

# NYSC INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES AND PRODUCTIVITY OF EX-CORPS MEMBERS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*This study determined the influence of innovative programmes of NYSC and the productivity of corps members. Specifically, the study determined the influence of: skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC; NYSC partnership with stakeholders; NYSC Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF); and culture of community on national integration among Corps members in Cross River State. The four objectives were postulated to four research questions and equally used to formulate four null hypotheses. The survey research design was adopted to carry out the study conducted in Cross River State using a population of 5,392 corps members and 357 sample size using multi-stage sampling technique. The researcher designed and administered to the respondents, two different structured questionnaires tagged, "Questionnaire on NYSC Innovative Programmes (QNYSCIP) and Questionnaire on Corps Members Productivity (QCMP)". The two instruments were validated by three experts and reliability indices of .71 and .73 for QNYSCIP and QCMP respectively determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. Item-by-item analysis was adopted in providing answers to the four research questions. The dependent t-test was used in testing the four null hypotheses. Findings show that skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC; NYSC Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF); and culture of community on national integration have no significant influence on corps members' productivity. However, NYSC partnership with stakeholders has significant influence on the productivity of corps members. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programme, NYSC partnership with stakeholders, NYSC Graduates Empowerment Fund and cultural integration despite their importance have not been effectively and adequately provided for corps members, hence the productivity of corps members is low. Based on the conclusions drawn, it is recommended among others that entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programme of NYSC should be made more functional by providing adequate training, using entrepreneurs with sound reputation and achievement.*

**Keywords:** Innovative Programmes, National Youth Service Corps, Entrepreneurship, Self-employment.

## INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, established on 22nd May, 1973 should not only be known for its role in promoting national unity and integration but should also enhance rapid economic development of Nigeria by preparing Nigerian youths who are graduates to meet the reality of the changing economic and global work environment. The new

dimension of the scheme, among others include, the training of serving youth corps members in entrepreneurship and skills acquisition through a programme known as the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (SAED), which offers Opportunities for self-employment and wealth creation.

The training of Corps members under the NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (SAED), which began in 2012, is always carried out in all orientation camps across the country (Emmanuel, 2017). The programme aims at contributing towards curbing the rate of graduate unemployment in the country, hence has trained millions of corps members. Some of the achievements recorded by the skills acquisition and entrepreneurial programme include: NYSC has successfully entered into partnership with stakeholders, including the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Bank of Industry (BOI), and the Heritage Bank, with a view to empowering interested Corps members with start-up capital to fund businesses conceived after the SAED training; NYSC/BOI Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF), the CBN/NYSC Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YEDP), which kicked off in 2016, has so far granted loans to serving Corps members and many Ex-Corps members, partnering with stakeholders in the private sector to build Zonal Integrated Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship centres in all six geo-political zones (Emmanuel, 2017).

In Nigeria today, the geometric progression on trend of the unemployed has revealed that young graduates from tertiary institutions do not have the necessary entrepreneurial abilities, competencies, exposures, value that will help them to adapt and integrate to the world of business. Okwuanaso (1992) argued that many graduates who tend to establish and be independent in all their own little way often failed in the world of work and this can be associated to little knowledge of what it takes to be an entrepreneur. Sasaki (2006) in his study adduced that if young graduates of today are better informed of the relevance of challenges of becoming self-reliant and independence, they will not only choose being entrepreneur as a profession but also complement their efforts in achieving competitive advantage and creating more wealth.

Training skills such as NYSC SAED can be linked to existing theories. For instance, Theory of Innovation by Rogers (1962). Central to the theory is the idea that different types of people adopt new ideas or products on different timelines. The theory specifies five categories of adopters based on their adoption rate. This theory has very serious implications on the study. First, most of the programmes being anchored by NYSC were not originally stated in the objectives of the scheme. However, it became very pertinent to introduce these programmes to match pace with the changing technology. Another theory that guided the study is the “*Theory X and Theory Y*”, propounded by McGregor in 1954. Theory X states that employees dislike work, are lazy, dislike responsibility, and must be coerced to perform. On the other hand, theory Y state that employees like work, are creative, seek responsibility, and can exercise self-direction. According to Robbins, Judge & Vohra (2012) McGregor proposed two distinct views of human beings: one basically negative, labelled Theory X, and the other basically positive, labelled Theory Y. After reviewing the way managers dealt with employees, Under Theory X, managers believe employees inherently dislike work and must therefore be directed or even coerced into performing it. Under Theory Y, in contrast managers assume employees can view work as being as natural as rest or play, and therefore the average person can learn to accept, and even seek responsibility. Robbins et al further explained that a better way to understand Theory X and Theory Y is to relate these theories with Maslow Hierarchy of needs. Therefore, Theory Y assumes a higher-order needs dominate individuals. In McGregor’s view, Theory Y assumptions

were more valid than Theory X. Therefore, McGregor proposed such idea as participative decision making, responsible and challenging jobs, and good group relations as approaches to maximize an employee's job motivation.

Meanwhile, Theory X and Theory Y have significant implications on this study. Although NYSC does not provide the serving corps members with permanent employment, wherefore corps members are not seen as employees, they are in a position to render services similar to people on permanent employment roll. Corps members may likely fall into any of Theory X and Theory Y. The way their employers (where they are deployed to serve) deal with them can have great effect in their beliefs as applicable in these two extremes. On the other hand, innovative practices introduced by NYSC for the benefit of corps members are quite motivating and can influence the actions of the corps members positively; and of course can raise their productivity. Such effect can extend to members of the community of deployment of corps members, thereby promoting effective integration. The third theory is the "*Theory of Needs*". Theory of Needs was propounded by McClelland in the 1940s. McClelland's Theory of needs state that achievement, power, and affiliation are three important needs that help explain motivation (Robbins et al). The implication of this theory to the current study is that innovations in the NYSC Scheme will go a long way to enhancing the achievement of corps members and add value not only to the Scheme but the larger Nigerian society. Enegwa & Umoden (1993), says that participants of the NYSC have continuously made us proud and have justified the optimism of the founding fathers of the corps scheme. Perry & Katula (2001:338) deduce that "*there appears to be a significant gap between scholars who assert that service, by its very nature, promotes citizenship and those who argues that only particular types of service activities nurture citizen development*". Patel (2003) add that service "*is shaped by the history and service traditions of a society, its level of development, the way in which it governs itself, organizes its economy and views the role of its citizens and its social institutions in meeting human needs and in promoting democracy*". Iyizobe (1982) noted that NYSC is in the interest of fostering national unity.

The SAED program is NYSCs response to the youth unemployment challenge in Nigeria. The program prepare the over 250,000 youths mobilized annually under the NYSC scheme to become employable or start-up their own businesses when they pass out. SAED (acronym for Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development) is a nationwide initiative of the NYSC targeted at young Nigerian graduates mobilized and deployed in the one year mandatory service with the primary mandate of promoting self-reliance in the Nigerian youth. It is designed to be implemented within the framework of the Corps members camping exercises (in camp) and also throughout the service year of Corps members (post camp) during which corps members will be encouraged to learn in-demand industry skills, position themselves to become value creators and leverage a bouquet of career and business start-up opportunities.

The entire programme is built around 3 core pillars: re-orientation: helping the corps appreciate the realities of life after school, Inspiring them to take control of their future, and exposing them to various viable career and entrepreneurship pathways; right-Skilling: supporting the corps members to acquire the relevant technical and soft skill set required to start-up businesses or meet industry recruitment standard; reducing the barrier for Corps members to access relevant resources and empowerment opportunities.

The SAED Programme offers two pathways to self-reliance for interested Corps members: employability: this pathway supports the Corps members to develop their capacity to deliver value in in-demand industry roles. It seeks to bridge the gap between the corps members'

tertiary education and the dominant industry skill demands. Entrepreneurship: This pathway supports the corps members to develop their capacity to start and run a business in an area of their choice. While the corp members are encouraged to start business in any field of their liking, The SAED program places special focus for entrepreneurship development in 12 vocational skill sectors such as food processing, education, film and photography, construction and automobile. "Other areas are: power and energy, environment, horticulture and landscaping, cosmetology, aggro-allied, ICT, culture and tourism". Salswu (2018) reports challenges faced in the fashion designing class due to inadequate training facilities and equipment. During orientation, corps members are introduced to the various skill areas where they pick an area of interest with a professional to guide, train and teach them the skills required to succeed. After the orientation course, the professionals continue with the training for the next six months of the service year allowing corps members to perfect the skills learned. Financial institutions such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Bank of Industry (BoI), Bank of Agriculture and Heritage bank give corps members loan to start up their businesses (Salswu, 2018).

According to Sasaki (2006), when the young people lack the basic entrepreneurial abilities, it therefore becomes difficult for them to succeed and triumph in the world of business. Also, Sako (2002) explained the concept of entrepreneurship from two major perspectives or school of thoughts - "creating opportunities" and "innovation". Adeboye & Olubela (2009) see entrepreneurship as a dynamic way of perceiving opportunities and introducing changes, innovations and a new order. Further, Kor et al. (2007) noted that an entrepreneur is one who brings resources and other assets into combination that makes their value greater than others. This definition upholds the fact that an entrepreneur is someone who creates and produces needs or values in a new way. In entrepreneurial decision, it is important to consider the role of risk taking and uncertain. Timmons et al. (2009) adduced that an entrepreneur is a person who is internally motivated to create something new with value by developing the necessary time and effort and also with the value by devoting the necessary time and effort and also with the enthusiasm for invention, discovery and creativity. Agada & Ekpa (2007) posited that an entrepreneur is solely vested with the passion to create value and satisfy needs. Creating value and exploiting innovation process is parallel to need for achievement. Aghazamani (2010) also supported that entrepreneurship primarily focuses on value creation and the exploitation of economic, innovation. According to Linan (2004) incremental health of value creation cannot be strongly achieved without entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education requires the deletion and intention to undertake risk, organization of social-economic resources and acceptance of creative thinking. Anerua & Obiazi (2009), entrepreneurship skills are accompanied with individual's understanding of similar notions such as newness, organizing, wealth creation and risk taking and also the ability to successfully perform particular responsibilities.

Basically, it is worthy to reiterate that the significance of entrepreneurship skills cannot be qualified since the knowledge and skills acquired through entrepreneurship with assist the youths and young graduates to be independent, self-reliant or self-employed person and contribute immensely to the economic success of the society at large. Uloka & Ejinkonye (2010) is of the view that when the young graduates are youths acquired the necessary skills and knowledge through entrepreneurship, that there is a greater chance to use the skills to create something new with value. Minnih & Leresque (2008) describe the term entrepreneurship as a history that dates back to 1732, when the Irish economist Richard Caritillion used the word in reference to individuals with "a willingness to carry out forms of arbitrage involving the

*financial risk of a new venture*". Drucker & Maciariello (214) says entrepreneurship as an innovative act which includes endowing existing resources for new wealth producing capacity. According to Gana (2001) entrepreneurship is the ability to seek investment opportunities and establish an enterprise based on identified opportunities. The entrepreneur takes risks, is focused and energized by inner drive. Esomonu (1998) also defined entrepreneurship as the effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in a creative performance. This singular risk taking act leads an individual to create something of value from practically nothing. Carnier (1996) sees entrepreneurship as the centre of an integrated model of economic development, incorporating a theory of profit and interest, as well as a theory of the business cycle and the capitalist system.

The entrepreneur is an innovator, one who carries a combination of the following: the introduction of a new product, the organization of new industry. Ogundele et al. (2012) noted that the contribution of skill acquisition and training on unemployment reduction through youth empowerment and social welfare service improvement will be much significant if encouraged at the level in the state especially at local and community level. Ohize & Adamu (2009) opined that non-government organization can play a vital role in training and skill acquisition. This is evident from the success story of project YES as findings revealed that the scheme has contributed to the economic enhancement of the youths by providing them with vocational skill acquisition and counselling services aimed at reorienting their attitudes towards self and social development. Akpama et al (2011) observed that skill acquisition of vocational skills lead to a significant reduction of poverty among young adults who participated on skills acquisition programmes. Entrepreneurial studies are inter-disciplinary training that focus on the tools needed to start a new business or vocation. Because Nigeria is fast becoming a predominantly youthful society with high rate of unemployment, it require training the youth in entrepreneurship skill in technical vocational education and training to tackle unemployment which has reached alarming proportions. Amadi (2012) deduce from their study that a greater percentage of the sampled youth reported high and moderate levels of their capacity building: implying that the vocational skills acquisition and development was a successful scheme. They however recommended that the constraints that impede the success of the scheme be addressed by policy makers to make the outcome of the skills training more successful. Ilemona et al. (2013) also investigated the conduct of skill acquisition and training in alleviating poverty and unemployment in Kogi State, Nigeria, where result showed that 65% of the respondents accepted that lack of entrepreneurship skills among youth is responsible for the high rate of poverty/unemployment in Nigeria. The result also revealed that at least 60% of the people that benefitted from the skills acquisition programme can now afford the basic necessity of life.

According to Isuke (2008) entrepreneurship has been identified globally and nationally as a tool for generating a sustainable economic which is the core value of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS). Through such skills acquisition, the establishment of small business helps to generate substantial amount of employment and income which are essential parts of a country's Gross National Product (GNP) on the one hand and reduce unemployment on the other. Ezeji & Okorie (1999) stressing on the importance of skills acquisition in national growth, emphatically contended, "*that Nigeria's social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment*". It is only with skilled men that materials can be harnessed, manipulated and transformed into products with quality skills acquisition programmes, countries like America, Britain, Germany and Japan have rehabilitated drug

addicts, school dropouts and several destitute who eventually contributed meaningfully to the economy and development of high volume of productivity in their countries. Kanyenze et al, (2000) underscores that trainings in vocational and technical skills will reduce youth marginalization in Anglophone Africa.

According to Obi (2010), for the Nigerian youth to survive in entrepreneurship, the following skills are required: he/she must be a high achiever, risk taker, self-confident, resourceful, goal setter, task oriented, innovative, future oriented, communication ability and technical knowledge. Binks & Vale (1990), also defined entrepreneurship as “*an unrehearsed combination of economic resources instigated by the uncertain prospect of temporary monopoly profit*”. Kanothi (2009) defines entrepreneur as the “*instigator of entrepreneurial events for so long as they occur*”. Tijani-Alawoye (2004) sees entrepreneurship as the process of increasing the supply of entrepreneurs or adding to the stock of existing small, medium and big enterprises available to a country by creating and promoting many capable entrepreneurs, who can successfully run innovative enterprise, nurture them to growth and sustain them, with a new to achieving broad socio-economic developmental goals. One of these goals is sustaining employment. Entrepreneurship revolves around the realization of existence of opportunities in combination with decision to commercialize them by starting a new firm. Schnurr & Newing (1997) justified needs for promoting entrepreneurship culture on the ground that youth in all societies have sterling qualities such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zeal, dash, ambition, energy, boldness, audacity and courage which are all valuable traits for entrepreneurship development. Bennell (2001), supporting this assertion, maintained that governments, NGOs and International bodies seeking to improve youth livelihoods could best pursue their empowerment objective by tapping into the dynamism of young people and build on their strong spirit of risk-taking through entrepreneurship developments. Entrepreneurship development has also led to employment generation, growth of the economy and sustainable development. Onyeneba & Ezeano (2011), assert that entrepreneurship performs numerous roles in business, in the society and overall development.

In fact all factors of production (labour, land and capital) would be rendered ineffective and unproductive without entrepreneurship development. Kirzner (1989) noted that other factors of production are the result of entrepreneurial choices and are open to entrepreneurial initiative.

According to Anyadike et al. (2012), these human and natural resources notwithstanding, Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the highest rate of youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, and despite its alleged strong economic growth. In respect of the above sad and deplorable situation, the government has done little to reduce the nursery and frustrations of citizenry. This has fasted as state of hopelessness on majority of young and old people who have resorted to any means including crime to succeed in life. Fajana (2000) posited that unemployment is a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. Todaro (1992) pointed out that the high rate of unemployment is as a result of countries transfer of economic activities, especially the youths from rural to urban areas. Oyebade (2003), Nigeria’s unemployment can be grouped into two categories; first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy, or bankruptcy and second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been employed. Awogbenle & Iwuamadi (2010), the statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80

million, representing 60% of the total population of the country also 64 million of them are unemployed, while 1.6million are underemployed.

According to National Bureau of Statistic (2009: 238:2014), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2012 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000;13.6% in 2001;12.6% in 2002;14.8% in 2003;13.4% in 2004;11.9% in 2005;13.7% in 2006;14.6% in 2007;14.9% in 2008;19.7% in 2009;21.10% in 2010;22.10% in 2011 and 23.90% in 2012 and many likely rise by 2% in 2013. According to Vanguard Newspaper headline of December 17, 2013, 54% of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012, for persons between 15 and 24 years, 41.6% were unemployed, for person between 25 and 44 years, 17% were unemployed. As regards sex, data showed that males constituted 48% while female constituted 51.9%. It is important to note that the figures above may not have capture in totality the youth unemployment situation in Nigeria, however, they are pointing to the fact that the phenomenon is a very critical issue with reference to the entrepreneurship development and economic development. Unegbu (2011) observed that the recent events in the sub-Sahara Africa countries like Liberia, Mali, Sierra, Angola and so on, where unemployment, war, disease and poverty among others played a key role in the uprising, one can only conclude that Nigeria's unemployment poses a threat to its development, security and peaceful coexistence, being that Nigeria is made up of diverse entities from different cultural and religious backgrounds most of whom have shown differences in political, cultural, religious understanding and accommodation emanating from concerns of abuse of power, resource allocation, nepotism, negligence and corruption among others. Also, Adeboye & Olubela (2009), claim that entrepreneurship is a systematic process of identifying needs and satisfying those needs with creative thinking and values with the aim of acquiring wealth and promoting the sense of self-reliance, self-determination, independence and life or personal satisfaction. The survival of any given society be it developed or developing society is dependent on the level of the entrepreneurial abilities undertaken. Adediran (2004) observed that unemployment problem which is an alarming rate has become an atrocious phenomenon which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our economy. It has been indicated that people who are commonly affected by the syndrome are the economically active population such as the youths particularly graduates from tertiary institutions, and also people who are retrenched as a result of economic recession, and socio-cultural discrepancies. Okwuanaso (1992) argued that many graduates who tend to establish and be independent in their own little way often failed in the work and this can be associated to their little knowledge of what it take to be an entrepreneur. Okebukola (2005), in a study confirmed that most of the economically active population (youths) in Nigeria are over dependent and oppressed by the bourgeoisies due to their insufficient funds, resources and low level of entrepreneurial skills. Through these problems have been associated with lack of accessibility to loan, poor infrastructural development/facilities, inadequate funding by the government.

According to Hisrich & Peters (2002), "*entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, physical, and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence*". Entrepreneurial skills have been identified by Terren (2010) as a very crucial for people that want to thrive in the business world to become successful. Five parts identified were (i) decision making (2) peoples skill (3) planning (4) sales and (5) communication. In Torren's words, "*in today's world, if you want to be a successful entrepreneur, there is certainly an evolutionary*" process that we must all undertake. In other word, there are skills that we must each learn and have in order to thrive in today's business

world, and we need to be able to adapt those skills to our surroundings, or be left behind with the “*entrepreneurial Neanderthals*”.

The training provided during the NYSC can help eliminate barriers. Of course, Onwubiko (2011) acknowledged the fact that there are barriers to entrepreneurship, especially non-availability of capital. Onugu (2005) argued against non-availability of capital as the prime problem of entrepreneurship development, the availability of capital, Onwubiko (2011) noted, is central to the establishment and continued existence of any enterprise irrespective of the size, focus and objective. Another challenge is absence of adequate training for students such has made it difficult to them to meet the demands of the era. Unemployment may lead many graduates been recruited into the rank of oil theft syndicates, armed robbers, kidnapper, militants and insurgents while their female counterparts may end up as prostitutes (Business Day, 2013). According to Akintoyo (1999), involvements of the youths in the Zangon-kataf crisis of 1992, the uncontrollable violent action of the Ayap and Hausa youths after February 1992 conflict between the two ethnic groups resulted in the violent crisis of May 1992. Most of the youths were said to be unemployed. To Bako (1994), the Almajirai and the Yandaba groups who are largely unemployed are in the vanguard in the execution of violence in the recurring ethnic/religions violence in Kano. Bako (1994) argued further that the root of violence among the youth can be located in the unprecedented poverty as well as the massive unemployment, hunger and deprivation among the youths thus providing avenue for their involvement in the ethno religious conflict across the country. Benzing et al. (2009) explained that entrepreneurs contribute to Nigeria’s GDP. According to World Bank (2007), entrepreneurs contribute reasonably to national development through tax payment.

Authorities of NYSC is constantly advocating and working towards strengthening mutual capacity for effective engagement of corps members and employers, Director General of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Kazaure (2018) noted that a better partnership between Corps members and employers is necessary. In a bid to strengthen mutual capacity for effective engagement of corps members and employers, Kazaure (2018), at the 2018 Corps Employers Workshop with theme, “*Tackling emerging challenges in youth corps administration through greater NYSC/stakeholders participation,*” said the forum was to draw from experiences of corps employers and members to ensure proper use of corps manpower. In view of this, Kazaure (2018) cautioned that rejection, underutilisation, evasion of service and inadequate welfare provisions, which includes, accommodation, transport allowances are some of the challenges that corps members face. In tackling the challenges, (“*to tackle evasion of service*”), the monthly biometrics clearance of corps members serves as a check on them. “*The management has also increased the number of regular inspection of corps members at their Places of Primary Assignment (PPA),*” he added. Kazaure (2018) advised that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) should not reject any corps member and advised that necessary provisions be made towards their welfare. Corps members in the FCT have been challenged to imbibe the culture of productivity and competitiveness in order to become relevant both during and after their service year.

Undergoing all the necessary training under the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development without a corresponding productivity culture would amount to an exercise in futility (Elekwa, 2016). The training is complimented by the provision of start-up funds (Osogbo, 2018). The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Heritage Bank Plc, Nigeria’s most innovative banking services provider and The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) have disbursed a whopping sum of N774million to 310 beneficiaries under the Youth Innovative Entrepreneurship



Development Programme (YIEDP) (The Marketing, 2016). Speaking at the flag-off ceremony for the disbursement of funds to young entrepreneurs under the YIEDP, the CBN in partnership with Heritage Bank and NYSC instituted the programme to reduce the alarming rate of unemployment affecting over 16 million unemployed youths in Nigeria. Access to credit via this platform would be a powerful instrument to grow businesses and the economy. The YIEDP was part of the plan by the CBN and the Federal Government to create over one million direct jobs by 2020. The opinion of many Nigeria that the programme would have a multiplier effect on job creation and economy, urged all the beneficiaries to make judicious use of the fund. The programme (YIEDP) has the potential of becoming the stimulus for job and wealth creation, growth and economic development through improved access to finance for young entrepreneurs. The business community as noted by the CBN would continue to provide enabling environment, devise ways and means to grow the real sector towards a self-reliant economy.

Money for this initiative is always disbursed by appropriate funding agents. The government of Cross River state is not relenting efforts in promoting youths' empowerment. Ayade (2018) remarked that there is need for government at all levels to protect the youths to ensure they maximize their potentials as they are the answer to future problems. There are many programmes of NYSC that aims to empower the youths and raise their productivity. The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YEDP) was launched on 15th March, 2016 to enhance the deployment of the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Nigerian youths for maximum economic development. This was in recognition of the fact that there was no better segment of the Nigerian population than the youths to propel us to our much-needed economic recovery and diversification. In the third quarter of 2015, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that of the 36.3 million youths representing 48% of the nation's labour force, 13.6 million or 37.7% of them were either unemployed or underemployed. This situation could not be allowed to fester given that many of our youths had very bright ideas and big dreams but are constrained by scarce seed funding (CBN, 2018).

The YEDP aims to fix the triple-barrelled constraints of insufficiency, high cost and inadequate term of capital usually faced by youth entrepreneurs and start-ups. It offers credit of up to N3 million to eligible youth or N10 million for groups of 3-5 youths, Interest rate is 9% per annum. Tenor broadly depends on project complexity and cash flow but is between 1 year for working capital loan and 3 years for term loan. The collateral requirements are quite simple: academic and NYSC certificates, third party guarantees and other movable assets. Target beneficiaries are members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), non-NYSC (but not more than five years post-NYSC), those who possess a verifiable tertiary institution certificate, and artisans with First School Leaving Certificate or a technical certificate or accredited proficiency certificate from the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), whichever is applicable. Beneficiaries can be encouraged to migrate to other CBN interventions to obtain more funding if they utilize the YEDP facility properly. The guidelines for the programme indicate that activities eligible for financing include start-ups and expansion projects in agricultural value chains (fish farming, poultry, snail farming, etc.), cottage Industry, creative industry (tourism, arts and crafts) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) among others.

Stakeholders continue to boost the empowerment programmes of corps members and Nigerian youths. Emefiele (2016) reported that the Central Bank of Nigeria is to give N3 million each to empower eligible youths under the Youth Initiative Empowerment Development Programme. Emefiele said N210 billion had been set aside for the programme and added that the

collateral for accessing the fund was simple. He said: *“It will include assets such as academic and NYSC certificates, third party guarantees and other movable assets”*. *“These programmes will be an equal opportunity programme across gender and geopolitical zones and we have developed a robust operational framework to deliver a bias-free per-qualification and selection process.”* Emefiele said the CBN was targeting 10,000 youths with the aim of creating one million direct jobs in productive activities within the next four years.

According to Emefiele, the National Bureau of Statistics says that there are over 36.3million youths in Nigeria’s labour force out of who 13.6 million are either underemployed or unemployed. He noted that many talented youth in the country were constrained by seed funding which was very scarce. He explained that to address the situation, CBN in collaboration with NYSC came up with the initiative. The CBN governor commended the efforts of the Director-General of the NYSC, Brigadier General Johnson Olawumi, and Akinsola Akinfemiwa, the Chairman of Heritage Bank, for their commitment to the programme. Also, the NYSC director-general said YIEDP focused at providing world class training and start-up capital to corps members who had indicated interest in Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship. Olawunmi said the initiative was designed to complement the other interventions in funding corps members’ proposals under the NYSC SAED programme. He explained that since the inception of SAED, the NYSC scheme had trained over 500,000 ex-corps members in various agro-based skills but not all were empowered due to inadequate funds. He noted that under the new concept of YIEDP, which had liberalised the lending terms, corps member entrepreneurs would enjoy unhindered access to start-up funds. He explained that corps members who intended to access the fund were expected to undergo a world class entrepreneurship development training facilitated by CBN and heritage bank. Olawunmi said: *“They will submit electronically bankable business plans as well as provide a reliable guarantor and their NYSC certificates will serve as collateral for beneficiaries.”* He admonished serving corps members to take advantage of the opportunity by coming up with creative ideas and bankable business plans, which could make them access the fund. In his remark, Akinfemiwa said the major partners to the programme were NYSC members and urged them to strive to be employers of labour and not job seekers. Akinfemiwa also urged the youths to generate good ideas as it was the only way to ensure that the money that would be given to them was properly used.

The National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, is a crucial symbol of cultural integration and national unity. In many occasions, Corps posted to communities have participated in the community’s activities including cultural activities. For instance in Otuoke, the leader of a socio-cultural title, the Regent of Otuoke, in Otuoke Community in Ogbia LGA of Bayelsa State, Chief Ariwaremi Paul while hosting the NYSC Bayelsa at the Community Town Hall during an integration programme said that the NYSC was the best thing to have happened to Nigeria. The Regent charged the Corps members to be disciplined, patriotic, committed, dedicated and respectful to traditional institutions. He assured the Corps that the Otuoke Community will continue to provide an enabling environment and support the group and individual Community Development Service projects of the corps members. *“Otuoke Community is a preferred choice of most Corps Members because of the hospitality, peace and accommodation. It is my hope that the partnership will be mutually beneficial”*. An NYSC staff, Mrs Loto agreed with the Regent that the NYSC remains the champion of national unity, peace, and cultural integration. She stressed that the Service Corps is undeniably the Soul of Nigeria.

The NYSC has been described as an organization that has played a pivotal role in youth development in Nigeria, called on corps members to have faith in the future of Nigeria (Nnachi, 2018).

The NYSC accords much importance to culture of host community of corps members and strongly advise corps members to respect the tradition of the people. In the words of Kazaure, (2015), “*National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) members have been advised to always respect the tradition and culture of their host communities*”. Obadare (2005) conducted a study, which examines the service -citizenship nexus in Nigeria using the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme as empirical backdrop. In the relevant sociological and service literature, the assumption that service is antecedent to, and necessarily impacts positively on citizenship is a virtual axiom. However, tentative conclusions from this study provide a basis for rethinking this wisdom. Using data from open-ended interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, the research traces the ways in which political dynamics in the country (Nigeria) have affected the implementation of the NYSC programme. The research concludes by articulating the conception of and prior allegiance to community as essential for the creation and nurturing of actual citizenship, and the performance of service respectively. The observed conceptual complex is a mixed one.

Therefore, Obadare (2005) further observe that buoyed up by the nature of the welfare state in developing countries, particularly in the African post-colony, which invested heavily in the idea of public spending to develop the emergent states and create national progress and unity, a strong conception of citizens who owe the state every duty was concomitantly developed. Consequently, the state promotes values of altruism, social solidarity and collectivism, which underpin institutional thinking, which are backed by extensive state spending characterized by strong service delivery by the state.

There are different categories of these skills offered in NYSC SAED Programme. You can do well to consider them in the list below:

**The NYSC SAED agro-allied:** This section of the SAED program partners with organization involved in large scale production, processing and packaging of food using modern equipment and methods. They are usually involved in education and training interesting corp members in the skills in processing and packaging of food. It can really be an invaluable skill to acquire with the recent trend toward food processing and packaging.

**The NYSC SAED automobile:** In this section of automobile, organizations such as driving schools can be contacted within the state to help corps members learn the skills of driving. A lot of corps members find themselves interested in this section which I feel it is very useful for every graduate to learn.

**The NYSC SAED beautification:** In a large sense, beautification involves making visual improvements to a person, place or thing. With SAED program in the orientation camp it is common to see beauty promoters who would teach corps members preliminary phases of embellishing pictures, art works and the sort.

**The NYSC SAED construction:** this is more of building and construction sector. Some of the training in this section might include brick laying, building of houses, building of roads and others like it. It can really be an interesting course for some corps members.

**The NYSC SAED cosmetology:** The SAED works had in hand with experts involved in the care of hair and make-up as well as skin care and products. These training may include services such as colouring, extensions, and straightening, interested corps members can learn useful skills in improving and perfecting the hair style of clients. With the new knowledge the corps

members they can make a business out of styling hair for wedding, proms, and other special events in addition to routine hair styling.

**The NYSC SAED culture and tourism:** the culture and tourism section is interested in educating students on how to make a business from culture and tourism. Culture and tourism happens to be placing importance on the art works, relics and attractive centres of a community that raise the interest of tourist. A good knowledge of the business is vital if a person wants to embark on it.

**NYSC SAED education:** in the education sector, organizations involved usually are into educating corp members who have a passion for education in seeing the various opportunities in the education sector and how to make a business out of it.

**The NYSC SAED environment:** In the environment section a lot of teachings on the dangers facing the environment are highlighted and training on environmentally ecology and economics are taught which is vital for most business today.

**The NYSC SAED film and photograph:** In the film and photography section the organization involved are usually into teaching corps members how to operate video cameras and photo cameras. To be able to produce excellent film and videos requires an art that need to be acquired and that is what these bodies are interested in teaching corps members.

**The NYSC SAED food processing/preservation:** This section cover technologies, involve in food processing and preservation. Corp members interested in this are taught by organization on the modern technologies and ways to use them in food processing and preservation and how to make a business out of it.

**The NYSC SAED ICT:** In ICT sector you can find organizations that are ready to give out knowledge on computer skills to students. Some of these skills would include skills on Microsoft office, web design, graphic design, program management and any other related skills.

**The NYSC SAED power and energy:** In this section you can find organizations that can teach Corp members one certain ways to generated power and energy. The training include training mostly on how to build solar power, knowledge on this can be a big source of revenue for corps members when taken seriously.

The department that anchors the NYSC SAED Programme is headed by a Director and it is made up of two divisions namely: Skills Acquisition Division and Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Division and perform the following functions: Sensitize and mobilize 200,000 young graduates for skill acquisition annually; facilitate the training and mentoring of 100,000 young graduates in skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development for self-reliance annually; promote public-private partnership for entrepreneurship development, self-reliance among Nigerian youths; promote documentation and sharing of best practices on youth empowerment in Nigeria; support evidence-driven advocacy effort for favourable policies on youth empowerment in Nigeria; sensitization and mobilization of Corp members for enrolment into the skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development program; development of a standard curriculum for the in-camp skill acquisition exercise; identification of organizations at state level to provide training and mentoring in specific skills sets. Other functions include: Attachment of the corps members to the various organizations for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development; monitoring and supervision of trainee corps members; and facilitate access to available funding opportunities.

### Statement of Problem

The responsibility of the government and other stakeholders to constantly identify and address the needs and problems of the youth with full participation of the youth themselves

through the establishment of the NYSC for decades could not address some perennial problems such as unemployment, low productivity and slow rate of economic development. This is due to the seemingly lack of skills and entrepreneurial spirit among youths, especially graduates of Nigeria's ivory tower and other tertiary institutions. Youths need to be mobilized, engaged, enlightened, sensitised, reoriented, trained and involved. In spite of attempts by successive regimes to improve their lot, the condition of the Nigerian youths still leaves a lot to be desired. This may not be unconnected with skill gap among graduates.

Lack of capacity building programmes for youths over the years has not been effective. Thus the introduction and inauguration of the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) into the NYSC scheme was greeted with high expectations by Nigerians. However, despite the self-reliance motive of SAED, unemployment remains a major threat to the society leaving people to ponder about the responsiveness of this programme in addressing high rate of youths' unemployment, among other ills. Moreover, entrepreneurial initiatives require finance. What collaborative efforts in financing youths who desire to venture into business has equally remained an issue begging for answer. The continued and steady rise in youths' unemployment, low productivity of the Nigeria's economy, among others; despite innovative programme of NYSC such as SAED constitute a problem for this study. Therefore, this work intends to find out innovative strategies by NYSC in enhancing the productivity of corps members in Cross River State.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Determine the influence of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.
2. Determine the influence of NYSC partnership with stakeholders on the productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.
3. Determine the influence of Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.
4. Determine the influence of culture of community on national integration among Corps members in Cross River State.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent is the influence of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State?
2. To what extent is the influence of NYSC partnership with stakeholders on the productivity of Corps members in Cross River State?
3. To what is the influence of Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State?
4. To what extent is the influence of culture of a community on national integration among Corps members in Cross River State?

### Research Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>:** *Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC has no significant influence on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.*
- H<sub>2</sub>:** *NYSC partnership with stakeholders has no significant influence on the productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.*
- H<sub>3</sub>:** *Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) by NYSC has no significant influence on productivity of Corps members in Cross River State.*
- H<sub>4</sub>:** *Culture of community of deployment of Corps members in Cross River State has no significant influence on national integration among Corps members.*

### RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted the survey research design. The choice of survey design is to enable the researcher adopt survey instrument in generating data for the study. More so, the descriptive survey was used. The method used in any research is determined by the nature of the research problem and purpose of the study; the use of descriptive method is regarded as logically sound and adequate for getting solution to the problem posed by the study. Therefore, the research design adopted for this study is descriptive research design. Descriptive research design refers to the identification and measurement of some characteristics of a population or phenomenon under study. According to Azuka (2011) descriptive research is a type of research that is primarily concerned with describing the nature or conditions and degree in detail of the present situation. The key word or statement is present situation and the emphasis is on “*describe*” rather than on “*judge or interpret*”. A descriptive study entails the systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of a particular situation. Descriptive research design is fact-finding in nature. It focuses on selective dimensions of a phenomenon and measures them in a systematic and precise manner. In descriptive research design, the research is involved in ex post study, that is, the researcher reports only what has happened or is happening without control over the variables. All over the literature on research methods, descriptive studies employ a number of methods including case studies, sample survey, census and aerial survey.

This study was carried out in Cross River State. Cross River State is located in the southerly part of Nigeria. It is bordered by Atlantic Ocean, Benue State, The Peoples’ Republic of Cameroun and Akwa Ibom State in the South, North, East and West respectively. Cross River has experienced structuring; first as a part of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria; second South-Eastern State; former Cross River State (with the present Akwa Ibom State); and the present Cross River State. The choice of Cross River State is premised on the need to determine how Corps members are integrated into the culture of Cross River State regarded as one of the best in the country. Again, in recent times, the state has shown resilience in development.

The population of this study is 5392 Corps members for batches A and B currently serving in Cross River State of Nigeria. Batch A is 3, 181 and Batch B 2, 211. The multi-stage sampling technique will be used to select the sample size for this study based on Morgan and Krejcie (1970) Table of sampling determination. The sample size for this study is 357 using Morgan and Krejcie (1970) Table of sampling determination. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) came up with a table using sample size formula for finite population.

The researcher developed two set of structured questionnaire and administered on the respondents (corps members). The use of structured questionnaire enables the researcher to seek the opinion of the corps members how innovative programmes of NYSC influence their productivity. The two set of questionnaires are: Questionnaire on NYSC Innovative Programmes (QNYSCIP) with 20 items; and Questionnaire on Productivity of Corps members (QCMP) with five items. Both questionnaires were rated with a four point scale showing the nature of influence of NYSC innovative programmes on the productivity of corps members. The statements were positive statements.

A total of 357 copies of the questionnaire was administered and retrieved from the participants. This was represented by a response rate of 100%. Materials from the libraries and other research units, which included books, journals, unpublished projects, handbills, submission in the internet were used as secondary sources of data collection. This was employed essentially to provide a theoretical framework for the study. Both private and public libraries were used in developing the literature. Research questionnaire carefully selected were given to respondents for this study. In order to avoid delay and, at the same time, ensure high percentage return of

questionnaire, they were distributed by hand and collected after respondents duly completed them. The instruments used for this study were validated by three experts.

The reliability coefficients of the two set of questionnaires were obtained using Cronbach Alpha Reliability analysis. This was achieved by sampling 40 copies of the questionnaire and administering it on those who were not part of the main study. Summary responses were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability technique and produced a reliability coefficient of .73 and .71. These indices were deemed high enough to reliably assess the respondents.

Item-by-item analysis was used to answer the research questions. On the other hand, the Dependent t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses. The choice of Dependent t-test was premised on the fact that the same respondents responded to two set of questionnaires which disqualified the use of Independent t-test. When the calculated value is greater than the Table Value, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis based on degree of freedom equals 355 and a Tabulated t-value of 1.98 in a two tailed hypothesis.

## RESULTS

### Research Questions one

To what extent is the influence of Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme of NYSC on productivity of corps members in Cross River State? Summary data produced is presented in Table 1.

S/N		Weighted means	Remark
1.	Influence of skills on personal development	1.98	Low Influence
2.	Influence of skills on business establishment	2.30	High Influence
3.	Influence of skills for occupational choice	1.60	Very low Influence
4.	Influence of skill on social living	1.60	Very low Influence
5.	Influence of skill on financial materials	2.5	High Influence
	Total	9.98	High Influence
	Average	2.50	High Influence

The result presented on Table 1 shows that the skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development has high influence on the productivity of corps members. This is the revelation from the weighted mean average of 2.5 in a four - point scale ration with a sample size of 337. Further analysis for the measure of productivity of corps member show a low productivity of 2.0 weighted average.

### Research Question two

To what extent is the influence NYSC Partnership with stakeholders of the productivity of corps members?

Summary of result of presented in Table 2.

S/N		Weighted means	Remark
6.	Influence of partnership with financial institution	2.56	High Influence

7.	Influence of partnership with training experts	3.25	Very high influence
8	Influence of partnership with NGOs	1.36	Very low influence
9.	Influence of partnership with government agencies	2.70	High influence
10	Influence of partnership with local community	1.50	Very low influence
	Total	11.37	
	Average	2.84	High Influence

The result presented in Table 2 shows that NYSC partnership with stakeholders has high influence on corps members' productivity. This is based on the weighted mean of 2.84. Furthermore, analysis shows that the corps members' productivity was low with a weight means of 2.0.

### Research Question Three

To what extent is the influence of Graduate Empowerment Funds (GEF) in productivity of corps members?

Summary of result is shown in Table 3.

S/N		Means	Remark
11.	Influence of GEF on fund raise	1.62	Very low influence
12.	Influence of GEF on entrepreneurship	1.50	Very low influence
13	Influence of GEF on business establishment	1.50	Very low influence
14	Influence of GEF on fund management	1.80	Low influence
15	Influence on accessing of funds	2.0	Low influence
	Total	8.42	
	Average	2.10	Low Influence

The result presented in Table 3 shows that graduate. Empowerment has low influence on corps member productivity. The weighted average from a four-point scale rating was 2.10 and a low productivity with a weighted mean of 2.0.

### Research Question Four

What is the nature of influence of culture of community on national integration among corps members in terms of their productivity?

Summary of results presented in Table 4.

S/N		Weighted means	Remark
16.	Influence of cultural plays or dance	1.70	Very low influence
17.	Influence of cultural competition by community	1.90	low influence
18	Influence of skills displayed during cultural event	2.10	low influence
19.	Influence of food type	2.2	low influence
20	Influence of social values	2.5	High influence



Total	10.40	
Average	2.60	High influence
Corps members productivity	2.00	Low

The results presented in Table 4 shows that cultural aspect of national integration has a high influence on productivity of corps members.

### Hypothesis One

Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC has no significant influence on productivity of corps members.

Summary of data is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 DEPENDENT T-TEST OF NO SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE OF SKILLS ACQUISITION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (SAED) PROGRAMME OF NYSC ON PRODUCTIVITY OF CORPS MEMBERS				
Variable	$\frac{x^1}{x^2}$	$\sum d$	$\sum d^2$	t-cal
SAED-NYSC	2.50			
		0.86	0.3456	1.46
Corps members productivity	2.0			
N=357; df=356; significant level=0.05 critical f=1.98				

The finding presented in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.46 is less than the critical t-value of 1.46 at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom equals, 356. Based on this finding, null hypothesis one is accepted.

### Hypothesis Two

NYSC Partnership with stakeholder has no significant influence on productivity of corps members.

Summary data is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 DEPENDENT T-TEST OF NO SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE OF NYSC PARTNERSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON PRODUCTIVITY OF CORPS MEMBERS				
Variable	$\frac{x^1}{x^2}$	$\sum d$	$\sum d^2$	t-cal
NYSC Partnership	2.84			
		3.65	3.0257	2.07
Corps members productivity	2.0			
N=357; df=356; significant level=0.05 critical f=1.98				

The result presented in Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.07 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98. Based on this revelation, the null hypothesis, "NYSC partnership with stakeholders has no significant influence on corps member's productivity is rejected". The alternate hypothesis as therefore stated thus, "NYSC partnership with stakeholders has significant influence on the productivity of corps members".

### Hypothesis Three

Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) by NYSC has no significant influence on productivity of corps members.

Summary data is shown in Table 7.

Variable	$\bar{x}^1 \bar{x}^2$	$\sum d$	$\sum d^2$	t-cal
Graduate Empowerment Fund	2.10			
		1.58	2.36	1.26
Corps members productivity	2.0			
N=357; df=356; significant level=0.05 critical f=1.98				

The result presented in Table 7 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.26 is less than the critical t-value of 1.98 at .05 levels of significance and df=356. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) has significant influence on corps member's productivity of corps members.

#### Hypothesis Four

Culture of community of deployment of Corps members in Cross River State has no significant influence on national integration among Corps members

Summary data is shown in Table 8.

Variable	$\bar{x}^1 \bar{x}^2$	$\sum d$	$\sum d^2$	t-cal
Culture	2.60			
		1.20	0.40	1.09
Corps members productivity	2.0			
N=357; df=356; significant level=0.05 critical f=1.98				

The finding from test of hypothesis four reveals that calculated t-value of 1.09 is less than the critical t-value of 1.98 at .05 levels of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is retained.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. NYSC skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development has high influence on productivity of corps members. Further analysis for the measure of productivity of corps member shows a low productivity.
2. NYSC Partnership with stakeholders has a high influence on the productivity of corps members. Further analysis for the measure of productivity of corps member shows a low productivity.
3. NYSC Graduate Empowerment Funds (GEF) has low influence on productivity of corps members. Further analysis for the measure of productivity of corps member shows a low productivity.
4. Culture of community for national integration has high influence on productivity of corps members. Further analysis for the measure of productivity of corps member shows a low productivity.
5. Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC has no significant influence on productivity of corps members.
6. NYSC Partnership with stakeholder has significant influence on productivity of corps members.
7. Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) has no significant influence on corps member's productivity of corps members.
8. Culture of community of deployment of corps members on national integration has no significant influence on

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the test of hypotheses one, three and four show that there is no significant influence of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC, Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) and culture on the productivity of corps members. On the other hand, test of null hypothesis two reveals that there is significant influence of NYSC Partnership with stakeholders on the productivity of corps members. The outcome of no significant influence in skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (SAED) programme of NYSC, Graduate Empowerment Fund (GEF) and culture must have been as a result of the corps members not fully committed to those innovative programmes.

Meanwhile, Obadare (2005) conducted a study, which examines the service -citizenship nexus in Nigeria using the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme as empirical backdrop. In the relevant sociological and service literature, the assumption that service is antecedent to, and necessarily impacts positively on citizenship is a virtual axiom. However, tentative conclusions from this study provide a basis for rethinking this wisdom. Using data from open-ended interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, the research traces the ways in which political dynamics in the country (Nigeria) have affected the implementation of the NYSC programme. The research concludes by articulating the conception of and prior allegiance to community as essential for the creation and nurturing of actual citizenship, and the performance of service respectively. The observed conceptual complex is a mixed one.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions are drawn: skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programme, NYSC partnership with stakeholders, NYSC Graduates Empowerment Fund and cultural integration despite their importance have not been effectively and adequately provided for corps members, hence the productivity of corps members is low. It is also concluded that the sustainability of the National Youths Service Corps Scheme can be enhanced with these innovative programmes.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. The entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programme of NYSC should be made more functional by providing adequate training, using entrepreneurs with sound reputation and achievement;
2. NYSC authority should make wider contacts to attract more partners
3. Funds should be made available to NYSC at their place of deployment to enable them show commitment in same community, where the productivity of the corps members can be assessed
4. Community leaders should be drafted into the decision making process of NYSC to give both community and corps members the confidence for cultural integration.

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