

## **Effective Implementation of Public Policies in Nigeria: Issues And Challenges.**

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### **Abstract**

*The need to provide the citizens with socio-economic and infrastructural facilities has continued to be a serious concern to countries all over the world, especially the developing ones including Nigeria. To achieve this, various governments in Nigeria have continued to initiate and implement policies aimed at addressing these problems. This study therefore set out to examine the challenges of implementation of public policies in Nigeria. The objectives of the study include: to find out the strategies adopted by government and its agencies in the implementation of public policies and to identify factors militating against their effective implementation. The study contends that the continued use of neo top-bottom approach in policy formulation and implementation has serious consequences for the realisation of the desired objectives. The paper highlights the relevance and practical issues relating to citizens input in policy formulation and implementation in their respective areas. The work argued that public policy implementation agencies and government officials have not shown any commitment to the effective implementation of public policies in Nigeria which would allow it achieve the desired result. The research methodology adopted is the contents analysis of the existing literature on the related subject while secondary source of data were used. The paper was predicated on the progressive utilization theory as its framework of analysis. The findings reveal that the implementation of public policy in Nigeria is characterised by weak institutional frame work, over politicisation of policies, lack of political will on the part of government, non-involvement of the beneficiaries and corruption among others. The paper therefore, recommends that the institutional frame work should be restructured for proper application of the strategies to avoid unnecessary political influence and neglect of the intending beneficiaries. The government should be more committed and see public policies as major tools for the development of the country.*

**Key words:** Public Policies; Effective; Implementation; Challenges; Nigeria

## **Introduction**

It is the desire and responsibility of every nation in the world including Nigeria to provide for the welfare of its citizens. This is achieved through government designed policies aimed at developing various sectors of the society, and Nigeria having been regarded all over the world as a leading nation in terms of socio- economic and infrastructural development in the entire African continent, has over the years desired to develop the country in the areas of agriculture, education, health care, housing, transportation, communication, technology, infrastructure, commerce, banking, roads, and water among others. In a bid to achieve these needs that might exist at various point in time, government is always confronted with formulating policies to tackle them, aimed at achieving the desired growth and national development for the wellbeing of the citizens. In some situations, these problems are tackled as they arise to avoid degenerating to uncontrollable level (Okoli and Onah, 2002).

Basically, since public policy is the action or proposed action of a government aimed towards achieving desired goals as stated by Ikelegbe (2006), it then means that public policy guides and determines present and future decision as well as private individuals or private business institutional actions, decisions or behavior.

As a result of the importance of government providing these facilities especially in the developing countries, the scope and level of public policy is pervasive and influential especially in third world countries such as Nigeria where the private sector is very weak, as such policies determine the activities of government in the provision of services designed to solve problems (Abah, 2010). Mostly, even though the executive can initiate public policies, but to back it up with enabling laws, policies are made by legislative arm of the government in both the federal, state and local governments, while the implementation lies with the public bureaucracy (Ezeani, 2006). While various public policies have been initiated and implemented in Nigeria aimed at enhancing the living standard of the citizens, a close look at the country's developmental level has indicated that the country is unfortunately one of the least developed countries in the world despite her abundant natural and human resources. This situation is led ajar by the various reports that showed that Nigeria is so underdeveloped that over seventy percent of its population lack finance to take care of their immediate needs, lack food, shelter, access to health care services, education while child and maternal mortality rates have continued to grow, children of school age drop out of school for odd jobs, while the people do not have access to socio-

economic and infrastructural facilities despite the plethora of development policies initiated and implemented in the past by various governments in the country (World Bank Report, 2008).

This frightening situation prompted Obodoechi (2009) to argue that in Nigeria, public policies are brilliantly formulated but their implementation turn out to be ineffective, thereby leading to the failure of such public policies to achieve their aims and objectives for which they were designed. Ozor (2004) on his part, assert that the ineffective implementation of public policies in Nigeria has continued to create a large gap between formulated public policy goals and the achievement of those goals. Basically, 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 as noted by (Ozor, 2004; Mankinde, 2005).

Initially, the emphasis in the literature of policy studies was more on the policy formulation stage. In contemporary times, however, emphasis has shifted to policy implementation following the realization that effective implementation of policies is not an automatic affair as noted by (Ikelegbe, 2006); Nweke, (2008) and Egonmwan, (1991). Furthermore, policy implementation has become of greater concern to its formulation particularly in developing nations like Nigeria where the government is increasingly looked upon by the citizens to effectively implement development policies and where, contrarily, ineffective implementation of policies has become very critical and worrisome. It is based on this that Ugo and Ukpere (2011) argued that an adequate solution to the problem of effective policy implementation failures in Nigeria must stem logically from a rigorous examination and analysis of its causes.

This study is therefore set to look at policy implementation as a major issue in public policy process, and to examine the role of public bureaucracy in effective public policy implementation in Nigeria, and to equally x-ray the obstacles that inhibit the effective implementation of public policies in the country.

### **Clarification of Concepts**

#### **Public Policy**

Policy is seen as course or principle of action proposed or adopted by individuals, groups, organizations or government. Policy is seen as being central to the operation and activities of both private and public organizations. However, a policy option made by groups or individual is

referred to as private policy while the one made by the government is regarded as public policy. Here, we are concerned with policies of government known as public policy.

Though public policy is viewed from different perspective, thereby generating varied definition of the concept, but what is game is that it is the principled guide to action taken by the government of the state with regards to a class of issues in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs. In the view of Egonwan (1991), it is a governmental programme of action, while to Okoro (2005), policy refers to hard patterns of resource allocation represented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems or challenges requiring government action for their solution. Contributing to the concept of public policy, Ezeani, (2006) sees it as the proposed course of action which government intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. Ikelegbe(2006) asserts a broader perspective when he states that public policy is the integrated course and programmes of action that government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct action and practices in certain problem areas.

Public policy is mode setting action which showcases the direction and guides the way to the realization of certain goals and objectives desired by the government. Some of these public policies in Nigeria in different sectors include; the National Policy on Education, National Population Policy, National Housing Policy, Poverty Alleviation Policy among others.

### **Effective Public Policy Implementation:**

Effiong (2013), states that the word effective refers to producing the results that is wanted or intended or producing a successful result. In the context of this work, effective public policy implementation, entails implementing a policy in such a way as to realize the goals and objectives for which the policy is intended. In this context, if a policy is effectively implemented, it would achieve the designed goals and objectives. Therefore, the basic focus of the government and its personnel especially those responsible for implementing public policies should then be on how to effectively implement government policies.

### **Public Policy Making In Nigeria**

Politics and policy making are interwoven and the study of politics is not complete without the examination of what government actually does, hence the study of the activities of government is an important aspect of policy science; and therefore, the study of Government falls within the purview of public policy(Eugene, N. 2005). When public policy is studied, we

therefore want to comprehend for instance the circumstances that make it difficult for government to implement its own policies and the wishes of the people and also want to understand the environmental factors that hinder the implementation of government policies, which are the constraints in policy implementation (Ozor,2004). He adds further that public policy therefore could be conceptualized as a long series of more or less related activities that government pursues at a particular time while public policy implementation has been described as one major problem confronting developing countries. Contributing to this, Egonmwan (1991) avers that the successful implementation of public policy is difficult in the first world countries as it is more difficult in reform oriented governments in the third world countries that are consequently stripped of all technicalities, but the implementation problem in the developing countries is the problem of widening gap between intentions and results. This can best be understood when viewed against a theoretical framework as explained below: That the Marxian theory of public policy is focused on the economic strength of the society, and that in the Marxian perspective, it is the sole determinant of the political super-structure (Maheshvaranda, 2003). The argument is that the mode of distribution of any society determines social relations while the mode of distribution is simply how people produce what they owned which is the tool or instrument. Social role is the kind of relationship that exists between the producer and the owners of the means of production (supplier and buyers). Referring to the Marxists, Maheshvaranda (2003) maintains that society is divided into two: those who produce (suppliers of labor) and those who appropriate what is produced (capitalists). This he states is equally applicable in international system where some regions of the world are suppliers of raw materials and cheap labor to other regions, and that Marxists looked at development in terms of historical stages through which the society was divided into antagonizing classes, while development started under the primitive stage or mode of production where the means of production is jointly owned by all and the result was that there was no division (class) and conflict in that society. Contributing to this, Omoke (2008) regards it as 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 purpose, which the primary function of the state in the capitalist society is therefore to maintain or serve the interest of capitalism by creating conditions favorable to profitable primitive accumulation. However in order to avoid revolution or to reduce conflict between classes which

the workers may embark upon, the State is involved in creating conditions for social harmony by providing policies that legitimize the capitalist society while those who hold the means of production therefore, use the instrument of ideology to sensitize the working class about the viability of private property and equally use ideology to convince people that there will be upward socio-economic mobility. Resulting from these tendencies, they make it difficult for people to understand that they are extremely exploited. Public policies in capitalist society could be categorized according to their intentions and that it is either the policy is serving the purpose of accumulation or legitimization, with example of accumulation policies as privatization whereby people want to enrich themselves easily, subsidies, fiscal and monetary policies, etc. while example of legitimization policies, include social welfare, free education, free health care, increment of workers salary, etc. Using this theory, one will attempt to ask why has government continued to pursue a particular course of action or, why is policy implementation problematic in Nigeria, but in clearing this however, Obi (2007), points out that politics is the competition among groups to make public policy conducive to the realization of their interests and ideologies and that the role of the ruling class is determinant in what the state does and what the state chooses not to do in the value allocation process.

### **Public Policy Making Process**

Policy making is a complex activity involving a pattern of actions, extending overtime and involving many decisions, and as a course of action, it is useful to conceive policy making as a process of activity involving a series of distinct stages which constitute what we here refer to as the policy cycle, while Policy making therefore is a concentric or consequential pattern of actions involving a number of functional categories of activities (Eugene, 2005). Ideally public policy process starts with policy formulation, implementation, feedback (evaluation), however, before policy-making process swings into action, a policy problem has to be identified by policy makers. Smith (1990) sees a policy problem as a condition or situation which generates a human need, deprivation or dissatisfaction, self-identified or identified by others for which relief is sought. Lending credence to this, Egonmwan (1991) also conceptualizes a policy problem as a social situation which many people consider adverse or intolerable in its effects on a large number of people over a long period of time. Judging from this premise therefore, people anticipate or desire qualitative change whenever a policy problem is envisaged. However, from social point of view, public policy problem may vary from society to society because of the

dynamism of human nature and in this regard, therefore, before a social problem can be said to be a public problem the following indicators need to feature prominently in such a problem. These indicators as highlighted by Egonmwan (1991) include:

- a. That a large number of people are in unfortunate conditions suffered deprivation, and are dissatisfied with an undesirable situation.
- b. These adverse conditions are recognized by some or a large number of people.
- c. In addition to those who suffered the unsatisfactory situation, the government is aware of the situation as they have responsibilities for coping with it.
- d. People outside the immediate social problems (third party) must show concern.
- e. Large number of people should think that something should be done about the situation apart from merely recognizing the undesirable situation.
- f. Conflicting interest and cognitive disagreement should be presented by different groups as this will motivate the government to step in and make necessary investigation and take appropriate action.
- g. Apart from objective situations, the values and perception of people also determine what a public problem is.

Further, Egonmwan reiterates that the value and perception of policy makers is one of the problems confronting policy making in any nation and that the above condition is by no means exhaustive, but to a large extent capture the realities of Nigeria's social situation, adding however that whenever a policy problem is identified, it passes three main stages and that include: formulation, implementation and feedback (evaluation) stages, adding that at the level of policy formulation, the first thing is that when government decides what to be done and what is to be achieved, the process involves the following;

- a. Goal formulation involving multiple groups with varying conflicting objectives.
- b. Problem identification and definition as a result of partial ignorance of problem situation.
- c. Agenda setting/setting of objectives involving attempts by individuals and groups to influence policy decisions.
- d. Seeking of policy alternatives and evaluating such policy alternatives, i.e. analysis of policy options.
- e. The policy choice.

The above are classical policy formulation process. However, Adeyeye (2000) submits in his contribution that policy formulation process involves the following;

- a. Determination of policy content
- b. Design of implementation strategy
- c. Monitoring, review and revision of policy.

Once a policy choice is made and has passed through the normal process, i.e. legislative enactment, the stage of reality comes next. Implementation stage therefore is the ability of an organization to bring together men and materials in a cohesive organizational unit and motivate them in such a way as to carry out the organization's stated objectives. This stage Adeyeye(2000) says involves the translation of goals and objectives of policy through various programmes. Public policy implementation is often regarded as programme implementation, since policy makers have to interact with different agencies and institutions controlled by people with different political persuasions, however the difficulty of this stage is usually compounded by certain idealistic or utopian assumptions of policy formulators. This stage is describes by scholars as the stage where one grapples with reality as assumptions associated with this stage is highlighted. The first assumption as outlined by Egonmwan is that the implementing agencies will faithfully comply with the policy handed down to them. Secondly, that the policy handed down is implementable, i.e. resources, knowledge, technical know-how, money, manpower, availability of material, etc., to implement a given policy. Thirdly, is that the change contemplated is technically feasible or possible and fourthly, that there should exist institutional arrangement for implementing a policy, i.e. the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). These assumptions he says, if neglected are capable of constituting impediments of execution of government policy or policies. The formulation of policy is theoretical while its implementation is practical, as there is a gap between practice and theory, which is typical of Nigeria's situation, while in some cases, policies are complicated and cannot even be comprehended by the people even when the goals are clearly stated and resources are made available. With the availability of all the required resources, it is still difficult and problematic to translate policies to action even under the best of circumstances in Nigeria. A typical example was the Structural Adjustment Programme aimed at economic recovery because the Nigerian economy was in deep crisis, but the implementation of it rendered such lofty policy useless (Egonmwan, 1991). Lending credence to this, Shepherd (2007) states that the verdicts



which people return on their government in consequence of their negative experiences with public policies raise serious questions about the legitimacy of government and hence of its authority to make binding decisions.

### **Factors Militating Against Effective Implementation of Public Policies in Nigeria.**

In a normal situation, the government is known for its desires to reliably, efficiently, and effectively implement policies. However, while this is obtainable in developed countries, the reverse is the case in developing nations like Nigeria, as its operations and activities are very much fraught with some challenges arising from certain negative factors and circumstances. Okoli and Onah (2002); (Makinde, 2005); Nweke (2006) and Effiong (2013), contend that in Nigeria like most developing countries, the performance card for government policies so far can be said to be far from being satisfactory due to several factors which has hindered them from achieving their aims and objectives. Some of these factors include the following;

#### **Ambiguous Goals**

Ambiguous goal is one of the challenges to effective implementation of public policies in Nigeria. Nweke (2008) contends that when policies are vague and unrealistic, they enhance the failure of such public policies, stressing that a policy that aims at achieving its goals should make such clear and realistic as clarity of policy goals are very important since it reduces conflict and confusion. In addition to goal clarity, public policy goals must be realistic and simple, showing the achievability of the desired goals. He notes that most policies are made for purposes of the selfish interest of the political leaders and sometimes only to attract public acclaim and attention with less regard to their appropriateness in addressing given problems or the possibility of their effective practical implementation. The above reasons prompted Okoli and Onah (2002) to note that most public policy making objectives in Nigeria are directed towards personal rewards and interests of the political leaders and their colleagues with the result that a policy is judged more on its political merits with the real development need rarely factored into consideration, and for these, most public policies in Nigeria are either inappropriate or lack well defined objectives for their effective implementation.

### **Poor Ambitions Nature of some Public Policies**

Another factor that constitutes an impediment for the effective implementation of public policy in Nigeria is over ambitions nature of some public policies. Some Public policies actually tend to be over ambitions, sweeping and overly fundamental in nature (Mankinde, 2005), stressing that in most cases, the formulation of such over ambitions policies is not borne out of sincere effort to bring about rapid development but just to boast the ego of the political leaders to attract the admiration of the electorates. Example of such public policies are policies that have their main objectives in the provision of free education or free health services to all the citizens especially in some states of the federation. For such policies, the government will be aware that there are no adequate resources, both financial, material and human resources for the effective implementation. Such public policies have witnessed very ineffective implementation resulting in deterioration in quality and standard of service that some people prefer to send their children to private primary and secondary schools and to seek medical services from private hospitals irrespective of the high cost in those private places.

### **Undue Political Interference**

Another constraint to effective policy implementation in Nigeria is undue interference by government officials and political office holders. Though it is the duty of government to make policy, but it demands that after formulating the policy, the government should give the implementing agencies or personnel the free hand to implement such policies without unnecessary interference. Such control and directives are mostly motivated by personal, group or political interests. Once this is the case, the strategies and processes of the implementation is always altered which definitely result to unsuccessful public policy outcome. This situation is getting worse as the headship of such agencies are appointed by the political office holders as political patronage thereby totally neglecting experience, skill and commitment. This prompted Ugo and Ukpere (2011) to note that public policies in Nigeria is marred by political interest.

### **Paucity of Data and Reliable Statistics.**

Public policy planning relies basically on data but in Nigeria like in other developing countries, accurate data is a very scarce commodity and since the success of any policy depends on the reliability of underlying data such as popular census, national income or output, available resources etc. it is difficult to come up with effective policy intentions with inaccurate data. The clearest illustration of the problem of data in Nigeria is the fact that since independence till date,

nobody has been able to answer the simple question of how many are we in Nigeria (Ugo et al). They argue that a county that does not know its population would definitely not be in position to determine the other vital statistics necessary for planning; like birth rate, death rate, number of school age and other demographic changes in the population which are essential for planning. In Nigeria, a comprehensive national data base is lacking and conflicting statistics abound in Nigeria as a result of the lack of collaboration and coordination between various federal agencies involved in data collection in such circumstance, the planning exercise will be reduced to a mere guesswork.

### **Culture and Values of Most Policies:**

Nweke (2006) argued that most policies of government are abstract things that do not give values in return. He states the example of the Festival of African Culture (FESTAC 77) which he says engulfed a huge sum of money that could have been channeled into other sectors so as to enhance growth and developments in the economy. If public policies does not have values, after implementation, the impact will not be felt by the people thereby making the implementation of such public policies ineffective. Since people have numerous needs, government abandoning their immediate needs to go for those without values to the people look ineffective after its implementation.

### **Changes in Government.**

Changes in government have contributed significantly against the successful implementation of government policies in Nigeria. Ajakaiye (2003) states that frequent changes in government from incessant military coup in the past and frequent changes in the administration in the present democratic era contribute to no small measure the ineffective implementation of public policies, as each succeeding government administration would undo and reject what it met instead of the common slogan that government is a continues process. Here though plans are made to accommodate little variations, in Nigeria, new administration finds it absolutely difficult to continue with the policies of the previous administration. This has led to many abandoned projects which litter the country's landscape today.

### **Lack of Mass Commitment:**

Here, Ajakaiye (2003) and Onokerhoraye (2007) argue that policies are initiated and implemented without consulting the people, hence the public apathy towards its implementation and since these policies are meant for the people but they are not even aware of the existence or

objectives, they do not feel duty bound to contribute to its success and this had led to the failure of most government policies in Nigeria.

### **Corruption**

Edoh (2003) sees corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, reiterating that this has become a common act in Nigeria as it has destabilized the political system drastically; where government funds are being misappropriated by the leaders who only put the interest of their family and friends at heart while ignoring the masses. In support of Edoh's view, Chimobi(2010) explains further that corruption has eaten so deep into the government and economy that everyone seems to be blinded by it and has almost become an accepted way of life in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the government's income is generated mostly from natural resources, and this income instead of being used for development purposes, is then circulated among the political office holders and their families, leaving the rest of the people to wallow in poverty. The situation has gone so bad that elected leaders practically ignore the affairs and well-being of their people who elected them into office as they mismanage and embezzle funds meant for the implementation of policies that would impact on the lives of the citizens with impunity. Chimobi adds further that this leads to bad governance, and there are several issues involved with bad governance in Nigeria which include; use of wrong policies, adaptation to wrong policies and implementation of those wrong policies, which has increased poverty and inequality as well as contributed to the suffering of the citizenry.

### **Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

The theory used for the explanation of this work is the Progressive Utilization Theory by Rajan (1962) given the general conception of public policy and implementation in Nigeria. It is appropriate to note that public policy and its implementation is meant to solve a perceived problem for both the present and future benefit to the citizens, and this can be achieved not only by how lofty and beautiful such policy is, but by the determination of the implementation bureaucracy in tailoring such policy to give the desired goals and objectives through strategies and collaboration of the beneficiaries.

This theory was propounded by PrabhatRanjan in 1962 in an effort to overcome the strategies of both capitalism and communism (Maheshvaranda, 2003). Maheshvaranda expresses that the theory optimizes the use of socio-economic, industrial and human resources based on cooperative coordination and a wide basis ranging from local communities to large regions and

nations and between the people of diverse geographical areas. He states that the theory seeks the welfare and happiness of all, stressing that it is not concerned only with economic but encompasses the whole of individual and collective existence, educational, social, political and mental well-being of the citizens. It analyzes the political forces that shaped the development of the economy which was described as inhumanity. This theory captures the essence of this study, as it stresses that socio-economic dimension of ineffective policy implementation include; lack of access to basic social and infrastructural facilities which is the responsibility of the government such as education and skills, ignorant and lack of access to information, basic health care, safe drinking water, transportation system, good road, communication, housing, food among others. The theory stresses that in doing this, the citizens themselves should be seen by government as partners who should be fully involved in initiation and implementation of such policies. The progressive utilization theory is of the view that government alone cannot achieve the desired goals of its policies without integrating the citizens who are the beneficiaries of these policies to see such policies as their, thereby inculcating ownership syndrome through bottom-top approach, while the beneficiaries of such policies should not be seen as mere recipient but partners in progress which is the basis for the initiation and implementation of such policy through input-output process. It adds further that since it is the responsibility of the government to provide for the welfare of the citizens, government and its agencies should come up with strategic policy plans devoid of personal or parochial interest for effective implementation of public policies for the benefit of the citizens they represent.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted content analytical approach as its methodology. It was utilized in the work to enable us have a reliable and trusted scientific method for assessing, analyzing and interpreting the volume of materials used for this study. For more emphasis, Content Analysis is a research technique adopted primarily for the objective, systematic and qualitative analysis and interpretation of information.

Data were sourced from existing records such as journals, books, internet materials, government and other official publications, United Nations documents, World Bank

publications, other documents related to public policy implementation in Nigeria as well as the use of direct observation.

### **Contending Factors in Public Policy Implementation in Nigeria**

Literature that sought to analyze the contending factors in policy implementation in third world and indeed Nigeria are replete with the failure-prone policy process thesis (Omoke, 2008). It contends that the failure-prone policy process thesis therefore argues that policy makers in the developing nations are guilty of setting unrealistic goals. The thesis he says further argues that the policy formulation process engenders expectations among the people which can hardly be matched by the capacities of the system, stating that goals are unrealistic because they are set at very comprehensive levels as decision makers lack reliable information on which to base their calculations and sometimes, because the possibility of expressing alternative policy options is either suppressed or non-existent. Following this therefore, he is of the conviction that the fundamental problem of developing nations lies in the inability of their policy makers to make decisions that will induce development due to certain psychological and socio-structural inadequacies that inhibit them from bringing to bear the needed amount of knowledge and commitment to make proper judgments about the allocation of resources. With this view, it is fashionable for developing countries to opt for comprehensive or fundamental solutions to policy problems since the choice that these countries make as policies compound the failure of policy for two reasons; firstly, developing countries hardly possess governments with the policy making apparatus adequate to the task of producing a comprehensive policy. Secondly, this inadequacy is met with the introduction of policy solutions from elsewhere, usually from advanced economies, whose solutions are hardly suitable to local problems. The adoption of foreign solutions to policies in third world countries undermines the capacity of local intellectual resources to act on local problems, which deepens the underdevelopment of local talents and deprives them of the opportunity to master the problems on their own terms. Typical examples of such many white elephant projects islike the Ajaokuta Steel Company. It is an incontrovertible fact that policy failure in Nigeria is much more pronounced at the implementation stage which accords with Egonmwan (1991)assertion that the possibility of carrying through with policy and implementing policy choices is circumscribed by administrative, economic and political constraints. An administrative constraint includes among others; lack of trained experts to

administer the complex policies and projects which comprehensive goals and plans demand and the negative consequences of the conflict of roles between elected political office holders and appointed officials in the civil service bureaucracy. Egonmwan (1991) adds that lack of adequate funds to execute a well-planned or designed policy agenda also account for the failure of policies in developing countries. Contributing, Zupi (2007), attributed this fact to government indebtedness and the reluctance of international financial institutions to sustain the profligacy and indiscipline which led to the indebtedness, coupled with the fact that funds from donor agencies are attached with severe conditionality. Adding to this he argues that the capacity of developing countries to source funds internally is severely limited, and that another important factor of public policy implementation in the third world is political consideration, stating that many of these countries belong to soft states. To him, these states suffer from severe/acute social indiscipline such as corruption, arbitrary enforcement of the law and abuse of power. These pathologies are without prejudice to regime types and the standards of morality in these states. A major source of these social pathologies could be located in the attempt to enforce an amazing array of official restrictions and regulations that amount to an open invitation to bribery and pay-offs while the economies of many of these countries are choked to death by innumerable regulations administered by innumerable persons. This prompted Chimobi(2010) to lay ajar the rating of Nigeria by Transparency International in the year 2004, as the most corrupt nation in the world, a position it sustained up to 2016 as reported by transparency International.

Corruption no doubt is the major stumbling blocks to policy implementation in Nigeria. The states the recent senate budget scandal is a case in point and until government unfolds its strategies for tackling corruption in Nigeria, the anticorruption crusade is therefore tantamount to political victimization, or best be described as lip service. Some scholars especially the Marxists do not subscribe to the failure-prone thesis due largely because of the neglect of the analysis of the context of social action which defines the possibilities and limitations of policy making as they tend to ask; what are the peculiarities of policy environment in the developing countries of the world and in what ways do these peculiarities affect the discharge of the policy making function in these countries?. Following from the above premise, Egonmwan states that applying the Marxist theory of environmental determinism shows that human beings are largely products of their environment and that they do not act in vacuum, as whatever it is they do, they do so always in response to the necessities of the situation in which they find themselves and that the

environment in other words, shapes their values, preferences, attitudes and behavior. Another vital issue is determining the necessities of the conditions under which policy makers operate in the developing countries. This calls for the stipulation of the objective realities which confront policy makers as they seek to make policy choices (Egonmwan, 1991). Arising from the above, some critical conditions or factors that shape policy behavior in developing countries were identified and some of these factors have to do with economic dependence and the nature of politics in these countries. Economic dependence is a feature of post-colonial societies because the colonial masters never really left their colonies, the fact of political independence notwithstanding. In the case of Nigeria the successor policy elite did not fight the colonial system to change it but merely to inherit it, hence, the logic of colonialism did not allow the Nigerian policy class to be anything more than marginal economically.

### **Summary of Findings**

- Implementation of public policy in Nigeria is characterized by weak institutional framework as they are built under ineffective and inexperienced and unskilled political leaders
- Implementation of public policies in Nigeria is over politicized
- The intending beneficiaries of public policies in Nigeria were never involved in the formulation and implementation of public policies.
- The formulation of public policies in Nigeria are the dictates of the Elites and government officials without recourse to the inputs of the citizens
- Most of the Nigerian public policies were formulated without clear and precise goals, making them difficult to realize their intended objectives
- Public policies in Nigeria are interfered by external influence, making it difficult to realize their goals, as policies are formulated based on external directives which may not work in Nigerian environment. These forces ignore the socio-cultural background of development in introducing policy reforms that run contrary to the peoples bases of existence
- Public policies in Nigeria are characterized by complex actions of government as the web of relationship that exists within political system is so complex that they create rooms for competition, lack of trust and bitterness among the implementation agencies



## **Conclusion**

The major responsibility of every government is to promote growth and development to improve the living standard of its citizens. Realizing these objectives demand that government does not only form and implement policies but effectively implement such formulated policies to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

Obviously, the Nigerian government has variously formulated and implemented various policies aimed at achieving this. The implementation of these policies have always been confronted by several challenges which usually left these policies ending up without achieving their targeted objectives. This has created a wide gap between the development goals of public policies at the formulation stage and the realization of such goals on implementation. This has generated hue and cry from different quarters against the government inability to effectively implement its policies in the country. In this regard those charged with the responsibility of implementing public policies should have a rethink if the country should redeem their battered image and take up its position as one of the most promising developed countries in the world for which nature has placed on it, judging from it endowed abundant natural and human resources.

## **Recommendations**

- Public policy institutions and agencies should be strengthened through the appointment of experienced leaders devoid of political patronage to enhance effectiveness
- The intending beneficiaries of public policies in Nigeria should be directly involved in the formulation and implementation of policies geared towards solving their problems. This will add local content and build ownership among the beneficiaries rather than seeing them as mere recipients. It will as well eliminate the present strategy where few elites appoint their cronies to represent the opinion of the people without their consent.
- Public policies should be formulated with clear and precise goals, to make them easy to realize their intended objectives
- Government should reduce the influence of external forces in the formulation of its public policies as such external directives may not work in Nigerian environment due to the differences in Nigerian socio-cultural background.
- The complex web of relationship that exists within political system should be reduced to the barest minimum to engender trust and eliminate unnecessary rancor, bitterness and competition among the implementation agencies

- Government officials and its political office holders should desist from interfering in the implementation processes and allow those saddled with the responsibility to discharge their duties in accordance with the stated strategies.
- Nigeria should intensify their efforts to eliminate corruption in every sector of the society, as it is an evil wind that blows no one any good. When this is achieved, the judicious utilization of the monies mapped out for the implementation of public policies would be effectively and efficiently used for the overall benefit of the citizens, rather than to the benefit of the privileged few
- The culture of discontinuity of policies due to changes in government or change in the leadership of organizations should be stopped both at the federal, state and local government levels. This can be achieved through laws that will guarantee continuity of developmental policies in all tiers of government irrespective of changes in government or organizations.

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