

National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) and Socio-Economic Development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the impact of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), specifically, the N-Power and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), on socioeconomic development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design on a population of 369,225 NSIP beneficiaries in Akwa Ibom State, from which a sample size of 359 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected through a structured four-point Likert-scale questionnaire, and 302 valid responses were analysed. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and coefficient of determination were employed to test the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed a strong/positive relationship between the N-Power program and employment opportunities, and a significant positive relationship between GEEP and the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Akwa Ibom State. These results indicated that both components of the NSIP contributed meaningfully to employment generation and enterprise development among beneficiaries. Thus, the study recommended that the sustainability of these gains depended on effective exit strategies, skill enhancement, and integration of beneficiaries into long-term employment and enterprise support systems.

Keywords: National social investment programme, N-Power, GEEP, socio-economic development, employment, SMEs, Akwa Ibom State.

1. Introduction

Over the years, social protection programs have emerged as a central policy instrument adopted to promote inclusive growth, alleviate poverty, and strengthen human capital development globally. In both developed and emerging economies, governments increasingly rely on social investment frameworks to address market failures, protect vulnerable populations, and enhance production capacity. Empirical evidence from Latin America, Asia, and parts of Africa revealed that organised and coordinated social investment programs contribute to employment generation, improved access to finance for micro and small enterprises, better educational outcomes, and greater resilience of households to economic shocks (Barrientos, 2011; World Bank, 2023; Ndubuaku et al., 2021). Ifeoma et al. (2025) and Udoh et al. (2024) revealed that poverty reduction and sustainable development anchor not only on macroeconomic growth, but also on deliberate investment in human capital development. In Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, persistent youth unemployment, limited access to finance, weak skills-to-labor-market alignment, and the dominance of informal enterprises undermine inclusive growth (Udoh et al., 2019), exacerbate inequality (Udo et al., 2025), and heighten the risks of social instability and insecurity (Abugu et al., 2024), underscoring the urgent need for effective social investment interventions.

Despite its vast natural and human resources, the country continues to record low human development outcomes, with a significant proportion of its population living below the poverty line (UNDP, 2023). Youth unemployment and under-employment remain major structural problems, while many small-scale businesses operate in the informal sector with limited access to finance and growth opportunities. In response, governments have introduced various intervention programs aimed at poverty reduction, employment creation, and social inclusion. Among these, the National Social Investment Program (NSIP), initiated in 2016 under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, represents the most comprehensive and coordinated social protection strategy in Nigeria's recent history.

The NSIP was designed to address multiple dimensions of deprivation through four key components: the N-Power program for youth employment and skills development, the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) for financial inclusion and MSME support, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) to improve nutrition and school enrolment, and the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme to support poor and vulnerable households. The program's underlying logic is that targeted investment in human capital and productive activities can simultaneously reduce poverty, enhance employment opportunities, and stimulate socioeconomic development. Existing studies suggest that such integrated interventions can create a virtuous cycle in which improved skills lead to better employment outcomes, increased income supports enterprise growth, and enhanced livelihoods contribute to broader economic development (Lamidi, 2021; Abubakar & Danjuma, 2021; Udoh et al., 2023; Ayange et al., 2020).

However, despite the scale and ambitions of the NSIP, its effectiveness in delivering sustainable socioeconomic development outcomes remains controversial. While the program has been credited with providing short-term employment, stipends, and micro-loans to millions of beneficiaries, critics argue that many of these benefits are transitory and may not translate into long-term employment, business sustainability, or structural economic transformation. In particular, concerns have been raised about N-Power's ability to move beneficiaries from temporary engagement to stable employment, and about whether GEEP loans are sufficient to support the long-term growth and formalisation of small- and medium-scale enterprises. The unresolved tension between short-term welfare gains and long-term development outcomes is a critical research problem.

This problem is especially salient in Akwa Ibom State. Despite being an oil-producing state in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom faces significant socio-economic challenges, including youth unemployment, skill deficits, poverty, and limited diversification of economic activities (Akpan et al., 2024). Although thousands of youth and small-scale entrepreneurs in the state have benefited from NSIP interventions, particularly N-Power and GEEP, there is limited empirical evidence on whether these interventions have meaningfully improved employment opportunities and enterprise growth within the state. Most existing studies focus on national-level outcomes or on other states such as Rivers, Oyo, and Kogi States, with relatively few studies providing state-specific evidence for Akwa Ibom. Moreover, many prior studies emphasise poverty alleviation broadly, rather than explicitly examining the link between social investment programs, employment creation, and SME growth as interconnected drivers of socio-economic development. This study addresses this gap by empirically examining the relationship between NSIP components, specifically N-Power and GEEP, and socioeconomic development outcomes in Akwa Ibom State. The study is premised on the argument that employment creation and enterprise development are mutually reinforcing processes: skill acquisition and work experience gained through N-Power can enhance

employability and entrepreneurial capacity, while access to finance through GEEP can enable business expansion, job creation, and income generation. Together, these mechanisms are expected to contribute to improved socio-economic well-being among beneficiaries.

Addressing this problem is crucial for several reasons. First, youth unemployment and weak SME performance pose serious threats to economic stability, social cohesion, and inclusive growth in Akwa Ibom. Second, continued investment in large-scale social programs without clear evidence of their impact risks the inefficient use of public resources. Third, understanding the extent to which NSIP interventions influence employment and enterprise development will provide valuable insights into strengthening program design, implementation, and exit strategies. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to empirically examine the impact of the National Social Investment Program, focusing on N-Power and GEEP, on employment opportunities and SME growth in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated as a guide to the study:

1. How does the N-Power programme affect employment in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What are the contributions of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP) to the growth of small- and medium-scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State?

Objectives of the Study

This study examines the relationship between the National Social Investment Programme(NSIP) and socioeconomic development in Akwa Ibom. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the effect of the N-Power programme on employment in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Establish the contributions of the government enterprise and empowerment program (GEEP) to the growth of small- and medium-scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no positive effect of the N-Power program on employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₂: Government enterprise and empowerment program (GEEP) does not contribute to the growth of small- and medium-scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State.

2 Literature Review

National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)

The National Social Investment Program (NSIP) was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2016 as a comprehensive social protection and development framework aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequality. According to the NSIP Report (2019), the programme was designed to promote equity, social inclusion, and economic participation by targeting vulnerable population groups, including youth, women, children, and small-scale entrepreneurs. The program comprises four major components: N-Power (youth employment and skills development), the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) (financial inclusion and microcredit), the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) (nutrition and school enrolment), and Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) (income support for poor and vulnerable households).

From a developmental perspective, scholars argue that contemporary social investment programs represent a shift from traditional welfare approaches that emphasise consumption

smoothing to productivity-enhancing interventions that focus on human capital development and economic participation (Barrientos, 2011; Ifeoma et al., 2025). In this context, NSIP is conceptualised not merely as a poverty alleviation initiative but as a strategic instrument for fostering sustainable socio-economic development through employability enhancement, enterprise growth, and income security. However, the degree to which the NSIP has successfully translated these intentions into long-term developmental outcomes remains a contested issue in the literature.

Social Investment and Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development refers to the process of improving both the economic and social well-being of individuals and communities, encompassing employment, income distribution, education, health, and overall quality of life (Todaro & Smith, 2015; Udoms et al., 2017; Abugu et al., 2024). Unlike economic growth, which focuses primarily on increases in output or GDP, socioeconomic development emphasises inclusiveness, equity, and sustainability. Social investment programs are therefore expected to contribute to socio-economic development by strengthening human capital, reducing vulnerability, and integrating marginalised populations into productive economic activities. Employment-oriented interventions enhance income stability and social cohesion, whereas enterprise support initiatives promote innovation, job creation, and local economic growth. This conceptual linkage provides the analytical foundation for examining N-Power and GEEP as complementary mechanisms through which the NSIP may influence socioeconomic development outcomes.

N-Power Programme and Employment Opportunities

The N-Power program was introduced to address Nigeria's growing youth unemployment crisis by providing temporary employment, skills acquisition, and work experience in critical sectors, such as education (N-Teach), agriculture (N-Agro), health (N-Health), construction (N-Build), and information technology (N-Tech). Empirical studies have documented several positive outcomes associated with the program. Udoh et al. (2024) and Akujuru & Enyioko (2019) found that N-Power significantly contributes to youth empowerment and poverty alleviation by improving beneficiaries' employability and income levels. National-level data further illustrate the scale of the program's implementation. As reported by the Office of the Vice President (2018), over 500,000 youths benefited from the N-Power program, including approximately 20,000 participants under N-Build. These figures highlight the programme's substantial reach and potential role in addressing unemployment challenges.

Despite these achievements, the literature has consistently identified important limitations. Scholars argue that the temporary nature of N-power engagement, coupled with weak or poorly articulated exit strategies, undermines its capacity to generate sustainable employment outcomes (Nwaobi, 2019; Udoh et al., 2023; Lamidi, 2021). Many beneficiaries reportedly exit the program without transitioning into stable employment or entrepreneurship.

Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and SME Growth

The government enterprise and empowerment program (GEEP) was designed to promote financial inclusion and stimulate enterprise development through the provision of interest-free microloans under sub-programs such as TraderMoni, MarketMoni, and FarmerMoni. According to Bakare, (2010) and Danjuma, (2023), GEEP has improved access to credit for petty traders and micro entrepreneurs, who are typically excluded from formal financial systems. The empirical evidence

suggests that beneficiaries experience increased business capital, higher profits, and improved household welfare.

Operational data from the NSIP further underscores the program's reach. As of 2018, over 317,212 beneficiaries had accessed MarketMoni and FarmerMoni loans, while approximately 1,061,592 traders had benefited from TraderMoni. In addition, 4,084 cooperatives were supported nationwide (Office of the Vice President, 2018). These figures indicate the program's extensive coverage and its potential contribution to SME development and financial inclusion.

However, the literature highlights significant challenges. While short-term business improvements are widely reported, issues such as small loan sizes, limited entrepreneurial training, weak monitoring mechanisms, and lack of mentorship constrain the long-term growth and sustainability of SMEs (Ekong & Uwah, 2022). Moreover, many studies examine GEEP in isolation, without linking enterprise outcomes to broader socioeconomic development indicators or analysing its interaction with employment-focused interventions such as N-Power.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Welfare State Theory, originally advanced by Otto von Bismarck (1840) and later expanded by scholars such as Marshall (1950). The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding government intervention in addressing socioeconomic inequalities and improving citizens' welfare through structured social policies. It emphasises the responsibility of the state to protect vulnerable populations by ensuring access to employment opportunities, income security, education, healthcare and social services.

The Welfare State Theory is grounded in the principles of equity, social justice, and collective responsibility, asserting that the state has an obligation to promote the well-being of its citizens, particularly those disadvantaged by structural economic conditions. Marshall (1950) conceptualised the welfare state as a system that integrates civil, political, and social rights, with social rights encompassing access to employment, social security, and basic economic resources necessary for a dignified life. Through this framework, social policies are not merely compensatory measures but are instruments for social inclusion and economic participation.

In modern societies, welfare state mechanisms are implemented through institutionalised social protection programs, including employment schemes, social insurance, income transfers, and enterprise support initiatives. These interventions are intended to mitigate the adverse effects of unemployment, poverty, and market failures, while simultaneously fostering human capital development and social cohesion.

The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) represents Nigeria's contemporary expression of welfare state principles. It embodies the state's commitment to addressing socioeconomic vulnerabilities through structured interventions aimed at poverty reduction, employment creation, and financial inclusion. The four components of the NSIP (N-Power, GEEP, NHGSFP, and CCT) reflect the core welfare state functions of income support, employment facilitation, human capital development, and social protection.

The Welfare State Theory provides a logical foundation for examining the relationships between NSIP components and socioeconomic development outcomes. According to the theory, state-led interventions in employment and enterprise development should improve individuals' economic security, enhance productive capacity, and contribute to broader socioeconomic development. In the present study:

- a) N-Power is theorised to influence employment opportunities by enhancing skills, work experience, and employability among youth in Akwa Ibom State.
- b) The GEEP is expected to influence SME growth by easing credit constraints, promoting business expansion, and encouraging self-employment.
- c) Improved employment opportunities and SME performance are expected to contribute to socioeconomic development through increased income, reduced poverty, and improved living standards.

The theory thus supports the assumption that targeted social investment programs can move beneficiaries from dependency to productive economic participation, provided that interventions are effectively designed and implemented.

Akwa Ibom State presents a compelling context for applying Welfare State Theory. Despite its oil wealth, the state continues to experience youth unemployment, skill deficits, poverty and limited economic diversification. These challenges reflect the structural inequalities that welfare-oriented interventions address. NSIP, as a federally implemented welfare programme, serves as a platform through which the state engages its youths and small-scale entrepreneurs in productive activities aimed at improving livelihoods and socio-economic outcomes. By anchoring this study to Welfare State Theory, the research is able to critically assess whether NSIP has fulfilled its theoretical promise of promoting employment, enterprise development, and socioeconomic well-being among beneficiaries in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the theory provides both an explanatory and an evaluative lens for understanding the effectiveness of the NSIP as a social investment strategy.

The Welfare State Theory guides the formulation of research objectives and hypotheses by emphasising the expected positive relationship between social investment interventions and development outcomes. It also informs the interpretation of findings by situating empirical results within broader debates on the role of the state in socioeconomic development. Through this framework, the study contributes to theoretical and policy discussions on whether welfare-oriented programs in developing economies can transition from short-term social assistance to sustainable development instruments.

Table 1: Summary of Empirical Studies on NSIP, Employment, Poverty Alleviation and SME Growth

Author(s) & Year	Study Focus/Objectives	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap Identified
Akujuru & Enyioko (2019)	Examined the impact of N-Power programmes on poverty alleviation in Rivers State	Survey design; sample of 400 youths (381 valid responses); descriptive and inferential statistics; Pearson correlation	Found a significant relationship between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation as well as youth empowerment. Identified challenges such as delayed stipends, corruption,	Focused mainly on poverty alleviation; did not examine sustainable employment outcomes or SME growth; study limited to Rivers State

			and political interference	
Essien & Ekpo (2021)	Assessed the impact of N-Power on the socio-economic livelihoods of beneficiaries in Ibadan North LGA	Survey design; 250 beneficiaries; SPSS analysis	N-Power improved access to basic needs, education, and household welfare; delays in payment and lack of continuity were major challenges	Did not link livelihood improvement to broader socio-economic development or employment sustainability
Ekong & Uwah (2022)	Investigated the role of GEEP in job creation and SME growth in Akwa Ibom State	Survey design; 320 GEEP beneficiaries; descriptive and correlation analysis	GEEP enhanced self-employment and business start-ups; SMEs lacked scalability due to weak mentorship	Examined GEEP in isolation without linking it to employment programmes like N-Power or overall socio-economic development
Lamidi (2021)	Assessed TraderMoni scheme as an economic empowerment tool for women traders	Interviews, focus group discussions, literary analysis	TraderMoni empowered petty traders; execution faced transparency and monitoring challenges	Did not empirically measure SME growth or long-term socio-economic development outcomes

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to systematically collect quantitative data from a large number of respondents and to facilitate the examination of relationships among variables. The survey design is particularly suitable for assessing the effects of government social investment programs, such as N-Power and GEEP, on employment opportunities, SME growth, and socio-economic development.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State is located in the south–south geopolitical zone of Nigeria and is endowed with significant natural resources, particularly crude oil. Despite this resource endowment, the state continues to experience challenges, such as youth unemployment, poverty, and limited economic diversification. These socioeconomic conditions make Akwa Ibom State an appropriate setting for examining the effectiveness of NSIP interventions.

3.3 Population of the Study

The study comprised 369, 225 beneficiaries of the National Social Investment Programme in Akwa Ibom State, specifically participants of N-Power and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). This includes youths engaged in N-Power sub-programs and small-scale entrepreneurs, traders, and farmers who have benefited from GEEP loans. To determine the appropriate sample size, Yamane’s (1967) formula was employed at a 5% level of precision:

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

Where: n = Sample size

N = Population size (369,225)

e = Level of precision (0.05)

Substituting into the formula:

$$n = \frac{369,225}{1 + 369,225(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{369,225}{1 + 369,225(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{369,225}{1 + 9323.0625}$$

$$n = \frac{369,225}{924.0625}$$

$$n \approx 399.4$$

To ensure the manageability of the data collection and consistency with similar empirical studies, the sample size was rounded and adjusted to 359 respondents, which was considered adequate for the study.

Table 2: Showing the Beneficiaries of NSIP in Akwa Ibom State

Programmes	Beneficiaries	No. of Beneficiaries	Total
N-POWER	Volunteers	12,278	
	Trainees	338045	350323
GEEP	Market moni	5,693	18,900
	Trader moni	13,207	
		Total	369,225

Source: AKSIO (2018)

Data for this study were collected using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire as the primary instrument. The response options were Strongly Agree (four points), Agree (three points), Strongly Disagree (two points), and Disagree (one point), allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. Data were obtained from primary sources using a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analysed at a significance level of 0.05, using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to test the study hypotheses and answer the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Presentation of Data

A total of 359 questionnaires were distributed to beneficiaries of the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) in Akwa Ibom State. Of these, 302 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned, representing a response rate of approximately 84.1%. The returned questionnaires were valid and sufficient for subsequent data analysis.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁ There is no significant effect of the N-Power program on employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient between N-power and Employment Opportunities of NSIP in Akwa Ibom State

Variables		N-Power	Employment opportunities
N-power	Pearson Correlation	1	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	302	302
Employment Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	302	302

Source: SPSS Analysis, 2025.

Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis between the N-Power program and employment opportunities. The results show a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.788$) between N-Power participation and employment opportunities among beneficiaries in Akwa Ibom. The associated p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the N-Power program has a significant and positive effect on employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State. The strength of the correlation suggests that participation in N-Power substantially enhances beneficiaries' employability through skill acquisition, work experience, and exposure to productive sectors, such as education, agriculture, health, and technology.

Implication of the Result: The strong association implies that N-Power functions not only as a temporary employment scheme but also as a human capital development platform that increases participants' chances of securing employment or engaging in self-employment after exiting the program. However, while the relationship is strong, it also raises policy concerns regarding sustainability, as long-term employment outcomes depend on the availability of structured exit strategies and labour market absorption mechanisms. This finding aligns with Akpan & Udo's (2024) observation that N-Power helped bridge the employment gap by equipping youth with market-relevant skills.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between GEEP and SMEs in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Correlation between GEEP and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Variables		GEEP	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
GEEP	Pearson Correlation	1	.685**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	302	302
Small and Medium Scale Enterprises	Pearson Correlation	.685**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	302	302

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Analysis (2025)

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlation results between GEEP and SME growth. The analysis revealed a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.685$) between GEEP participation and SME performance. The p-value (0.000) was also below the threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship was statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) was rejected. This result demonstrates that GEEP has a significant positive relationship with SME growth in Akwa Ibom State. The provision of interest-free microloans under schemes such as TraderMoni and MarketMoni contributed to improved business operations, capital expansion, and income generation among beneficiaries.

Implications of the Result: The positive relationship suggests that access to microcredit through GEEP enhances entrepreneurial capacity and supports business sustainability among small-scale traders and entrepreneurs. By easing financial constraints and promoting financial inclusion, the GEEP contributes to enterprise development and local economic growth. However, the moderate strength of the relationship indicates that credit alone may not be sufficient for long-term SME expansion without complementary interventions, such as business training, mentorship, and access to larger-scale financing. This finding is consistent with that of Abubakar & Danjuma (2021), who reported that TraderMoni and related enterprise support schemes significantly improve SME performance. It also supports the broader development literature that identifies financial inclusion as a critical driver of SME growth in developing economies. Overall, the results confirm that both N-Power and GEEP are significantly related to key indicators of socioeconomic development, namely employment opportunities and SME growth, respectively. The findings suggest that the NSIP operates through two pathways: human capital development (via N-Power) and enterprise

empowerment (via GEEP). When combined, these pathways strengthen income generation, reduce vulnerability, and promote economic participation among young and small-scale entrepreneurs. However, the results also imply the need for policy refinement. While NSIP has demonstrated effectiveness, its long-term developmental impact depends on program sustainability, integration of exit strategies, and stronger institutional support mechanisms. Addressing these issues would enhance the NSIP's ability to transition beneficiaries from short-term support to lasting socioeconomic empowerment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is established that NSIP significantly contributes to employment creation and enterprise development among its beneficiaries. With respect to the N-Power program, the results reveal a significant positive effect on employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State. The program provided youths with temporary employment, practical work experience, and relevant skills that enhanced their employability. Beyond income support, N-Power has contributed to human capital development, particularly in the education sector, where the deployment of trained volunteers has improved teaching capacity and learning outcomes in public primary schools. These outcomes reveal that N-Power serves as both an employment intervention and a capacity-building mechanism capable of supporting broader socioeconomic development.

Similarly, the findings confirm that the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) has a significant positive impact on the growth of small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Akwa Ibom. By providing interest-free microloans and facilitating access to formal financial systems, the GEEP has enabled small-scale entrepreneurs, traders, and farmers to expand their businesses, improve productivity, and generate income. This form of financial inclusion strengthened local economic activities and enhanced the livelihoods of beneficiaries. Overall, the study underscores the effectiveness of the NSIP as a social investment strategy that addresses key dimensions of socioeconomic development, particularly youth unemployment and enterprise growth. However, while the program has demonstrated positive outcomes, its long-term developmental impact depends on sustained implementation, effective monitoring, and the integration of structured transition mechanisms that move beneficiaries from short-term support to sustainable economic engagement. Addressing these factors will enhance the capacity of the NSIP to contribute more effectively to inclusive and sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Institutionalise sustainable employment and enterprise transition pathways within NSIP: The Federal Government should redesign the National Social Investment Programme to move beyond short-term welfare support by embedding clear, enforceable transition mechanisms for beneficiaries. For the N-Power program, this should include formal absorption quotas within federal and state ministries, departments, and agencies, particularly in education, health, and agriculture, where beneficiaries have already acquired relevant work experience. For GEEP beneficiaries, transition pathways should involve access to graduated financing, business development services, and market linkages that enable small enterprises to scale up their operations.

2. Integrate skills certification, business development support, and rigorous monitoring frameworks: To enhance the long-term socio-economic impact of NSIP, the government should integrate nationally recognised skills certification for N-Power beneficiaries and compulsory entrepreneurship training for GEEP participants. Skills acquired under N-Power should be aligned with labour market demands and certified through accredited institutions to improve employability. Similarly, GEEP beneficiaries should receive continuous business advisory services, mentorship and simplified access to formal financial systems.

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