

THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) seeks to reduce poverty in Nigeria through employment generation, women and youth empowerment, infrastructure development, and value reorientation. Evidence on its effectiveness in Adamawa State is limited. The study aims to assess the impact and effectiveness of NEEDS interventions on poverty reduction and the role of value reorientation in improving livelihoods in Adamawa State. A mixed-methods convergent design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected from 387 households across all 21 Local Government Areas using structured questionnaires. Qualitative data were obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions with men, women, and youth. Descriptive statistics summarized socio-demographics and program outcomes, while correlation and multivariate regression analyses examined the relationship between NEEDS components and a composite Poverty Index. Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data for triangulation. Awareness of NEEDS was moderate (63.3%), but only 48.8% perceived economic improvements. Employment increased from 42.1% to 65.4%, and average monthly income rose from ₦28,300 to ₦48,700. Skill training participation increased from 25.6% to 58.2%. Women and youth empowerment achieved a moderate level (mean index = 3.67/5), while infrastructure improvements were notable in roads (68.2%), markets (64.5%), and electricity (57.1%). Regression analysis showed employment generation ($\beta = -0.312, p < 0.001$), women/youth empowerment ($\beta = -0.276, p = 0.004$), infrastructure development ($\beta = -0.298, p = 0.001$), and value reorientation ($\beta = -0.184, p = 0.021$) significantly reduced poverty, explaining 54.7% of variance. KIIs and FGDs reinforced these findings but noted gaps in funding, monitoring, and program continuity. NEEDS has moderately improved livelihoods, empowered women and youth, and enhanced infrastructure access in Adamawa State. Strengthened monitoring, awareness campaigns, and sustainable funding are recommended to maximize impact.

Keywords: NEEDS, Poverty Reduction, Employment, Infrastructure, Value Reorientation.

I. INTRODUCTION

National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy is described as a Nigeria's plan for prosperity, popularly christened a "Home grown programmed" by the former president of Nigeria [7]. NEEDS is a Federal Government plan, which also expects the state and local governments to have their counterpart plan, that is State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and the Local Government Empowerment & Development Strategy (LEED) respectively [5]. Since according to Nwachuku development planning must be controlled and directed toward the desired goals. It is imperative for the federal government to include not all levels of government towards moving in the same direction but in all and sundry namely: the private sector, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the general public in cooperative activities in pursuit of developmental goals. However, like the previous development planning especially from the first attempt in 1946 and in the opinion of scholars like Rodney Obikeze and Obi, NEEDS as a plan contains all the envisaged policies and programmes of the federal government [10]. It is not only a macro-economic plan

document, but also a comprehensive vision, goals and principles of a “New Nigeria” through re-enacting core Nigeria value like respect for the elders, honesty, accountability, corporation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. As established NEEDS document, “NEED” significantly want to eradicate poverty and promote self-reliance, entrepreneurship innovation, and rewards hard work. As rightly observed by the National Planning Commission and Central Bank of Nigeria, the development plans are not understood in terms of economic development [7]. The study aims to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in Adamawa State, with a focus on its impact on poverty reduction and socio-economic development.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

This study was conducted in Adamawa State, located in the North-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The state shares a significant international border with the Republic of Cameroon, which influences its socio-economic dynamics. With an estimated population of 4,248,436 people according to the National Population Commission (2017), Adamawa State is characterized by a diverse ethnic composition and an economy predominantly based on crop farming, livestock rearing, and trading. Administratively, the state is comprised of 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs), which are grouped into three Senatorial Zones: Adamawa North, Adamawa Central, and Adamawa South.

Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design, with data collected at a single point in time. However, retrospective questions were included to capture perceived changes in employment, income, empowerment, and infrastructure access since the inception of NEEDS interventions. This design allowed for the assessment of both the current state and the evolution of socio-economic outcomes associated with the program.

Study Population

The research was conducted across all 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Adamawa State, located in North-East Nigeria. The target population included households and individuals who were potential beneficiaries of NEEDS and SEEDS programs, such as participants in employment schemes, women’s and youth groups. Additionally, government agency staff involved in poverty reduction, NGO/CBO officials, and community leaders were included to provide expert perspectives on program implementation and effectiveness.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the household survey was calculated using Cochran’s formula for large populations:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where $Z = 1.96$ (95% confidence level), $p = 0.5$ (maximum variability), and $e = 0.05$ (margin of error). Calculations were performed as follows:

- $Z^2 = 1.96 \times 1.96 = 3.8416$
- $p(1 - p) = 0.5 \times 0.5 = 0.25$
- Numerator: $3.8416 \times 0.25 = 0.9604$
- Denominator: $e^2 = 0.05 \times 0.05 = 0.0025$
- $n_0 = 0.9604/0.0025 = 384.16$, rounded to **385**

To account for potential non-response, a 10% increment was added, yielding a final sample of approximately 425 households. [3].

Sampling Procedure

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to ensure representativeness:

Stage 1 – LGA selection: All 21 LGAs were included.

Stage 2 – Community selection: Within each LGA, 2–4 communities were randomly selected using simple random sampling.

Stage 3 – Household selection: Systematic sampling was applied to households (e.g., every kth household), or a random-walk approach was used until the community quota was met. Key informants included government officials, program managers, NGO/CBO leaders, and community leaders, while FGD participants were drawn from women, youth, and elders' groups, with 6–10 participants per group.

Table 1: Sample Size Allocation for Selected Local Government Areas

| Senatorial Zone | Selected LGA | Projected Population (2017) | Percentage of Total | Allocated Sample Size (Households) |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| ADAMAWA NORTH | Gombi | 337,200 | 9.8% | 42 |
| | Hong | 269,100 | 7.8% | 33 |
| | Michika | 320,900 | 9.3% | 40 |
| Sub-Total | 3 LGAs | 927,200 | 26.9% | 115 |
| ADAMAWA CENTRAL | Girei | 224,500 | 6.5% | 28 |
| | Madagali | 257,600 | 7.5% | 32 |
| | Song | 233,800 | 6.8% | 29 |
| | Yola North | 348,600 | 10.1% | 43 |
| Sub-Total | 4 LGAs | 1,064,500 | 30.9% | 132 |
| ADAMAWA SOUTH | Jada | 242,500 | 7.0% | 30 |
| | Mayo-Belwa | 202,700 | 5.9% | 25 |
| | Mubi South | 305,800 | 8.9% | 38 |
| | Shelleng | 205,200 | 6.0% | 25 |
| Sub-Total | 4 LGAs | 956,200 | 27.7% | 118 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 10 LGAs | 3,448,900 | 100% | 425 |

Note: The total population of the 10 selected LGAs (3,448,900) was used as the base for proportional allocation. Percentages are rounded, and sample sizes are rounded to the nearest whole number, with the total constrained to 425.

Data Sources and Instruments

Primary Data were collected using a structured household questionnaire, KII guide, and FGD guide. The household questionnaire included sections on socio-demographics, NEEDS program exposure, employment outcomes, empowerment indicators, infrastructure access, poverty indicators, and perceptions of NEEDS effectiveness and value reorientation. **Secondary sources** included NEEDS policy documents, SEEDS/LEEDS program records, state poverty reports, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) publications, local government budget and expenditure reports, and other official statistics relevant to program outcomes.

Instrument Design and Validation

The questionnaire contained mostly closed-ended items with some open-ended questions. A pilot test involving 30–40 respondents outside the study communities was conducted to assess clarity and timing. Content validity was ensured through expert review and pilot feedback, while reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha, targeting $\alpha \geq 0.70$.

Data Collection Procedures

Enumerators, preferably local and bilingual, were recruited and trained on ethics, sampling, questionnaire administration, consent procedures, and quality assurance. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using tablets or paper forms, with supervisors performing spot checks and re-interviews for 5–10% of respondents. KIIs were audio-recorded with consent, and FGDs were documented using a note-taker and audio recording where permitted.

Data Analysis

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed for all variables. Cross-tabulations were used to explore NEEDS participation across demographic groups. Bivariate tests included t-tests for continuous variables and chi-square tests for categorical variables to compare outcomes between participants and non-participants. Multivariate regression models tested the relationship between NEEDS strategies and poverty reduction. For a continuous Poverty Index, OLS regression was specified as:

$$Poverty_Index_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Employment_i + \beta_2 Empowerment_i + \beta_3 Infrastructure_i + \beta_4 X_i + \epsilon_i$$

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the null hypothesis that NEEDS strategies have no significant relationship with poverty reduction, using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Both statistical and practical significance were considered in interpretation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 425 questionnaires were administered, of which 387 (92%) were completed and valid for analysis. Of these respondents, 228 (58.9%) were male and 159 (41.1%) females. Most were working-age adults: 134 (34.6%) aged 31–40 years, 104 (26.9%) aged 41–50 years, 92 (23.8%) aged 18–30 years, and 57 (14.7%) aged 51 and above. Regarding marital status, 252 (65.1%) were married, 71 (18.3%) single, and 64 (16.6%) widowed/separated. Educational attainment was mainly tertiary (152; 39.3%) and secondary (107; 27.6%), while household sizes were medium for 196 (50.6%), large for 120 (31.0%), and small for 71 (18.3%) respondents Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variable | Category | Frequency (n=387) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Sex | Male | 228 | 58.9 |
| | Female | 159 | 41.1 |
| Age Group (years) | 18–30 | 92 | 23.8 |
| | 31–40 | 134 | 34.6 |
| | 41–50 | 104 | 26.9 |
| | 51+ | 57 | 14.7 |
| Marital Status | Single | 71 | 18.3 |
| | Married | 252 | 65.1 |
| | Widowed/Separated | 64 | 16.6 |
| Educational Level | None | 23 | 5.9 |
| | Qur'anic Only | 46 | 11.9 |
| | Primary | 59 | 15.2 |
| | Secondary | 107 | 27.6 |
| | Tertiary | 152 | 39.3 |
| Household Size | 1–4 | 71 | 18.3 |
| | 5–8 | 196 | 50.6 |
| | 9+ | 120 | 31.0 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Household Livelihood and Income Status

The livelihood and income characteristics of the households are summarized in Table 2. Farming was the most common primary livelihood, reported by 136 (35.1%), followed by trading (82; 21.2%), salary employment (67; 17.3%), and artisan or skilled work (54; 14.0%). Livestock rearing and unemployment were less common, each reported by 24 respondents (6.2%).

Analysis of average monthly income indicates a concentration in the lower to middle income brackets. The largest proportion, 147 (38.0%), earned between ₦25,000–₦50,000, while 101 (26.1%) earned less than ₦25,000. Earnings of ₦51,000–₦100,000 and above ₦100,000 were reported by 92 (23.8%) and 47 (12.1%), respectively.

Regarding income changes over the past three years, 137 (35.4%) reported a decrease, 132 (34.1%) reported no change, and 118 (30.5%) reported an increase.

Awareness and Perception of NEEDS

The awareness and perception of respondents regarding the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) are summarized in Table 3. Most respondents, 245 (63.3%), had heard of NEEDS, while 142 (36.7%) had not. Regarding its impact on the community economy, 189 respondents (48.8%) believed NEEDS had improved the economy,

124 (32.0%) felt it had not, and 74 (19.1%) were unsure. Assessment of government support under NEEDS revealed mainly critical views: 153 (39.5%) perceived it as ineffective, 131 (33.9%) as effective, 42 (10.9%) as very effective, and 61 (15.8%) believed it had worsened the situation.

Table 2: Household Livelihood and Income Status

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Main Source of Livelihood | Farming | 136 | 35.1 |
| | Trading | 82 | 21.2 |
| | Salary Job | 67 | 17.3 |
| | Artisan/Skilled Work | 54 | 14.0 |
| | Livestock | 24 | 6.2 |
| | Unemployed | 24 | 6.2 |
| Average Monthly Income | < ₦25,000 | 101 | 26.1 |
| | ₦25,000–₦50,000 | 147 | 38.0 |
| | ₦51,000–₦100,000 | 92 | 23.8 |
| | > ₦100,000 | 47 | 12.1 |
| Change in Income (3 years) | Increased | 118 | 30.5 |
| | Same | 132 | 34.1 |
| | Decreased | 137 | 35.4 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Table 3: Awareness and Perception of NEEDS

| Question | Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Heard of NEEDS | Yes | 245 | 63.3 |
| | No | 142 | 36.7 |
| Perception of NEEDS improving community economy | Yes | 189 | 48.8 |
| | No | 124 | 32.0 |
| | Not sure | 74 | 19.1 |
| Government support effectiveness | Very effective | 42 | 10.9 |
| | Effective | 131 | 33.9 |
| | Not effective | 153 | 39.5 |
| | Worsened situation | 61 | 15.8 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Household Participation in Empowerment Programs

Household participation in and perception of empowerment programs are summarized in Table 4. Only 154 (39.8%) reported benefiting from any poverty alleviation or empowerment program, while 233 (60.2%) had not. Among beneficiaries, the most common programs were Youth Empowerment (49; 31.8%), Skills Acquisition 43(27.9%), Cash Transfer 28(18.2%), Agricultural Support 22(14.3%), and Loan Schemes 12(7.8%). Regarding program impact, 96 beneficiaries (62.3%) reported meaningful improvement, 37 (24.0%) observed no improvement, and 21 (13.6%) were unsure.

Value Reorientation and Community Awareness

Community value reorientation and awareness are summarized in Table 5. When asked about active civic awareness campaigns, 183 (47.3%) reported none, 148 (38.2%) affirmed their presence, and 56 (14.5%) were unsure. Regarding the perceived link between societal value decay and poverty, a majority, 212 (54.8%), believed the impact was very high, 131 (33.9%) considered it moderate, and 44 (11.4%) viewed it as low.

Table 4: Household Participation in Empowerment Programs

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Benefited from any poverty/empowerment program | Yes | 154 | 39.8 |
| | No | 233 | 60.2 |
| Type of Program | Youth Empowerment | 49 | 31.8 |
| | Skills Acquisition | 43 | 27.9 |
| | Cash Transfer | 28 | 18.2 |
| | Agricultural Support | 22 | 14.3 |
| | Loan Scheme | 12 | 7.8 |
| Program Impact | Meaningful Improvement | 96 | 62.3 |
| | No Improvement | 37 | 24.0 |
| | Not sure | 21 | 13.6 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Table 5: Value Reorientation and Community Awareness

| Statement | Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Active Civic Awareness Campaigns | Yes | 148 | 38.2 |
| | No | 183 | 47.3 |
| | Not sure | 56 | 14.5 |
| Extent of Value Decay Affecting Poverty | Very High | 212 | 54.8 |
| | Moderate | 131 | 33.9 |
| | Low | 44 | 11.4 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Household Living Conditions and Challenges

Household living conditions and prevalent challenges are summarized in Table 6. Most respondents reported negative living conditions, with 178 (46.0%) describing them as poor and 76 (19.6%) as very poor, while 104 (26.9%) rated them good and 29 (7.5%) very good. The major challenges faced by households included unemployment (256; 66.1%), low income (211; 54.5%), high food cost (189; 48.8%), lack of skills (122; 31.5%), and insecurity (103; 26.6%).

Table 6: Household Living Conditions and Challenges

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Current Living Condition | Very Good | 29 | 7.5 |
| | Good | 104 | 26.9 |
| | Poor | 178 | 46.0 |
| | Very Poor | 76 | 19.6 |
| Major Challenges | Unemployment | 256 | 66.1 |
| | Low income | 211 | 54.5 |
| | High food cost | 189 | 48.8 |
| | Lack of skills | 122 | 31.5 |
| | Insecurity | 103 | 26.6 |

Source: Survey Research 2025

Key Informant Interview (KII) Results

The Key Informant Interviews provided critical insights into the implementation of NEEDS from program officials and community leaders. Respondents highlighted several notable achievements, including the "expansion of youth and women empowerment schemes," with one community leader observing, "We now see more women and youth engaging in petty

trading and small businesses than before NEEDS.” Additionally, micro-credit and agricultural support programs were acknowledged as vital, though an official noted that “the funds are often insufficient.” There was also consensus on increased entrepreneurship awareness among youth, with a program officer stating, “Many young people now understand that they can earn a living from business ventures.”

However, significant challenges persist. Key among these are “inadequate funding and delayed disbursement,” which a state planning officer said “often stalls progress,” alongside “political interference in beneficiary selection” that favors connected individuals over the most vulnerable. Weak coordination and monitoring further limit effectiveness, as one NGO official explained: “There is minimal tracking of post-training activities.”

To address these issues, informants recommended establishing local monitoring teams, decentralizing project ownership, and prioritizing women and youth. A key informant summarized the situation: “NEEDS programs have created avenues for young people to acquire skills and start small businesses, though sustainability remains a concern.”

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Findings

Focus Group Discussions revealed grassroots perspectives on poverty and NEEDS. Participants identified unemployment, inflation, and insecurity as primary drivers of poverty, with a youth from Yola South noting, “Even if you have skills, there are no jobs, and markets are unstable.”

Awareness of NEEDS was limited, and benefits were often perceived as temporary. A woman from Michika stated, “We know about the training and small loans, but most benefits are short-lived.” Many participants expressed skepticism about political motives, with a youth from Gombi asserting, “We only see empowerment when politicians want votes.”

Cultural and leadership barriers—including corruption and poor governance—were seen as major impediments. A female trader from Numan highlighted a critical gap: “The training we received was useful, but no tools followed.” Proposed solutions included vocational training linked to markets, transparent beneficiary selection, and stronger local governance. A female youth from Yola North emphasized, “If you don’t know someone in the government, you might never get the loan or training promised,” underscoring the need for greater transparency and accountability in program delivery.

Table 7: Statistical Summary

| Variable | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|----------------------------------|------|------|----------------|
| Awareness of NEEDS | 3.22 | 0.98 | Moderate |
| Impact on income | 3.41 | 1.04 | Moderate |
| Effect on employment | 3.38 | 1.01 | Moderate |
| Value reorientation outcomes | 3.46 | 0.95 | Moderate |
| Government support effectiveness | 3.09 | 1.08 | Low–moderate |

Descriptive Analysis of Core NEEDS Indicators

Analysis of core NEEDS indicators shows significant positive outcomes across employment, income, empowerment, and infrastructure. The employment rate increased from 42.1% to 65.4%, while average monthly income rose by 72.0% (₦28,300 to ₦48,700), and participation in skill training more than doubled from 25.6% to 58.2% (Table 8). Women and youth reported high access to microcredit (Mean=3.89, SD=0.82), confidence in business (Mean=3.79, SD=0.75), and moderate-to-high control over personal income and reduction in gender inequality (Table 9). Infrastructure improvements were substantial, with feeder roads (68.2%), market facilities (64.5%), and health centers (59.0%) showing major gains, while only 8–9% reported deterioration (Table 10).

Table 8: Employment and Income Outcomes

| Indicator | Before NEEDS | After NEEDS | % Change | t-stat | p-value |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|--------|---------|
| Employment rate (%) | 42.1 ± 7.8 | 65.4 ± 8.6 | +23.3 | 6.72 | 0.000* |
| Average monthly income (₦) | 28,300 ± 12,900 | 48,700 ± 21,400 | +72.0 | 8.15 | 0.000* |
| Skill training participation (%) | 25.6 ± 5.4 | 58.2 ± 7.1 | +32.6 | 7.04 | 0.000* |

Table 9: Women and Youth Empowerment Outcomes

| Indicator | Mean (1–5) | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------------|------|----------------|
| Access to microcredit | 3.89 | 0.82 | High |
| Control over personal income | 3.66 | 0.97 | Moderate–High |
| Participation in community decisions | 3.42 | 0.88 | Moderate |
| Confidence in business operation | 3.79 | 0.75 | High |
| Perceived reduction in gender inequality | 3.58 | 0.93 | Moderate |

Table 10: Infrastructure Development

| Infrastructure Type | Improved (%) | Unchanged (%) | Deteriorated (%) |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Feeder Roads | 68.2 | 23.5 | 8.3 |
| Electricity Supply | 57.1 | 34.8 | 8.1 |
| Water Access | 52.9 | 38.4 | 8.7 |
| Market Facilities | 64.5 | 27.2 | 8.3 |
| Health Centers | 59 | 32.1 | 8.9 |

Inferential Analysis

Correlation and regression analyses reveal significant relationships between NEEDS program components and poverty reduction. The poverty index correlates negatively with employment ($r=-0.512$), empowerment ($r=-0.438$), and infrastructure ($r=-0.461$) (Table 11), while positive inter-correlations among employment, empowerment, and infrastructure ($r=0.382-0.417$) indicate mutually reinforcing effects. OLS regression (Table 12) shows that employment generation ($\beta=-0.312$, $p<0.001$), infrastructure ($\beta=-0.298$, $p=0.001$), women and youth empowerment ($\beta=-0.276$, $p=0.004$), and value reorientation ($\beta=-0.184$, $p=0.021$) significantly predict poverty reduction, confirming that increases in these components are associated with decreased poverty.

Table 11: Correlation Matrix

| Variables | Poverty Index | Employment | Empowerment | Infrastructure |
|----------------|---------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| Poverty Index | 1.000 | | | |
| Employment | -0.512* | 1.000 | | |
| Empowerment | -0.438* | 0.382* | 1.000 | |
| Infrastructure | -0.461* | 0.417* | 0.395* | 1.000 |

Table 12: Regression Analysis – OLS Model

| Variable | β | Std. Error | t-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|----------------------------|---------|------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Constant | 4.23 | 0.41 | 10.32 | 0.000 | — |
| Employment Generation | -0.312 | 0.081 | -3.85 | 0.000* | Significant |
| Women & Youth Empowerment | -0.276 | 0.094 | -2.94 | 0.004* | Significant |
| Infrastructure Development | -0.298 | 0.086 | -3.47 | 0.001* | Significant |
| Value Reorientation | -0.184 | 0.079 | -2.33 | 0.021* | Significant |

Hypothesis Test Summary

All four hypotheses were supported, with employment (H_{01} , $p=0.000$), women and youth empowerment (H_{02} , $p=0.004$), infrastructure development (H_{03} , $p=0.001$), and value reorientation (H_{04} , $p=0.021$) significantly reducing poverty (Table 13).

Table 13: Hypothesis Test Summary

| Hypothesis | p-value | Decision |
|--|---------|----------|
| H_{01} : Employment \rightarrow Poverty | 0.000 | Reject |
| H_{02} : Women & Youth Empowerment \rightarrow Poverty | 0.004 | Reject |
| H_{03} : Infrastructure \rightarrow Poverty | 0.001 | Reject |
| H_{04} : Value Reorientation \rightarrow Poverty | 0.021 | Reject |

The findings indicate that NEEDS has positively influenced poverty reduction. Employment rates increased from 42.1% to 65.4%, average monthly income rose by 72%, and participation in skill training more than doubled. Regression analysis confirmed that employment generation, women and youth empowerment, infrastructure development, and value reorientation are significant predictors of poverty reduction. These results align with previous studies in northern Nigeria, which demonstrate that multi-dimensional interventions targeting income, skills, and social empowerment are more effective than single-sector programs [8], [2], [4], [6].

Value reorientation emerged as an important dimension of poverty reduction. Many respondents linked societal value decay, including corruption, poor leadership, and laziness, to persistent poverty. NEEDS moderately improved attitudes toward self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and women/youth participation, although civic engagement remained limited. These findings echo Sani *et al.* [8], who noted that educational interventions under NEEDS promoted productive behaviors and youth self-reliance, highlighting the need for integrating ethical and behavioral components with economic interventions for sustainable poverty reduction.

Comparisons with other Nigerian regions suggest that NEEDS programs provide tangible poverty reduction benefits nationwide, particularly when combining skills development, employment opportunities, and access to credit [1], [2], [8].

IV. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) has significantly contributed to poverty reduction in Adamawa State through employment generation, women and youth empowerment, infrastructure development, and value reorientation. Employment rates and skill training participation increased substantially, while average household income rose, confirming that multi-dimensional interventions are more effective than single-sector programs. Nevertheless, program effectiveness is constrained by funding limitations, political interference, weak monitoring, and limited civic engagement. Therefore, establishing local monitoring teams, enforce transparent beneficiary selection, and conduct periodic audits to minimize political interference.

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