

## POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: THE BANE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Over the years in Nigeria, excellent policies have been formulated, but the problem is that only an insignificant part of these numerous policies are implemented. There is no visible and significant development to show for this. This suggests that mere formulation of policies should not be the major issue in Nigeria but rather their effective implementation, as it is only effectively implemented policies that can bring about national development. Against this background, this study discusses the reasons that militate against effective implementation of policies in Nigeria and the solutions to the problem. This work also enumerated some of the public policies that have failed in the country. The paper reveals, among other reasons, corruption, poor funding of policies, lack of continuity in government policies, lack of political will, inadequate human and material resources, and clarity of purpose are responsible for policy failures in Nigeria. The consequences of public policy failures to the citizens in particular and the country in general were stated, some of which are less patriotism, underdevelopment and non human capital development.*

**Key words:** public, policy, failures, under development

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is besieged by many problems. These problems could be in the areas of politics, commerce, education, agriculture, communication, housing, transportation, health and other contemporary issues such as terrorism, unemployment, kidnapping, and governments formulate policies to help eradicate these problems. Achebe (1983) believes that the problem with Nigeria is the problem of leadership. It is clear that the kind of leader that is needed in Nigeria is the type that will have the will to implement her numerous policies because political will should be the key factor to government policy formulation strategies.

Policy implementation has been described as one major problem confronting developing countries. According to Cochran (2015) policy comprises political decisions for implementing programs to achieve societal goals. The implementation problem in developing countries is the problem of a widening gap between policy intentions and outcomes. Implementation gap manifests in the widening of the distance between stated policy goals and the realization of such planned goals. The implementation gap from policy formulation in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as successive governments make policies that are not realizable throughout their tenure.

It very clear from records that Nigeria over the years has initiated well articulated developmental, economic and social policies, intended to launch the nation on the path of meaningful

development. A list of such programs abound; Operation Feed the Nation, vision 2010, 2020, 7 point Agenda and many others, many of which did not yield any result due to poor implementation or non-implementation.

Presently, the crisis of development is the most serious problem facing Nigeria. This is because the continent has remained a victim of underdevelopment despite the presence of huge mineral and human resources. Several decades after the end of colonialism, most parts of Nigeria is still fighting with problems such as high poverty rate, lack of basic infrastructural facilities in all sectors of the economy, unemployment, high mortality rate, political instability and insecurity of lives and property. Nigeria's underdevelopment is more of poor implementation than lack of development visions and programmes. To this extent, therefore, the role of government in development is to a very large extent, achieved through the effective implementation of government policies, projects and programs, (Abah, 2010).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Policy denotes 'What governments do, why they do it, and what difference does it make (Dye, 1995). According to Cochran (2015) policy comprises political decisions for implementing programs to achieve societal goals. Public policy comprises a plan of action or program and a statement of objectives, in other words, a map and a destination. The objectives tell us what we want to achieve with policy and who will be affected by policy. Public policy plans or programs outline the process or the necessary steps to achieve the policy objectives. They tell us how to do it.

Ozor (2004) the term policy is central to the operation and activities of both private organizations and public institutions. A policy option made by an individual or private institution is known as private policy while the one made by government or its institutions is called public policy. However, the term policy as it is used in this work refers to only the ones made by government and which are, as such, regarded as public policies. Generally, scholars have viewed the term policy differently and from various perspectives. Some emphasize policy as an action. Others see it as choice. Yet, some see it in terms of scope of action (Ikelegbe, 2006). In other words, the way a given scholar conceptualizes a policy depends on the perspective from which the scholar is viewing it and this accounts for the varied definition of the concept. For instance, in the view of Egonwan (1991), it is a governmental programme of action, while to Abdulsalami (in Yakubu & Obasi, 1998), a policy refers to hard patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring government action for their solution. To Ezeani (2006), it is the proposed course of action which government intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it.

Ikelegbe (2006), in a more elaborate form, defines policy thus; it is the integrated course and programmes of action that government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct action and practices in certain problem area. In essence, a policy is a course setting action that provides the direction, the guide and the way to the achievement of certain goals or objectives desired by government.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study derives its theoretical foundation from Elite Theory and the Rational – Choice Theory. **Elite Theory:** In political science and sociology, elite theory is a theory of the state which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy planning networks, holds the most power and that this power is independent of a state's democratic elections process. According to the elite theory society is stratified with the masses at the bottom and ruling-class elite at the top, (Mosca, in Dlakwa, 2008). These elites are the rich and well-educated, who share

common beliefs and use their influence to dictate public policies. Any policy which went against this class could be predicted to fail. This theory also focuses attention on the role of leadership in policymaking

**Rational-choice theory:** Rational choice theory is an economic principle that states that individuals always make prudent and logical decisions. These decisions provide people with the greatest benefit or satisfaction given the choices available and are also in their highest self interest. The theory argues that policymakers pursue their own self interest instead of any national interest. They also formulate policies based on their own goals. This model alerts us to the importance of self-interest in policymaking.

### **CRITICAL REVIEW OF POLICIES LEADING TO UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

**New Automotive Policy:** The Federal Government introduced a tariff of 70% on used cars and buses effective July 1, 2014. Side by side with that, the government approved import duty waivers on imported Completely Knocked Down (CKD) components while Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) components will attract only 10% duty without any levy. The policy was geared at stimulating local manufacturing and assembly of cars, attract investment in the sector, encourage technologically advanced manufacturing activities so affordable cars could be produced and also generation of employment. At the moment, the Stallion Group has started the assembly of Nissan and Hyundai vehicles from their assembly plants while Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Plc. also recently rolled off the first set of 'made-in-Nigeria' vehicles. The policy has its critics as well like those who argue that such a policy being initiated in the midst of an undeveloped steel industry and comatose power was not well thought out. Another criticism is the absence of automotive components supply base and other cluster industries.

**The Re-Introduction of ATM Charges:** In September, the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, announced a re-introduction of ATM charges. According to the CBN, the N65 charge per transaction "shall apply as from the fourth remote withdrawal (in a month) by a cardholder, thereby making the first three remote transactions free for the card holder but to be paid by the issuing bank". The CBN said the fee was re-introduced to cover remuneration of switches, ATM monitoring and fit notes processing by banks. This is still very unclear to the masses.

**National Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP) and the National Enterprise Development Program (NEDEP)** Both were launched on the same day in February. The president said that the NIRP is "the most ambitious industrialisation programme ever pursued by our nation" and will accelerate growth in those industries where Nigeria has comparative advantages such as food and agric products, metals and solid minerals processing, oil and gas related industries, construction, light manufacturing and services. The NIRP targets N5 trillion revenue for Nigerian manufacturers annually. An 8-man committee with the richest man in Africa as alternate co-chair was set up by the President on NIRP. NEDEP, on the other hand was initiated to tap into the potentials of micro, small and medium enterprises as "the bedrock for industrialisation and inclusive economic growth." President Jonathan said that under NEDEP, "enterprise zones will be created in every state of the federation equipped with essential infrastructure for small businesses to thrive and transform Nigeria through employment generation, economic linkages and rural industrialisation." The impact of these two initiatives so far is still unclear.

**Operation Feed the Nation (OFN):** This policy was formulated in 1976. Its functions, amongst others were to provide sufficient food for all Nigerians; to facilitate agricultural credit from commercial banks to farmers. The policy was abandoned soon after the civilian administration of Shehu Shagari came on board in 1979.

Green Revolution: it was formulated in 1979 and used to replace the Operation Feed the Nation. This policy did not achieve the desired results due mainly to structural defects occasioned by political parochialism. It ended up as mere slogan or symbolic policy (Samson & Stanley, 2014)

## **FACTORS THAT MILITATE AGAINST EFFECTIVE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA**

- **Lack of Political Discipline:** A man who is not disciplined cannot discipline his household. Most of our political rulers are not discipline to themselves that is why they lack the will power to say something and implement it. It is argued that though, the set objectives of government polices stand to benefit the public, top government officials and politicians jeopardize the implementation of such public policies.
- **Need Analysis:** for effective policy implementation, there is need to understand the pains of the people and how the policy will be of benefit to them along side with proper channelling procedure.
- **Corruption:** corruption affects the content and quality of policy at formulation stage, public office holders make policies based on their selfish interest and sometimes only to attract public attention. Most policy goals in Nigeria are based on the personal rewards and interests of the political leaders and their godfathers with the result that a policy is judged more on its political merits than with the real developmental gain.
  - **Too many points of agenda:** from the incept of assumption of office, most political leaders ditch out too many agenda that lack focus and technical knowhow , most often they use it to buy time and while blowing political ruckus on air deceiving the masses that they are working.
  - **Lack of continuity:** in most developing countries, the target beneficiaries are not allowed to contribute to the formulation of the policies that affect their lives. Implementation problem can arise from the policy itself when such a policy emanates from government rather than from the target groups. Lack of continuity arises from ego, change of regimes, godfatherism which in turn gives way to abandonment of projects. This may explain one of the reasons why it is possible to find abandoned project all over Nigeria.
  - **Inadequate Resources:** Nigeria is endowed with material and human resources, but it is the formulation of wrong policies at the right time and discriminative funding of some policies that has led to the problem of inadequate resources. This is because when most public policies are formulated, adequate provision of resources is not made to implement them. The Primary Health Care (PHC) program, for instance stand to benefit massively the rural population and urban poor in the country, but resources are not appropriated to make it a success. There is thus politics of implementation because, the resources needed for adequate implementation of relevant policies are not provided to realize policy objectives.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY CATASTROPHES**

Policy failure gives birth to so many catastrophes afflicting the citizens and the country at large, these include;

- **Underdevelopment:** any country that is underdeveloped cannot feed her citizens neither provide jobs for all, when citizens are well to do they will in turn be productive in the country by contributing their quota to its growth and development. What the country gives her citizens shows to a large extent the state of her development; suffice to say that the state of any economy directly reflects in the life style of her citizens.

- **Less Patriotism by Citizens:** these days a lot of persons are no longer interested in the things that happen in Nigeria due to lots of failure in policy implementation.
- **Non-improvement on Human Capital:** Public policies, besides solving the problems of the people, are also meant to improve on the human resources of the society. It is human capital that is the fulcrum and lever of nations. Public policy failures hinder the development and improvement of human capital.
- **Waste of Resources:** Public policy failures are waste of human and materials resources that were put into it during and after formulation. The entire process of public policies is no mean task. If the policies fail to achieve its desired results, then the colossal human and material resources put in from formulation to the implementation stages are wasted. The resources could have been devoted to other areas which need more attention in the country. It is the people's resources or commonwealth that are used in making and implementing policies, Samson & Stanley, (2014).

### WAYS OF ENHANCING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

The following will help to achieve a successful policy implementation in Nigeria:

- Target beneficiaries: it is suffice to say that no single government policy plan is sufficient to meet the needs of the people. It is good to target a specific group for a better policy implementation. The target group should be involved at the formulation stage in order for them to contribute in what affect their lives. This will also give them a sense of belonging and commitment.
- There should be provision for adequate monitoring of projects, to stop the problem of abandoned projects and to ensure the realization of policy goals.
- Adequate material and human resources needed to implement the policy should be provided.
- There must be effective communication between the target beneficiaries and the implementers of policy programs.
- Encourage the culture of continuity: the culture of discontinuity of policies should be discouraged. The national and state assemblies should enact laws that will guarantee continuity of policies made to enhance growth and development. The culture of changing or discontinuing a policy once there is a change in government should be discouraged, though government comes and goes, administration is continuous. There should be continuity in policy except if the policy is found not to be useful to the people.

### CONCLUSION

It is evident from this discourse that policies been formulated in this country do not in any way address the needs and aspirations of the masses. "In the words of Samson & Stanley, (2014), policies need to be properly formulated and must as well be properly monitored so as to avoid failures". This is because the failure of public policies, to a large extent, is a failure of government and governance. It is therefore pertinent to suggest that until public policies are implemented to achieve the desired goals for which it was formulated, the general aspiration for Nigeria to join the league of developed nations in 2020 will be unattainable. This calls for a change of attitude on the part of policy makers, implementers and the general public.

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