



## National Youth Service Corps and the Problem of National Integration, 1973-2023

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### ABSTRACT

*This study will investigate and discuss the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and national integration with a view to capturing the challenges facing the scheme as an instrument of national integration, and to find out whether the scheme is still relevant to the purpose for which it was established. The Federal Military Government under General Yakubu Gowon, through Decree No. 24 of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1973, established the National Youth Service Corps with a view to reconciling, reconstructing and rebuilding the nation after it was ravaged by the Nigeria–Biafra war. The study will be conducted in five Local Governments in Anambra and Enugu States. Descriptive survey design methodology will be used in this study. Structured and validated questionnaire titled “Is the National Youth Service Corps still relevant as an instrument of national integration will be administered to randomly selected civil servants. The Statistical Model of Impact Measuring, a combination of multivariate regression methods and statistical inference would be used in analysing data generated from the study. The findings of the study will be generalized to the entire Nigeria. The findings will be very useful to policy makers on how best to streamline the activities of the National Youth Service Corps to ensure it is actually serving the purpose for which it was established. The paper recommends that, government should be ready to provide corps members with jobs after the mandatory one year service. This will truly define the purpose for which the scheme was established.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Youths, National integration, Nigeria–Biafra war, National Youth Service Corps.

### Introduction

The Nigeria–Biafra war of 1967–1970 created a serious dichotomy between Nigeria and Biafra people who were hitherto living together under the name of one Nigeria. The first military coup which was viewed by the northerners as masterminded by the Igbo was the beginning of distrust between the people of Nigeria who were living together as one people. It was the first coup of January 1966, followed by a counter coup of July, 1966 that finally precipitated into a thirty month (30) war apparently occasioned by personal differences between the duo of General Yakubu Gowon who took over as the head of state of Nigeria after the counter coup and Col. Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu who insisted that Gowon was not the rightful person to be at the helm of affairs in all fairness, according to military rank and files. This led to the declaration of the Sovereign State of Biafra by Col. Ojukwu on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1967, after Gowon announced the creation of 12 states from the four regions that made up the Nigeria state on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1967 (T. Falola et al, 1991). In his response to Ojukwu’s declaration of the sovereign State of Biafra, Gowon declared full blown war on Biafra on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1967.

The war which lasted for almost three years created fear among the different ethnic groups of Nigeria. In a bid to allay the fears orchestrated by the war, the Federal Military Government led by General Gowon, at the end of the war made decree no. 24 on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1973, which announced the establishment of the National Youth’s Service Corps (NYSC). The aim was to allay the fears of Nigerians who were afraid to go, live and work in other parts of the country other than theirs, (Anyaele, 2003), and as well encourage labour mobility in the country, foster common ties among Nigerian youths and thus promote national unity and integration.

Over the years, the federal government of Nigeria made it mandatory for Nigerian graduates to go for a mandatory one year national service in states and regions other than theirs. Thus, there was exchange of graduates from one tribe/ethnic group to the other and from one region to the other to serve their fatherland and in so doing attest to the fact that the country is safe for all to live and work, thereby proving the point that Nigeria is really one. From that very point, there was reduction in fears from Nigerians that the people were really getting over the effects of the war. This equally paved the way for trade relations

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between the different regions and tribes/ethnic groups that finally integrated Nigeria into one full entity where people could go about their normal businesses without fear of the unknown.

It does appear that since the purpose of the NYSC has been achieved, that the scheme is no longer to be sustained since people can travel to any part of the country at their beck and call. Some people are of the opinion that the programme be scrapped since the federal government has no more genuine interest for them as a result of incessant attacks, killing, raping of the corps members by terrorists, bandits, hoodlums without the government doing much to rescue or abate the ugly trend, coupled with the fact that after the mandatory one year service, the corps members were left to roam the streets in search of non-existing jobs after wasting the whole year serving their fatherland. It is expected that after serving ones fatherland, the land is supposed to provide for the person as a reward for his or her services. It is on this premise that this paper seeks to re-appraise the National Youth Service Corps as an instrument for national integration.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established as an instrument for national integration with a view to allaying the fears that arose from the 30 months war between Nigeria and Biafra. The youths who are mandatorily graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions and those who graduated from abroad are expected to serve their fatherland in that capacity as corps members. They are expected to be posted to their work place commonly referred to as of Place of Primary Assignment (PPA) where they are to showcase their expertise as graduates in different fields of study. Their placement covers every aspect of the Nigerian public and private sectors, ranging from schools, hospitals, banks, companies, factories to mention but a few.

Despite the fact that the scheme is popular in Nigeria especially among the Nigerian graduates, and also, the fact that corps members have now being incorporated as ad-hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the purposes of conducting elections in Nigeria, evidence show that not much has being put in print about the scheme and especially, the challenges it is facing as an instrument for national integration. In the few works available on the scheme, the challenges of the scheme as an instrument for national integration were not given adequate attention; rather they served as a pointer to other issues such as NYSC and the conduct of election in Nigeria. In a bid to understand what challenges the NYSC is facing as an instrument for national integration, it becomes imperative to look at the scheme and the youths and indeed whether it should be adjusted, re-organized or be scrapped outrightly.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The research is intended to investigate the challenges facing the national youth service corps as an instrument for national integration. The main aim is to ascertain whether the scheme is still serving the purpose for which it was established, which national integration is. In specific terms, the research is aimed at;

- Finding out the major challenges facing the scheme as an instrument for national integration;
- Ascertaining whether there is need to continue with the scheme or have it scrapped.

### ***Project Impact***

The achievements of this project will be impactful in many ways. In the first instance, when the work is completed, it will close the gap created by the lack of information on this study area, especially in the aspect of lack of printed material on the NYSC as a popular project in Nigeria. Again it will become an additional source of resource materials for researchers especially for those working on national integration. Furthermore, it will help the policy makers and policy implementers to know when policies are no longer working, useful or needed. It will also serve as a guide for the federal government to know when a scheme has outlived its usefulness, is under-performing or when its mandates have lost touch with the realities of life. Finally, when the work is achieved, it will help know whether the scheme is still useful as an instrument of national integration.

### ***Research Questions***

1. What are the major challenges facing the scheme as an instrument of national integration?
2. Should the federal government continue with the NYSC scheme or have it scrapped?

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## **Literature Review**

Related literature to the subject under study as well as to the key concepts of the topic and those that would be derived from them would be reviewed under this section for the purpose of conceptual explanation and clarifications. This will help form some opinions as well as a better understanding of this study.

### **Nigeria**

Nigeria is one of the countries in Africa. It is the most populous country in Africa and is strategically located at the West African sub-region of the African continent. The name Nigeria was derived from the river Niger by Miss Flora Shaw who later became the wife of lord Lugard. In 1960, Nigeria gained her independence from the British, under a British supervised parliamentary system of government whereby there is a president and a prime minister.

The President who was the Queen of England was represented by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, while the Prime Minister was Alhaji Tafawa Balewa (Ojiakor, 2001).

In 1966, Nigeria witnessed the first military coup which later metamorphosed into a 30 months war between Nigeria and the secessionist Biafra. On July 1966, there was a counter coup which overthrew the first military regime. Gowon was later to assume office as the military head of state which did not go down well with Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu who never recognised Gowon as Head of State of Nigeria because of obvious reason that Gowon was not the highest in rank according to military rank and file. This personal clash between General Gowon and Col. Ojukwu later precipitated into a thirty month war which had catastrophic effects on the Nigeria state (Anyaele, 2003). After the war ended in 1970, there were fears that people could no longer live and work in any other region other than theirs as a result of the consequences of the war. This fear led to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps as an instrument to foster national integration by allowing graduates live and work in regions and states other than theirs. Thus, the Nigeria state is the centre for this study because she is the originator of this theme of study.

### **Youth**

Youth is a [period](#) in [life](#) when one is [young](#) or the [state](#) of being [young](#). However, the United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years (United Nations, 1981). This definition was without prejudice to member states definition of youth. In Nigeria youths are regarded as young men and women between the Ages of fifteen (15) to forty (40). In this study youths will be regarded as graduates of different higher institutions both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria below the age of 30 years since it is only graduates who are 30 years old and below that are allowed to participate in the scheme. The youths who graduated from different institutions are mobilized and posted to regions and states which are different from their states of origin so as to cross-fertilize relationships, ideas and foster unity and national integration.

When these youths are posted to the different orientation camps in their various states of deployment, they are expected to live, work and relate peacefully with their host states and communities after the three weeks orientation at the camp. This will enable them make impact in their place of primary assignment and attest to the peaceful co-existence of the Nigeria people irrespective of tribe, state and region. From the foregoing, it is clear that it was the youths that were used as an acid-test for national integration after the devastating effects of the Nigeria-Biafra war of 1967-1970.

### **National Integration**

National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions, and regions and speak different languages, we recognize that we are all one. National integration fosters nationalism. It is the creation of feeling of oneness where the diversities are recognized and respected by imbuing a sense of nationhood. National integration is the awareness of a common identity among the citizens of a country (Ezeobi, Mbachu and Chukwuji, 2019). According to Onwuasoanya (2014), National integration is referred to as the process of creating awareness of a single identity by which people from different socio-economic, political, religious and cultural groups are being identified for the purpose of achieving a national goal. National integration according to Kaur refers to a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties (Kaur, 2013). For national integration to occur in a nation, a significant number of citizens must develop identification with the nation that supersedes identification with ethnic, cultural or religious groups, acquire political awareness, share common norms and values and develop attitudes favourable to the display of integrative behaviour among people of different groups.

### **Efforts towards Promoting National Integration and Unity in Nigeria**

There are various efforts of the government towards promoting National integration and unity.

- Introduction of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was a step towards achieving national unity and integration. The essence of this scheme was to correct the biases already harboured by some ethnic groups against other ethnic groups. The recitation of the National Pledge, the singing of the National Anthem and hoisting of the National Flag by the Nigerian government are equally progressive steps towards ensuring national integration and unity. Our National Symbols like the National Flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem also help to remind us that we all have one identity. For this reason we stress on the importance of showing proper respect to these symbols. These acts as strong unifying forces both in times of celebration and adversity.
- Other forces like the communication system and the mass media help in the exposure to all the cultures of different regions of the country, thus, bringing the whole country together as one nation. The settings up of some projects such as the National Television Authority, Nigeria Airways etc. are all efforts to install national integration and unity by the Nigerian government. Quota system or the Federal Character was established by the Nigerian government to facilitate appointment distribution through the commission known as the Federal Character Commission. By this, Federal appointments are to be justified in such a way that no part of the federation feels cheated.
- Introduction of Unity Schools (Federal Government Colleges) in all states of the federation and ensuring that students from different ethnic groups are brought together in each school and groomed together to see common values in their love for one another, their school and their community and the nation as a whole.

### **Nigeria-Biafra war**

The Nigeria-Biafra war is a term used to denote the conflict that took place between Nigeria and Biafra from 1967-1970. The Nigerian-Biafra War (6 July 1967–15 January 1970), was a war fought between the government of Nigeria and the state of Biafra. Biafra represented nationalist aspirations of the Biafra people, whose leadership felt they could no longer co-exist with the Northern-dominated federal government. The conflict resulted from

political, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which preceded Britain's formal decolonization of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963. Immediate causes of the war in 1966 included ethno-religious riots in Northern Nigeria, a military coup, counter-coup and persecution of the Igbo living in Northern Nigeria. Control over the lucrative oil production in the Niger Delta played a vital strategic role. The end of the war saw the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps as an instrument to foster national integration after the negative effects of the war.

### **National Youth Service Corps**

The ethnic and regional politics that created a hostile socio-political atmosphere within a decade after the independence of Nigeria served as a major factor that led to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973, through Decree No. 24 under the administration of General Yakubu Gowon. This divisive atmosphere was birthed in the course of colonial rule and groomed by nationalists after independence. Within the first decade of political independence, there was a power tussle for the control of Nigeria's economic resources which exacerbated problems of national integration. The political upheaval that ensued in the regions aroused tension among the people. On January 15, 1966, a coup was staged in an attempt to save the country from political disintegration. A few months after this successful coup, widespread suspicion of the Igbo provoked the Northerners and the Yoruba into a joint counterattack. This attack on the Igbo people caused them to form their own state called the Republic of Biafra. These events culminated in the Nigeria-Biafra war.

At the end of the war, it was realized that ethnic and regional politics were salient in Nigeria's disintegration. Steps were therefore taken to promote national integration in both policymaking and implementation. This effort gave birth to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973 as an instrument to promote peaceful co-existence among all ethnic groups in Nigeria. The choice of youth for the programme was based on the fact that they are considered as agents of change and also the backbone of every society. A way of achieving this was for the youths to imbibe and nurture a sense of common belonging and national consciousness which would transcend political, social, state and ethnic loyalties. The programme aims to enhance reconciliation and restructuring of intergroup relationships between and among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria and also to create common ties among the Nigerian youths.

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### **Objectives of the Scheme**

To build a pragmatic organisation that is committed to its set objectives with the ultimate goal of producing future leaders with a positive national ethos. Leadership that is vibrant, proud and committed to the unity and even development of the Nigeria State.

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To be at the forefront of National development efforts, as well as serving as a profitable platform for imparting in our youths values of nationalism, patriotism, loyalty and accountable leadership.

To raise the moral tone of our youths by giving them the opportunity to learn about high ideals of national achievement, social and cultural improvement.

To develop an attitude of mind acquired through shared experience, and suitable training would make them more amenable to mobilisation in the national interest. Nigerian youths would acquire the spirit of self-reliance, a reliable source of economic empowerment and effective participation in nation building; to develop an organisation that live to its responsibilities and responsive to the needs of the country. (NYSC Inspectors Manual, 1998).

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### **Methodology**

This study adopted the Descriptive Survey design. According to Osuala (2005) survey design is appropriate for studies dealing with people's opinions, beliefs, attitude, motivation and behaviour. The study would be conducted in three Local Governments in Anambra and two Local Governments in Enugu state. The population comprises of civil servants and corps members in the five Local Governments under study in Anambra and Enugu States.

For the purpose of research questions, this study collected data from two sources. First source involved a semi-structured interview and a group of selected civil servants at ten (10) persons from each of the selected local governments. A semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of the questions or subjects that the interviewer must examine, served as the foundation for the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allowed for more methodical and thorough investigation of a large number of respondents while still maintaining the interviewer's emphasis on the intended course of action.

The other instrument constituted of structured questionnaire, which was administered to civil servants with the help of research assistants. They were briefed on the administration procedure. A validated questionnaire titled "Is the National Youth Service Corps still relevant as an instrument for national integration?" designed by the researcher and constructed in a 4-point Linkert scale format was also administered. The reliability of the questionnaires was also established before use. The Statistical Model of Impact Measuring, a combination of multivariate regression methods and statistical inferences was used in analysing data generated from the study. Data analysis was carried out on MS Excel SPSS 17.

**Population of the Study**

S/N	Name of Local Government	Number of Civil Servants	Number of Corps Members
1	Njikoka Local Government, Anambra State	180	400
2	Dunukofia Local Government, Anambra State	180	400
3	Awka South Local Government, Anambra state	180	400
4	Enugu North Local Government, Enugu State	180	400
5	Enugu South Local Government, Enugu State	180	400
<b>Total</b>		<b>900</b>	<b>2000</b>

The population for the study is 2000 which is too large; hence Taro Yanne (1964) was used to obtain the sample size. Yanne's statistical formula for finite sample size determination is as follows:

**Civil Servants**

$$n = \frac{900}{1 + (900) \times (0.05)^2} = \frac{900}{1 + 900 \times 0.0025} = \frac{900}{1 + 2.25} = \frac{900}{3.25} = 277$$

**Corps Members**

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + (2000) \times (0.05)^2} = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000 \times 0.0025} = \frac{2000}{1 + 5} = \frac{2000}{6} = 333$$

A sample of 277 civil servants and 333 totalling 610 was sampled from the three Local Governments in Anambra state and two Local Governments in Enugu state. A developed questionnaire was used for the study. The items on the questionnaire were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Copies of the questionnaire titled "Is the National Youth Service Corps still relevant as an instrument for national integration?" were validated by 3 experts in Measurement and Evaluation and the questionnaires were distributed to the respondent with the help of 3 research assistants. The entire 610 questionnaires were timely completed and used for the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to obtain and consider the internal consistency of the items, with an overall co-efficient of **0.81**. The research questions were answered using mean, while T-test was used for hypothesis with the use of a Statistical Model of Impact Measuring, a combination of multivariate regression methods and statistical inference was used in analysing data generated from the study. Data analysis was carried out on SPSS 17. Only items with mean ratings of 2.50 and above were accepted as measures to understand and ascertain whether the National Youth Service Corps is still relevant as an instrument for national integration.

**Findings****Research Question 1: What are the major challenges facing the NYSC scheme as an instrument of national integration?**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	SD	Decision
1	Insecurity in certain regions discourages effective deployment and integration.	40	40	5	5	100	2.95	1.24	Accepted
2	Rejection of corps members by employers during the one year programme impacts the experience of corps members on national integration.	70	10	20	0	100	3.50	0.81	Accepted
3	Poor infrastructure at orientation camps impacts the experience of corps members.	53	41	2	4	100	3.43	0.73	Accepted
4	The posting process often ignores corps members' fields of study, affecting their skill development.	46	33	7	14	100	3.11	1.04	Accepted

5	Ethnic and cultural biases create challenges in achieving the integration goals of NYSC.	10	30	10	50	100	2.00	1.09	Rejected
6	Corps members face challenges with accommodation and basic amenities in their assigned locations.	49	30	20	1	100	3.27	0.81	Accepted
7	Lack of employment for corps members after one year of service to the fatherland.	30	27	40	3	100	2.84	0.16	Accepted
8	Political interference and corruption reduce the impact of the NYSC scheme.	37	40	11	13	100	3.03	1.22	Accepted
9	The NYSC scheme lacks sufficient training on national unity and integration.	36	0	102	40	100	1.78	0.84	Rejected
10	The NYSC scheme fails to adequately prepare corps members for the job market.	39	47	10	4	100	3.21	0.78	Accepted

**Key:  $\bar{X}$  Mean Standard (Standard Deviation)**

From the above analysis in table 1, it was revealed that all item from 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 and 10 were accepted with the mean score of 2.95, 3.50, 3.43, 3.11, 3.27, 2.84, 3.03 and 3.21 respectively while items 5 and 9 were rejected with the mean scores of 2.00 and 1.78. This implies that the respondents are in agreement that the major challenges facing the NYSC scheme as an instrument for national integration includes that: insecurity in certain regions discourages effective deployment and integration, rejection of corps members by employers during the one year programme impacts the experience of corps members on national integration, poor infrastructure at orientation camps impacts the experience of corps members, the posting process often ignores corps members' fields of study, affecting their skill development, corps members face challenges with accommodation and basic amenities in their assigned locations, lack of employment for corps members after one year of service to the fatherland, political interference and corruption reduce the impact of the NYSC scheme and finally, the NYSC scheme fails to adequately prepare corps members for the job market.

The above analysis show that the NYSC is facing serious challenges and until these challenges are addressed, the desire to achieve national integration through the National Youth Service Corps will be a mirage.

**Research Question 2: Should the Federal Government continue with the NYSC scheme or get it scrapped?**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	S.D	Decision
11	The NYSC scheme is essential for fostering national unity in Nigeria.	33	45	8	14	100	2.97	0.98	Accepted
12	The NYSC scheme should continue because it provides graduates with valuable work experience.	50	50	0	0	100	3.5	0.5	Accepted
13	The NYSC scheme should be scrapped due to security risks in certain areas.	41	29	23	7	100	3.04	0.96	Accepted
14	NYSC helps participants build relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds.	39	43	8	10	100	3.11	0.93	Accepted
15	The scheme is outdated and should be replaced with more relevant youth programs.	4	91	3	2	100	2.00	0.39	Rejected
16	The Federal Government should improve the NYSC scheme rather than scrapping it.	20	40	30	10	100	2.70	0.9	Accepted
17	The NYSC scheme has contributed significantly to addressing unemployment.	33	23	13	31	100	2.58	1.45	Accepted
18	Scrapping the NYSC scheme would negatively impact national unity efforts.	40	50	0	10	100	3.20	0.87	Accepted
19	The scheme is effective in teaching corps members about different cultures and regions.	19	73	8	0	100	3.11	0.51	Accepted

20	There are more effective ways than the NYSC to achieve the goals of national integration.	33	45	20	2	100	1.78	0.77	Rejected
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**Key:  $\bar{X}$  Mean Standard (Standard Deviation)**

From table 2 above, it was discovered that all the items from 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 were accepted with the mean scores of 2.97, 3.5, 3.04, 3.11, 2.70, 2.58, 3.20, and 3.11 respectively. While items 15 and 20 were rejected with the mean scores of 2.00 and 1.78. This implies that the respondents agreed that the NYSC scheme should not be scrapped because: the NYSC scheme is essential for fostering national unity in Nigeria, it provides youth with valuable work experience, it helps participants build relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds, the Federal Government should improve the NYSC scheme rather than scrapping it, the NYSC scheme has contributed significantly to addressing unemployment, scrapping the NYSC scheme would negatively impact national unity efforts, the scheme is effective in teaching corps members about different cultures and regions.

From the observations above, we can infer that the respondents were of the view that the NYSC scheme should not be scrapped. They based their argument on the fact that the scheme is effective in improving relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds, providing the youths cum graduates with valuable work experience and teaching corps members about different cultures and regions.

## Discussion

On the major challenges facing the NYSC scheme as an instrument for national integration, it was discovered that insecurity in certain regions discourages effective deployment and integration, rejection of corps members by employers during the one year programme impacts the experience of corps members on national integration, poor infrastructure at orientation camps impacts the experience of corps members, the posting process often ignores corps members' fields of study, affecting their skill development, corps members face challenges with accommodation and basic amenities in their assigned locations, lack of employment for corps members after one year of service to the fatherland, political interference and corruption reduce the impact of the NYSC scheme and finally, the NYSC scheme fails to adequately prepare corps members for the job market. These findings were in line with the discovering of Adewale (2021), who observes that one of the most critical challenges undermining the NYSC's goals is insecurity. Corps members are often posted to areas far from their homes, including regions experiencing ethnic violence, insurgency, banditry and kidnappings. For instance, the rising insecurity in Nigeria's northern states has made corps members hesitant to serve in these areas, fearing for their lives. Many corps members lost their lives during their service year.

Also Olawale & Nwachukwu, (2022) corroborated this view that many corps members were either abducted, killed or missing as a result of insecurity especially in the northern part of Nigeria. Even today insecurity is no more exclusive to the north, but every region of Nigeria is replete with insecurity. Poor funding leads to poorly maintained orientation camps, inadequate facilities, and delays in the payment of corps members' allowances. Orientation camps across the country often lack essential amenities such as potable water, electricity, and proper medical care, creating an unpleasant experience for participants.

On whether the NYSC scheme should be scrapped, majority of the respondents agreed that it should not be scrapped. According to them the NYSC should not be scrapped due to the following reasons: the NYSC scheme is essential for fostering national unity in Nigeria, it provides youth with valuable work experience, it helps participants build relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds, the Federal Government should improve the NYSC scheme rather than scrapping it, the NYSC scheme has contributed significantly to addressing unemployment, scrapping the NYSC scheme would negatively impact national unity efforts, the scheme is effective in teaching corps members about different cultures and regions. This is in line with findings of Okafor, (2023) who opined that the NYSC instils a sense of patriotism and national identity among young Nigerians. By serving in unfamiliar regions, participants develop a deeper appreciation of the country's diversity and challenges. This experience often inspires a commitment to national service and a shared sense of responsibility for Nigeria's development. Aliyu, (2022) also discovered that while the NYSC faces challenges such as insecurity and inadequate funding, these issues can be addressed through reforms rather than scrapping the program outrightly. Enhancing security measures, increasing funding for orientation camps, and improving the transparency of deployment processes can resolve many of the scheme's limitations. Reforming the NYSC would ensure it continues to fulfil its objectives while adapting to contemporary realities. Thus, the national youth services corps should be reformed with current realities so as to justify its existence.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions above, the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) should not be scrapped. Although the scheme is faced with significant challenges prominent among them which are insecurity, poor funding and the posting process which often ignores corps members' fields of study, affecting their skill development. Yet the scheme is effective in fostering national unity, providing graduates with valuable work experience and helping participants build relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds. This will go a long way to ensure national unity and integration among Nigerians.

However, there is need to address the challenges mentioned above if the goal of the scheme must be achieved. No country achieves growth, development and national unity amidst insecurity, poor youth and infrastructure development. Government of Nigeria should take the scheme serious, initiating major reforms for effective performance. Provision of accommodations, healthcare scheme and stoppage of employers rejecting posted corps members will help encourage the members to give their best towards national unity and integration.

Finally, government should be ready to provide corps members with jobs after service. It is discouraging serving one's fatherland for one year only to come out and start roaming the streets in search of jobs. This is why some graduates prefer going for hustling instead of participating in the scheme so they would not waste their one year for nothing. For instance, if the NYSC is optional, no graduate would like to be part of it as result of these challenges.

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