Analysis of Public Policy Implementation Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract
The work entitled “analysis of Public Policy Implementation challenges in Nigeria” seeks to examine the challenges that have continued to hinder the successful implementation of public policies in Nigeria. A general policy problem is that of inadequate and poor data which poses planning difficulties and invariably implementation challenges of projects and programmes. Unreliable data makes it difficult to make adequate projections in terms of expected outcome, needs and equipment Failure of government to meet up with the condition of coming up with an action plan as and when due impedes effective implementation of public policies. Inadequacy of policy resources also tend to undermine the successful implementation of public policies. This study recommends that the factors that plague public policy implementation agencies must be addressed. Laudable policies formulated should not go into thin air at the implementation stage. Governmental implementing agencies must be efficient and competent so as to ensure effectiveness of policy implementations. Also, corruption is of serious concern; in this regard, the issues of proper utilization of funds and accountability must be critically observed.

Keywords: Public, Policy, Implementation, Programme, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction
The magnitude and complexity of contemporary problems faced by developed and developing countries need urgent intervention (Dye, 2002). Increasing resource and economic problems, the enlarging responsibilities of public authorities and the growing expectations of the citizenry for speedy and efficient resolutions have not only compounded the burden of most states but have raised the need for proper diagnosis of socio-economic problems. According to Ayuba (2012), these varied socio-economic problems need to be carefully studied while prescriptions and particularly the design, formulation, implementation and performance management of optimal and effective policies are substantially reviewed. As a way of providing solutions to these myriads of problems facing society, Ikelegbe (2006) opined that society is ordered, steered and directed towards desired ends by the state through policies.

There is no unanimity on the definition of policy. However, according to Egonmwan (2009), policy can be described as the overall framework within which the actions of the government are undertaken to achieve its goals. It is a purposive and consistent course of action devised in response to a perceived problem of a constituency, formulated by a specific political process, and adopted, implemented, and enforced by a public agency. The word "policy" is not a tightly defined concept but a highly flexible one, used in different ways on different occasions (Ayuba, 2012). According to Dye
(2002), public policy is whatever governments chose to do or not to do. A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes (Ayuba, 2012). It is a statement of intent, implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization. Therefore, policy-making in a federal system entails the government deciding when, where, how to act or not act on a particular problem or concern (Egonmwan, 2009). Through linkage institutions, (that is political channels), people's concerns become political issues on the policy agenda, and policies of government are reflective of the will of the populace.

To Sapru (2004), policy is a purposive course of action taken by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives. Webster's dictionary defines policy as a course or method of action selected (by government, institution, group or individual) from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and, usually, to determine present and future decisions. A policy enumerates the objectives, intentions, and guidelines. It is a course of action aimed at finding solutions to specific social problems. On his part, Egonmwan (2009) sees policy as a formal document or framework in which a government or other institution outlines goals and the guiding principles and strategies for achieving those goals; and gives the authority to undertake actions in pursuit of them. Sound policies should include human and financial commitments, clear timelines, and the roles and responsibilities needed for achieving the stated goals, as well as benchmarks for ensuring accountability (Egonmwan, 2009).

According to Ikelegbe (2006), a policy is both related to and, different from a decision. A decision is a choice made from among alternatives. Policies are "made" and "implemented" in the same way that decisions are made and implemented. Yet it is possible to have policies that are not or cannot be implemented, so that, conceptually, actions that implement policies need not necessarily be part of policy itself. Although a policy is like a decision, it is not just a "vie-off", independent decision. A policy is a set of coherent decisions with a common long-term purpose(s) (Ikelegbe, 2006). When decisions are one-off, incoherent or opportunistic, complaints are made that a government or its agent "does not have a policy". Government policies are often supported by special legislation. The terms "policy", "plan", "programme" and "project" are progressively more specific in time and place (Ikelegbe, 2006). Policies are usually national policies (not district or provincial) and are not normally limited in time: one does not usually speak in terms of "2-year policies" as one does of "2-year programmes" or "5-year plans."

Overall, policy-making may involve decision-making while decision-making may not necessarily embrace policy-making, (Egonmwan, 2009). Policy is different from a programme; whereas a policy is a statement of actions and intentions, a programme is the means designed to achieve the actions and intentions. A programme according to Ikelegbe (2006) is the set or package of structures, processes, resources, activities, and action designed to implement a particular policy. A project, on the other hand, has a defined lifespan or timeframe with specific objectives that, when attained, signify completion. A programme, therefore, is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing the projects individually Makinde, (2005).
1.1 Policy Development in a Federal System

In a Federal System, policies are developed through consultative, participatory and transparent processes - particularly those that engender ownership among both the implementers and intended beneficiaries of the policy; they are more responsive and have greater chance for effective implementation than those that are not (Iyanda and Bello, 2016). Federalism, on the other hand, is a system in which the power of all government regulations is split among the local, national, and central or federal governments. Nigeria is one of the major examples of a federal system, where the authority is divided among various levels of government, which includes federal (central), state and local authorities. Federalism is divided into two dimensions; constitutional and financial. They both play a major role in policy-making process (Gerston, 2007).

A constitutional dimension of federalism in the United States of America (USA) highlights certain powers being provided to national government and, it also provides certain responsibilities to the state government. The 1789 constitution of the USA, which is among the oldest constitutions in the history of the world, highlights the overall structure and practices followed in the federal system (Inyang, 2015). Policy-making in federalism is shaped by the financial dimension of federalism, where spending is divided among the three levels of government. Federalism plays an important role in identifying various perspectives and interests of the bureaucrats and policymakers, which helps them in developing and implementing policies (Makinde, 2005).

In the Nigeria federal system, the best example of policymaking can be taken from the healthcare and education sectors. In the healthcare sector, the process involves contributions from primary actors through the national government; the state government plays a secondary but significant role. In the education sector, all three governmental levels play significant roles. The state government is involved in primary constitutional as well as monetary responsibilities, national government plays secondary but very important role, whereas the local government involves in providing the educational services. (Ayuba, Charas, and Paul, 2012). Policymaking is when a government decides whether to act on a particular problem. If it chooses to act, the policymaking becomes choosing what action to take (Ikelegbe, 2006). Development policy-making, therefore, entails the reception of policy demands, arriving at policy decisions, formulating policy statements, which are implemented to generate policy outputs to derive policy outcome (Ikelegbe, 2006). Basu (2006) has identified certain basic elements that distinguish public policy from other policies as follows:

i. Purposive or result oriented action rather than random behaviour is the hallmark of public policy.

ii. Public policy refers to the action or decisional pattern by public administrators on a particular issue over a period rather than their separate discrete decisions on that matter in adhoc fashion.

iii. Policy is what government actually do and what subsequently happens rather than what they intend to do or say.

iv. Public policy may be either positive or negative in form positively, it may involve some form of government action regarding any issue or problem, negatively, it may involve a decision by government officials not to take action on a matter on which government opinion, altitude or action is asked for.
iv. Public policy is based on law is authoritative. It has legal sanction behind it, which is potentially coercive in nature and is binding on all citizens.

As a course of action, public policy involves a number of activities that are carried out sequentially in district stages as follows:

a. Goal formulation involving multiple groups with varying and often conflicting objectives.
b. Problem identification and definition as a result of partial ignorance or problem situation.
c. Agenda setting involving attempts by individuals and groups to influence policy decisions.
d. Seeking of policy alternatives and evaluating such policy alternatives, that is analysis of policy options and policy choice.
e. Policy execution by administrators after formal adoption i.e policy implementation.
f. Policy evaluation that is concern with estimation, assessment or appraisal of policy.

2.0 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Ho: The public policy formulated does not have significant effect on its successful implementation.
   Hi: The public policy formulated has significant effect on its successful implementation.

2. Ho: The challenges of public policy implementation does not significantly contribute to national development.
   Hi: The challenges of public policy implementation significantly contributes to national development.

3. Ho: Corruption does not significantly contribute to unsuccessful implementation of public policies in Nigeria.
   Hi: Corruption significantly contributes to unsuccessful implementation of public policies in Nigeria.

3.0 Challenges of Policy Implementation in Nigeria

It is important to note that the bane of Nigeria's national development lies in its inability to implement policies effectively, despite the enormous resources at the disposal of the government. Many policies have suffered at the stage of implementation and hardly serve their intended purposes. Many scholars expressed their views on the problems of policy implementation in Nigeria, while some problems are structural, others are environmental and attitudinal. Some of the major problems are highlighted below:

i. Lack of Clear Definition of Goals: Various governments in Nigeria have the obvious tendencies of pursuing multiple goals that in most cases are complicated. Policy goals often lack clarity and consistency with demands of the people. Policy makers in Nigeria assume that they know the needs of the target groups whose social situation they are attempting to ameliorate and therefore see no need for clarity of goals. And it is obvious where policy goals are not clear, implementation tend to be more difficult.

ii. Over-Ambitious Policy Goals: Many policies pursued by government tends to be over ambitious which largely affect how programmes and policy goals are decided. According to Egomnwan (2009) "the desire to establish the legitimacy of the political regime by providing tangible evidence of improving conditions, create a situation in which the
political leaders are likely espouse policies that led to improvement of conditions of life, but maybe not realizable because of its overambitious nature. Therefore, the scope and comprehensiveness of policies formulated gave rise to serious bottlenecks during implementation. Vision 2020 & the present nine point agenda are some of such policies.

iii. **Lack of Appropriate Technology for implementation**: Implementing agencies in most cases lack appropriate modern technology, managerial skill and administrative capacity that are prerequisite for effective policy implementation. The procedures adopted in policy implementation are such that are not consistent with policy goals. And sometimes cultural consideration hampers adoption of modern technology in areas of programme implementation. Examples can be seen in the people’s resistance of use of fertilizer because of traditional beliefs some decades ago; or the rejection of polio vaccines in some northern states.

iv. **Lack of Continuity Commitment to Policy**: Change in government more often is accompanied by change in priorities. The situation tends to make implementation more difficult in terms of switch over to entirely different priorities and objectives which requires new organizations, personnel, resources and technology which are not always easy to provide. This led to abandonment of many policies.

v. **Lack of Clear Definition of Responsibility & Coordination**: Many policies in Nigeria require the involvement of many agencies at different levels of government. Example includes the policy on poverty reduction that was designed in phases and requires the involvement of so many agencies across the three level of government. And there is absence of coordination and clear definition of responsibility among the various agencies involve, this factor led to the failure of the poverty alleviation policy.

vi. **Comparison during Implementation**: Compromises are made that usually undermines the basic policy goals are detrimental to successful execution of programmes. For example the successive Housing policies in Kano failed because it turnout to be the means of rewarding party loyalist and other economic and royal elites, thereby negating the basic goals of the policies of providing housing to the general public.

vii. **Corruption**: The corrupt tendencies of public officials and politicians in connivance with private organizations and individuals have no doubt have a far reaching consequences on effective implementation of policies in the country. Corruption has pervaded every aspect of our societal life. It can be seen not only in inflation of contract figures or percentage negotiations, but outright diversion of billions of naira meant for one programme or another. Agencies like EFCC and ICPC created to control and convert corruption have turnout be toothless bulldogs with nothing to show compared to the high level corruption in the country. These corrupt practices can easily be seen in the diversion of billions of US dollars aimed at providing enough power supply that will boost the national economy, a case which is yet to be investigated.

4.0 Effects of Public Policy Implementation Challenges on National Development

Given the ample problems and challenges elaborated earlier, the question of national development looks quite not obvious. National development been multi-faceted phenomena that is concerned with total transformation of the political economic, social and cultural aspects of the society, requires, commitment and structures conducive to implementation of development programmes. The impact of implementation of policies on any economy is of vital importance. "The greatest problem hindering development of
less developed countries like Nigeria is a lack of implementation and or improper implementation of plans, programmes and projects" (Bernar, 1995). In recent times, there has been increasing pressures on the Nigerian government to provide basic essential services such as education, health infrastructures, etc. which was resulted from growing number of population, coupled with high level of insecurity that engulfed most parts of the country. This is attributed to the high level of poverty and unemployment. And it is evident, that where policy goals are over ambitious, not well articulated and made explicit, implementation because more difficult and complicated, and it amounts to overstretching the available resources for maximum impact and at the end nothing concrete is achieved. Secondly, in the absence of modern technology, managerial skills and administrative capacity in our public agencies responsible for implementing projects and programmes, the resultant effects will be inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the utilization of resources which lead to serious misappropriations and mismanagement. Thirdly, constant change in policies or shifts in priorities that led to abandonment of many projects across the country, largely due to change in government has the potential of making our national developments more difficult and led to compromises in our development plans. At the end, government may likely lose focus and direction, which will invariably affects our national development.

Lastly, national development will never be possible in the face of high level corruption that pervades all nooks and crannies of the country. The situation was so bad to the extent that it caught the attentions of international organizations such as the World Bank and Transparency International, and Nigeria was ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world. It can be’ seen in the way billions of US dollars were squandered in NEPA (now Power Holding Company of Nigeria) and NNPC in recent years. At some point, the transparency international is showing accusing finger at Aso Rock as being the most corrupt place in the country. And Nigerians are yet to recover from the oil subsidy saga that amounts to trillions of naira and still nothing has been done to perpetrators. The effects of these corrupt practices will no doubt lead to lack of basic essentials like education, health, food and shelter. And poverty, unemployment, arm robbery, kidnapping, militancy and terrorism will be on the increase and the question of National development will be pipe dream.

5.0 Conclusion

Essentially, success in implementation must be evaluated within the context of particular problems and critical factors affecting implementation varies, and "success prone" policies are not always obvious. Effective implementation is said to be partially preordained by good leadership that can be the significant political hidden hand that guides disorganized and desperate interest to converge in support of implementing policy. External monitoring of the implementation process was also a crucial variable. Constant and closer monitoring and intervention on continue basis can greatly facilitate action. Effective and successful policy implementation is the key to national development, it is a building block that facilitate socio-economic and political progress and can only be achieved not only through a continuous political commitment and clear definition of responsibilities and coordination, but also through genuine commitment to eradication of corruption at all levels of government.
6.0 Recommendations

The challenges associated with policy implementation depend largely on the problems passed on to the implemented by policy formulators and those that are inherent within the implementation stage itself. In Nigeria, however, the most serious challenge is the ability of the government to eradicate corruption at all levels. Genuine commitment to the eradication of corruption involves not only the empowerment of the various agencies charged with responsibility of converting corruption with little interference by the government in their activities, but also the prosecution of the perpetrators no matter, their social, economic and political standing in the society.

Secondly, there is also the issue of including implementation plan and analysis within the broader policy formulation framework, where the chains and multiple factors for successful policy implementation will be considered and appropriate measures taken, that will provide for clear definition of goals and coordination as well as defined programme for achievement of goals. More importantly, the ability of the politicians and bureaucrats to imbibe a culture of patriotism and the necessary political will and commitment, that will ensure continuity in policy direction and resistance to temptations and compromises that for long have been detrimental to the successful implementation of public policies.

Lastly, various civil society organizations, other professional bodies and private individuals should pressurize the government for better public policy that will ensure the progress of the country, through the various constitutional means and other democratic norms and traditions.

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