Research Article

Implementation Challenges of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) on Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstract:
The paper examines the challenges Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) of President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration as it relates to the reduction of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, the main focus of the paper was the evaluation of the challenges facing the implementation of the programme against the backdrop of criticisms by members of the public that it is another drain pipe of the government. The study derived its data from secondary sources. The findings of the paper indicate that there is no significant reduction in unemployment even with the implementation of SURE-P. Though it has the potentials for youth unemployment reduction but has been poorly implemented. As such it has not been able to attain the goals for which it was initiated. Like many other previous efforts by other governments in this area that failed, the SURE-P is another failed programme of government. Findings shows that it is challenged by a number of issues ranging from its conception to issues of corruption, lack of funding, political interference and other implementation problems. The position of this paper is that the programme should be scrapped.

Keywords: Subsidy, Reinvestment, Youth empowerment, Unemployment and Public policy.

Introduction

The subsidy reinvestment and empowerment programme(SURE-P) of the Nigerian government was introduced in 2012 by the President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration at the wake of a widespread protest by the citizens of the country resulting from government withdrawal of subsidy from petroleum products (Obuzuwa, 2012). Subsidy is a deliberate economic policy of government to bolster its economy through the payment of part or certain percentage of the cost of production of certain essential goods and services. It is a government incentive in the form of financial aid or support for the production and/or supply of critical public goods in society. According to Schrank and Keithly (1999,162) subsidy is an economic benefit or financial aid provided by a government to support a desirable activity, so as to keep prices low, maintain the income of the producers of critical or strategic products, maintain employment levels, or induce investment to reduce unemployment. Generally, therefore, government subsidies are intended to boost the economy by reducing the market price of an item or items below its cost of production aimed at making such products available for consumers at an affordable price.

Governments of developing nations often employ such economic instruments to stimulate growth and development of their economies. The Nigerian state, for example, among other essential commodities subsidizes petroleum products such as Premium Motor Spirit (PMS, generally known as petrol), kerosene, diesel and cooking gas to make these products readily available for the consumers, recognizing the essential nature of these petroleum products to the life of her citizenry. Succeeding regimes in the country have maintained the subsidy policy as a necessity rather than an option. Nevertheless, as demand on government to develop other sectors of the economy, the pressure on government to free funds from other areas has led different governments at different times to take steps aimed at cutting down backup financial commitment to the petroleum subsector through subsidy. Beginning from 1978, when the then military
government of General Olusegun Obasanjo reviewed upward the pump price of fuel from 8.4kobo to 15.37kobo (Erin and Akpan, 2012), similar steps have been taken by other administrations to reduce the subsidization of petroleum products in Nigeria. Thus, the history of fuel subsidy removal by government dates back to the 1970s (Nwosu and Ugwuerua, 2014). In a similar move, the Goodluck Jonathan led government in January, 2012 announced an increase in the pump price of petroleum products from N65.00 to N97.00 representing 49.2 percent increase (Nwosu and Ugwuerua, 2014). It was this action of government that spark off protest across major cities in Nigeria including Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Port-Harcourt etc., by labour unions, civil society groups, NGOs and market women. The rationale for the removal was informed, according to the government by the following reasons;

i. That the subsidy regime in which fixed prices are maintained irrespective of market realities has resulted in a huge unsustainable subsidy burden

ii. Fuel subsidies do not reach the intended beneficiaries

iii. Subsidy administration is beset with inefficiencies, leakages and corruption.

iv. Subsidy has resulted in the diversion of scarce public resources away from investment in critical infrastructure, while putting pressure on government resources.

v. Subsidy has discouraged competition and stifled private investment in the downstream sector.

vi. The deregulation of the downstream sector of the petroleum industry will help lead to rapid private sector investment in refineries and petrochemicals, which generate millions of jobs and lead to increased prosperity for our people.

vii. Huge price disparity has encouraged smuggling of petroleum products across the borders to neighbouring countries where prices are much higher (SURE-P Annual Report, 2012).

Further observations show that from the period 2005-2015, a period of ten years shows that government subsidy payments gulp over N7 trillion naira only N2 trillion less than expenditure on capital projects at the same period.

Table 1: showing the capital expenditure and fuel subsidy (2005-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Capital Expenditure(N’ Billion)</th>
<th>Fuel Subsidy (N’Billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>539.2b</td>
<td>146.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>539.2b</td>
<td>151.9b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>781.5b</td>
<td>188.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>952.0b</td>
<td>256.3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>796.7</td>
<td>421.5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>883.8b</td>
<td>673.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>771.1b</td>
<td>2.19 trillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1.32 trillion</td>
<td>888.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.343 trillion</td>
<td>971.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1.19 trillion</td>
<td>971.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>387.0b</td>
<td>145.0b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N9.513 trillion</td>
<td>N7.19 trillion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tell, August 10,2015 p:24

The fund saved from the withdrawal of subsidy was to be reinvested to generate job opportunities for the unemployed as well as develop other critical infrastructure in the Nigerian economy, hence, the introduction of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P). Therefore, one of the major areas of focus of the SURE-Programme was to mitigate youth unemployment in Nigeria which has become a menace and international embarrassment to the country. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the challenges confronting implementation of the programme.

The work is divided into following sessions including the introduction of the work. This is followed by the session that deals with clarification of concept and the theoretical framework of analysis. Following these sessions is discussion on the sure-p programme. especially, the areas related to youth empowerment and this session is followed by examination of the challenges facing the implementation, and then followed by the conclusion and the recommendation sessions. The study made used of secondary sources of data. The secondary sources of data included, the review of related literature published in journals, newspapers and magazines as well as government publications among them was the sure-p annual report of 2013. Therefore, the study is purely descriptive and analytical in nature.

Conceptual Clarification

Unemployment: Unemployment is a phenomenon that occurs when a person or persons that are actively searching for employment but yet to secure any. It can be seen as a condition where able bodied persons physically, mentally and psychologically sound seeking for job engagement but could not find...
One. Therefore, unemployment is a condition where those seeking to be employed could not be engaged either in the private or public sectors and has become idle. Jhingan (2011) defined unemployment as “an unacceptable idleness of a person who is willing to work at prevailing labour rate but still unable to find one”. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012) sees unemployment as “that part of a country’s population who are within 15 years and above that are without job of any type, but are actively looking for work and is ready to be engaged when called upon to do so”. Youth unemployment therefore means the youth population of a given country who are able and willing to work and are actually searching for job engagement but are yet to find any. Youth population are those persons from the age bracket of 15-35 years within the larger population that idle without doing any meaningful paid job. It should however be noted that this description does not include those within the same age bracket who are in one form of partial or unstable employment or the other.

**Youth:** The concept of youth is devoid of unanimous definition. Thus, various conceptualization abounds and some leading to confusion as what actually the term implies. However, from its biological perspective, youth describes the quality of been young, youthfulness and juvenility (Ugwu, 2013). Simply put, “it is that aspect of one’s existence that succeeds the childhood stage but precedes the adult age” (Ugwu, 2013). Therefore, a youth is someone within the age above childhood but below old age. Beyond the biological perspective, other criteria for assessment of a person whether he or she is a youth is the rate or degree of the individual’s dependence on one’s parent. The age categorization has to do with the minimum age under which an individual can be called a youth. However, studies across different countries show that the minimum and maximum age bracket varies. In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution put the minimum adult age at 18 years which qualifies an individual to exercise his or her civic right to participate in an election (FGN, 1999). While the Joint Matriculation Examination Board (JAMB), the body responsible for the conduct of examination into tertiary institutions in the country pegged the age qualification at 16 years. Similarly, the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) put the minimum age for qualification at between 16-30 years (Ugwu, 2013). The age criteria for the description of a youth is seems more acceptable to most countries and economic analysts. The preference for the age criteria is understandable as it makes for easy estimates of a given population on the one hand and on the other hand, it make easy an evaluation of government policies particularly, those the policy is targeted at, the problem it intends to solve and the impact the policy intends to bring to bear for the targeted group. That is why government policy aimed at youth unemployment reduction is often directed at the youths within the defined age bracket whether in Nigeria or elsewhere in the world.

Such policies and programmes have been seen to be very important to most governments and the need to achieve positive results usually guide the government in its commitment in terms of implementation. It is believed that the youths are the most vulnerable as they can easily be lured into committing social atrocities and engage in other forms of unproductive ventures. On the other hand, the future labour force of any given country lies with the youths. Hence, government interest in the introduction and implementation of programmes geared towards engaging the youth population in their countries with the aim of taking them off the streets. The SURE-P is one of such programmes of the government of Nigeria.

**Youth Empowerment:** Empowerment simply refers to capacity building of the individual either through skill acquisition or through financial inducement with the main focus of making the individual independent and useful both to himself and society at large. Closely associated with the above meaning of empowerment is the definition given by Solomon (1976). He defined empowerment as “a process whereby individuals are made to engage in activities that aim at reducing the powerlessness that has been created through negative valuation based on membership in a stigmatized group” (Solomon, 1978). Schuler (1986) refers to empowerment as the capacity to mobilize resources to produce beneficial social change. Rao (1996) stated that “empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions, but also equal participation in decision making processes, control over resources and mechanisms for sustaining these gains”. It is clear from the above that the concept of empowerment lacks a generally acceptable meaning among researchers. However, empowerment whether economic, political or social involve (i) a process that foster increased capacity in an individual to better his individual self, his immediate environment and society at large, (ii)it is a multidimensional phenomenon that occurs at all
ramifications and levels of the individual’s socio-economic and political interactions and interrelationship in society, thus, “is a diverse social process that enable the individual to gain control over his life challenges” (Namadi and Aliyu, 2017). It is against the above understanding that youth empowerment can be appreciated. Youth empowerment is a process of building in the youths the necessary and required capacities in them to assist them realize the endowed potentials in them. In a nutshell, it is “the means through which the youths of any country are assisted to succeed in life” (Namadi and Aliyu, 2017). This can be achieved through deliberate policies and programmes directed towards the development of skills and other potentials in them for their own use and for the benefit of society in general.

Nigeria, for example, has a youth population of about 67 million, between the ages of 16-35 years. Out of this figure over 42.2 percent do not have a means of livelihood, while only about 20 percent have more that the secondary school leaving certificate (Nwosu and Ugwuerua, 2014). This simply implies that greater number of the youth population in Nigeria are unemployed. A publication of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2018) shows that the number of people within the labour force who did not have a job rose from 15.9 million in the third quarter of 2017 to 20.9 million in the third quarter of 2018. While those in part engagement also rose from 18.0 million to 18.2 million (NBS, 2018). Among the unemployed and those in unstable employment, youths constitute over 40 percent of the number. The SURE-P programme was therefore introduced to build youth capacity to enable them acquire requisite skills and training for self-reliance.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis.

This study adopted the systems and the elite models as its framework of analysis. The system model has its origin in sociology and political science by Talcott Parsons (The structure of Social Action, 1937; Parsons and Shils, Towards a General Theory of Social Action 1951); and by David Easton (The Political System, 1953) (McLean and McMillan, 2003). The systems model takes the political system as the proper unit of analysis. Thus, it sees the political system as “a set of interrelated and interdependent parts which work harmoniously and simultaneously to accomplish set objectives (Ughale, 1998). That is, the political system is compose of those identifiable and interrelated institutions and activities in a society that makes authoritative decisions that are binding on society (Egonmwan, 2000).

In policy making, the systems model concern itself with the processes by which policies and programmes are made, and how people response to such government policies and programmes. Hence, in the field of public policy study, systems scholars conceptualize policy making in terms of inputs (demands), conversion process (policy choice or alternatives), output (Policy outcomes) and feedback (Policy impact analysis (Egonmwan, 2000). No wonder the systems model sees the policy process as cyclical and identify the political system as the critical unit in the policy making process. This is because it is the political system that transforms inputs into outputs for the entire society through its structures and institutions. Thus, the systems model of public policy analysis sees the political system as “a processor of inputs fed into the system, processed within the conversion box and later released into the environment as policy outcome” (Oghale, 1998).

Public policies and programmes are thus the reactions of the political system to environmental demands and pressures (Ikelegbe, 2006).

The strength of the systems model to this study lies in the fact that it draws the attention of the analyst to some significant aspects of the political process such as the effects of the environmental inputs on the policy content, the effect of public policy and programmes on the environment and the ability of the political system to convert demands into policies and programmes and preserve the same overtime. The model has been criticized for been static as it does not say how decisions are made and policies are developed within the political system (Ikelegbe, 2006; Egonmwan, 2000; Oghale, 1998). Smith (1973) cited in Ikelegbe, has also observed that, among developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, the trend is that policies and programmes often times emanate from the government rather being a result of the pressures and demands of the citizens.

Against this backdrop, the study adopts the elitist model to argue that the SURE-P programme is a reflection of the interest of the Nigerian governing elites meant to address a fundamental threat on the political system at the time. The elite model posits that society is divided into two major groups, namely the ruling minority (the elites) and the ruled majority (the masses) (Ibani, 2006). The model assumes that public policy is the reflection of the preferences of the few ruling elites (Egonmwan, 2004; Ikelegbe, 2006; Ibani, 2006). The elites according to Mill quoted in Henry (1995) are “those with higher incomes, more educated and
more status than the masses”

Though they are fewer in society compared to the masses, however, giving the potentials of the elites, they are the class that wield power and influence, allocate values and rules. While the masses who are in majority only obey usually guided, controlled and governed (Ibani,2006). Geraint (1972) posits that, “the values and preferences of public policy reflects that of the elite rather than the demands of the masses in society”. This model negates the assumptions of the classical democratic theories that public preferences articulated by representatives are the main source of policy flow (Ikelegbe, 2006). In reality however, the masses hardly have any considerable influence on the policy making process.

Thus, the model is appropriate as an explanatory framework for the understanding of the emergence of the Sure-p programme and its implementation. This is against the backdrop that the model (i) directs the attention of the policy analyst to the source of policy flow, (ii) it direct attention of the analyst to whose interest public policy serve, and (iii) the model want us to understand that public policy flows downward from the elites to the masses, and thus policy making process is hierarchical. The elite model is criticized for been essentially conflictive (Allen, 2006).

### The SURE-P Programme and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

The SURE-P provides three key areas of youth empowerment and employment. The first is vocational training, the main objective is to tackle the problem of unemployment by training the youths in various vocational skills ranging from Information and Communication Technology (ICT)/Telecommunication, marine, oil and gas, Agro and Agro allied productions, creative industry, Artisan, Fabrication technology and so on. In order to achieve the objective of this programme (vocational training), it is the vision of the committee to establish specialized vocational training centers across the six geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

The second area of youth empowerment programme of the SURE-P is in the component of community service, Women and youth employment (CSWYE). According to the SURE-P, this project is aimed at creating immediate short-term employment opportunities for women and youths through labour intensive public workforce. The major aims of the programme according to the committee 2013 annual report are;

1. To create employment opportunities for up to 185,000 women and youths in the 36 states of the federation and the FCT.
2. To serve as a bridge to formal employment through empowering youths, women and vulnerable groups;
3. To reduce the vulnerability of women and youth through exposure to income support opportunities offered by the programme;
4. To create good value system and self-actualization in women and youth through pre-works orientation sessions; and
5. To enhance societal access to quality social and economic infrastructure and service across the federation.

The third programme of youth empowerment of SURE-P is what is called the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS). This project is meant to create opportunity for graduates to be attached to firms/organizations to be mentored thereby enhancing their opportunity for employment (SURE-P, Report, 2013).

With these programmes, the SURE-P was set out to tackle the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The Minister of Labour Chukwuemeka Wogu speaking particularly on the Graduate Internship Scheme on July 8, 2013 argued that the programme should not be allowed to die as it was targeted at 185,000 beneficiaries per annum (Premium Times, 2013). In the same vein, Christopher Kolade, the Chairman of the SURE-P committee described the GIS as one of the many interventions of the SURE-P to create jobs for Nigerian Youths, stating that the programme has the mandate to create 50,000 jobs for graduates annually (Cited in National Mirror, 2013). In respect of the graduate programme, Nigerian graduates are to be placed on selected public and private organizations for a period of one-year internship where the interns are expected to acquire relevant professional skills, training and experience to improve their job-placement opportunities either in the public or private sector. The underlying idea behind the need for such training is that over the years, employers of labour in the country complained of Nigerian graduates not been employable as a result of lack of requisite skills and experience. The Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) project director, Peter Papka averred that, “the internship scheme is designed to reverse this situation” (National Mirror, 2013).

### Impact Assessment of the Programme on Youth Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria.
1. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the body that is generally allowed to keep records of employment and unemployment rates of the nations of the world in 2012, stated that about 6% of the world population are unemployed (ILO, 2012). The organization further observed that “by the end of 2013 about 73.4 million young people will be without job”. Further observation shows that from 2009 to 2011 global youth unemployment rate decreased from 12.7% to 12.3% but experienced an increase in 2012 to 12.4% and has been on the increase since then.

In Nigeria, the unemployment rate among youths is estimated at 40 million persons (Vanguard Online, 2014). Undoubtedly, this figure is high against the backdrop that the country’s population is estimated at one hundred and forty million people (National Population Commission, 1996). The high rate of unemployment is caused by varying factors. Tunah (2010) studied the macroeconomic variables which cause unemployment in Turkey and came to the conclusion that there is a significant impact of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Consumer Price Index (CPI) and unemployment rate in Turkey. El-Agroyd (2010) examined the economic study of unemployment and its impact on the GDP for Egypt and his findings indicates that privatization and increasing population growth are important variables of high rate of unemployment in Egypt. Pallis (2006) also examined the relationship between inflation and unemployment and findings across national economies show that the applications of common policies among European Union members may be questionable because of the different effects of the policies on inflation and unemployment.

However, in Nigeria, poor education, poor government planning, corruption and fraudulent practices, population growth (e.g., an increase in the number of graduates) as well as inflation are some of the major causes of the high rate of unemployment. Osinubi (2005) carried out a study on the relationship between growth, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria and confirms that growth is positively related to unemployment. Flain (1990) also examined population changes and unemployment rate and came to the conclusion that unemployment rate had an upward trend as a result of growing rate of population. Nigeria’s tertiary institutions (e.g., Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics etc.), turns out thousands of graduates every year. According to the National Bureau of Statistics more than 200,000 students graduate from our tertiary institutions yearly (Ozechukwu, 2014). However, lack of government planning on how to absolve this large number into the labour market is contributing to the high level of unemployed in the country.

Literature on unemployment in Nigeria indicates that over 40 million Nigerians need employment (Ugwu, 2013, National Mirror, 2013). The SURE-P projects on youth employment and empowerment look elaborate and capable of addressing to a large extend this critical problem of unemployment in Nigeria. In this regards, the vocational training scheme and the graduate internship scheme provides the fulcrum in ameliorating this problem in the country. Nevertheless, with the high number of unemployed in the country shows clearly that the programme does not have the capacity to resolve this daunting problem in Nigeria. The large number of graduates seeking employment into public and private establishment is an indication that unemployment is still very high among youths in Nigeria. The programme is targeted at creating only 180,000 thousand jobs annually. If this target is achieved (which it has not able to do), it creates about 540,000 jobs in three years the programme is meant to operate. This is gross inadequate against an estimated 40 million unemployed persons in the country.

**Implementation Challenges of the Programme**

The implementation of the policy has been marred by a number of implementation gaps including:

1. Though the programme was intended to tackle a basic demand and pressure from the environment, however, it was formulated and implemented in haste without due articulation and aggregation of the varying interests among groups and individuals. Akinloye (2013) put this succinctly when he stated that, “SURE-P was a hastily packaged initiative, designed to assuage the masses hard feelings against the fuel subsidy removal”. This shows the lack of input by the people in the policy making process especially, among the developing countries that Smith (1973) recognized. It thus gives credence to the assertion that policies often emanate from government rather than being a result of the pressures and demands of citizens. According to Egonmwan (2004) in society decision making is characterized by limited mass participation on issues and the domination of the masses by a small group of elites.

The systems model earlier mentioned draw our attention to the impact of environmental inputs (demands) on policy or programme content and the effect of public policy on the environment and subsequent demands for action. Environmental
inputs to public policy making process are very important. Because in most cases, these inputs go
to determine the content of a policy as well as its acceptance or otherwise. Public policies that are
carefully articulated based on the views and opinions of the public are found to be more enduring in society. On the other hand, a policy though may be intended to solve a fundamental problem such as youth unemployment but when its formulation processes do not include a wide range of views as what and how the content of the policy should be, such a policy is bound to face serious challenges. The Federal Government’s SURE-P is one of such programmes. The inability of the programme to adequately address the issue of youth unemployment is an indication that there is something fundamentally wrong with its conception and implementation and this can be attributed to the lack of inclusiveness in the formulation process.

2. The challenge of insufficient and well equipped training centers across the thirty-six states of the nation and the federal capital territory, Abuja. This account for the reason why the programme managers could not recruit more than what the few centers can absorb. Besides, the choice of the candidates also poses a problem as many would prefer to be posted to lucrative companies like oil servicing companies etc.

3. Corruption is a widespread virus in the Nigerian environment. Nigeria is rated among the most corrupt countries in the world (Olagunju, 2012). Corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregard, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold (Aiyede, 2006). Thus, corruption undermines efficiency, superimposes informal practices over the proper rules and procedures of government adding additional cost to the implementation of government policies and programmes (Ebegbulem, 2006). The SURE-P as an intervention fund is meant to operate and succeed in a political and socio-economic system whose leadership echelon and followership are found to be corrupt. Corruption in the past and present has hindered the success of many commendable projects and programmes of government such as the Free and Compulsory Primary Education (1977), the Green Revolution (1980), Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (1986), the National Directorate of Employment (1986), Peoples Bank of Nigeria(1990), Poverty Alleviation Programme (2000) and others are said to have failed as a result of corruption in government (Anumudu, Umar and Madu, 2013; CBN Report, 1998). In fact, in popular
discourse many Nigerians see corruption as the major factor responsible for government failure in the development of the country. According to Ebegbulem (2006), “the negative effects of corruption on national development can be monumental as the country could lose billions of dollars to the country’s leadership”. The operations of the SURE-P is already been accused of been bedeviled by corrupt practices. The National Assembly described it as a “drain pipe” on the Nigerian economy (Umoru and Erunke, 2012).

4. Another critical area of the programme implementation is funding. The estimated funds for the implementation of the SURE-P is N180 billion per annum and N15 billion per month (SURE-P Annual Report, 2012). In its 2013 budget, the programme needed the sum of N273.53 billion to execute its projects and programmes. A programme that need this huge amount of funds, at a time when the price of the nation’s main source of export earnings crude oil is dwindling in the international market, and the nonchalant attitude of Nigerian leaders who can deliberately stiffened budgeting allocations to ministries, departments and agencies, the success of the SURE-P is at the mercy of the sitting government. Lack of funds has been responsible for the delay in the payment of the stipend to the trainees. In some cases, trainees are not paid their allowances for three to four months. On the other hand, some officials sabotage the payment by deliberately delaying the payment to allow the money accrue interest for themselves. This is another clear case of the corrupt practices of the officials meant to implement the programme.

5. Equally challenging is the influence of politicians and government officials in the recruitment process. A report by the Nigeria Security and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) stated that 79 per cent of Nigerian youth feel that only those close to politicians benefit from youth employment and empowerment interventions in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2014). Thus, the implementation of the programme is not sufficiently transparent and accountable to reach the targeted beneficiaries. Based on these implementation gaps, the desired goal of government policy or programme equipping the beneficiaries the necessary technical skills that could place them in prime position in the competitive labour market for employment is scuttled, therefore, the study do not see the need for the continuation or the sustenance of the policy as it has not been able to achieve the objectives for which it was introduced.
Concluding Remarks

With regards to the observations in this study, youth unemployment in Nigeria is high and the situation remains a daunting issue to the socioeconomic development of the Nigerian State. The SURE-P from our analysis shows that though the policy was capable of reducing unemployment in the country if it was properly and adequately implemented with genuine commitment on the part of the government, nonetheless, observations clearly indicate that the programme is marred by a number of implementation gaps ranging from lack of widespread consultation in the policy formulation stage to issues of corruption, lack of funding, lack of training centers and influence of politicians and government officials in the recruitment of beneficiaries into the programme. The existence of these gaps in the implementation process has helped undermine the achievement of the laudable goals of the programme. It is the position of this paper that the sure-p has failed to attain its stated objectives and as such need not to be sustained. The paper recommends that the government need to believe in its policies and programmes asinitiated to ameliorate the scourge of youth unemployment in the country. All what the government needs to do is to go back to similar programmes and identify the gaps that have hindered the implementation of such programmes and do not need to continue with the sure-p policy.

References


