligns with the Capability Approach Theory of Sen (1999), which suggests that development interventions should expand individuals' opportunities and abilities to achieve improved wellbeing. The findings are also consistent with Anikeze et al. (2024), who found that NSIP interventions enhanced employment opportunities and income generation among beneficiaries.

However, the findings show that NSIP has not fully addressed the structural causes of rural poverty in Kogi West. Participants identified sustainability challenges, suggesting that interventions focused largely on short-term support rather than long-term livelihood transformation. This agrees with Musa (2023), who found that N-Power improved beneficiaries' welfare but faced limitations relating to sustainability and exit mechanisms. Overall, the evidence suggests that NSIP has contributed positively to poverty reduction at the household level but requires stronger integration with rural development strategies, including entrepreneurship support, infrastructure development, market access and continuous capacity building to achieve lasting community transformation.

Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in reducing rural poverty among beneficiary communities in Kogi West Senatorial District, Nigeria. Using a qualitative case study approach, the study revealed that NSIP has contributed positively to the welfare of beneficiaries by providing temporary financial support, employment opportunities, skills development and improved access to livelihood resources. The experiences shared by participants across Kabba/Bunu, Yagba West and Ijumu Local Government Areas indicate that the programme has enhanced beneficiaries' ability to cope with economic difficulties and improved their participation in productive activities.

However, the findings also demonstrate that NSIP has largely functioned as a poverty mitigation mechanism rather than a comprehensive pathway out of poverty. While beneficiaries appreciated the immediate support received, concerns were raised regarding irregular programme implementation, limited coverage, inadequate follow-up support and the absence of sustainable exit strategies. These challenges have reduced the capacity of the programme to generate long-term livelihood transformation among rural households. From the perspective of Sen's (1999) Capability Approach, NSIP has contributed to expanding beneficiaries' capabilities by improving access to economic opportunities, skills and social support. Nevertheless, sustainable poverty reduction requires interventions that go beyond short-term assistance to address the structural factors that sustain rural poverty, including unemployment, limited access to markets, poor infrastructure and weak productive systems.

The study concludes that while the National Social Investment Programme represents an important federal intervention in addressing rural vulnerability, its long-term effectiveness in Kogi West Senatorial District depends on stronger institutional coordination, community participation, improved monitoring and the integration of social investment programmes with broader rural development strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Sustainability Mechanisms**: The Federal Government should redesign NSIP interventions to include clear exit strategies that enable beneficiaries to transition from temporary support to sustainable economic independence. Beneficiaries should be linked with entrepreneurship opportunities, markets, financial institutions and continuous mentoring after programme participation.
2. **Improving Community Participation in Programme Implementation**: Programme planning and implementation should involve community leaders, beneficiary groups and local stakeholders to ensure that interventions reflect the actual needs of rural communities. Increased community participation will enhance ownership, transparency and sustainability.
3. **Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**: There is a need for stronger monitoring mechanisms to track beneficiary outcomes beyond programme participation. Regular assessments should examine whether beneficiaries have achieved improved livelihoods, sustainable employment and increased economic resilience.
4. **Expanding Skills Development and Enterprise Support** : NSIP should place greater emphasis on practical skills development, entrepreneurship training and business incubation

rather than focusing mainly on financial transfers. This will improve beneficiaries' capacity to create sustainable income sources.

5. **Improving Accessibility and Transparency of Beneficiary Selection**: The government should strengthen beneficiary identification processes to ensure that interventions reach genuinely vulnerable households. Transparent selection mechanisms will reduce perceptions of political influence and improve public confidence in the programme.
6. **Integrating NSIP with Rural Development Policies**: Social investment programmes should be implemented alongside broader rural development initiatives, including agricultural support, infrastructure development, rural electrification, digital inclusion and access to markets. Such integration will create an enabling environment for beneficiaries to sustain improvements in their livelihoods.
7. **Developing State and Local Government Collaboration Frameworks** :Although NSIP is a federal intervention, effective poverty reduction requires collaboration with state and local governments. Local structures should be strengthened to support implementation, provide feedback and ensure that interventions address local realities in communities across Kogi West Senatorial District.

Policy Implication

The findings suggest that poverty reduction interventions in rural Nigeria should move from a welfare-based approach towards a capability-enhancing model that empowers individuals and communities to build sustainable livelihoods. For Kogi West Senatorial District, this requires combining social assistance with entrepreneurship development, employment creation and community-driven development strategies. Such an approach will enable federal interventions like NSIP to achieve deeper and more enduring impacts on rural poverty reduction.

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