

PUBLIC POLICY FAILURES IN NIGERIA: CASES, CAUSES AND REMEDIES

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ABSTRACT

Incidence of Public policy failures have been attributed by commentators on the Nigeria's political plane as a causative factor to lack of development in the country. Concerned by this phenomenon, we set out to investigate such failures and their causes. Our strategy was to examine sectoral policies using six identified sectors viz: Agriculture and Food; Education; Health; Housing; Power and Security. Among the identified causes of policy failures in these sectors are non-involvement of all stakeholders at the formulation and implementation stages of the policies, lack of political will to implement formulated policies; unnecessary political interferences, termination of subsisting policies/programmes by successive governments etc. Strategies proposed for ameliorating the situation include: every stakeholder as it affects policies in various sectors must be involved from formulation to the implementation stages; evolving the political will to implement formulated policies; continuity in implementation of viable policies irrespective of leadership changes; further strengthening and effective utilization of the Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Agency which is located in the Presidency in its mandate of providing feedback to government on the progress or otherwise of policy performances in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Public Policy failures; Sectoral Policies; Causes of Policy Failures; and Remedies.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major features of a Nation State is the existence of a government which directs the affairs of that nation. The growth and development of the nation is therefore anchored on the quality of government it produces. Assumably, there exists a charter between the government and the citizens which was consummated while marketing the Manifesto of the political party at campaign period which eventually results in the emergence of a government. On assumption of office, governments of nation states translate their manifestoes as well as other expressed needs of the citizens to policies as a means of guiding the government towards meeting citizens needs/demands. For purposes of implementability, the policies are, quite often, further translated to programmes, then to projects.

However, lack of development as witnessed in most developing countries including Nigeria, is attributable to policy failures. Such indices of lack of development are easily identifiable by the existence of hunger, diseases, illiteracy, squalor and the like. The question that agitates one's mind is, why the failure in policy objectives. This, thus, instigated the study from which this article emerged. It therefore constitutes a veritable contribution to the received wisdom in the field.

Against the foregoing backdrop, the article is arranged as follows:

- (i) Conceptual framework which identifies significant parameters for analyzing the Nigerian situation.
- (ii) Analysis of the situation in Nigeria in which cases of policy failures in selected sectors in Nigeria are identified and explained.
- (iii) Discussions on causative variables which expose impediments to policy successes and consequences of such impediments.
- (iv) The Concluding part of the article prescribes treatment variables for ameliorating the situation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Various Authorities have some notion of what constitutes public policy. Analysis of the different concepts of public policy reveals a diversity of definitions. More traditionally, policy is deemed to be a predetermined course of action determined by elected representatives of the

people. Anderson (1990:4) defines public policy as 'anything governments choose to do'. Policy is not a simple phenomenon, but complex and multifaceted. Although 'policy' might be a straightforward statement of what will be done, the stated objectives may not be the only objectives, or indeed the most important ones. Indeed, other covert or subconscious objectives may exist. The Author provides another definition thus:

A purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern.

Finally, Davis G., Wanna J., Warhurst J., and Wellen P. (1993:4) provide a richer explanation of policy:

...Public policy is the complex interplay of values, interests, and resources. Policies express values, support or curtail interests and distribute resources. They shape, and are shaped by, the constituent elements of politics, so that policies represent victories or compromises encapsulated as programs for action by government.

Programmes and Projects

One interrelated concept of policy is programme. As we explained elsewhere, policies quite often exist in documents. For policies to make the desired impact on the citizens or eventual beneficiaries, they must be translated first to programmes then to projects. This is the reason implementation stage of a policy is assumed to be the most important in that, that stage is often used to evaluate the success or failure of a policy. For instance, establishing a model Secondary School in every state of the federation would as a policy remain a documented statement of government unless translated to concrete programmes or projects which the citizens can see, touch or feel (Maduabum 2008: 416). As explained by Wallace (2007: 4), a programme is a set of related projects which collectively deliver an overall change for the business. A similar argument was made by Vijayakamar, (2011: 1-2), who posits that a programme contains some interrelated projects and that programme management focuses on optimally managing the interdependencies among the various projects in the programme.

Policy Failure: A Concept

The foregoing exposition points-up plausibility of positive policy outcomes yet, pronouncements are often made with regards to policy failures. What then is policy failure? A given policy is said to have failed where and when the policy objectives are not attained. Quite often, public policies are enunciated to address an identified problem in the society. Where the identified problem persists or is not fully resolved after the implementation of such policies, they are deemed to have failed. Certain factors are identified by Ingram and Mann (1980) as determinants of policy failures. These are: excessive demand for policy output; evolving unrealizable policy goals; ineffectiveness of policy instruments and strategies; policy summersaults; and failure of political institutions. To these are remote and immediate causes of policy failures such as inadequate problem definition; untimeliness in policy enunciation; bad policy making process; policy decisions based on imperfect information; failure to define appropriate measures of success; inadequate analysis of changes in the external environment; unrealistic applicability of a given policy; lack of awareness campaigns; failure to develop the capacity for successful delivery; corruption; political instability; ineffective monitoring and evaluation etc.

CASES OF POLICY FAILURES IN NIGERIA

The identified cases are on sectoral basis and our strategy is to employ tabular analysis. The sectors are as follows: Agriculture and Food; Education; Health; Housing; Power; and security. The situation in these sectors is displayed in tables 1 to 6.

Table I: The Agriculture and Food Sector

S/N	Policies/ Programmes	Year of Enunciation	Aims	Causes of Failure
1.	National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)	1990	To sustainably increase the incomes of the Fadama users through expansion of farm and non-farm activities with high value added output (http://www.fadama.org/)	Unskilled handling of water application through irrigation degraded and depleted the soil of its productive capacity (Afolayan, 1997)
2.	National	1992	(a) To give strategic public support for	Most highly placed and

	Agriculture Land Development (NARDA)		land development. (b) To assist and promote better use of Nigeria's rural land and their resources. (c) To boost profitable employment opportunities for rural dwellers. (d) To rise the standard of living of rural people. (e) To assist in achieving food security through self-reliance sufficiency	influential Nigerians seized the opportunity to usurp land that belonged to poor people.
3.	National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS)	2002	(a) To increase food production and eliminate rural poverty. (b) To assist farmers in increasing their output, productivity and income. (c) To strengthen the effectiveness of research and extension service training. (d) To educate farmers on farm management for effective utilization of resources. (e) To support government's efforts in the promotion of simple technologies for self- sufficiency.	(a) Inability of majority of beneficiaries to repay their loan on time. (b) Complexity and incompatibility of innovation and difficulty in integrating technology into existing production system. (c) Insufficient knowledge of credit, use of poor extension agent-farmer, unavailability of labour to carry out essential farming activities. (d) Lack of modern storage facilities and high cost of farm input.
4.	Root and Tuber Expansion	2003	(a) At the National level: to achieve food security and stimulate demand for cheaper staple food such as	The momentum soon waned due to changes in government and its concomitant changes

programme (RTFP)			<p>cassava, gari, yam, potato etc.</p> <p>(b) At the local farmer's level: To achieve economic growth, improve access of the poor to social services and carryout intervention measures to protect poor and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>(c) To introduce improved root and tuber varieties to about 350,000 farmers in order to increase productivity and income.</p>	in policies and programmes.
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Table 2: The Education Sector

S/N	Policies/Programmes	Year	Aims	Failure
1.	National Policy on Education (NPE)	1997	<p>(a) To develop the individual into a sound and effective citizen.</p> <p>(b) To fully integrate the individual into the community.</p> <p>(c) To provide equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school systems.</p>	The situation today is that with an estimated human population of 150,003,543, illiteracy is still as high as 60%.
2.	Policy on Pre-Primary Education	1997	<p>(a) To promote the training of qualified pre-primary school teachers in adequate number.</p> <p>(b) To supervise and control the quality of such institutions.</p>	<p>Has not been implemented at the Federal Level.</p> <p>At the State Level, only one State (Lagos) has an institution for training of pre-primary school teachers.</p>
3.	Policy on Science and Technology		The policy directed that 70% of total admission into tertiary institution should be	As of today, less than 50% of graduates of tertiary

		<p>in Science and Technology programmes. The purpose was to turn the country from a consumer nation to a producer of goods and services through technological development and to keep pace with technological development around the world</p>	<p>institutions are products of science and technology due to gross inadequacy of facilities in the science and technology departments of the tertiary institutions.</p>
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Table 3: The Health Sector

S/N	Policies/Programmes	Year	Aims	Failures
1.	National Drug Policy (NDP)	1990	<p>(a) To realize self-sufficiency in local production of essentials drugs.</p> <p>(b) To establish an effective drug procurement system.</p> <p>(c) To evolve a well-ordered drug distribution system.</p> <p>(d) To harmonize and update drug legislation.</p> <p>(e) To ensure effective control of drug advertisement and promotion.</p> <p>(f) To entrench a commitment to rational use of drugs at all levels of healthcare and drug research and development.</p>	<p>Corruption has practically made it possible for “quacks” and non-professionals to become major players in the Pharmaceutical sector and with the backing of members of the political class they are able to sustain their business.</p>
2.	National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)	2005	<p>(a) To provide easy access to healthcare for all Nigerians at an affordable cost through various pre-payment systems.</p> <p>(b) To improve the health status of</p>	<p>(a) NHIS has only been able to enroll up to 3% of Nigerians under the formal sector health insurance program (Kujenya, 2009). Governments at all</p>

			Nigerians.	<p>levels provide little support for the medical sector.</p> <p>(b) Lack of adequate medical personnel in clinics, primary healthcare, general and tertiary hospitals is limiting the effectiveness of NHIS in Nigeria (WHO 2007).</p> <p>(c) Poor distribution of Health-care facilities.</p>
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Table 4: **The Housing Sector**

S/N	Policies/Programmes	Year	Aims	Failures
1.	National Housing Policy	1980	<p>(a) "To ensure that all Nigeria's own or have access to decent, safe and sanitary housing accommodation at affordable costs by the year 2000".</p> <p>(b) To evolve as a strategy, establishment of the National Housing Fund scheme to mobilize loanable funds from workers which would be reimbursed via newly created Primary Mortgage Institutions.</p>	As of today, housing development has been neglected by successive governments which did not regard it as a priority. Other contributory factors to the failure are poor programme planning design; wrong siting of projects; politicization of polices; appointment of schedule officers by patronage; corruption and nepotism etc.

Table 5: **The Power Sector**

S/N	Policies/Programmes	Year	Aims	Failures
1.	(a) The Electricity Power Sector Reform Act	2005	<p>(a) To establish the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN).</p> <p>(b) To unbundle the PHCN into 18</p>	<p>(a) Lack of foreign investment.</p> <p>(b) Absence of a sustained and deliberately deployed long-</p>

	<p>(EPSRA). (b) Power Sector Roadmap.</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p>successor companies. (c) To transfer management and financing of operations to the private sector. (d) To establish an independent and effective regulatory commission to oversee and monitor the industry. (e) To ensure that the Federal Government focuses on policy formulation and long-term development of the industry. (f) To increase access to electricity services. (g) To improve efficiency affordability, reliability and quality of services. (h) To ensure greater investment into the sector to stimulate economic growth.</p>	<p>term power development strategy. (c) Under-exploitation of the nation's abundant energy endowments. (d) Inadequate implementation of reforms. (e) Institutional and regulatory problems.</p>
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Table 6: The Security Sector

S/N	Policies/Programmes	Year	Aims	Failures
1.	Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy (1999 Constitution, Chapter 2)	1999	<p>(a) To ensure that Government exercises its responsibility of securing lives and property of the people of Nigeria. (b) To keep peace within the borders of the Nigerian State through its internal</p>	<p>(a) Inability of Government to formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, dearth of</p>

			<p>security.</p> <p>(c) To uphold the national laws and forestall internal security threats.</p>	<p>infrastructural facilities, uneven development etc.</p> <p>(b) Incapacity of the security Agents to curtail the security challenges in Nigeria.</p>
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DISCUSSIONS

This section of the Article is merely to reinforce the summaries provided in the foregoing tables. In the agricultural sector, there is evidence of non-interaction between the government and the various stakeholders. Agriculturists, Scientists, Researchers and more importantly the farmers/rural dwellers are normally ignored during planning and implementation of agricultural/rural development policies and programmes. Role conflict between different programmes and projects were rife. Termination of a subsisting polices/programmes by successive governments is a common phenomenon. In addition, are such factors as incompatibility of regional or state policies/programmes with the national policies and programmes; emphases on mainly food and animal production and neglect of other interrelated activities such as agro-industrial operations and communication, packaging and storage; delay, embezzlement, misappropriation and lack of funds to pursue specific policy/programme to an expected end; inadequate varied technical advisory and extension services; and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.

With regards to the education sector, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) which is a policy document of the Federal Government status:

“the delivery of education in Nigeria has suffered from years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector. Findings from an ongoing educational sector analysis confirm the poor state of education in Nigeria. The national literacy rate is currently 57 percent. Some 49 percent of the teaching force is unqualified. There are acute shortages of infrastructure and facilities at all levels. Access to basic education is inhibited by gender issues and socio-cultural beliefs and practices, among other factors. Wide

disparities persist in educational standards and learning achievements. The system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education”.

In the area of health, it should be recalled that the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), was launched in 2005.

NHIS is totally committed to securing universal coverage and access to adequate and affordable health-care in order to improve the health status of Nigerians. Unfortunately, the last documented data about its performance revealed that, the NHIS has only been able to enroll up to 3% of Nigerians under the formal sector health insurance programme (Kujenya, 2009). Just about 1% has also been covered in the private sector by the Health Maintenance organizations, consequently, out of pocket expenditure still accounts for 70% of health-care financing in Nigeria, thus making health-care services economically inaccessible especially to the population in greatest need.

Our next subject of discourse is Housing, which is acknowledged as a basic necessity for every citizen. In reaction to the immense challenges inherent in this sector, the Nigerian Government in February, 1991 launched the first National Housing Policy with the overall aim of ensuring that all Nigerians own or have access to decent, safe and sanitary housing accommodation at affordable costs by the year 2000”. The main strategy of the then New Policy was the establishment of the National Housing Fund Scheme to mobilize loanable funds from workers, which would be reimbursed via the newly created Primary Mortgage Institutions with the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria playing the role of apex/supervisory body. Despite all these, housing development had been neglected by successive governments, which for years did not regard it as a priority and hence did not make budgetary provisions for it.

The consequence is that, a ‘no-housing’ situation existed in Nigeria and about 60% of Nigerians could be said to be ‘houseless persons’. About this, the World Bank Country Director for Nigeria – Francoise, Marie – Nelly stated that: “100 million Nigerians live in destitution” (AmaefuleEveresty, 2013:32).

An identified area of monumental failure of policy is the Power Sector. In Nigeria, electric power system currently comprises the following:

- (i) Three (3) hydro and seven (7) thermal generating stations with a total installed capacity of about 6,852 Mega Watts (MW), with available capacity of 3,542 MW. Each entity has been incorporated as a single-asset generating company;
- (ii) A radial transmission grid owned and managed by the Transmission Company of Nigeria, with the responsibility of undertaking the systems operation and market settlement functions respectively; and
- (i) Eleven (11) distribution companies that undertake the wiring, sales, billing, collection and customer care functions within their respective geographical locations.

The foregoing are strategies put in place to improve the electric power situation in Nigeria, yet the situation continues to worsen such that as of today, power outages have metamorphosed into complete and outright darkness in most parts of the country, many urban cities and towns across the country hardly enjoy three to four hours of uninterrupted power supply.

In the area of Security, policy failures have assumed an alarming dimension thus casting doubts as to whether policies/programmes actually existed in the sector. Two variables of Bombing and Kidnapping introduced into the Nigerian environment by the Niger-Delta Militants have today become the in-thing. While the Niger-Delta is receding its activities in this direction, kidnapping for money has been translated to a big business. On the other hand, Bombings and killings held sway particularly in the North Eastern part of the country notably by the “Boko Haram Sect”.

Other variables that contribute to policy failure in the security sector includes Theft, Armed Robbery, Assassination, Kidnapping, Fraud etc. The volume of activities in this direction, is corroborated by a study carried out by the National Crime and Safety Survey in 2012. The study involved a total of 1,518 male and female adults. The findings are (i) 75% of the respondents were fearful of becoming victims of crime; (ii) 31% experienced criminal victimization; (iii) 17% experienced robbery attacks; (iv) 5% of the respondents were victims of armed violence

such as terrorism, bombings, community violence; (v) 4% were victims of rape or attempted rape; (vi) 35% were victims of physical assault; (vii) 3% were victims of attempted murder; (viii) 2% were victims of kidnapping or attempted kidnapping; (ix) 31% were victims of domestic violence; and (x) 47% of the respondents lost their mobile phones to theft (Clean Foundation, 2012).

What the current trend of violence is imprinting on the psyche of Nigerians is that the government's security apparatus is incapable of guaranteeing the safety and security of its people. This would, therefore, impact on the general human security of the people as the situation promotes fear, while at the same time limiting the peoples' ability to develop economically. Similarly, the state's capacity to attract investors becomes limited as a result of the insecurity.

REMEDIES

Findings from this study identified through our tabular analysis stimulate proposal of strategies for ameliorating the situation.

- (i) Various stakeholders including farmers/rural people should be involved in planning and execution of agricultural policies and programmes.
- (ii) Each agricultural policy and programme should be open, transparent and must be framed within the context of national agricultural development policy.
- (iii) Government should promote a virile extension liaison services that is empowered and backed-up with adaptive research and mobile personnel equipped with necessary media facilities and information. This will help to solve the challenge of misconception of the objectives of the policy/programme by the target audience.
- (iv) Programmes should also be monitored and their efficacies evaluated in terms of a specific geographical impact of that programme. This provides a highly useful approach for gauging the direct and indirect impact of different programmes and projects interacting simultaneously.

- (v) Policy makers/planners should also identify and evaluate alternative or different intervention programmes in terms of their immediate and long term impacts as well as their implications to the communities and society at large.
- (vi) The philosophy of policy/programme consistency should be adopted in Nigeria. This is the easiest way to streamline, direct and focus on agricultural development.
- (vii) Government should provide enabling environment for private sectors' involvement in agricultural development especially in areas like processing, preservation, exportation, tourism, recreational and environmental services. This will promote agricultural development and project Nigeria to the entire world.

In more general terms, a realistic manifesto of the political party in power from where most policies are derived is desirable. The political party manifesto is a contract document between the politicians and the citizens hence realistic promises should be made during campaigns to ensure that such promises are implemented when elected into office. In addition, every stakeholder as it affects policies in various sectors must be involved from the formulation to the implementation stages in order to earn their commitment to such policies. And once a policy is formulated it should be religiously implemented in accordance with the provisions of the formulated policy document. Continuity in viable policies irrespective of leadership changes in government is advocated. Similarly, strict adherence to the provisions of the budget which is regarded worldwide as a "policy implementation control mechanism" will be a welcome development. There must also be the political will to see to their fruition, government's policies, programmes and projects. It should be recalled the Nigerian government established a Policy Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Agency which is located in the "Presidency" and with a clear mandate to strictly monitor and report back on the implementation of all government policies, programmes and projects. This is with a view to modifying, adjusting, discontinuing with or reversing such policies, programmes and projects as appropriate. Effectiveness and efficiency of this Agency could be put to question where cases of policy, programme or project failures become apparent. It is equally important that all levels of government must be involved from the initiation to the implementation stages of policies.

CONCLUSION

If we contend that policies are guides to government in its determination to meet its avowed commitment to the citizens, then greater attention should be paid to them by governments at all levels. Policies, we aver, will remain dreams or blue-prints in file jackets unless they are implemented, and desirable too. For any sector of the economy to be adjudged administratively competent, there must be evidence of accomplishing its policy objectives satisfactorily. By so doing cases of policy failures will be reduced to their barest minimum in Nigeria.

A GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATION OF TERMS/NAMES

- Boko Haram Sect - A Terrorist Group operating in parts of Northern Nigeria.
- Bombing - An occasion when a bomb (a weapon designed to explode at a particular time) is dropped or left somewhere.
- Destitution - A noun from the word Destitute which means a condition of without money, food and other necessities of life.
- Fadama - A programme (Scheme) evolved by Federal Government of Nigeria to finance farmers through cooperatives.
- Kidnapping - An act of kidnap which is to take individuals away illegally and keep them as prisoners especially in order to get money.
- Manifesto - A written statement in which a group of people especially a political party, explains their beliefs and promises to the electorate
- MW - Mega Watts – A unit for measuring electrical power, one million watts.
- Prototype - The first design of a structure from which other forms are copied or developed e.g. prototype houses.

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