

CONTENDING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES HAMPERING EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN NIGERIA: A PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

In Nigeria, numerous public policies have been formulated and implemented since independence. However, there is no significant development to show for these policies as evidenced by the fact that Nigeria is still classified as underdeveloped countries among the comity of nations. This implies that mere formulation of policies should become not the major issue in Nigeria but rather the effective implementation of these policies should be a matter of great concern to all governance actors, as it is only a successfully implemented policies that can bring about development. Therefore, policy implementation is central to the nation's development trajectory. In Nigeria, the recurring challenge is essentially the problem of effective implementation of policies. In reality, it the practice of successive governments to abandon inherited policies and initiate their own policies, which their own successors usually abandon, thus leaving a chain of abandoned policies. As public policies continue to fail, citizen's trust in government ability to achieve national development is gradually eroded. Based on this, discussion on policy implementation continually assumes a greater significance among scholars. Policy implementation is not a bed of roses, as it is often challenging and contentious, because policy's programmes usually faced obstacles during implementation. Most policy's programmes do not survive during execution and those that do, usually implemented haphazardly, thus, emerged mutilated or distorted, to the extent that they may no longer serve their intended purposes. Premised on this, the study examined the emerging issues and evolving challenges in policy implementation in Nigeria. In carrying out the study, the secondary sources of information or data, were mostly relied on. Thereafter, content analysis technique was adopted in the data analysis. The study found that there exists, some factors that constitute obstacles to effective policy implementation in Nigeria. These factors include; corruption, bad leadership and the influence of primordial demands on the public service, which negatively affect policy implementation processes. Recommendations are offered to overcome these challenges and to facilitate effective implementation of policies is that government should work towards ensuring the emergence of responsible political and public service's leaderships in order to create room for the public institutions to implement public policies essentially on the basis of laid down rules and principles of public service.

Introduction

For a policy to be put into effect, it requires determining which organization will be responsible for carrying it out, and clear communication and coordination as well as sufficient funding are needed to make the implementation step a success. The success of any government lies in the manner of public policy implementation process employed and this process occupies a key position in the success of every administration. In Nigeria, public policies are usually well formulated but poorly implemented by the bureaucracy (Obodoechi, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2006). This results to the failure of so many public policies to achieve their target goals and objectives, and to ultimately alleviate the problems for which they were designed. In practical terms, there is usually wide gaps between formulated policy goals and the achievement of those goals as a

result of ineffective implementation in almost all facets of public administration in Nigeria (Ozor, 2004; Mankinde, 2005).

According to Ezeani(2006), policy implementation is generally a function of administration and politics, in co-operation with the people (citizenry). But, the problems in Nigeria is that little attention is given to the process of policy implementation by policy makers. This means that there is a disconnection between policy formulation and implementation process, and this gap has caused the country a very serious problem that policy distortion or abortion and even policy failure is always reoccurring. Resultantly, it has also caused untold hardship on the citizenry since programme execution and service delivery has been in an epileptic form. In fact, many scholars have described public policy implementation as the major challenge confronting Nigeria in its effort to achieve national development and implementation of public programmes often turn out to be the graveyard of many public policies.

Practical experience in public service shows that little attention is paid to the subject of policy implementation by political office holders and political executives who are saddled with policy making, often taken for granted that once a policy is adopted by government, it must be implemented and the desired goals will be achieved. Therefore, in most cases, policy makers particularly the political executives, paid little or no attention to the problems and complexities associated with implementation of public policies. The recurring action always witnessed is that large amount of energy and resources are spent on designing and drafting policies as well as preparing plans for all kinds of sector, with little or no thought given to the complex chains of reciprocal interactions and variables required during implementation process, evidenced in the recurring widening gap between policy intentions and policy results or impacts since independence till date.

George Honadle and Rudi Klauss, (cited from Egonmwan, 2009), best described the pathetic situation of public policy implementation in Nigeria as thus: *"Implementation is the nemesis of designers, it conjures up images of plans gone awry and of social carpenters and masons who fail to build to specifications and thereby distort the beautiful blue prints for progress which were handed to them. It provokes memories of good ideas that did not work and places the blame on the second (and Second Class) member of the administration team"* Their description vividly captures the typical policy making situation in Nigeria, where the intention of designers of policies are often underline by constellation of powerful forces of politics and administration, coupled with prevalence of high level corruption. The resulting inadequate attention to difficulties and failures that have attended major public policies in Nigeria have necessitated this study to investigate the challenges hampering effective management of public policy implementation process and to stress the need for adequate attention to be paid to political variable and institutional capacity for implementation of public policies and execution of its component programmes and projects.

In the past, the focus of the literature of policy science was more on the policy formulation stage. But, in contemporary period however, emphasis has shifted to policy implementation process following the realization that effective implementation of policies is not an automatic affair (Egonmwan, 1984; Ikelegbe, 2006; Nweze, 2016). In recent time especially under the current fourth republic, policy implementation has become of great concern to its formulators in Nigeria as ineffective implementation of policies has become very critical and worrisome to the citizenry. In fact, this paradigm shift is in consonance with the position of Ugo and Ukpere (2011) that an adequate solution to the problem of public policy implementation failures in Nigeria must stem logically from a rigorous examination and analysis of its the challenges and

causes, which this study looked at. This is because policy implementation is a major stage in the public policy making process and it worth it to examine obstacles that is constraining the effective implementation of public policies by the public institutions in Nigeria, and to make recommendations on how to address these challenges and strengthen the capability of the policy implementing agencies towards effective implementation of formulated policies.

Also, under the present fourth republic, the study observed that continuity of public policies has been a challenge, with the high frequency of change in administrations at sub national level. Evidently, the nation has witnessed the scrapping of past policies by incumbent governments, which has now become a norm or tradition in Nigeria. In fact, in many public policies, there is no nexus connecting former policies to present ones. This unhealthy state of politics now prevalent in policy making and implementation process in Nigeria remains a major detrimental challenge to the nation's developmental drive. A typical example of the disconnection in past and present policies is cited by Eleagu (2019) where it was observed that in the agriculture sector alone, there were no fewer than twelve policies and programmes between 1976 and 2015 addressing the same issue of food security and poverty alleviation, and these policies were only renamed in most cases. They included Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution in 1980, and the establishment of the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Development Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), among others. Many of these policies and their component programmes failed because of corruption, lack of continuity, improper implementation guidelines and poor supervision (Okoye and Onyeukwu, 2007, cited in Eleagu, 2019).

Based on the recurring abysmal low performance in policy implementation in Nigeria, this study therefore investigates some of the evolving issues and emerging challenges in public policy implementation process with a view to proffers some workable solutions to enhance of the public policies success in Nigeria.

Methodology

The investigation of the evolving challenges in policy implementation in Nigeria is a documentary study. The work obtains its data from secondary sources such as books, journals, archival documents, newspapers, magazines, and websites that host related data on public policy making process. The collected data were examined using a content analysis technique.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

The study adopted four main approaches to policy implementation and three major theoretical models of policy implementation to explain the relevance of policy implementation in public policy making process. Firstly, the adopted approaches to policy implementation are;

- (i) the machine approach which assumes that a clearly formulated policy, backed by legitimate decision-making authority contains the essential ingredients for its own implementation;
- (ii) the game approach that swings from total rationality to virtual irrationality in implementation, and plays down plans, and policies and plays up the power of bargaining and exchange to ensure effective implementation of policy;
- (iii) the evolutionary model which implies that policy is significant not because it sets the exact course of implementation but because it shapes the potential action for its implementation; and
- (iv) the transaction approach which connotes a deliberate action to achieve result, a conscious dealing between implementers and policy environments, and a particularly critical

kind of dealings, negotiation among parties with conflicting or otherwise diverging interests during policy implementation process.

Warwich (1982) recognized the four approaches enumerated above and concluded that implementation means transaction, and to carry out a programme. This kind of transaction involves dealing with tasks, environments, clients and each other. The existence of a formal organization like the civil service and the running of administration are prerequisite for transaction, and the key to successful policy implementation is the continual coping with the context, the personalities involved in the execution, alliances forged and events that were carried out by the implementers.

Equally, scholar like Buses (2005) also recognized top-down approach, bottom-up approach and principal-agent approach as three major theoretical approaches of policy implementation. First, the top-down approach viewed policy formulation and policy implementation as distinct activities. Policies are set at the higher levels in the political system and are then communicated to subordinate levels which are then charged with the technical, managerial and administrative tasks of putting policy into practice. The approach is effective in government and public service because there are clear objectives and a structure for policy implementation. In public service, process exists and this enhanced compliance by policy implementers. The availability of committed and skilled implementing officials such as the civil servants, and regular support from the legislature and interest groups, as well as availability of resources, effective communication and coordination among government implementing agencies are other factors that will make the top-down approach to be effective for policy implementation.

Secondly, there is bottom-up approach which recognizes that individuals at subordinate level are likely to play an active part in policy implementation and may have some discretion to reshape the objectives of the policy and change the way it is implemented. The bottom-up approach sees policy implementation as an interactive process involving policy makers, implementers from various levels of government, and other actors. The problem of bottom-up approach is that it allows for change of policy during implementation, and evaluation of the policy impacts is difficult to carry out. Also, it is difficult to separate the influence of individuals and different levels of government on policy decisions and consequences.

Finally, there is principal-agent approach which suggests that in each situation, there will be a relationship between principal (those who define policy) and agents (those who implement policy), which may involve contracts award and agreements that enables the principal to specify what is to be provided and check that it has been implemented. In recent times, the principal-agent approach is commonly used in government for implementing policy's programme through award of contract for projects execution to private companies and consultants. In Nigeria, inflation of contract and corruption are major weaknesses of the principal-agent approach to policy implementation, which the study uncovered in the course of the research.

Conceptual Analysis

For the benefit of hindsight and to ensure proper understanding of the theme of the topic, the study undertook conceptual analysis of related concepts of policy, public policy, public policy making process and policy implementation.

i. The Concept of Policy

Public policy connotes a declaration of goals, a declaration of course of action, a declaration of general purpose and an authoritative decision. It is an output of the political

system and general directives on the main course of action to be followed. Carl(1967) viewed policy as a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment, providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose. Also, Adenrson (2008), regarded policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. Another scholar-Sharkansky (1978) referred to policy as a proposal, a programme, major decision or refusal to take decision.

Other notable scholars such as Sapru, Vickers, Carls, Robert and Edward equally defined policy in their own way. For instance, Sapru (2012) averred that policy connotes guidance for actions and takes the form of a declaration of goals, a declaration of general purpose and an authoritative action. Vickers (1965) is of the position that policy is decision giving directions, coherence and continuity to the course of action for which the decision making body is responsible. In the words of Carl (1967), policy is a purposeful course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment, providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose. Robert and Edwards, cited in Olaniyi (1998) also defined policy as a set of decisions taken by a political actor or group concerning the selection of goals and the method of attaining them, relating to a specified situation.

Notwithstanding the definitions provided by various scholars enumerated above, it is the position of this study that a policy is simply a statement of the goals and objectives of an organization in relation to a particular subject and the description of the strategies by which the goals and objectives are to be achieved.

ii. The Concept of Public Policy

Public policy is a course of action adopted by the government of a nation. It is often referred to as the laws, regulations, administrative guidelines, procedures and funding criteria established by government (Manjo,2019). This definition implies that public policies are generated by the power of the political actors. In practical terms, public policy is referred to as specific action having an official character, expressed as policy statements, programmes or projects, aimed at solving societal problem. Likewise, policy analysts such as Dye (1972), viewed public policy as anything a government chooses to do or not to do, while Jenkins (1998) defined public policy as a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them.

Generally, public policy is viewed as a process of choice, a succession of stages which mirrors a rationalist understanding of individual behavior, requiring thinking first, then doing, and checking. This connotes a cycle which begins with problem identification, agenda setting, and analysis of policy option, policy instrument, consultation, coordination, policy decision, policy formulation, policy implementation and evaluation. It is a process that begins from individual behaviour and later involves a number of participants at different stages with different perception and interests.

In short, public policies are developed by government agencies and officials who engage in the daily affairs of a political system and persons who are recognized by most members of the system, as having responsibility for those matters and taking decisions that are accepted as binding, most of the time by most of the members, as long as the act falls within the limits of their rules. Amplifying this assertion, Anderson, 2008 (cited in Manjo, 2019) identified some

key elements which distinguish public policy from other types of policies. These elements are that:

- (i) public policy is a purposive or goal oriented action rather than random or choice behavior;
- (ii) public policy consists of courses or patterns of action by government officials;
- (iii) public policy is what governments actually do, not what they intend to do or say they are going to do;
- (iv) public policy involves some governmental actions to solve a particular problem;
- (v) public policy involves a decision of government officials not to take actions, to do nothing, on some matters in which government involvement is sought;

From the foregoing definitions, public policy is based on law and is authoritative. It has a potentially legal coercive quality that private organization policies do not have.

iii. Conceptualizing policy implementation

For a policy to be meaningful in the lives of citizenry, it must be implemented and transformed to service delivery to people by government. However, not all policies reach the implementation stage, even when some attain the implementation level; they are at various stages of completion and different levels of quality. Policy implementation therefore forms a critical stage in the policy cycle. Literarily, implementation connotes carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing and completing. From this definition, policy implementation can be said to begin when policies become programmes or when by authoritative action, conditions are created and efforts made to forge subsequent links in the casual chain to attain the desired result.

Scholars such as Van Meter and Van Horn (1974) provided a more specific definition of policy implementation, when they referred to it as those actions by public or private individuals or groups that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth prior to policy decisions. In effect, they make a clear distinction between the interrelated concepts of implementation, performance, and impact. Also, in the opinion of Cleaves (1980), policy implementation involves moving forward a policy objective by means of administrative and political steps. Bardach (1977) also equates implementation with an “assembly process”, that is; putting machine together, and making it run at one level to the next level.

From the foregoing definitions, policy implementation can be described as the process of converting various inputs, i.e. financial, human, materials, technical resources, demands and supports, etc. into output of goods and service delivery for the betterment of the society.

iv. Conceptualizing Public Policy Making Process

According to Manjo (2019), public policy making process comprises a large and diverse number of actors and institutions, government and non-governmental entities, as well as a wide range of policy instruments. In the process, there are interactions among these actors and institutions during public policy making process as they attempt to influence the debate, selection and eventual implementation of various policy instruments. Public policy making process is also conducted in sequential order, stages and in a cycle, involving actors and institutions, beginning with the identification of a given problem. This is followed by public and government’s awareness of the problem, known as policy demand, which leads to the development of various causes of actions to solve a given problem, known as policy formulation. This is followed by government adoption and legitimization of a given action which results to the implementation of the action, and subsequently, leads to policy evaluation

in order to determine if the objectives of the action are being achieved, and finally, the cycle comes full circle when new problems are identified, resulting to policy modification, revision or termination (Peters, 2010).

This informed the position of Ferdous (2009) who averred that public policy making process is not a merely technical function of government, rather it is a complex interactive process influenced by the diverse nature of socio-political and other environmental forces. These environmental forces that form the policy context lead to the variation in policies during implementation and influenced the outcomes, outputs and impacts of the policies

Thematic Literature Review

The study reviewed some relevant literature relating to the theme of the topic such as methods of implementing policy; activities connected to policy implementation, stages of policy implementation and variables influencing policy implementation.

a. Methods for implementing Policy

In public sector, policy is implemented through direct labour and contract basis. The direct labour basis wholly involves the civil service apparatus who executes public projects and programmes on the basis of direct labour. In this regard, government ministries, departments and agencies do implement public policies, programmes and projects through advocacy, public enlightenment campaigns, construction, maintenance, procurement, service provision and enforcement, licensing, routine checks, budgeting, rulemaking, planning, coordination, staffing, organizing, adjudication of disputes, etc. Through these activities, executive agencies such as the civil service carryout or implement public policy.

On the other hand, policy can be implemented through contract basis when it involves execution of programmes and projects by contractors and consultants. Before the awards, contractors must have tender for the contracts and the procedure for the award and execution is to be organized and supervised by the civil service. The civil service must also arrange bill settlement and payment through preparation of payment vouchers after receipt of valuation certificates on work done (Manjo, 2019).

b. Basic Activities during policy implementation

Regardless of the approach adopted in implementing policy, policy implementation involves three basic activities that must be done during implementation stage. These activities are:

- (i) Interpretation, i.e. the translation of policy into administrative process.
- (ii) organisation, which requires the establishment of administrative units and methods that are necessary to put a programme into effect; and
- (iii) application which involves routine administration of the service.

However, practical experience in public service have shown that three variables i.e. tension, institution and feedback connects the above three activities together. Firstly, any policy, particularly a new policy, necessarily generates tension within and between implementing agencies, the target groups and the environment. The tension may arise within an implementing agency, if its personnel lack the required skills to implement the policy. The target group or environment may also create tension if the policy is new or its components introduce series of changes into the environment. The capability of implementers to handle or manage tension, therefore determines the degree of success of policy implementation (Manjo, 2019).

Secondly, the execution of a new policy usually required that a new institution is created to properly implement it. For instance, following the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent government policy on its containment, Nigeria Government establishes a Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 headed by Mr. Boss Mustapha (SGF). The taskforce implemented the

government policy decisions on containment of Covid 19 in the country and finally, in the process of implementing a new policy, tensions generated could be fed back into the public policy making process in form of new demands which are subsequently processed in the formulation stage and transformed into policies.

c. *Stages in Policy Implementation*

In practice, Manjo (2019) further identified five stages of policy implementation as follows;

- (i) the policy decisions of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs);
- (ii) compliance of the internal and external target groups with those decisions;
- (iii) the actual impact of the decisions;
- (iv) the perceived impact of the decisions; and
- (v) the political systems revision of the original policy.

The first three stages address policy output while the last two stages address the political system's relationship to policy. In all, the five stages usually reflect general tendencies in 'top-down' approach to policy implementation.

A critical examination of the five stages of policy implementation by this study reveals that implementation is not only a managerial or administrative problem; it is also a political process. It is concerned with who gets what, when, how, where and from whom. In this case, there are multiple actors during the policy implementation process. It is unlikely, if not impossible, that public policy of any significance could result from the choice process of any single unified actor. Both policy formulation and policy implementation are inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of several actors with separate interests, goals and strategies.

d. *Variables Influencing Policy Implementation*

Okon (2005) in the book: *Public Policy Analysis*, submitted that policy implementation process is influenced by five critical variables which determine the direction that implementation takes. These variables are linked to, and influenced by each other to a varying extent, depending on the specific implementation situation. Okon (2005) further identified the first variable as the implementation capacity and this determines the function of all the remaining variables such as policy content, institutional context, and commitment of implementers to the goals, clients and coalitions, support and communication. The implementation capacity consists of the structural, functional and cultural abilities to implement the policy objectives of the government by the implementing body. It also involves the ability to deliver those public services, aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens. Capacity of implementers connotes the availability or otherwise of the resources, i.e. human, financial, and materials needed to carry out the policy objectives.

Secondly, the content of policy determines its implementation. A policy may either be distributive, regulatory or redistributive. The policy content will be employed to achieve some ends of a policy aimed at achieving its objectives. Thirdly, the institutional context within which a policy is to be executed, and determine the success or otherwise of the policy. Though, the institutional corridor will necessarily be shaped by the larger context of social, economic, political and legal realities of the system, the principal concern of this study is the impact of the institutional context on the policy implementation process, either positively or negatively. For instance, the bureaucratic context or the civil service is more often considered favourable to the implementation of public policies in view of its human interactions and working relations with the environment, arising from bargaining, accommodation, gestures of respects and related transactions with the public.

Furthermore, commitment of implementation agencies is vital to the implementation process. The government may have formulated the most logical policy imaginable, the policy may have passed cost-benefit analysis and it may have a bureaucratic structure that will be appropriate to its implementation, but if those responsible for executing it are unwilling or unable to do so, little will happen. Policy scientist considered commitment to be critical variables to effective implementation of a policy. Commitment is important, not only at the bureaucratic level, but at all levels through which policy passes. Commitment will influence all the remaining variables like content, context, clients and coalitions.

Finally, client and coalition is also very significant during implementation stage. The communication and support given by clients and coalition of interest groups, opinion leaders and other outside actors will also determine the successes or failures of policy implementation and vice-versa.

Discussions and Findings on the Challenges Hampering Effective Implementation of Public Policies in Nigeria

Generally, as identified in the book of Manjo (2019), this study agreed that multiplicity of participants; and multiplicity of perspectives by policy actors are considered as the two major problems hindering effective implementation of public policies in Nigeria. These two factors usually converge to delay and in some cases; stifle the administrative effort to secure the joint actions required in policy implementation and resulted in policy implementation failures, which is evident in inadequate power supplies, bad roads, dilapidated public schools, poorly-equipped public hospitals among others, and thus, continuing hampering economic growth and development in the country.

Furthermore, based on the Author's practical experience in public service spanning over three decades, and from the contents of some field report on project inspections, as well as the reports of observatory works of government ministries, departments, and other policy implementing agencies, the study further found that policy implementation process in Nigeria is also confronted with other sixteen evolving challenges such as defective methods of procuring policy infrastructure, corruption, inadequate funding, defective project management, leadership problem and political instability, improper design, policy inconsistency, low institutional capacity and poor governance issues as enumerated as follows;

(i) Defective Methods of Procuring Infrastructure for Policy Execution

The method of procuring some public projects is fraught with inherent infractions and fraud. For instance, concessionaire and public private partnership methods of implementing some projects have not worked successfully in Nigeria. For example, in 2009, the 160km Lagos-Ibadan expressway which was concessioned to Bi-Courtney Consortium in 2009 at ₦89.53 billion for a 25 year period under the federal government public-private partnership arrangement did not work. The concession arrangement failed as Bi-Courtney could not delivered the project as agreed due to defective methods of bidding, tendering and awards. The same fate befell the Kaiama- Kishi federal road project traversing Kwara and Oyo states boundary that has been abandoned since 2019 due to faulty procurement and reimbursement impasse between Federal and Kwara State Governments as revealed in the project report (Kaiama-Kishi report, 2019)

(ii) Corruption

The high rate of corruption in Nigeria is disturbing, as corrupt practices have stalled and slowed down the implementation of numerous policies, projects and programmes in the country due

to over-invoicing, bribery, connivance and conspiracy to reduce the quality of public infrastructure in return for cash, kickback, misappropriation of project's fund, embezzlement of project fund, diversion of fund, bribery to execute shoddy works, and a host of other corrupt practices, which are hampering effective policy implementation in the country. The prevailing high incidents of corruption in government have continue to weaken the effective involvement of the civil service in the policy implementation process. In practice, some civil servants find it difficult to observe the laid down due process and other rules, ethics and codes on transparency and accountability in government. In Nigeria, transparent processes have not always been applied by both the executives, legislatures and the civil service during policy implementation process. The consequence lies on the high cost of executing the component of policy such as projects and programmes, and the concomitant abandonment of policies that usually follows.

However, the study further noted that as part of the effort of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) at maintaining transparency and accountability in the execution of public policy, programmes and projects, Nigerians witnessed the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 1999, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003, and enactment of Fiscal Responsibility Act, Public Procurement Act and the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) in 2007. These agencies were designed to ensure openness and transparency government. Strong as their laws are, these agencies have not been able to overcome or eliminate the corrupt practices of political executives and the civil service during policy implementation process in Nigeria.

(iii) Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding remains the bane of execution of many public policies in the country. Successive governments in Nigeria are fond of designing ambitious policies, without making adequate provision for steady sources of funding for their implementation. Many component of policies, especially the infrastructure projects and programme components, rely solely on appropriations in annual budgets for their implementation, which are always inadequate, thus, turning many policies' programmes to conduit pipe, gulping the nation's scarce resources little by little, on annual basis, without completion. Numerous roads and bridge projects of the nation's transport infrastructure policy falls into this category.

(iv) Defective Management

Non-application of sound management techniques constitutes a major problem for some public policies, which usually stalled their implementation.

(v) Improper formulation and design of policies

Improper policy design and formulation usually constitutes problem during the implementation of some policies. Also, the inappropriate use or wrong utilization of novel technology and innovation for the implementation of the programme component of some policies or for operating some of the projects contained in some policies usually stalled some them midway during implementation process.

(vi) Leadership Problem

In Nigeria, there are lack of visionary and incorruptible leaders that can influence the required transformation during policy implementation process are scare. The nation therefore needs visionary, committed and dedicated leaders that can drive effective implementation of public

policies in the country. In fact, successive governments since independence, lack the required blueprints or policy direction for proper policy implementation.

(vii) Political Variables

Political variables that generally impact on policy implementation often result into abandonment of its programmes or projects midway, due to party differences, bad politics of project location, awards of projects to party faithfuls who lack expertise and capability in executing the programmes or projects, which may result into execution of sub-standard works. Also, change of government may likewise bring about change in policy direction, which may have negative effects on the execution of some on-going programmes components of the policy.

In practical terms, the greatest challenge the civil service usually encountered in the public policy making process has been the recurring political instability in most developing nations. For instance, in Nigeria, inconsistency is not only prevalent in public policy but has also been the bane of the policy processes, especially at the implementation stage. In many cases, every regime comes with its own policy and implementation strategies, thereby jettisoning the policy thrust and implementation guidelines and programmes of the predecessors. The resultant effects had been rapid turn-over of officials executing such policy, consequently leading to series of abandoned policies and projects scattered all over the countries.

(viii) Change in economic policy

Frequent changes in economic policy of successive governments may also have an adverse effect on policy implementation. Such economic policies include monetary and fiscal rates such as the rate of inflation, interest rate, tax rates, exchange rates, price fluctuation, bank lending rate, bond prices, etc. changes with change of government and it may impact on policy implementation. Fluctuation in oil prices also impacts on the execution rate of public programmes and projects in the country.

(ix) Environmental Variables

Policy and programme implementation can also be affected by environment variables such as the project location, geography, topography, geology, climate and security of human and material resources at projects site, all of which can make or mar the programmes or projects of public policies, as foreign investors will consider some of these variables in making investment decision and execution plan.

(x) Excessive importation of materials

Majority of materials and personnel required for proper execution of projects and programmes components of public policies are usually imported from outside the country, which may result to capital flight and repatriation of fund by the expatriates to their home countries.

(xi) Poor governance challenges

Mismanagement and maladministration by the public institutions saddled with implementation of policy or its programme components usually constitutes a major challenge in Nigeria. This may take the form of lack of proper accountability, lack of transparency and non-adherence to due process in the administration and implementation of programmes and projects components of public policies. Poor governance challenges have been a recurring decimal and has consequently impacted negatively on service delivery. Effective checks and controls of corrupt practices in public institutions and effectiveness of public institutions in providing quality

regulatory mechanisms for implementation and management of policy, programmes and projects of government will go a long way to enhance development in Nigeria.

(xii) Low capacity of implementing agency

Most of the implementing body or public institutions responsible for policy implementation comprises of unskilled and semi-skilled personnel. The required manpower and capacity is lacking for proper implementation of policy and programme of government. Similarly, staff of government's institutions also suffers from inadequate training and capacity development. In some cases, there is lack of skilled manpower to maintain infrastructure facilities designed and constructed by expatriates after their exit from the country. Complexity of design and non-involvement of institution's officers during facility's design and construction stage also accounted for poor implementation of some public projects and programmes in the country.

(xiii) Inadequate data and poor record keeping

Inadequate data and improper record keeping also constitutes a major challenge confronting government during policy implementation process. Absence of adequate information in the civil service has adversely affected policy implementation process, which in some cases, resulting in to policy failures.

(xiv) Misunderstanding of policy goals

Misunderstanding of policy goals specified by the political executives constitutes another challenge during policy implementation process. In practice, the civil service may not be fully informed about the objectives of government policy, hence wrong alternative means of execution are usually adopted by the civil service during implementation, consequently leading to policy failures. Some policy goals tend to be over-ambitious in nature, owing to the political executive's zeal to bring about rapid socio-economic development within a short period, thus, posing implementation problem and resulting to unattainable goals. Sometimes, the civil service is confronted with self-contradictory goals inherent in some objectives of a policy.

(xv) Inconsistency in Policy

An observable challenge in the policy process was made by Essien (1985), who averred that: *"inconsistency in policy has been the bane of public policy making process in Nigeria. He said, policies and priorities are changed at whim and dizzying frequency. Ministries have been split and merged and them split again only to be merged next time around. Policy programmes or projects have been cancelled, varied, then cancelled only to be revived and cancelled again. All these have occurred not so much for efficiency reasons, but largely for political reasons. The whole approach to government business has been a stop-go approach or a circular approach, or else one of progress through retrogressions; that is, one step forward, and two steps backwards"*.

Essein (1985) further stated that inaccurate identification of problems a policy intends to cure by government's officials often results into defective solutions during policy formulation, which may even worsen an already bad situation. If the civil service based a policy on wrong options and solutions, correct policy strategies will not be adopted during implementation and the policy objectives may not be achieved. A typical example is the flood problem in Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara state, where millions of naira has been spent on yearly basis on flood control along the bank of Asa River. Successive government flood control measure focuses on desilting and provision of assistance to victims, which tends to cure the symptoms, rather than the root causes of the flood, which experts have attributed to lack of drainage, illegal building at the bank of Asa river and, dumping of wastes in the drainages during rains, in which some

experts had suggested the channelization of Asa River as a permanent solution to the problem (Manjo,2019).

(xvi) Adoption of top-down approach

In the opinion of Musa (1995), the increasing adoption of top-down rather than bottom-up approach in policy formulation by the government is identified as a setback to the public service in policy implementation process. This is because the approach is donor-driven, sector specific and restrictive in scope. It implies that policies emanate from the top and are sent down to people without their participation in the initiation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Under the top-down approach, policies are initiated, rationalized and coordinated at the top of the administration, with little consultations with the public service and people, who will later be expected to implement the policies. This usually leads to conflict and deviation during implementation process.

Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing analysis and findings, it is the conclusion of this study that the evolving challenges that is hampering effective implementation of policies in Nigeria revolves around multiplicity of participants, multiplicity of perspectives by implementing actors, defective methods of procuring policy's infrastructure, corruption, inadequate funding, defective project management, leadership problem and political instability, improper design, policy inconsistency, low institutional capacity and poor governance challenges.

Recommendations

In order to close the ever widening gap between policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria, and as solutions to the evolving challenges hampering effective implementation of public policies, the study is of the stand that there is the need to enhance institutional capacity for policy implementation tasks. It is also necessary for policy makers to be conversant with some prerequisites factors required for effective policy implementation such as clarity of the policy; structure; leadership; quality of personnel of implementing organisation; the execution capacity of the implementing organ in relation to the scope of the policy to be implemented, the target group, the organization's previous experience with the introduction of new policies; and the environmental factors which dictate how the policy is implemented, such as local customs, tradition, and religions, that may be influence the implementation of the policy positively or negatively. In order to guarantee success during policy implementation, the study submits that these factors must be given due cognizance in the course of implementing a policy by the implementing organ

Equally, as an additional solution to overcome the challenges of policy implementation in Nigeria, this study is recommending use of skilled workforce for policy implementation; strict adherence to the ground norm of due process, civil service rules and regulations by the implementing body; transparency and accountability during policy implementation process by implementing organs.

The study submits further that no matter how soundly formulated a public policy is, it is absolutely of no consequence until it is implemented and translated to concrete programme by the public institutions. It is the implementation of public policies that will usually result in social services to the people such as good roads, water supply, electricity, establishment of schools, hospitals, industries, etc. hence, policy implementation process must be tackle with all seriousness it required.

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