REGIME CHANGE AND PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA, 2015-2020

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Abstract

In a bid to ensure efficient and effective governance, the Nigerian state has put in place numerous policies, usually geared towards the attainment of principal objectives of statehood. These policies cover a wide spectrum of activity areas in all sectors of the country, touching on various aspects of the people's lives. Being an indispensable aspect of development of society, policy remains mere pronouncement, prescription or statement of intentions unless implemented. Hence, public policy implementation is the process of translating policy mandates into action, prescriptions into results and goals into reality. However, scholars have not necessarily focused on the character of different regimes and its influence on policy implementation in Nigeria. In most cases where these studies argue that change of government leads to poor policy implementation, it does not show empirical validation of such conclusions, hence, creating a gap in literature which this study intends to fill, asking questions on Buhari's "change agenda" and the constitutional provisions of regime change. The study adopted the rational choice theory as framework for analysis. The documentary method was used and content analysis was used to analyse the data generated. Time series design was adopted and applied in the study as it examined some policy inconsistencies over time. The study found that the Buhari administration's "Change" agenda undermined the implementation of the Agricultural Transformation Policy of the previous administrations; and that the Constitutional provisions of regime change did not account for inconsistencies in policy implementation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2020. It recommended that all major policies of government should not just be an executive initiative, but should be backed by adequate legislation; etc.

Keywords: Regime change; Public policy; policy implementation; change mantra; agricultural transformation policy.

Introduction

Man as an individual and in society is a social being. Hence, the life of man is the life of social interaction. Man's social interaction does not exist in isolation of social problems and as man interacts in different spheres of life – political, economically, technological, educational, and otherwise, these social problems diffuse and spread along these sectors of life. It is in recognition of these social problems and in a bid to proffer durable and reliable solutions to them that governments are always seen formulating policies with a view to fostering development, stability, growth, citizenry wellbeing and administrative efficiency. This is necessary because if attempts are not made to address social problems as they arise, they may degenerate into uncontrollable stages with the society's socio-economic growth and development endangered (Okoli & Onah, 2012).

In view of this, a policy is a conscious plan of action and the action itself, initiated to solve a specific social problem. It is a plan or course of action by a government, political party or business designed to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters (Lennon, 2009). Public policy on the other hand, limits policy meaning to the one that has majorly the involvement of the government in policy formulation and implementation. Little wonder, Dye (1995) conceived public policy as what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it does make. Also, Ikelegbe (2006) defines it as the integrated course and programmes of action that government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct actions and practices in certain problem area. It is thus, used mainly in reference to what government does in order to meet the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the citizenry.

Over the years, different administrations and regimes have formulated and implemented different policies. These policies have an impact on where the country is today. Most of these policies like privatization of state-owned enterprises, civil service reform, banking sector reforms, among others, have seen the country's economy expand to a certain degree. Some other policies and its inconsistencies like the most petroleum sector policies which have also affected the country in a bad light. Moreover, there is a constitutional order for regime change in Nigeria. At different times, outgoing and incoming administrations have formulated and tried implementing policies which they deem fit for the Republic. This study is an investigation into issues of regime change and public policy implementation in Nigeria between 2015 and 2020.

Public Policy Process in Africa

Policy-making is a techno-political process of articulating and matching actor goals and means. Policies, themselves, are thus actions which contain both some, however poorly identified, justified and formulated, goal(s) and some means, again however poorly specified and articulated, to achieve them. Many organizations and actors create policies but "public" policies are made to governments, and the 'actions' we are concerned with in this case are government decisions to act or not to act to change, or maintain, some aspect of the status quo (Brikland 2001).

In probably the best-known short definition of a public policy Thomas Dye offered a particularly succinct formulation, describing public policy as 'anything a government chooses to do or not do' (Dye 1972:2). This is, of course, is too simple for many analytical purposes that is not without its merits. First Dye's definition specifies clearly that the primary agent of public policy-making is a government. As mentioned above, to repeat this means that private business decisions, decisions by charitable organizations, interest groups, other social groups, or individuals are not in themselves public policies. Although these others might be important actors with a role in governmental policy-making processes, governments enjoy a special role in public policy making due to their unique ability to make authoritative decisions on behalf of citizens, that is ones backed up by other potential for sanctions for transgressors in the event of non-compliance. Of course, the activities of non-governmental actors may and very often do influence government's policy decision, and governments will sometimes leave the implementation or some other aspect of policy making to non-governmental organizations (NGO'S). However, the efforts and initiatives of such actors do not in themselves constitute public policy. Thus, for example, how the medical profession interprets the causes of lung cancer and the solutions it proposes for prevention and cure may have a bearing on what a government eventually does adopts or endorses – such as a ban on the sales of cigarettes – actually constitute public policy.

Second, as Dye notes, public policy is, at its simplest, a choice made by government to undertake some course of action. Dye highlights the fact that public policy – making involves a fundamental choice on the part of governments to do something or to do nothing with respect to a problem and that this decision is made by government officials be they elected or appointed politicians, judges or administrators. Thus a 'negative' or 'non – decision', that is, a government's decision to do nothing and simply maintain the current course of action or status quo (Creson, 1971; Smith, 1979). Such 'negative' decisions, however, like more 'positive' ones, should be deliberate, such as when a government decides not to increase taxes or declines to make additional funds available for arts, health care, or some other policy area. The fact we have the freedom to paint the interiors of our homes in colours of choice, for example, does not mean that this is a public policy, because the government never deliberately decided not to restrict our options in this area.

Third and closely related to this, Dye's definition also highlights the fact that a public policy is a conscious choice of a government. That is, government actions and decisions very often involve unintended consequences, such as when an effort to regulate tobacco consumption or some other vice results in the activity 'going underground' and operating illegally as a 'black' market. Unless this subsequent activity or consequences was specifically anticipated and intended by government (such as occurs when governments increase gasoline taxes to discourage automobile use and thus indirectly promote the use of public transit), the unintended consequence of policy is not public policy but merely its unexpected by-product, which sometimes may be beneficial and sometimes not.

Dye's three points are central to understanding public policy as the result of a government decision-making process but is less clear on how such decisions are arrived at our implemented. Other more complex definitions such as that put forward by William Jenkins (1978) offer a more precise conceptualization of public policy which also addresses these aspects of the subject. Jenkins defined public policy as 'a set of interrelated decision taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the policy decision, as being composed of the 'selection of goals and means' as noted above, although this says nothing about the nature of the goals (or the means involved). Viewing policy as the pursuit of conscious goals nevertheless raises the significance to policy – making of the ideas and knowledge held by policy actors about policy goals and the tools or techniques used to achieve them, which shape their understanding of policy problems and the 'appropriateness' of potential solutions to them.

Jenkins also improves upon Dye's definition by adding the idea that a government's capacity to implement its decisions is also a significant component of public policy and a major consideration affecting the types of action that government will consider. This recognizes the limitation on a government's ability to act, that can constrain the range of options considered in particular decision – making circumstance and contribute to the success or lack of success of their efforts. A government's choice of policy may be limited, for instance, by the presence or lack of financial, personnel, or informational resources, by international treaty obligations, or by domestic resistance to certain options, all affecting what kinds of actions would be considered 'effective' 'feasible' and 'appropriate' in dealing with an issue (Huitt, 1968; Meltsner, 1972; Majone, 1975; May, 2005). Thus, for example, we will not understand health policy in many countries without realizing the powerful opposition that the medical profession can mount against any government's effort to control health – care costs which might reduce the profession's income or without taking into account the kinds of financial resources government have at their disposal in providing healthcare and/or paying doctors and nurses and other healthcare providers for their services (Alford, 1972). Similarly, understanding domestic government actions increasingly requires detailed awareness of the limits upon, and opportunities provided to, them by international agreements, treaties, and conventions (Milner and Keohane, 1966; Doern et al., 1996).

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted as a framework for this study is the Rational Choice Theory. The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory, is a theory for understanding and often modelling political, social and economic as well as individual behaviour. Downs (1957) was the first to apply rational choice theory to electoral behaviour and party competition.

Rational choice is argued to have developed as part of the behavioural revolution in American political science of the 1950's and 1960's which sought to investigate how individuals behaved, using empirical methods. The approach has increasingly become a growing approach to political science, especially in the United States. Downs (1957) was the first to apply rational choice theory to electoral behaviour and party competition. His work, reviewed in Hinch & Munger (1997) went further to revolutionize the studies of elections. Other directions in which rational choice theorists.

Application of the Theory

In applying this theory, it becomes relevant in this study as regimes (administrations) in Nigeria often make policies and implement them based on their character and sometimes, composition. Regimes pursue policies that ensure their interests including survival and reproduction of self in government. Within the context of this study, this theory provides that regimes pursue self-interests, and changes in the character and composition of these administrations just like between 2007, 2010 and 2015, have implications for the policy process in Nigeria.

In fact, the quest to show the country of its capacity, the Buhari administration dismantled the Agricultural transformation policy of the Goodluck Jonathan administration, instituting in its place, the Agricultural Promotions Policy. The Buhari administration wanted to sell itself and stamp its legitimacy by doing that which it felt could improve value chain and galvanize support for itself. This also goes to show the place of structures within the policy process in Nigeria. Again, the way and manner in which the constitution provides for change in administration, in which no administration can stay more than two terms of four years each, without providing certain protections for some policies, has shown that such changes will continue to drive inconsistencies in policy implementation as it is rational for emergent regimes to court that path that ensures its survival interests which it usually adopts by rubbishing previous governments.

Proclamation of Change Mantra in 2015 and Discontinuation of Agricultural Transformation Policy

In 2015 Nigeria experienced a political changeover due to the presidential and parliamentary elections on 28 March, enabling Muhammadu Buhari – a retired general who was in power between 1983 and 1985 – to return to office. Buhari came to office with the slogan of 'Change", and since then, has pursued the narrative that his ''change" mantra is functional. The 'change' agenda was the political slogan as well as rhetoric device deployed by the current Buhari administration to appeal to Nigerian masses in 2015 when the country was in the democratic process of moving from one civilian regime to another.

Against the backdrop of the perceived peculiar problems of the country at that period, including corruption, insecurity, and unemployment, the slogan became strategic for the All Progressives Congress (APC), on whose platform the current administration got to power to ending the sixteen-year straight rule of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Since the beginning of the administration in 2015, all efforts to represent the APC-led government as committed to the 'change' agenda as promised have been foregrounded in all political activities and speeches, including the Independence Day Speech of President Muhammadu Buhari on October 1, 2019.

Upon the assumption of office in May 29, 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari proclaimed his "change" mantra in his inauguration speech (Buhari, 2015) and as well stated that he was for everybody and for nobody, and also essentially highlighting the departure of his newly sworn in administration from past traditions of high office holders. At the time of his assumption into office, the country was still in a transitory phase politically as this change of government represented the first time an opposition party is winning presidential office in Nigeria.

During the electioneering campaigns when the "change" slogan began, and few months into his administration, President Buhari began a "negative-othering" of the previous government This particular attitude resonated with his party – the All Progressives Congress and a host of other Nigerians who felt that "change" from past government ineptitude, corruption, waste of public resources, etc, has indeed arrived. The negative-otherization is an ideological discursive strategy deployed to emphasize the negative aspect of the 'other' in a discourse. In this case, the "other" is the People's Democratic Party and the Goodluck Jonathan administration specifically.

As observed by Akinrinlola (2017), blaming is a discourse strategy that is very common among political actors in Nigeria. It is noted that, political actors often blame their opponents for their own failures. This discourse strategy is glaringly used by Buhari in his speech to cast aspersions on the past administrations of the PDP - the strongest opposition party to Buhari's political party, the APC. Blaming is illustrated in the excerpts below:

> This Administration inherited a skewed economy, where the Oil Sector comprised only 8% of Gross Domestic Product but contributed 70% of government revenue and 90% foreign exchange earnings over the years. Past periods of relatively high economic growth were driven by our reliance on Oil Sector revenues to finance our demand for imported goods and services. Regrettably, previous governments abandoned the residual Investment-driven Non-Oil Sector, which constituted 40% of Gross Domestic Product and comprised agriculture, livestock, agro-processing, arts, entertainment, mining and manufacturing activities that provide millions of jobs for able-bodied Nigerians and utilize locally available raw materials and labour for production (Buhari, cited in Ajayi, 2020).

An analysis of the speech above showed that the President was already disenchanted with the Previous administration, and acting on his powers, and riding on a wave of popularity shortly after he was sworn in, he decided to do away with a couple of policies initiated by the previous government of Goodluck Jonathan and the people's Democratic Party. One of the Policies he discontinued with is the Agricultural Transformation Agenda. In fact, an examination of the President's speech will show where he claimed that the failure of the past PDP-led governments to explore these "other sources" is mainly responsible for the high level of unemployment in the country. Chief among these other sources include these other sectors include agriculture, livestock and Agro-processing (Bamgbose, 2018).

Starting in 2010/2011, the Government of Nigeria, after years of benign neglect, began to reform the agriculture sector. To refocus the sector, the Government implemented a new strategy (the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, ATA) built on the principle that agriculture is a business and therefore policy should be about supporting it. The main priority of policy was to "restart the clock" and reintroduce the Nigerian economy to sustainable agriculture centred on business-like attitude driven by the private sector. That strategy was in place from 2011 to 2015.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2016) under the leadership of Hon. Minister Audu Ogbeh, noted that the ATA was a good platform to re-engage key stakeholders in Nigerian agriculture to shift focus towards how a self-sustaining agribusiness focused economy could be built. The ATA focused on how to make Nigeria's agriculture more productive, efficient and effective. It set a target of creating 3.5 million jobs by 2015; generating foreign exchange, and reducing spending on food imports. Among its key achievements was a restructuring of the federal fertilizer procurement system.

However, the Buhari led federal Government claimed that ATA faced challenges and did not deliver on all the targets identified. It was highlighted that Nigeria still imports about $3 to $5 billion worth of food annually, especially wheat, rice, fish and sundry items, including fresh fruits. As a result, Nigeria is not food secure. Wastage levels remain high in production areas, reducing supply of feedstock to processing factories, requiring them to keep importing supplies. The net effect is limited job growth across the agricultural value chain from input production to market systems, and continued use of limited foreign currency earnings to import vast quantities of food (FMARD, 2016).

The challenge here is that the Federal government discontinued a successful programme and, in its place, introduced a new programme known as the Agricultural promotions Policy. The successes of the ATA have been highlighted and in fact, it does not show that there is any more reason to its discontinuation apart from the emergence of a new government with "change" mantra. If it was because of the reasons cited by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, then the policy would have been updated with its programmes incorporated to emergent frameworks for agriculture. As at today, much of the issues for which the Buhari administration claimed is wrong with the ATA have remained the same. Nigeria's food insecurity has increased with high food prices and considerable scarcity of food items (Odunze, 2019).

Appointment of a Cabinet for the Administration of Change Agenda and Formulation and Implementation of Agricultural Promotions Policy

Six months into the Buhari administration, the president appointed a "change" cabinet to implement his change agenda. Part of his change agenda was revival of the non-oil sector of which agriculture has a big part. Chief Audu Ogbeh was appointed Minister of Agriculture in November 2015. He immediately began to find ways to scale the agricultural sector towards high productivity. However, arising from the attitude of the governing All progressives Congress party in seeing almost everything of the past as being tainted, the Honourable Minister discarded the then subsisting agricultural Policy (ATA) which was seen even by his own Ministry to have achieved great success, and replaced it with the Agricultural Promotions Policy.

The Minister stated the vision of the Buhari Administration for agriculture is to work with key stakeholders to build an agribusiness economy capable of delivering sustained prosperity by meeting domestic food security goals, generating exports, and supporting sustainable income and job growth. In this regard, a number of specific objectives for the period 2016-2020 emerge:

- Grow the integrated agriculture sector at 1x to 2x the average Nigerian GDP for 2016-2020; sector's historical growth was between 3%-6% per annum in 2011-2015, hence the need to raise performance. Assuming GDP growth of 6% in 2017, agriculture would aim to achieve 6%-12%, allowing agricultural household income to double in 6-12 years, holding all else equal.
- Integrate agricultural commodity value chains into the broader supply chain of Nigerian and global industry, driving job growth, increasing the contribution of agriculture to wealth creation, and enhancing the capacity of the country to earn foreign exchange from agricultural exports;
- Promote the responsible use of land, water and other natural resources to create a vibrant agricultural sector offering employment and livelihood for a growing population;
- Facilitate the government's capacity to meet its obligations to Nigerians on food security, food safety and quality nutrition
- Create a mechanism for improved governance of agriculture by the supervising institutions, and improving quality of engagement between the Federal and State Government (FMARD, 2016).

Now, examining the origin of the Agricultural Promotions Policy, it becomes almost impossible to overlook the reality that despite the claims of the Ministry of building on the ATA, the APP was a policy that arose out of the desire to implement "Muhammadu Buhari's vision" with regards to the agricultural sector. The substituting of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) with the Agricultural promotions Policy (APP) did not have much to do with policy framework and performance, but has a lot to do with the desire to implement the Change agenda especially after the 'change' cabinet had been inaugurated. The policy thrust of the APP goes thus:

i. Agriculture as a business – focusing the policy instruments on a government-enabled, private sector-led engagement as the main growth driver of the sector. This essential principle was established in the ATA and will remain a cardinal design principle of Nigeria's agriculture policies going forward

ii. Agriculture as key to long-term economic growth and security—focusing policy instruments to ensure that the commercialization of agriculture includes technologies, financial services, inputs supply chains, and market linkages that directly engage rural poor farmers because rural economic growth will play a critical role in the country's successful job creation, economic diversity, improved security and sustainable economic growth
iii. Food as a human right – focusing the policy instruments for agricultural development on the social responsibility of government with respect to food security, social security and equity in the Nigerian society; and compelling the government to recognize, protect and fulfill the irreducible minimum degree of freedom of the people from hunger and malnutrition.
iv. Value chain approach – focusing the policy instruments for enterprise development across successive stages of the commodity value chains for the development of crop, livestock and fisheries sub-sectors, namely input supply, production, storage, processing/utilization, marketing and consumption. Building complex linkages between value chain stages will be an important part of the ecosystem that will drive sustained prosperity for all Nigerians.
v. Prioritizing crops – focusing policy on achieving improved domestic food security and boosting export earnings requires a measure of prioritization. Therefore, for domestic crops, the initial focus in 2016-2018 will be expanding the production of rice, wheat, maize, soya beans and tomatoes. For export crops, the initial focus will be on cocoa, cassava, oil palm, sesame and gum Arabic. In 2018 onwards, the export focus will add on bananas, avocado, mango, fish and cashew nuts. Investments in closing infrastructure gaps to accelerate productivity and investment in these crops will also be sequenced to reflect capital availability and management attention.
vi. Market orientation – focusing policy instruments on stimulating agricultural production on a sustainable basis, and stimulating supply and demand for agricultural produce by facilitating linkages between producers and off takers, while stabilizing prices or reducing price volatility for agricultural produce through market-led price stabilization mechanisms (commodity exchanges, negotiated off-take agreements, extended farm-gate price under value chains coordination mechanisms, agricultural insurance, etc.)
vii. Factoring Climate change and Environmental sustainability – focusing policy instruments on the sustainability of the use of natural resources (land and soil, water and ecosystems) with the future generation in mind while increasing agricultural production, marketing and other human activities in the agricultural sector
viii. Participation and inclusiveness – focusing instruments on measures to maximize the full participation of stakeholders including farmer's associations, cooperatives and other groups, as well as NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, development partners and the private sector. This places a premium on the role of these organizations or groups as agents of economic change in general and agricultural economy in particular, thereby drawing benefits from their policy advocacy roles as partners to and watchdog of government.
ix. Policy integrity – focusing policy instruments on measures for sanitizing the business environment for agriculture, in terms of accountability, transparency and due process of law, ensuring efficient allocation and use of public funding and fighting corruption on all programmes involving public resources. This also applies to compliance with international commitments, protocols and conventions that Nigeria is a signatory to.
x. Nutrition sensitive agriculture – focusing policy instruments on addressing the issues of stunting, wasting, underweight and other manifestations of hunger and malnutrition with particular reference to the vulnerable groups, which include children under 5, nursing mothers and persons with chronic illness and disabilities
xi. Agriculture's Linkages with Other Sectors – focusing policy instruments on the connected relationship between agriculture and other sectors at federal and state levels, particularly industry, environment, power, energy, works and water sectors.

xii. Nigeria's Agriculture in Facts and Figures by the *Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism* (PTCIJ), and Nigeria Incentive-based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL).

Policy Inconsistencies in Nigeria

In the sub-Saharan African countries, transiting from colonial administration to contemporary political system and regime change involving a transition from ruling party to the opposition was until recent the exception rather than the rule. In most of these nations, democratic transformation often evolves within the context of power changing hands between different factions of the same ruling party and between one generation of rulers and the other without the prospects of inter-party transition (Alamu, 2015). In most of these African nations such as Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Cameroun, Malawi, Benin Republic, South Africa, Botswana, Guinea, Gambia, Mali, Ivory Coast; there have been consistent inter-party and intra-party transmission because power has shifted away from the military juntas following global opposition to military intervention and military government. The regime change is usually characterised by a shift of paradigm from traditional authoritarian model to some form of political modernity.

However, issues of policy inconsistency plague the Nigerian government. Policy inconsistency resulting from changes in policy sometimes emerges from the attempt of leaders to reform the society not necessarily to create a setback for the citizenry. Where a leader has amended a policy not for national interests or development, but to tarnish the predecessors, such policy is likely to fail.

Looking at the educational sector for example, under the President Obasanjo's administration, new education policies were introduced to enable Nigeria to flow with the global education trends among which was the Education For All (EFA), coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) with the supports of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and World Bank. To realise the six goals of Education For All (EFA), governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector in every country were expected to work together with UNESCO.

Consequently, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), Universal Basic Education (UBE) Law (2004), National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (2007) and the National Policy for the Integrated Early Childhood Development (2007) were all established under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo to enable Nigeria to comply with the global education demand which compelled every member nation to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. Those policies were initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), education agencies, International Development Partners (IDPs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and approved by President Olusegun Obasanjo to enhance the educational growth of the nation.

The 6-3-3-4 policy was however changed under the President Olusegun Obasanjo through his Minister of Education, Dr. Obi Ezekwesili, who initiated the 9-3-4 system as a new education policy. The goal of this policy was to privatise the unity schools (i.e., the Federal Government Colleges). This new system was to make the primary education 9 years, while the secondary and higher education should not exceed 3 and 4 years respectively. The 3 years was meant for children to sit for WAEC or NECO examinations after which they were expected to enrol for JAMB entrance examination. Taking close look to the two systems, there is really no difference between the 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4 because the 9-3-4, which is Basic 1-9 is the same thing as Primary1-6 and JSS 1-3.

Following a regime change from President Obasanjo to President Goodluck Jonathan, the repealed 6-3-3-4 was restored with the appointment of Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i but with modification that would include Early Childhood Education (ECE). In the manner of her predecessors, she also christened the system hence the name 1-6-3-3-4. Under the proposed 1-6-3-3-4 system, 1 year was set aside for early childhood education for five years old, 6 years for primary, 3 years for junior secondary school and 3 years for senior secondary school and 4 years to be spent in the higher education by children.

Also, during the President Obasanjo administration, he privatized a lot of moribund national assets including some refineries. However, his successor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua reversed a couple of these decisions and even refunding money to those who bought them off. Again, during the Yar'Adua administration, the President decided to subsize petroleum products so as to make things easier for the populace. However, his successor Goodluck Jonathan partially ended then policy. In fact, inconsistencies in policies have become a sad feature of the Nigerian government.

In 2015, after the APC government of President Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in, the government began to systematically liquidate most of the policies of the previous administration. This is shown in the discontinuation of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, enforcement of a rigid foreign exchange regime against what was obtainable, and even refusal to implement the National Confab report which was arrived at in 2014. These issues highlight some of the examples of policy inconsistencies in Nigeria.

Factors Responsible for Public Policy Failures in Nigeria

The above policies, some of which were meant to alleviate poverty in the country failed due largely to the following factors:

i. Those that were aimed at poverty alleviation were mostly not designed to alleviate poverty
ii. All the policies lacked a clearly defined policy framework with no proper guidelines for poverty reduction, rather, were meant to enrich the pockets of political appointees and stooges.
iii. All the policies suffered from political instability, political interference, policy and macro-economic dislocations
iv. They also lacked continuity as different regimes, both military and civilian, enunciated different policies.
v. Poor governance leading to abandonment of projects.
vi. Lack of involvement of beneficiaries in project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation
vii. Ineffective targeting of real beneficiaries. This led to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries or targets.
viii. Unwieldy scope of policies and programmes which resulted in resources being thinly allocated to projects.
ix. Overlapping of functions of the agencies/institutions which ultimately led to institutional rivalry and conflicts.
x. Lack of mechanisms in the various policies and programmes and projects to ensure sustainability.
xi. Poor human capital development and inadequate funding.

Conclusion

In 2015 Nigeria experienced a political changeover due to the presidential and parliamentary elections on 28 March, enabling Muhammadu Buhari – a retired general who was in power between 1983 and 1985 – to return to office. Buhari came to office with the slogan of 'Change", and since then, has pursued the narrative that his "change" mantra is functional. The 'change' agenda was the political slogan as well as rhetoric device deployed by the current Buhari administration to appeal to Nigerian masses in 2015 when the country was in the democratic process of moving from one civilian regime to another.

Moreover, it is not necessarily regime change that leads to policy inconsistencies. Maybe it does contribute, but from analysis, we posit that constitutional change of government is not the sole or major reason for policy inconsistency. Rather, the absence of a legislative framework for most policies which makes it easier to discard by an emergent administration is responsible for policy inconsistency in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made:

i. All major policies of government should not just be an executive initiative, but should be backed by adequate legislation.

ii. Emergent governing executives should take care in dealing with already subsisting policies that have a track record of performance and results.

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