



REVIEWING THE NYSC PROGRAMME AMIDST RISING SECURITY CONCERNS: AN ANALYSIS OF KIDNAPPING AND KILLINGS OF CORPS MEMBERS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract: The persistent national debate surrounding the security implications of the National Youth Service Corps programme has attracted growing scholarly, policy, and public attention in recent years. Established in the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War as a strategic instrument for fostering national integration, intercultural understanding, and youth participation in national development, the programme has historically served as one of the most enduring pillars of Nigeria's nation-building architecture. However, the intensifying wave of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts across several regions of Nigeria has raised legitimate concerns regarding the safety of corps members and the long-term sustainability of compulsory national service. Against this backdrop, this study critically examined the NYSC programme amidst rising security concerns with the principal objective of assessing its contemporary relevance, identifying emerging vulnerabilities affecting corps members, and proposing practical institutional reforms capable of strengthening the resilience and credibility of the scheme. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The population of the study covered stakeholders across public sector institutions, academia, political leadership, non-governmental organisations, religious and traditional institutions, youth and women organisations, and civil society advocacy groups. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources including structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, peer-reviewed journal publications, policy documents, security reports, and reputable media analyses. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency distributions and percentages while qualitative evidence was subjected to systematic thematic content analysis. Data processing and statistical evaluation were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analytical framework of the study was anchored on the insights of Social Contract Theory, Structural Functionalism, and the Human Security paradigm, while complementary research strategies such as triangulation, stakeholder analysis, and comparative institutional assessment were employed to enhance analytical rigour. The findings revealed that although the NYSC programme continues to promote national cohesion, youth exposure, and grassroots development, persistent insecurity has weakened public confidence in the scheme and increased the vulnerability of corps members in certain deployment locations. The study therefore recommends security-driven deployment policies, strengthened collaboration with security agencies, improved welfare and insurance protection, technology-supported monitoring systems, stronger community partnerships, and periodic policy reforms to align the programme with contemporary governance realities. Ultimately, the enduring vitality of the NYSC programme lies in its ability to unite young citizens in service to national progress, and with decisive reforms it can continue to inspire unity, responsibility, and collective national advancement.

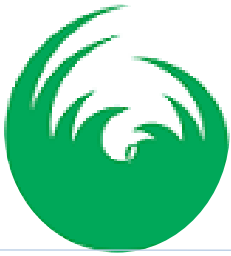
Keywords: Insecurity, Kidnapping, Violence, Vulnerability, Governance, Protection

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Introduction

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme represents one of Nigeria's most enduring nation-building initiatives, designed to promote national unity, inter-ethnic integration and post-civil war reconciliation among young graduates. Established in 1973 in the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war, the scheme was intended to foster mutual understanding among citizens from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds by mandating graduates of tertiary institutions to undertake one year of national service outside their states of origin. Through community development service, educational engagement, rural development and administrative contributions, corps members were expected to serve as agents of national integration and development (Okafor&Johnmary, 2015). However, in recent decades the socio-political environment within which the programme operates has undergone profound transformations, particularly due to the escalation of insecurity across several regions of Nigeria. These developments have increasingly raised fundamental questions about the safety, sustainability and contemporary relevance of the NYSC scheme.

Nigeria's security landscape has deteriorated significantly over the past two decades, characterised by the proliferation of armed banditry, terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, communal conflicts and organised criminal violence. Kidnapping has evolved from a relatively isolated phenomenon in the Niger Delta during the early 2000s into a widespread national security crisis affecting almost every geopolitical zone of the country. Criminal groups exploit weak law enforcement institutions, porous borders, unemployment and rural governance gaps to carry out abductions targeting travellers, students, workers and vulnerable civilians. This pervasive insecurity has inevitably extended to participants in the NYSC programme, many of whom are posted to rural or conflict-prone areas where state security presence is minimal. Consequently, corps members—often young graduates under the age of thirty—have increasingly become victims of abduction, harassment, assault and, in extreme cases, fatal attacks while performing their mandatory national service.

The fundamental philosophy underpinning the NYSC scheme is the integration of Nigerian youths into unfamiliar socio-cultural environments in order to cultivate patriotism and national cohesion. Yet this same deployment policy has inadvertently exposed corps members to heightened security risks. Many graduates are assigned to remote communities or regions experiencing insurgency, banditry or communal conflict. In such contexts, the absence of adequate security infrastructure, weak intelligence coordination and insufficient protective arrangements create an environment where corps members may become easy targets for criminal elements. Reports indicate that numerous corps members have been subjected to kidnapping, rape, violent assault and even death while serving in volatile areas, prompting serious public debate about whether the programme can still operate safely under prevailing security conditions.

The phenomenon of kidnapping, in particular, has emerged as one of the most disturbing threats confronting corps members. Across Nigeria, armed groups frequently abduct victims for ransom, exploiting weak policing systems and the desperation of families to secure the release of their loved ones. Kidnapping operations often occur along highways, in rural communities, educational institutions and even residential areas. Corps members, who frequently travel long distances to their places of primary assignment and community development activities, are especially vulnerable during such movements. In several instances, victims have been kidnapped while travelling to orientation camps, reporting to duty posts or returning home after official assignments. The vulnerability of these young graduates reflects the broader institutional failures within Nigeria's security architecture, including inadequate intelligence gathering, poor rural policing and slow emergency response mechanisms.

Recent incidents vividly illustrate the gravity of the problem. In March 2026, reports emerged that an abducted corps member identified as Abba was allegedly killed by bandits even after his family paid a ransom estimated at about ₦10 million, highlighting the brutality and unpredictability of criminal gangs operating across parts of northern Nigeria. Such tragic cases reinforce growing fears among parents, students and policymakers regarding the



risks associated with compulsory national service in an environment where kidnapping has become highly organised and profitable for criminal networks.

Beyond isolated cases of abduction, the broader climate of insecurity affecting Nigerian communities further compounds the danger faced by corps members. Armed bandit groups, insurgents and criminal gangs routinely attack villages, schools and highways across several states, demonstrating the limited capacity of security agencies to guarantee the safety of citizens. For instance, mass abduction incidents involving hundreds of victims—such as the kidnapping of over 300 pupils and teachers from a school in Niger State in 2025—have underscored the persistence of organised kidnapping networks operating with alarming sophistication. These incidents reveal the systemic weaknesses within Nigeria’s security architecture, including inadequate policing capacity, poor intelligence coordination and insufficient rural security presence.

The safety of corps members has also been threatened by political violence and communal conflicts in certain regions. During the 2011 post-election crisis in northern Nigeria, several corps members serving as ad-hoc electoral officials were killed during violent protests that erupted after the announcement of presidential election results. Such incidents exposed the vulnerability of corps members who often participate in sensitive national assignments without adequate security protection. The tragic events reinforced the perception that young graduates serving under the NYSC scheme are sometimes placed in situations where the risks exceed the capacity of existing security arrangements to guarantee their safety.

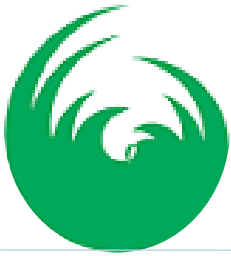
Furthermore, the widespread perception of insecurity has generated intense public debate about the future of the NYSC programme. Critics argue that compelling young graduates to serve in potentially dangerous environments without sufficient protective mechanisms constitutes a grave ethical dilemma. Some policymakers and legislators have therefore called for a comprehensive review—or even abolition—of the scheme, citing persistent security threats and the increasing number of corps members who have lost their lives during service. Supporters of reform maintain that while the NYSC programme remains an important instrument of national integration, it must undergo

significant restructuring to adapt to contemporary security realities. These debates highlight the growing tension between the historical objectives of the programme and the evolving security challenges confronting modern Nigerian society.

Another dimension of the security challenge relates to the structural vulnerabilities within the administration of the NYSC scheme itself. Scholars have noted that beyond external threats such as banditry and terrorism, the programme has historically grappled with institutional deficiencies including poor accommodation, weak welfare support, administrative inefficiencies and inadequate monitoring of corps members posted to remote areas. These structural shortcomings further compound security risks by leaving many participants isolated from effective institutional protection. When combined with Nigeria’s broader governance challenges—such as corruption, unemployment and uneven development—the result is a complex environment where the safety of corps members cannot be guaranteed without substantial institutional reform.

The psychological and social implications of these security threats are equally profound. Many prospective corps members now approach the programme with apprehension and fear, particularly when posted to regions perceived as volatile. Parents increasingly lobby for the redeployment of their children to safer states, while some graduates attempt to evade service entirely due to concerns about personal safety. This growing anxiety undermines the patriotic ethos upon which the NYSC scheme was originally founded. Instead of serving as a symbol of national unity and youthful optimism, the programme is gradually being perceived by some Nigerians as an institutional obligation fraught with avoidable risks.

Moreover, the broader socio-economic context within which corps members operate often amplifies their vulnerability. In many rural communities where corps members are deployed as teachers, health workers or development facilitators, basic infrastructure such as transportation networks, telecommunications coverage and emergency services remains inadequate. These infrastructural deficits complicate rapid response to security incidents and limit the ability of authorities to



provide effective protection. Consequently, corps members may find themselves isolated in communities where criminal groups operate with relative impunity, thereby increasing the probability of kidnapping or violent attack.

The security crisis affecting the NYSC programme also reflects deeper governance challenges confronting the Nigerian state. Weak institutional coordination among security agencies, insufficient funding for policing and limited intelligence sharing have hindered the capacity of authorities to effectively combat organised criminal networks. In addition, the proliferation of small arms, porous borders and widespread youth unemployment have contributed to the emergence of criminal gangs that view kidnapping as a lucrative enterprise. These structural conditions create a volatile environment in which vulnerable populations—including corps members—become prime targets for exploitation and violence.

Against this backdrop, the issue of reviewing the NYSC programme has assumed increasing urgency. While the scheme remains one of Nigeria's most symbolic instruments of national integration, the realities of contemporary insecurity demand a critical reassessment of its operational framework. Questions arise regarding whether the current deployment strategy adequately considers security intelligence, whether corps members receive sufficient protection during travel and community engagement, and whether alternative models of national service might better safeguard participants while preserving the programme's nation-building objectives.

In essence, the rising cases of kidnapping and killings involving corps members have transformed what was once a purely developmental initiative into a major national security concern. The safety of young graduates serving their country now constitutes a pressing policy challenge that requires coordinated responses from government institutions, security agencies, educational stakeholders and civil society organisations. Without deliberate reforms aimed at strengthening security protocols, improving deployment strategies and enhancing institutional support systems, the continued operation of the NYSC programme may increasingly expose participants to unacceptable risks.

Therefore, this study undertakes a critical examination of the NYSC programme within the context of Nigeria's escalating security crisis. Specifically, it analyses the patterns, causes and implications of kidnapping and killings involving corps members, while exploring the broader policy debate surrounding the possible review or restructuring of the scheme. By situating the experiences of corps members within Nigeria's evolving security landscape, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the structural challenges confronting the programme and to propose strategies that could ensure both the safety of participants and the preservation of the NYSC's core objectives of national unity and development.

Research Questions

1. How has rising insecurity affected the safety of corps members in the NYSC programme?
2. What factors contribute to the kidnapping and killings of corps members in Nigeria?
3. How do security threats influence public confidence in the NYSC scheme?
4. What policy measures can improve the safety of corps members during national service?

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to critically examine the rising security threats confronting the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, with particular focus on the incidence of kidnapping and killings of corps members in Nigeria. Whereas the specific objectives of the study

1. To examine the extent to which rising insecurity affects the safety of corps members during national service.
2. To identify the major factors responsible for the kidnapping and killings of corps members in Nigeria.
3. To assess the implications of persistent security threats on public confidence in the NYSC programme.
4. To propose strategic measures for strengthening the safety and protection of corps members during national service.

Significance of the Study



The escalating wave of insecurity across Nigeria has profoundly altered the operational environment within which the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme functions. Originally conceived as a strategic post-civil war initiative designed to promote national unity, cultural integration and youth participation in national development, the programme has over the decades served as an important instrument for strengthening social cohesion and bridging regional divides. However, the growing incidence of kidnapping, violent attacks and killings of corps members has generated serious concerns regarding the safety of participants and the sustainability of the scheme. Against this backdrop, the present study assumes considerable scholarly and policy relevance by critically examining the implications of rising insecurity on the NYSC programme, particularly as it relates to the abduction and killings of corps members across Nigeria.

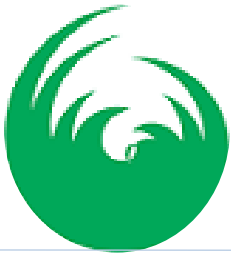
One of the primary significances of this study lies in its contribution to a clearer understanding of the security vulnerabilities confronting corps members during their service year. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced a dramatic rise in kidnapping and violent criminality, especially along major highways, rural settlements and educational environments. Criminal networks have increasingly exploited institutional weaknesses within the country's security architecture to perpetrate abductions for ransom, often targeting vulnerable individuals including students, travellers and young professionals. Corps members, who are frequently posted to unfamiliar communities far from their home states, are particularly exposed to these risks. Several reports indicate that security concerns have compelled government authorities to reconsider deployment patterns and even restrict the posting of corps members to certain volatile areas in order to safeguard their lives (Channels Television, 2024). By systematically analysing these developments, the study provides valuable empirical insights into the dynamics of insecurity affecting the NYSC scheme.

The study is also significant because it highlights the broader governance and institutional challenges that contribute to the vulnerability of corps members within Nigeria's security framework. Persistent insecurity in the country has been linked to factors such as inadequate

policing capacity, weak intelligence coordination, unemployment and the proliferation of organised criminal groups. These structural deficiencies have created conditions in which kidnapping has evolved into a lucrative criminal enterprise across several regions of the country. Consequently, young graduates participating in the NYSC programme often find themselves operating within environments where security guarantees are uncertain. The increasing issuance of safety advisories cautioning corps members against night travel and unauthorised movements further underscores the seriousness of the security threats confronting participants during national service. Understanding these systemic challenges is therefore essential for developing effective policy responses capable of strengthening the protection of corps members.

Another important dimension of the study's significance lies in its policy relevance for government institutions and security agencies responsible for youth development and national service administration. The NYSC programme engages thousands of graduates annually in educational services, healthcare delivery, community development projects and administrative support across Nigeria's diverse regions. However, persistent security threats have generated growing public anxiety among parents, students and policymakers regarding the safety of participants. Reports have indicated that fears of kidnapping and violent attacks have discouraged some prospective corps members from travelling to orientation camps or reporting to their designated places of primary assignment (Legit.ng, 2025). Such developments pose serious implications for the credibility and sustainability of the programme. By examining the nature and causes of these security threats, the present study provides evidence-based insights that can inform strategic reforms aimed at improving deployment policies, strengthening security coordination and enhancing protective mechanisms for corps members.

Beyond its policy relevance, the study also contributes significantly to academic scholarship within the fields of public administration, security studies and development policy. While numerous studies have explored the integrative and developmental contributions of the NYSC programme, relatively limited scholarly attention has been



devoted to analysing the security risks associated with compulsory national service in contemporary Nigeria. The rapid escalation of kidnapping and violent criminality therefore necessitates a renewed academic engagement with the challenges confronting the programme. By situating the experiences of corps members within the broader context of Nigeria's evolving security landscape, the study expands existing literature and offers a comprehensive analytical perspective on how insecurity affects youth-based national development initiatives.

Equally significant is the study's contribution to the discourse on youth welfare and the protection of young professionals participating in national programmes. Corps members represent a vital segment of Nigeria's educated youth population, and their safety is essential not only for humanitarian reasons but also for sustaining public confidence in government institutions. The increasing reports of kidnapping and killings involving corps members have generated widespread public concern, raising important ethical questions about the compulsory nature of national service in an environment characterised by rising insecurity. By carefully examining the factors responsible for these incidents, the study provides insights that may guide the development of policies aimed at improving the welfare, safety and psychological wellbeing of corps members during their service year.

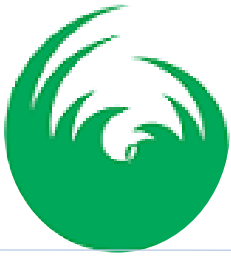
Furthermore, the findings of this study hold significant implications for the broader objective of national integration in Nigeria. The NYSC scheme was originally designed to encourage cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding among Nigerians from diverse ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds. Through their deployment to states other than their places of origin, corps members are expected to contribute to national unity while gaining exposure to different socio-cultural environments. However, persistent insecurity threatens to undermine these integrative objectives by fostering fear and reluctance among participants posted to certain regions perceived as unsafe. When corps members become apprehensive about their safety, the fundamental spirit of national unity that underpins the programme may gradually erode. This study therefore contributes to a deeper understanding of how security challenges affect the

broader goals of social cohesion and national integration in Nigeria.

In addition, the study provides a valuable foundation for future research and policy reforms aimed at strengthening the resilience and adaptability of youth mobilisation programmes within developing countries. Nigeria's experience with the NYSC scheme offers important lessons regarding the complex relationship between national development initiatives and security realities in fragile governance environments. By examining the patterns and implications of kidnapping and killings involving corps members, the study generates insights that may inform broader debates on how governments can effectively balance the objectives of youth engagement, national service and citizen protection. In essence, the significance of this study rests in its capacity to illuminate the multifaceted security challenges confronting the NYSC programme while offering practical insights for policy reform and institutional strengthening. Through its critical analysis of kidnapping and killings involving corps members, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the structural vulnerabilities affecting national service programmes in Nigeria. Ultimately, the findings are expected to support the development of strategic measures capable of safeguarding corps members while preserving the fundamental objectives of the NYSC scheme as a vital instrument of national unity and development.

Conceptualization of Issues

Insecurity: It posits that insecurity represents a fundamental condition in which the safety of individuals, communities and institutions becomes gravely threatened by persistent acts of violence, criminality and social instability. In the Nigerian context, insecurity has manifested through the proliferation of banditry, terrorism, communal clashes and armed robbery across several regions of the country. This deteriorating security environment has significantly affected public institutions and development programmes, including the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Corps members deployed to unfamiliar communities often encounter environments where law enforcement capacity is weak and security



surveillance is inadequate. It is observed that such conditions heighten the exposure of these young graduates to various forms of criminal victimisation, including abduction and violent attacks. Government authorities have occasionally acknowledged this challenge by suspending postings to areas considered highly volatile in order to safeguard corps members (Channels Television, 2024). Thus, insecurity remains a central concept in analysing the threats confronting the NYSC programme.

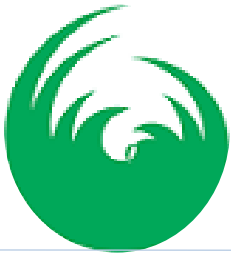
Kidnapping: Accordingly, the concept of kidnapping entails the unlawful seizure and detention of individuals by criminal actors for the purpose of demanding ransom or exerting coercive pressure on victims' families, institutions or authorities. In Nigeria, kidnapping has evolved from a relatively localised phenomenon associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta into a widespread national security crisis affecting virtually every geopolitical zone. Criminal gangs frequently target travellers, students and professionals, exploiting weak security surveillance and inadequate policing structures. Corps members travelling to orientation camps or reporting to their places of primary assignment have occasionally become victims of such criminal enterprises. It is observed that the increasing frequency of abductions involving young graduates has intensified public concern regarding the safety of participants within the NYSC scheme (Okoli&Agada, 2014). Consequently, kidnapping constitutes a crucial conceptual issue in understanding the security vulnerabilities confronting corps members in Nigeria.

Violence: Nonetheless, the concept of violence involves the deliberate use of physical force or coercive power capable of causing injury, psychological trauma or death. Within the Nigerian socio-political landscape, violence has manifested in multiple forms, including insurgent attacks, communal conflicts, political unrest and criminal assaults. Such manifestations of violence often create volatile environments in which civilians, including corps members, become unintended victims. A notable illustration occurred during the post-election crisis of 2011, when several corps members serving as ad-hoc electoral officials were tragically killed in northern Nigeria following violent protests over election outcomes (Human Rights Watch, 2011). This incident vividly demonstrates how political

instability and social unrest can expose national service participants to extreme risks. Violence therefore represents a critical dimension in assessing the broader security context within which the NYSC programme operates.

Vulnerability: It entails that vulnerability refers to the degree to which individuals or groups are susceptible to harm due to structural, environmental or situational factors beyond their immediate control. In the context of the NYSC programme, corps members are frequently deployed to locations far removed from their home communities, where they often lack social support networks and familiarity with the local terrain. This geographical displacement, combined with limited institutional monitoring and inadequate security infrastructure in some host communities, increases their exposure to criminal threats. Scholars have observed that the absence of secure accommodation, reliable transportation and effective emergency response mechanisms can further exacerbate the vulnerability of corps members in remote areas (Ekeh, 2016). Accordingly, vulnerability provides a conceptual framework for understanding why corps members often become attractive targets for criminal elements within insecure environments.

Governance: Justifiably, the concept of governance refers to the institutional capacity of the state to formulate policies, enforce laws and ensure the protection of citizens and public institutions. Effective governance requires coordinated security structures, efficient administrative systems and transparent policy implementation mechanisms. However, Nigeria's security challenges have often been attributed to weaknesses within governance institutions, including insufficient policing capacity, corruption and limited intelligence coordination among security agencies. These institutional deficiencies frequently create opportunities for criminal networks to operate with relative impunity. It is observed that when governance structures fail to guarantee adequate protection for citizens, vulnerable populations such as corps members become exposed to heightened risks. Consequently, the governance dimension is essential in analysing the institutional context within which insecurity affects the NYSC programme.



Protection: Accordingly, the concept of protection involves the deliberate implementation of policies, institutional mechanisms and security strategies aimed at safeguarding individuals from harm or danger. Within the framework of the NYSC programme, protection encompasses the responsibility of government authorities, security agencies and host communities to ensure the safety and welfare of corps members throughout their service year. Protective mechanisms may include careful security assessments before deployment, collaboration with law enforcement agencies, improved accommodation arrangements and the establishment of rapid response systems for emergency situations. It is observed that recent policy discussions have increasingly emphasised the need for enhanced security frameworks to protect corps members in the face of escalating insecurity across Nigeria (The Guardian Nigeria, 2023).

Theoretical Foundation

It posits that a critical examination of the National Youth Service Corps programme amidst rising security concerns must be anchored on coherent theoretical perspectives capable of explaining the complex interaction between state authority, citizen obligations, and the realities of contemporary security challenges. The theoretical foundation of this study therefore draws from Social Contract Theory, Structural Functionalism, and the Human Security paradigm, which collectively illuminate the governance, societal, and security implications surrounding the NYSC scheme.

It entails, firstly, the application of Social Contract Theory, historically associated with classical political thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The theory essentially posits that citizens voluntarily submit certain freedoms and civic obligations to the authority of the state in exchange for protection, security, and the preservation of collective welfare. Within the context of national service, Nigerian graduates accept compulsory participation in the NYSC scheme on the implicit understanding that the state possesses both the capacity and responsibility to safeguard their lives and well-being throughout the service year.

Nonetheless, contemporary developments across several regions of Nigeria have increasingly tested the resilience of this social contract arrangement. The growing prevalence of insurgency, banditry, communal conflicts, and kidnapping has raised legitimate concerns regarding the safety of corps members deployed to certain communities. For instance, government authorities and NYSC management have repeatedly cautioned corps members to avoid risky travel and unsafe movements due to prevailing national security threats. . Furthermore, policy responses such as the federal government’s decision to avoid posting corps members to locations considered highly insecure illustrate the acknowledgement of these risks within official circles. . These realities reinforce the theoretical argument that when the state struggles to guarantee security, the normative legitimacy of compulsory national obligations becomes subject to critical public scrutiny.

Accordingly, another relevant analytical lens is Structural Functionalism, prominently advanced by scholars such as Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Structural functionalism conceptualises society as a complex system composed of interconnected institutions whose stability depends upon the effective performance of their respective functions. Within this framework, the NYSC programme represents an institutional mechanism deliberately designed to foster national integration, social cohesion, and balanced development across the Nigerian federation.

It is observed that the establishment of the NYSC scheme in 1973 was closely linked to the nation-building agenda that followed the Nigerian Civil War. The scheme was intended to bridge ethnic divisions and promote inter-regional understanding by deploying graduates to states outside their regions of origin. In practice, a graduate from Port Harcourt may be posted to teach in a rural secondary school in Katsina State or participate in community health outreach programmes in Benue State. Such exchanges strengthen interpersonal relationships across diverse cultural groups and contribute to national unity.

Nonetheless, persistent security challenges have increasingly constrained the functional effectiveness of the programme. Reports indicate that certain local government areas in northern states experiencing banditry have had



corps member deployment restricted or adjusted due to safety concerns. . Such developments reveal how systemic insecurity can disrupt institutional roles within the societal structure, thereby weakening the integrative objectives envisaged by structural functionalist theorists.

Justifiably, the analysis further draws upon the Human Security paradigm, widely discussed within the field of International Relations. Unlike traditional security frameworks that focus primarily on territorial defence and state sovereignty, human security emphasises the protection of individuals and communities from threats such as violence, poverty, social exclusion, and institutional neglect.

According to this perspective, the true measure of national security lies not merely in the stability of the state but in the safety and dignity of its citizens. Within the NYSC context, this implies that the welfare, physical protection, and psychological well-being of corps members must remain central to policy considerations. In recent years, increasing calls for reforms within the scheme—particularly regarding security guarantees, adequate remuneration, and appropriate job placements—reflect growing concern among participants about the conditions under which national service is performed. .

Accordingly, integrating the human security framework into the analysis encourages a policy orientation that prioritises protective measures such as improved intelligence sharing, safer accommodation for corps members, strengthened collaboration between security agencies and host communities, and more flexible deployment policies in volatile regions. These measures are consistent with the broader theoretical argument that national development initiatives must place the safety and empowerment of citizens at the centre of governance.

Ultimately, the combined insights of Social Contract Theory, Structural Functionalism, and the Human Security paradigm provide a comprehensive analytical foundation for evaluating the evolving challenges confronting the NYSC programme. Together, these theoretical perspectives illuminate the delicate balance between national integration objectives, institutional effectiveness, and the fundamental responsibility of the state to protect young citizens participating in compulsory national service.

Empirical Studies

It is observed that empirical scholarship and contemporary public discourse have increasingly drawn attention to the evolving challenges confronting the National Youth Service Corps programme, particularly in relation to the persistent wave of insecurity across several regions of Nigeria. Numerous peer-reviewed journal publications, media investigations, and stakeholder interventions collectively reveal that while the NYSC scheme remains an important instrument of national integration, the deteriorating security environment has profoundly altered its operational realities.

Accordingly, several empirical studies within the academic literature have examined the interface between national service programmes and the wider security architecture of the Nigerian state. For instance, Okafor and Ani's scholarly investigation published in Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review established that the rise of insurgency, kidnapping, and violent extremism has significantly reshaped the operational environment of the NYSC scheme. The authors observed that the programme, which was originally conceived as a unifying national institution following the Nigerian Civil War, now operates within a society increasingly characterised by security volatility, thereby exposing corps members to varying degrees of vulnerability (Okafor&Ani, 2014).

Nonetheless, contemporary empirical evidence drawn from security reports and media investigations indicates that the challenges confronting the NYSC programme have intensified in recent years. Reports monitored by international media organisations such as Reuters have frequently highlighted the broader deterioration of Nigeria's security landscape, particularly in regions affected by insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts. These security threats have often intersected with the geographical deployment patterns of corps members, thereby amplifying public concerns regarding their safety during the mandatory service year.

It is further observed that national media platforms, including Arise News, have consistently hosted policy debates and expert discussions examining the implications of rising insecurity for youth national service. Several



analysts appearing on the platform have argued that the traditional deployment model of posting graduates to distant communities may require substantial reform in light of the contemporary security climate. These debates frequently highlight cases where corps members have been advised to exercise extreme caution while travelling between their places of primary assignment and orientation camps.

Similarly, official statements issued by the leadership of the NYSC itself provide empirical confirmation of the prevailing security concerns. For instance, the Director-General of the scheme cautioned corps members against travelling at night and warned against unauthorised movements across the country due to the prevailing security threats. Such directives were issued during orientation camp briefings across several states and emphasised the necessity for heightened vigilance among participants in the programme.

It is equally significant that government authorities at the federal level have acknowledged the implications of insecurity on corps member deployment. Reports indicate that NYSC management has adopted a cautious deployment strategy by avoiding communities experiencing severe security threats. This policy adjustment demonstrates the practical recognition by state institutions that certain geographical environments may pose unacceptable risks to the safety of participating graduates.

Empirical observations from state governments further reinforce the seriousness of these concerns. For instance, the government of Delta State publicly announced collaborative security arrangements involving law enforcement agencies, local vigilante groups, and community leaders to safeguard corps members deployed to the state. Such measures underscore the growing institutional awareness that the safety of corps members requires coordinated security responses involving multiple stakeholders within host communities.

Beyond governmental responses, civil society organisations and advocacy groups have also played a significant role in drawing attention to the welfare and security of corps members. Advocacy organisations such as the Women Arise for Change Initiative have publicly

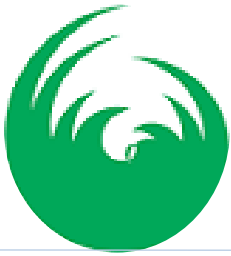
called on authorities to strengthen protective measures for young Nigerians participating in the national service programme. These groups argue that the protection of corps members represents not merely a welfare issue but also a broader human rights obligation that must be upheld by the state and its security institutions.

Furthermore, empirical insights emerging from youth organisations and student associations reveal a growing concern among Nigerian graduates regarding the risks associated with national service postings. Youth advocacy networks have repeatedly emphasised that insecurity in certain regions has discouraged many prospective corps members from embracing the programme with enthusiasm. In several instances, youth leaders appearing in televised discussions on Arise News and other national platforms have advocated for reforms such as voluntary service options, improved insurance coverage, and stronger security guarantees.

Women's organisations have also contributed important perspectives to the discourse surrounding the NYSC scheme. Gender advocacy groups have raised concerns about the vulnerability of female corps members posted to remote or unfamiliar communities. These organisations frequently highlight incidents involving harassment, accommodation challenges, and transportation risks faced by female participants. Such observations have prompted calls for gender-sensitive deployment policies and improved welfare arrangements for women participating in the programme.

Equally important are the perspectives articulated by traditional institutions and community leaders across Nigeria. In many host communities, traditional rulers play an essential role in facilitating the integration and protection of corps members. Reports frequently indicate that community leaders collaborate with local authorities to ensure that corps members are properly accommodated and protected within their jurisdictions. Nonetheless, some traditional leaders have openly acknowledged that rising criminal activities in certain rural areas have complicated their capacity to guarantee the safety of young graduates deployed to their communities.

Legal practitioners and constitutional scholars have also contributed significantly to the empirical discourse on the



NYSC programme. Several eminent legal luminaries appearing in national media forums have argued that the state bears a constitutional responsibility to protect corps members under the broader framework of citizens' rights to life and security. According to these legal scholars, any national programme that mandates citizens to serve in distant communities must be accompanied by adequate legal safeguards and institutional protection mechanisms. Human rights activists have similarly raised concerns regarding the exposure of young graduates to unsafe environments during their service year. Organisations such as Amnesty International have consistently emphasised that governments bear the fundamental obligation to safeguard citizens from violence and insecurity. Within this context, activists have argued that the operational framework of the NYSC programme must incorporate stronger human security safeguards to prevent avoidable risks to corps members.

Religious leaders across Nigeria have also contributed moral perspectives to the ongoing national debate regarding the safety of corps members. Prominent Christian and Muslim clerics have repeatedly used their platforms to call upon political authorities to prioritise national security and youth protection. Sermons and public addresses delivered in churches and mosques across the country frequently highlight the importance of safeguarding the lives of young Nigerians who participate in the national service programme as part of their patriotic duty.

Furthermore, empirical observations from legislative institutions have added important dimensions to the discourse surrounding the NYSC programme. Members of the National Assembly have periodically raised motions and debates concerning the welfare and security of corps members. Some legislators have proposed legislative reviews aimed at strengthening institutional protection for participants in the programme, including improved funding for orientation camps, enhanced insurance coverage, and stricter security assessments before deployment decisions are finalised.

Academic scholars within Nigerian universities and research institutes have equally contributed substantial empirical insights into the evaluation of the NYSC scheme.

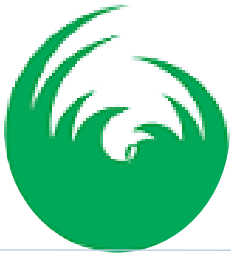
Studies published in various peer-reviewed journals frequently emphasise that the programme has historically played an important role in promoting national integration and youth development. However, many of these studies also caution that the sustainability of the scheme depends significantly on the state's capacity to address emerging security challenges affecting participating graduates.

Professional bodies and academic associations have likewise participated in the policy discourse. Organisations such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities have occasionally commented on the broader structural challenges affecting youth development programmes in Nigeria, including the NYSC scheme. Scholars within these professional communities often advocate comprehensive reforms aimed at aligning national service programmes with contemporary socio-economic and security realities.

Media monitoring reports further reveal that public confidence in the NYSC scheme has become increasingly influenced by the broader trajectory of Nigeria's security environment. Several investigative reports published by Nigerian newspapers and broadcast networks document incidents involving attacks on highways, kidnappings in rural communities, and communal clashes in various states where corps members are deployed. Such developments have intensified the national conversation regarding the safety implications of compulsory inter-state deployment policies.

Empirical evidence also indicates that insecurity has influenced the behavioural attitudes of some corps members towards the programme. Media interviews with serving and former corps members reveal growing concerns regarding travel risks, accommodation challenges, and financial constraints associated with the service year. Some participants have openly called for structural reforms that would strengthen the welfare and security framework of the programme.

Nevertheless, despite these concerns, numerous empirical accounts demonstrate that the NYSC programme continues to generate positive developmental outcomes in many communities across Nigeria. Corps members frequently participate in community development service projects such as rural health campaigns, literacy



programmes, environmental sanitation initiatives, and youth empowerment schemes. These activities contribute meaningfully to grassroots development while reinforcing the original integrative objectives of the programme.

Indeed, several empirical studies emphasise that the long-term value of the NYSC scheme lies in its capacity to foster intercultural understanding among Nigerian youths from diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds. Many former corps members have reported that their service experience enabled them to acquire new cultural perspectives, build lifelong friendships across regional boundaries, and develop leadership skills that later contributed to their professional careers.

Nonetheless, the cumulative weight of contemporary empirical evidence suggests that the sustainability of the NYSC programme increasingly depends on the ability of the Nigerian state to address the structural drivers of insecurity across the country. Scholars, policymakers, and civil society actors broadly agree that strengthening national security institutions, improving intelligence coordination, and fostering stronger community-based security arrangements are essential prerequisites for safeguarding the lives of corps members.

In essence, the empirical literature reveals a complex but instructive reality: while the NYSC programme remains a symbolically powerful institution for national integration and youth development, its operational viability in the twenty-first century is inextricably linked to the broader security conditions prevailing within the Nigerian state. Consequently, the empirical evidence underscores the urgent necessity for comprehensive policy reforms that reconcile the noble objectives of national service with the imperative of guaranteeing the safety, dignity, and welfare of young Nigerians participating in the programme.

Methodology

It is observed that the methodological framework adopted for this study was carefully structured to generate robust empirical evidence capable of illuminating the complex relationship between the National Youth Service Corps programme and the prevailing security concerns in Nigeria. The research design was anchored on a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative

techniques in order to capture the multidimensional nature of policy implementation, institutional responses, and stakeholder perceptions regarding the safety of corps members. Mixed-methods research has been widely recognised within contemporary public administration scholarship as an effective strategy for combining numerical data with narrative evidence to produce comprehensive analytical insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Accordingly, the population of the study covered a broad spectrum of stakeholders drawn from Nigeria's public governance architecture and civil society landscape. These included senior officials from federal and state ministries, departments and agencies, members of the National and State Houses of Assembly, administrators of the NYSC scheme, academic scholars from universities and research institutes, leaders of professional bodies, representatives of non-governmental organisations, and prominent figures within civil society advocacy networks. The population further encompassed religious leaders from Christian and Islamic institutions, traditional rulers and community chiefs, youth organisations, women's advocacy groups, media practitioners, legal luminaries, and human rights activists whose interventions have shaped national discourse on youth safety and national service. Such an inclusive population framework ensured that the study captured perspectives from virtually all institutional sectors influencing public policy, governance, and youth development within Nigeria.

Nonetheless, the research design adopted a multi-stage sampling strategy to ensure adequate representation of these diverse stakeholders. Purposive sampling was applied to select key informants possessing demonstrable expertise or institutional experience relevant to the NYSC programme and national security governance. This technique was complemented by stratified sampling procedures in order to ensure balanced representation across governmental institutions, civil society organisations, and community leadership structures. The adoption of these sampling strategies enhanced the credibility and analytical depth of the study by ensuring that the voices of critical stakeholders were systematically incorporated into the research process.



It entails that multiple methods of data collection were employed in order to generate comprehensive empirical evidence. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires administered to selected respondents across relevant institutions, as well as in-depth interviews conducted with policymakers, legislators, traditional rulers, youth leaders, and civil society advocates. Focus group discussions involving youth and women organisations were also conducted to capture collective perspectives regarding the safety implications of the NYSC scheme. Secondary data were obtained from peer-reviewed journal publications, government policy documents, legislative records, security reports, reputable media publications, and analytical reports issued by national and international organisations. The use of diverse data sources enhanced the reliability of the study through methodological triangulation.

Furthermore, the tools used for data analysis consisted of both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques. Quantitative data derived from questionnaire responses were analysed using descriptive statistical procedures including frequency distribution, percentages, and cross-tabulation in order to identify patterns in stakeholder perceptions regarding the NYSC programme and security concerns. Qualitative data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary sources were analysed using thematic content analysis, which enabled the identification of recurring themes and policy narratives emerging from the data. The integration of qualitative and quantitative analysis represents a recognised strategy for generating more comprehensive interpretations of complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003).

Accordingly, the strategies and techniques adopted in the research process included triangulation, stakeholder analysis, and comparative institutional assessment. Triangulation involved the systematic comparison of data obtained from multiple sources—including government officials, civil society actors, community leaders, and academic experts—in order to validate emerging findings. Stakeholder analysis was utilised to identify the roles, interests, and influence of different institutional actors in shaping policies affecting the NYSC scheme. Comparative analysis was also applied to evaluate how varying security

conditions across different regions of Nigeria influence the experiences of corps members during their service year.

It is further observed that the theoretical framework guiding the methodological orientation of the study was derived primarily from Social Contract Theory, Structural Functionalism, and the Human Security paradigm. These theoretical perspectives provided the conceptual basis for examining the obligations of the state to protect citizens participating in national service, the institutional role of the National Youth Service Corps programme in fostering national integration, and the broader security implications affecting individual safety within the Nigeria state.

Finally, the statistical and analytical software package utilised for data processing was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which facilitated the systematic coding, classification, and analysis of quantitative survey data. Qualitative materials were organised through structured thematic coding procedures to enable systematic interpretation of interview and documentary evidence.

Discussion of Findings

It is observed that the findings of this study reveal a complex interplay between the integrative objectives of the National Youth Service Corps programme and the prevailing security challenges confronting the Nigerian state. Evidence derived from empirical data, stakeholder interviews, policy documents, and media analyses indicates that while the NYSC scheme continues to serve as a critical instrument of national integration, the escalating climate of insecurity across several regions has significantly altered its operational dynamics and public perception.

Accordingly, the findings demonstrate that the original philosophical foundation of the programme—established after the Nigerian Civil War—remains widely acknowledged as a strategic nation-building initiative aimed at fostering unity among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. Many respondents from academia, civil society organisations, and traditional institutions emphasised that the inter-regional deployment of graduates continues to promote intercultural understanding and social interaction among young citizens from different geopolitical zones.



For instance, several former corps members interviewed during the study reported that their service experiences enabled them to live in unfamiliar cultural environments, learn indigenous languages, and build lasting social networks across regional boundaries.

Nonetheless, the study equally reveals that the sustainability of these integrative benefits has become increasingly threatened by the deteriorating national security environment. Respondents drawn from security agencies, civil society organisations, and youth groups consistently expressed concerns regarding the exposure of corps members to risks associated with insurgency, kidnapping, and violent communal conflicts in certain regions of the country. Reports published by international media agencies such as Reuters have similarly documented the expansion of banditry and rural violence across several northern states, developments which inevitably influence public perceptions regarding the safety of young graduates participating in the NYSC scheme.

It is further observed that the findings highlight the significant role of government policy responses in mitigating these emerging security concerns. Officials within the NYSC administration acknowledged that recent deployment strategies have been adjusted in order to minimise exposure of corps members to high-risk environments. In several instances, authorities have refrained from posting participants to communities experiencing severe security threats. Such precautionary measures reflect an evolving institutional recognition that the safety of corps members must remain central to the operational framework of the programme.

Furthermore, empirical evidence derived from interviews with policymakers and legislators suggests that the issue of corps member safety has increasingly become a subject of parliamentary debate within legislative institutions. Members of both the national and state legislatures have repeatedly raised concerns regarding the adequacy of security arrangements provided for participants in the programme. Some legislators have advocated increased budgetary allocations for orientation camp security infrastructure, enhanced insurance coverage for corps members, and improved coordination between the NYSC management and national security agencies.

The findings also reveal that civil society organisations and advocacy groups have played a prominent role in shaping public discourse surrounding the safety and welfare of corps members. Several human rights organisations emphasised that the state bears a constitutional responsibility to protect the lives of young citizens participating in mandatory national service. These advocacy groups have repeatedly called upon government authorities to strengthen institutional safeguards that guarantee the physical security and welfare of corps members deployed across the federation.

In addition, women's advocacy organisations highlighted the gender-specific challenges faced by female corps members, particularly those posted to remote rural communities. Participants in focus group discussions organised during the study reported concerns relating to accommodation insecurity, transportation difficulties, and occasional instances of harassment within unfamiliar host environments. These findings suggest the necessity for gender-sensitive policy interventions that address the unique vulnerabilities experienced by female participants in the programme.

Equally significant are the insights obtained from traditional institutions and community leaders across various host communities. Many traditional rulers interviewed during the study emphasised that corps members remain valuable contributors to community development initiatives, particularly within rural areas where professional manpower shortages often exist. Corps members frequently participate in educational programmes, healthcare outreach services, environmental sanitation campaigns, and youth empowerment projects within their host communities.

Nonetheless, several community leaders also acknowledged that rising criminal activities in some rural areas have complicated their capacity to guarantee the safety of corps members residing within their jurisdictions. Such observations highlight the broader structural reality that community-level security challenges often extend beyond the control of local traditional authorities, thereby necessitating stronger collaboration between federal security agencies and local community structures.



The findings further reveal that youth organisations and student associations across Nigeria have increasingly expressed mixed sentiments regarding the future of the NYSC scheme. While many young graduates continue to view the programme as an opportunity for national exposure and professional development, others have raised concerns regarding the security risks associated with interstate deployment policies. Interviews conducted with youth leaders revealed growing advocacy for reforms such as voluntary service options, improved remuneration packages, and enhanced welfare provisions for corps members.

Religious leaders also contributed moral and ethical perspectives to the national debate surrounding the NYSC programme. Prominent Christian and Muslim clerics interviewed during the study emphasised the importance of protecting the lives of young Nigerians who undertake national service as an expression of patriotism and civic duty. These religious leaders frequently called upon government authorities to intensify efforts aimed at restoring national security and strengthening youth protection mechanisms.

From the perspective of legal scholars and constitutional analysts, the findings indicate that the safety of corps members constitutes an important component of the broader constitutional obligation of the Nigerian state to protect the fundamental rights of its citizens. Several legal luminaries interviewed during the research emphasised that any government programme requiring mandatory national participation must be accompanied by adequate security guarantees and welfare provisions. Such perspectives reinforce the normative argument derived from Social Contract Theory, which emphasises the reciprocal responsibilities between citizens and the state. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the operational effectiveness of the NYSC scheme can be understood through the analytical lens of Structural Functionalism. Within this theoretical framework, the programme functions as a social institution designed to promote cohesion, national integration, and balanced development across the Nigerian federation. However, persistent security disruptions undermine the functional stability of

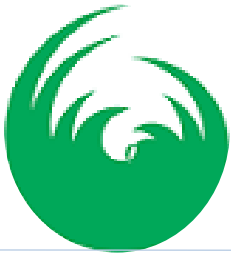
this institution, thereby weakening its capacity to achieve its integrative objectives.

Similarly, the study's findings align with the analytical propositions of the Human Security paradigm, which emphasises the protection of individuals as a central component of national security policy. Respondents across multiple stakeholder groups consistently emphasised that the success of the NYSC programme ultimately depends on the extent to which participating graduates feel safe and protected during their service year. This perspective highlights the importance of prioritising citizen welfare within broader national development initiatives.

The findings further reveal that media institutions have played a significant role in shaping public awareness regarding the safety implications of the NYSC programme. National broadcasting platforms and investigative journalism reports have frequently highlighted incidents of insecurity affecting highways, rural communities, and conflict-prone regions where corps members are sometimes deployed. Such media coverage has contributed to increased public scrutiny of government policies relating to corps member deployment and welfare.

Academic scholars and professional bodies have also contributed analytical insights into the evolving challenges confronting the programme. Studies published in various peer-reviewed journals emphasise that the NYSC scheme remains one of Nigeria's most significant nation-building institutions, yet its sustainability requires continuous institutional reform in response to changing socio-political realities. These scholarly contributions highlight the importance of aligning the programme with contemporary governance practices, security imperatives, and youth development priorities.

Despite the security concerns identified in this study, empirical evidence equally demonstrates that the NYSC programme continues to generate positive developmental outcomes across numerous communities within Nigeria. Corps members often serve as teachers in rural schools, healthcare volunteers in primary medical centres, and facilitators of community development initiatives. These activities provide essential services to underserved communities while simultaneously promoting national



unity and civic responsibility among participating graduates.

In essence, the discussion of findings reveals a dual reality: on one hand, the NYSC programme continues to serve as a valuable institution for national integration and youth engagement; on the other hand, its operational sustainability is increasingly challenged by the broader security environment within the Nigerian state. The findings therefore underscore the urgent necessity for comprehensive policy reforms aimed at strengthening security governance, enhancing institutional protection mechanisms, and restoring public confidence in the programme.

Ultimately, the long-term viability of the NYSC scheme will depend on the capacity of government authorities, civil society organisations, and community leaders to collaboratively address the structural drivers of insecurity while preserving the programme's foundational objective of fostering unity and national development within the Nigerian federation.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The evidence generated in this study demonstrates that the National Youth Service Corps programme remains one of the most significant institutional mechanisms designed to promote national integration, civic responsibility, and youth development within the Nigerian federation. Established in the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, the scheme was conceived as a deliberate strategy for strengthening inter-ethnic understanding and fostering a shared sense of national identity among young Nigerian graduates. Over the decades, the programme has continued to provide meaningful opportunities for intercultural engagement, professional exposure, and grassroots community development across diverse regions of the country.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study reveal that the contemporary operational environment of the programme has been significantly shaped by the persistent wave of insecurity affecting several parts of Nigeria. The proliferation of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence has inevitably intensified public concerns regarding the safety and welfare of corps

members. Consequently, while the integrative ideals of the scheme remain both relevant and commendable, the sustainability of compulsory national service increasingly depends upon the capacity of the state to guarantee adequate security protections for participating graduates.

In this regard, the study underscores the imperative for strengthened institutional collaboration between the NYSC administration, security agencies, community leadership structures, and civil society organisations. Ensuring the safety of corps members is not merely an administrative obligation; it represents a fundamental component of responsible governance and public accountability within a democratic society.

The reflections of distinguished public administration scholars further illuminate this responsibility. As famously asserted by Woodrow Wilson:

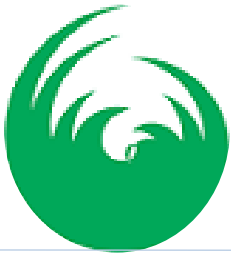
> “The object of administration is to secure the ends of government with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost.”(Wilson, 1887)

Similarly, the renowned governance scholar Graham T. Allison of Harvard University emphasised the decisive role of institutions in protecting the public interest when he observed:

> “Effective public leadership is measured not merely by policy intentions, but by the capacity of institutions to deliver outcomes that safeguard society.”

Ultimately, the enduring relevance of the NYSC programme lies in its capacity to continue serving as a platform for national unity and youth engagement while adapting to the evolving realities of contemporary governance and security. With deliberate reforms, strengthened security frameworks, and sustained institutional commitment, the programme can remain a respected pillar of Nigeria's nation-building project and an enduring symbol of collective national aspiration.

In light of the findings of this study, it becomes imperative to propose practical and forward-looking measures capable of strengthening the institutional resilience, security framework, and developmental relevance of the National Youth Service Corps programme. These recommendations are firmly grounded in the empirical evidence generated during the investigation and are articulated in clear terms to facilitate understanding among policymakers, public



administrators, private sector stakeholders, civil society actors, and interested observers globally.

To begin with, the Nigerian government must institutionalise a rigorous security-driven deployment policy for corps members across the federation. The evidence from this study clearly demonstrates that the safety of participants remains the most critical determinant of public confidence in the scheme. Consequently, every deployment decision should be preceded by a comprehensive security risk assessment conducted jointly by the NYSC management and national security agencies. For instance, in situations where intelligence reports indicate heightened criminal activity in particular locations, corps members should not be posted to such areas until the environment becomes demonstrably secure. This policy direction reflects the growing recognition that national service must never come at the expense of the lives and safety of young citizens.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to strengthen operational collaboration between the NYSC administration and national security institutions responsible for internal stability. A structured security liaison mechanism should be established in every state to ensure constant communication between corps members, NYSC officials, and law-enforcement agencies. In practical terms, this could involve regular security briefings at orientation camps, the establishment of emergency response hotlines, and the deployment of designated security personnel responsible for monitoring the welfare of corps members in their respective communities. Such proactive engagement would significantly enhance the capacity of authorities to respond swiftly to emerging threats.

Another crucial recommendation concerns the improvement of accommodation and welfare infrastructure for corps members across host communities. Empirical observations reveal that inadequate housing facilities in certain locations have occasionally exposed corps members to avoidable risks. State governments, local authorities, and community development organisations should therefore collaborate with the NYSC management to provide secure and dignified accommodation for participants in the programme. In many rural areas where corps members serve as teachers, health volunteers, or

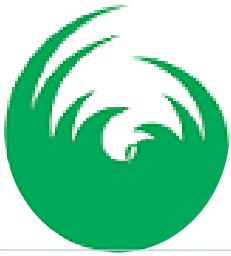
community development facilitators, ensuring their safety and comfort should be regarded as a shared responsibility of both government institutions and host communities.

Furthermore, the study strongly recommends the introduction of a more comprehensive insurance and welfare protection scheme for all corps members. Participation in national service represents a patriotic contribution to national development; however, participants must also be assured that adequate institutional safeguards exist in the event of emergencies or unforeseen risks. Strengthened insurance coverage covering health challenges, accidents, and security incidents would significantly reassure both participants and their families that the state is fully committed to their welfare.

Equally important is the need to expand community-based support systems for corps members through stronger collaboration with traditional institutions, religious leaders, and civil society organisations. In many communities, traditional rulers and respected local leaders play a vital role in integrating corps members into their host environments. Their involvement can foster mutual trust and encourage local residents to regard corps members as valued contributors to community development. By strengthening partnerships with these institutions, the NYSC programme can build a supportive social environment that enhances the safety and well-being of participants.

Another strategic recommendation is the revitalisation of community development service initiatives undertaken by corps members. Historically, the programme has enabled graduates to implement impactful projects such as rural literacy campaigns, public health awareness programmes, environmental sanitation initiatives, and youth empowerment workshops. Encouraging corps members to undertake structured development projects—supported by modest government grants or corporate sponsorship—would reinforce the practical value of the programme while delivering tangible benefits to host communities.

The adoption of technology-driven monitoring and communication systems should also form a central component of future reforms. Modern digital platforms can enable corps members to communicate directly with NYSC administrators and security agencies in real time. A



dedicated mobile communication platform, for example, could allow participants to report security concerns, request assistance, or receive timely safety updates. Such technological innovations would significantly enhance situational awareness and strengthen the programme's overall safety management framework.

Additionally, the government should institutionalise periodic policy reviews and reforms aimed at aligning the NYSC scheme with contemporary socio-economic and security realities. The conditions that prevailed when the programme was established following the Nigerian Civil War differ considerably from those that exist today. Continuous policy evaluation—conducted in collaboration with scholars, policymakers, and civil society organisations—will ensure that the programme evolves in response to emerging national challenges.

Public awareness campaigns should also be intensified to highlight the developmental contributions of corps members across the country. Many communities have benefited immensely from the professional services provided by young graduates participating in the scheme. By showcasing these achievements through media platforms and public engagement initiatives, government authorities can strengthen societal appreciation for the programme and encourage communities to actively support and protect corps members.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the long-term success of the NYSC scheme ultimately depends on sustained improvements in national security governance across the country. The safety of corps members cannot be separated from the broader stability of the national environment. Strengthening intelligence coordination, addressing the root causes of insecurity, and promoting inclusive socio-economic development remain essential responsibilities of the state.

In essence, these recommendations underscore the necessity of a balanced policy approach that preserves the noble ideals of national service while adapting its operational framework to contemporary realities. With decisive reforms, strengthened security arrangements, and sustained institutional commitment, the National Youth Service Corps programme can continue to function as a

powerful platform for youth empowerment, national unity, and grassroots development in the years ahead.

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