

Review

Public policy: Myths and realities in the Nigerian nationhood since independence

Samuel C. Ugoh¹ and Wilfred I. Ukpere^{2*}

¹Department of Political Science, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria.

²Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, Faculty of Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Accepted 8 July, 2011

Nigeria is confronted today with the challenges of political and constitutional crises in a manner as never before. After 50 years of independence, the country still faces frequent sectarian turmoil that raises some very fundamental questions about the nature of Nigerian identity and its implications for integrity. A cursory look at the events that have occurred in the polity since 1960, one finds out that ethnic irredentism of groups attempting to overcome existing divisions had caused internal conflicts and created friction and occasional intra and inter-group crises. Despite the remedial policies meant to assuage tensions, ethnic and religious conflicts still persist. One of the problems is that these policies were applied in negative ways. Indeed, some basic policies embedded in the political restructuring by the successive governments were not directed to the root causes of the crises. Put differently, the politicization of government policies have led to ethnic, regional and religious tensions that featured frequently in the minds of the people. Undoubtedly, this has affected the growth of a national identity in spite of the ideology of nationalism. In the context of nation building therefore, a state-nation rather than a nation-state emerged. The question is, why is this so and can this process be stopped under the entity called Nigeria? The thrust of this paper is the recognition of the reality that Nigeria exhibits diverse identities difficult to co-exist. The paper therefore concludes that the unity of Nigerian nationhood depends on dynamic and powerful institutions capable of democratizing the relationship between the distinct nationalities and the nation – state.

Key words: Policy, ethnicity, democratization, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian political process presents an image of an ethnic assertion affecting all aspects of political life in the state. This assertion has a close bearing even on the socio-economic conditions in the country. The society, which is mainly divided along ethno-linguistic lines, has witnessed major upheavals, including the civil war in the late 1960s. Put simply, the difficulties started with the first republic and the difficult years after independence. The competing groups have clashed with one another on various occasions while seeking dominance at the federal level. It has involved intense rivalry among the regions as they tried to out do each other in socio-economic

development. In fact, the location of a multi-billion naira iron and steel industry was earlier greeted with disagreements among the regions before it was finally located at Ajaokuta is an ample example. According to Osaghae (2002), these regions struggled to maximize their shares of the federation's resources and the control on federal power.

These sentiments are noticeable, mainly of two factors. First; it is because of relative backwardness of the nation-state; and second, ethnic differences in the country were sharpened by the colonial rulers for their selfish interest. Although, there were enthusiasm for establishing representative institutions of government and developing more productive modes of economic life but it was difficult to realise them in a country where there exists no-clear-cut perspective as to which way the political and social systems should evolve in times to come. As a result,

*Corresponding author. E-mail: pastorwilfred@yahoo.co.uk, wilfredukpere@gmail.com.

there has been a dismal performance of the political system on all counts. The military therefore, emerged to play the roles that were to be performed by democratically elected governments. Unfortunately, the military has proved it's incompetent and corrupt as the civil administrators. Thus, the contemporary politics seems to have provided continuity to the old colonial practices and structures. Indeed, the programmes and policies relating to political, social and economic developments have greatly been influenced by the ethno-regional calculation which has not only caused unevenness in the process of development but also have promoted new tensions. The contention of some scholars is that the roots of political conflicts are the tensions generated by economic imbalances, ethnic and cultural diversities as well as the incompatibilities of groups of people associated with these social cleavages in society (Phadnis, 1986)

This paper is aimed at examining the policies as its effects on governance in the country. In this regard, the paper will trace the making of Nigeria by underlining the colonial policy of 'divide and rule' principle which started the process of ethnic consciousness among the diverse groups. In the main, it will focus on various policies embedded in the political restructuring by the successive governments and their relevance after 50 years of nationhood.

The paper has been divided further to examine the policy as a concept, argue that the colonial rulers created the problems of ethnic consciousness that have sharpened the ethnic demands which in turn have impinged on public policy formulation and implementation, analyse the effects of politics on some basic policies in the restructuring of the nation and argue that diverse identities should be accommodated into a true federal system as evidence of good policy formulation.

Conceptual framework

Public policy is an extremely complex analytical and political process in which there is no beginning or end and the boundaries are most uncertain. Thus, public policy has been defined by various scholars at one time, or the other. According to Dye (1998), public policy is what government chooses to do or not to do. This explanation has been criticised on the premise that it did not take cognizance of that fact that there may be a difference between what the government decide to do and what they actually did. The government, for instance, may enact a policy to up-grade road infrastructure, throughout the country. This is an act decided upon by the government. However, there may be a gap between the decision of the government and actual implementation. Besides, there is something that governments do that is not considered policies in actual sense, even though they are government actions.

In an attempt to capture most governments' actions as

public policy, Richard Rose has suggested that policy be considered as 'a long series of more-or-less related activities and their consequences for those concerned rather than a discrete decision'. This definition though ambiguous, connotes the notion that policy is a course, or pattern of activity and not simply a decision to do something. Taking into account certain problems raised by some definitions of public policy, Anderson (1984) defined the concept of public policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem, or matter of concern. This definition focuses on the actual concluded action of government rather than what is proposed or intended. Some scholars refer public policy as all that goes on from the moment the need for a policy was muted and articulated to its formations, enactment, implementation and performance or impact. It involves a complex web of activities, interactions, techniques and strategies involving several persons, groups and agencies (Ikelegbe, 1996). Dror (1971) defined public policy as a major guideline for action. According to him, public policy in most cases, lays down general directives, rather than detailed instructions on the main liens of action to be followed.

In most African countries, this is an activity that is essentially monopolised by the civil service. The civil service monopolises policy initiation activities because of the available resources at its disposal, the expertise it can mobilise, the necessary information and data which it can draw upon for the articulation of the policy and an awareness of societal needs and demands through various agencies. Political scientists like Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan defined policy as a projected program of goals, values and practices and Carl Friedrich says, it is essential for the policy concept that there be a goal, objective or purpose (Dye, 1998). These definitions imply a difference between specific government actions and an overall program of action towards a given goal. However, the problem raised in insisting that government actions must have goals in order to be labelled 'policy' is that we can never be sure whether or not a particular action has a goal or if it does, what that goal is. Perhaps, most people assume that if a government chooses to do something, there must be a goal, objective or purpose. In reality, however, people observe that government chooses not to do anything. In this case, it is not a policy. Policy involves what government actually do, not just what they intend to do or what they say they are going to do. For example, if the National Assembly enacts a law directing employers to pay no less than an approved minimum wage but nothing is done to enforce the law and subsequently little change occurs in economic behaviour, it seems reasonable to contend that public policy actually takes the form of non-regulation of wages (Anderson, 1984). Generally, governments at all levels in Nigeria have been increasingly active in developing public policies. The outcome is a large volume of laws

that flows from the national, state and local legislative bodies. Despite this, there has been series of policy failures in the country. In fact, policy failure in Nigeria is linked to the inability of the government to identify the needs of its citizens before initiating the correct policies. A close look at the statement indicates that the inability of any government to successfully manage its policy process, encounters grave challenges of development. The present work therefore will examine the various public policies and their probable factors for failure in Nigeria. In order words, the level of development across the country is deplorable and an outcry which need urgent attention.

THE NIGERIAN STATE – AN OVERVIEW

Before the British rule, there was no entity called Nigeria, the three major ethnic groups, which are Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, were living separately along with other minor ethnic groups such as the Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Nupe, Tiv, Kanuri, Urhobo, etc. Each of the major groups had a well-structured administrative system (Ugoh, 2005). With the advent of British rule in 1861, a number of changes were introduced in the system. In 1900, for example, under the leadership of Sir Frederick Lugard, the British colonial policy created the crown colony and the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria. The British assumed direct control over the Northern Protectorate in 1906 and subsequently merged the protectorate of Southern Nigeria with the colony of Lagos to be known as Southern Nigeria. In 1914, Sir Lugard, as the Governor-General, amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria for administrative convenience. Thus, Nigeria came into existence in 1914 after the amalgamation. In essence, Nigeria today is an aggregation of several nationalities that have been joined to co-exist as one nation.

This amalgamation, according to some scholars, was done so that the finances of the comparatively well-off south could be extended to the north (Eke, 2001). Administratively, British relied purely on indirect rule in the north where the local leaders continued to rule their subject only to the limited supervision of colonial officials. In the south, they created a traditional colonial regime in which colonial officials governed directly. Although the British chose to rule through traditional local leaders, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that these local leaders had no role in determining colonial policies set by British officials in London and Lagos (Hauss, 2006).

In comparative terms, the colonial rule was relatively benign in the country. Having created a single Nigerian colony, they administered the north and south separately until the end of the colonial period for their convenience. As rightly put (Hauss, 2006), if the British created Nigeria, British colonial policy largely contributed to its remaining a mere geographical expression. In fact, the colonialist's policy in governing their possessions found

reflection in various forms of national oppression such as the promotion and creation of artificial boundaries which divided common ethnic regions and setting one group against another. Thus, the British rulers through their 'divide and rule' policy started the process of an ethnic consciousness which has continued to influence public life after independence. This consciousness has made these ethnic segments opponents of each other in social, economic and finally political spheres. As a consequence, the emergence of nationalism counterpoising the colonial politics had to compete against sub-national loyalties based upon ethnic, region or religion. In the post-independence phase too, the competition on the same lines continued because of sub-national consciousness among diverse ethnic groups.

While discussing on the political instability in Nigeria, Adedeji remarks: "Nigeria's failures might be occasioned by the fact that the creation of Nigeria by the British was not motivated by high principles of public policy and the wider vision of building a great, united and prosperous African country out of the existing small nationalities, but merely for administrative convenience and the fear of rival French colonialists" (Eke, 2001). Evidently, imperialism by the British was mainly concerned with its economic interest and thus no concerted effort to build a strong political sign-post which resulted into the present situation of political instability. On occasion, such situations invited military intervention leading to coups and counter-coups. The military, therefore, play roles that were to be performed by democratically elected governments. This is totally against what is obtainable in some other developing countries like India.

Public policy: Its myths and realities of political development

The Nigerian state as mentioned earlier is an aggregation of several nationalities that have joined to co-exist as one nation. However, the growth process associated with the development perspective has generated endemic poverty and growing inter-personal and inter-regional disparities among these nationalities. None of these nationalities wants to be relegated to the bottom in the competition for scarce resources. In reality, most of these nationalities over the years have felt alienated from the national mainstream. On occasions, mutual hostilities have developed between the larger nationalities themselves and those perceived as smaller nationalities. The political competition that determines the allocation of scarce resources becomes a "do or die" affair. For instance, the people of the southern Nigeria dominated by Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups have been against the political hegemony of the Hausa – Fulani group in the north (Babawale, 2006). In fact, since the nation's 50 years of independence, persons from the north have ruled for about thirty-seven years against thirteen years from the south. As a result, the sense of emotional integration

among the people has not only been shaken but many a time posed a serious threat to the unity and integrity of Nigerian society. The situation in the Niger Delta and several other parts of the country where there are agitations for re-distribution of power and resources are cases at hand.

No doubt, mere existence of diverse nationalities does not pose any problem on its own but the state's ability or inability to manage the problems that arises among these nationalities is the issue.

In the light of the foregoing, it is the writer's contention that the failure of past and existing policies on some selected issues should be analysed and discussed. The essence of this is to generate concern and ideas on alternative policy guidelines that are acceptable by the diverse nationalities and the Nigerian state. The first major threat of Nigerian nationhood was the policy of regionalism. The process began with the division of the country into three regions. These regions exercised powers given to them by the central government. For more details, the central legislatures were called Houses of Representatives and Executive Councils. The North and West had both the legislative councils and the Houses of Chiefs while the East had only the legislative council. These regional legislatures were granted powers to make laws on such subjects as local government, town and country planning, agriculture and fisheries, education, public works, health for the region, forestry, etc. Thus, the policy of regionalism was meant to ensure development across each region but the reverse was the case. Evidently, it was characterised by hatred and ethnic factors. For instance, it allowed for discrimination against non-indigenes in terms of employment, admission of children from other regions into public schools, etc. It also created rivalry among the regions as each tried to outplay another in socio-economic development. The rivalry further heightened with the opening of regional consulates abroad after independence (Yagboyaju, 2009). Indeed, the regionalization policy embarked upon resulted in the birth of the ethnically loaded slogan of West for westerners, East for easterners and North for northerners. Here, regionalisation policy failed to achieve its objectives.

The Nigerianisation policy was formulated to put Nigerians in the senior posts in the governmental administration. At the same time, the people of the North had the fear that the policy was meant for the southernisation of the posts in the northern region. Thus, the northern regional government resolved that qualified northerners would be given preference over others in the recruitment of personnel into the public service in the region. This fear of southern domination in all the Nigerian affairs led northerners to formulate the northernisation policy. In order to prevent the better educated southerners from securing the senior posts and associated benefits in the north, the regional movement began to implement the policy of northernisation. In 1957, the policy was defined

by the Regional Public Service Commission as a system wherein "if a qualified northerner is available, he is given priority in recruitment; if no northerner is available, expatriate may be recruited or a non-northerner on contract terms (Dudley, 1968). The policy however affected every other activity not only in Northern region but also in the Western region. For example, in the Western region, the government expressed serious misgivings in the appointment of easterners to posts into the public service in the region. In reaction and in spite of the poor financial situation of the Eastern regional government, the regional bureaucracy was forced to absorb easterners displaced from the Northern and Western regional governments. Again, it became clear that the programme of Nigerianisation was doomed (Nnoli, 1980).

The situation was reinforced by the educational policy. Admission into public schools mainly in the northern region was checkmated. They felt that checkmating the admission or enrolment of the southern children in schools could control the ambition of their southern counterparts already in the region because of early contact with western education. Interestingly, the spread of education between the northern and southern Nigeria was noticeable more in the southern parts than the northern part. Such a disparity in the levels of education has created imbalances and widened as well as deepened regionalism causing harm to national consciousness. For instance, universities in the early period were established along regional lines which saw three regional universities namely: University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the Eastern region, Ife University in the Western region and Zaria University in the Northern region. The students were taught to place their regions before the nation, thereby poisoning their minds against ethnic nationalities from other regions (Ugoh, 1996).

In addition, the application of quota system in admission into various universities and tertiary institutions also accentuated regional differences. It came out because of attitude of the western educated southerners towards the less educated northerners that was essentially negative and non-complementary. However, through the northernisation and regionalisation policies, the north was able to devote more on education. This steady progress toward education continued till 1975 when General Murtala Mohammed formulated a policy of ensuring a quota system into higher institutions. Moreover, the federal military government dominated by northerners set up the National Universities Commission by brining vice-chancellors' position under the whip of the education minister through NUC executive secretary who was answerable to the Head of state. As a measure to strengthen the policy, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) were set up to centralised the university admission. The argument was that the Board would save applicants the trouble of buying multiple admission forms, reduce the cost of transport and eliminate multiple placements. But, the variation in the

'cut-off point' in all the national entrance examinations has given rise to regional tensions. For example, while the northerners could qualify with only about 40% marks, the southerners had to secure 60% marks in order to get admission into federal institutions (Ugoh, 1996). As a result, Nigeria's educational policy began to swim in troubled waters.

The irony is that while the better educated people are being denied opportunity, the lower in merit occupy better position due to policy of reservation and quota system. Its implication has not only added to the socio-economic and political backwardness but also encouraged people to protest on ethnic lines.

Another important policy adopted to address the challenge of the national question was the policy of 'federal character' principle. According to Maduabum (2006:212), the policy represents an instrument for resolving the national question as it guarantees to every part of the federation a place in federal government and its agencies. In other words, it means having the best and most competent personnel from all parts of the country. The need is to ensure a sense of belonging, promote national unity and equal contribution to the federal cause among citizens of the federation irrespective of tribe, sex, language, religion, etc.

Underlying this concept is the assumption that the various nationalities in the country are essentially significant in the differences rather than in their similarities.

Thus, the constitution drafting committee (CDC) makes provision for bridging these differences hence the federal character principle. However, the principle which was spelt out in the constitution exists in theory.

For more than three decades of its commencement, there is no significant achievement recorded. Instead, appointment of mediocre over experience and competence from among the nationalities to sensitive positions was visible. In addition, it has been used to promote discrimination in appointment and admission because of the state of origin. Moreover, the principle is sued to share privileges and not responsibilities and, as a result, led to primordial antagonisms.

In more practical terms, appointments into the decision making armed forces ruling council (AFRC) or the provisional ruling council (PRC) during the Generals Babangida and Abacha regimes in the country scantily reflected the need for balanced representation in line with the requirements of the principle (Yagboyaju, 2009).

Before this principle and prior to independence, military aspirants from the southern parts were frustrated. By 1960, there were only 81 Nigerian officers in the army, the rest being British. Interestingly, out of the 81 officers, 60 were Igbos with the remaining nationalities being represented by the rest of the 21. However, with the introduction of the quota system, the balance tilted towards the dominant Hausa-Fulani in the North. In fact, 42% of the commissioned officers in the army came from the northern region alone leaving only 25, 19 and 14% of the

posts for eastern, western and mid-western regions respectively (Dudley, 1973). Thus, the federal government dominated by northerners who formulated and implemented the programme were, of course, steeped in ethnic politics. The northerners were also quite conscious of the army's critical role in the political process as the final instrument of coercion. This consciousness is reflected in the efforts of the leaders of various nationalities to encourage members of their ethnic groups to join the army (Nnoli, 1980). Perhaps, the main reasons for these political interests in the military and the contacts with the military personnel was the fear that if they lose power in the event of collapse of political institution, the dominated army of their ethnic group could takeover.

More than anything, the ethnic, religious and regionalism still dominate the social ethos and thus, exists a great deal of imbalance in the process of socio-economic development. Every successive government dominated by particular ethnic group always manipulate and exploit emotive considerations to perpetuate their hold on federal issues. The Shagari administration encountered various forms of confrontation from various ethnic groups due to certain policies of his government. In fact, the Yoruba group felt resentment over federal housing programmes and the demolition of houses at Ibadan which they claimed was ethnically motivated. Apart from this, a large proportion of development funds were spent in the north by the northern dominated federal government. For example, the Kainji Dam which cost 136.2 million naira was located in their locality. Furthermore, in 1963 to 1964, the North received over 50% of the federal disbursement for agricultural expansion. Apart from these allocations, the northern leaders ensured that there was no policy which ran contrary to the interests of their region.

The governments of the Northern states, too, indulged in formulating policies of discrimination that is indigenism. This policy made southerners particularly the Ibos, aliens in their motherland. As observed, the Ibos who constituted majority of migrants in the North, found it difficult to fulfil the requirements of this discriminatory practices by northern leaders. Even the school fees policy introduced in the North discriminated between, what it called "indigenes" and "non-indigenes". To some extent, such discriminatory policies have been copied by some states in the western Nigeria, brewing discontent among the people of Nigeria. Although, many patriotic citizens have criticised this unhealthy policy, yet it continues to operate within the country and, thus, raises doubts about the unity of Nigeria.

Creation of states was another policy measure adopted by various regimes to address some of the challenges facing the nation. As earlier indicated, the country was divided into four regions in a way that maximised the influence of the major ethnic nationalities. Subsequently, the country has been subdivided in an attempt to ward off the impact of ethnic divisions, suppression of minorities,

economic inequalities, etc. These national goals were fostered to ensure national unity and stability of government.

Thus, the country was first divided in 1967 into twelve states from the existing four regions by General Gowon. The creation of states shows that in the Northern and Western regions, the dominance of the Hausa-Fulanis and Yorubas, respectively remained intact, while the Igbo dominated Eastern region was divided into three states mainly on the basis of ethnic bias. Actually, the then northern military ruler carved out separate states for minorities just to weaken the Igbo threat of secession. The Ibos who protested against the creation of these three states alleged that the Western region which had relatively large landmass and population was kept intact despite the demands of the Yorubas. With this, the creation of states hardly satisfied the diverse ethnic groups. For example, Yorubas in Ondo area demanded a state of their own. They feared domination by Yorubas from the Oyo area. The Yorubas in Ondo area saw themselves as educationally more advanced than the other Yorubas and claimed that their achievements had attracted suspicion and discrimination (West Africa, 1976). In fact, some Yorubas demanded separate states of their own from the existing Western region. A similar trend was witnessed in the states dominated by the minority groups. It was in view of this that the former Federal Minister for communication said "creation of more new states is a tide which no one can stop" (Quoted in Africa Diary, 1975). As a result, the military regime of General Mohammed set up a panel headed by Justice Irikefe to look into these problems. Ironically, the panel found that part of the agitations was due to bad government. It emphasized that even if the government implemented the idea of 'one family, one state', there would continue to be agitations whenever there was a vacillating and purposeless government. For administrative efficiency, however, the panel suggested the creation of an additional seven states (Federal Republic of Nigeria Government, 1976:9). By 1991, the total number of states rose to 30. According to the government, the inspiration for additional states came from three mutually reinforcing principles that is, principles of social justice, development and balanced federation (The Guardian, August 28, 1991).

Unlike on earlier occasions, the creation of states in 1991 was followed by widespread protests across the country. The protests were based on boundary problems, ethnicity and location of states' capitals. This was so because the reorganisation of state was done without adequate consultation with the local groups and elites. Apart from this, southerners felt that no balance was maintained between the North and the South as relatively more states were created in the North. They claimed that out of the 30 states, the North had 16 as against 14 from the South. They feared that such imbalances would create political problems as representation in the House of Representatives had been based on states rather than

population. This undue political advantage accorded to the North was considered unjust and unfair in the South.

In spite of the drawbacks, however, the creation of more states helped to promote the policy of consolidating the gains of development. People of the new states, particularly the minority groups, could now expect improvement in their living conditions. In essence, it created opportunity for ordinary people to compete in different fields which were earlier dominated by a small number of individuals or privileged groups. This directly, or indirectly, facilitated the pace of political development at the grass roots level.

In the development discourse, it has become pertinent to associate state failure to the inability of the state to discharge its responsibilities to its citizens. In other words, the weakness of the nation's state is mostly visible in the corruption. This canker worm has plagued the socio-economic and political development of the country. Thus, there was little surprise when in 1996, the Transparency International rated Nigeria as the most corrupt country in the world. The successive governments including the military regimes have made various efforts to comb the menace. For example, in 1966, the leaders of the first military coup pronounced that the key-factor for their action was the political corruption. The fight against this menace was highlighted when General Murtala Muhammad administration confiscated some of the properties of several public officials who served under General Gowon. In a similar way, Generals Buhari and Abacha regimes came and instituted anti-corruption crusades with the slogans "war against indiscipline" (WAI) and "war against indiscipline and corruption" (WAIC) respectively. But, their best were not enough to minimise corruption in the country. In fact, those who claimed to be fighting corruption were those institutionalising it. For instance, before power was handed over to the civilian administration in 1999, about \$ 750 million was found from Abacha's various accounts (Hauss, 2006:459).

The Obasanjo government also made major attempt to fight corruption. The government, on coming to power, immediately submitted an anti-corruption bill to the National Assembly which was passed into law. With this, ninety-three top generals who served under various military regimes were replaced. Besides, it created anti-corruption agencies such as the independent corruption and Allied offences commission (ICPC) and the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC). These agencies on various occasions enhanced the recovery of the country's stolen funds by some past officials and politicians. Again, the fight against corruption by President Yar'Adua administration has been demonstrated through the strict observance of the rule of law. In a similar manner, President Goodluck Jonathan's appointment of Professor Attahiru Jega as chairman of the independent national electoral commission (INEC) is a serious indication against corruption especially in the

coming general elections in 2011. Before this time, the commission has been accused of not only being corrupt but also non-independent. Without contradictions, therefore, adequate policies implemented by various governments and functional public institutions have been regarded as the most effective anti-dote for public abuses and malpractices. Like several other challenges, poverty in the land has defied policy measures and initiatives of successive governments. Most of the various programmes organised to address poverty such as green revolution, operation feed the nation (OFN), and national agency for poverty eradication programme (NAPEP) achieved little success. The main reason for the failure was the improper identification of issues and challenges, the planning of policies and their implementation. For example, the governments which initiated these programmes and supposed to assist the agriculturalists embarked upon large scale importation of food items including fertilizers. Expectedly, these programmes, distribution method of fertilisers and allocation of farmland to agriculturalists have failed thereby added hardship to the people. In addition, some methods of the restructuring and implementation of policies of the various programmes which included the removal of subsidies, deregulation of the downstream oil sector and privatisation of public enterprises, have "spurred an upward pressure in the inflation rate and further reduced the people's purchasing power" (Dauda and Nwaogwugwu, 2006). From the foregoing analysis, successive governments have formulated various policies which meant to assuage the people's plight but these policies were applied negatively or not directed to the root causes of the crises. For a clearer understanding of the Nigerian state and its public policy processes, the World Bank (2000) states: The actions of individuals, groups or firms both in public and private sectors to influence the formulation of laws, regulations, decrees and other governmental policies to their own advantage as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials. Unless and until these hurdles are removed, the formulation and implementation of public policies in Nigeria can hardly be effective. Thus, for Nigeria to meet its lofty ideals like the millennium development goals (MDGs), vision 20, 2020, sentiments along ethnic, regional and religious considerations should be deemphasised.

CONCLUSION

This study dealt with various aspects of politicisation of public policies in the socio-economic and political context of Nigeria since independence. It has focused mainly on policies in relation to the political development of the Nigerian nationhood, the nature and support structure of individuals, governments at federal and state levels and political leadership. Public policies are outputs of the processes of political systems. Thus, they are the

outcome of decisions taken by government on serious and sensitive issues of public interest. Nigeria, as a nation occasionally encounters challenges in different types and forms. Most of these challenges have become perennial problems. A cursory look at the events that have occurred in the country since 1960, one would immediately link them to ethnic, regional and religious tensions. In a culturally diverse context, ethnic identities have provided the basis for stability and unity through respect for other identities. However, whenever the exclusivist dimension acquired importance, ethnic groups have denied respect for others. The unity in such conditions is thought of as something to be achieved by subjugating the others. This has found expression in inter-ethnic discrimination in jobs, housing, admissions and enrolment into educational institutions and in the distribution of social welfare services. Political corruption breeds alongside this kind of exclusiveness. Even the processes of development and modernization lead to the hardening of ethnic identities and on occasions, provoke ethnic conflicts. In modern times, when equality is a proclaimed social ideal, the marginalised groups have frequently articulated against the dominance of and exploitation by the stronger groups. Invariably, this articulation has led to demands for higher participation in political power, economic well-being, better education and job opportunities, etc. Such demands usually result in struggles for autonomy, self determination and resource control. Inter-group conflicts have often culminated in violation, migration, economic distress, political breakdowns and instabilities, coups and counter-coups, etc. This trend is reflected in the fact that the greater the exclusiveness of the deprived ethnic groups from the dominant group, greater is the likelihood of the intensity of the discontent and its articulation in the shape of a violence or militant ethnic movement. Nevertheless, the corporate existence of Nigeria is endangered on account of these conflicting interests and perceptions. Although the country has experienced the agony of political instability, still no effort seems to have been made towards cementing diverse tendencies into a broad identity of Nigerian nationhood. Both the civilian and military regimes have not only failed but also stifled the emergence of democratic institutions. Rather than making efforts to strengthen the ideal of 'unity in diversity', the leadership formulated and implemented policies motivated by personal or group interests. As a result, the country suffers from economic backwardness, political instability and high rate of political corruption. The authors still believe that, Nigeria will continue to be listed as most at risk states even as the country celebrates her independence century. Thus, without the policy-makers getting their priorities right the unity of Nigerian nationhood is far-fetched.

Suggestions

An adequate solution to the problems of policies failure in

Nigeria must stem logically from a rigorous analysis of the causes of its emergence and persistence. There should be adequate constitutional guarantees against any anti-integrational policies by the states such as in the recruitment of the people in government services.

Political, social and economic policy differences and imbalances across ethnic lines should be remedied by the formulation, as well as strict application of identical rules, norms and regulations throughout the country. Differences in the traditional cultures of the people should be deemphasised and similarities highlighted.

The enhancement and depersonalization of public offices should be required for the effective performance of juicy and strategic ministries. The colonial-type policy associated with socio-economic scarcity and inequality which is the bases of ethnic or religious and regional affiliations should be discouraged. A new system must be designed to ensure a rapid growth of the productive forces with sound policies free from primordial biases. Besides, the economy should be diversified and the process of industrial development intensified. The present policy system of allocating scarce resources to states which are lopsided must be restructured in a way that there must be equal number of states in the six-geopolitical zones. In addition, the unfortunate policy of the national population towards the division of the national cake should be shifted to an emphasis on the production of the national cake.

REFERENCES

- Anderson JE (1984). *Public Policy Making: An Introduction*. New York: Praeger, p. 9.
- Babawale T (2006). *Nigeria in the Crises of Governance and Development*, Lagos. *Polit. Adm. Resour. Centre*, 2: 1.
- Dauda R, Nwaogwugwu I (2006). "Fiscal Policy and Poverty Reduction: Some Implications for Economic Transformation", in R. Anifowose, and T. Babawale (eds.) *An agenda for a New Nigeria: The Imperative for Transformation*. Lagos: Concept Publications, p. 176.
- Dror Y (1971). *Ventures in Policy Sciences*. New York: Eisenhower, p. 14.
- Dudley B (1968) *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*. Lagos: Frankcass, p. 220.
- Dudley B (1973). *Politics and Crisis in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, p. 92.
- Dye TR (1998). *Understanding Public Policy*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Eke DO (2001). *Perspectives on a Stable Democracy for Nigeria*. Aba: Lord Onny International.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria Government (1976). *Report of the Panel on Creation of States*. Lagos: Ministry of Information, p. 9.
- Hauss C (2006). *Comparative Politics Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. Belmont: Thomson Corporation, p. 441, 459.
- Ikelegbe A (1996). *Public Policy-Making and Analysis* (2nd ed.) Benin: Uri Publishing Ltd, p. 67
- Maduabum C (2006). *Reforming Government Bureaucracies in Nigeria: The journey so far*, Lagos: ASCON, p. 212.
- Nnoli O (1980). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, p. 189, 240.
- Osagha E (2002). *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Ibadan: John Archers, p. 2.
- Phadnis U, Muni SC, Bahadur K (1986). *Domestic Conflicts in South Asia, Economic and Ethnic Political Dimensions*, New Delhi: Asian Publishers, p. 2.
- The Guardian, 28 August (1991). *Test of Babangida's Announcement*. Lagos: The Guardian, p. 3, 24.
- Ugoh SC (1996). "Ethnicity and Politics in Nigeria (Since Independence)" Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Panjab University Chandigarh – India.
- Ugoh SC (2005). "Constitution-Making and Constitutionalism in Nigeria's Fourth Republic September (1999 – 2004): Issues and Trends" in *Unilag. J. Pol.*, 2: 1.
- West Africa, 3 May 1976. "Is there one Nigeria?" London: West Africa. p. 594.
- World Bank (2000). *Anti-corruption in Transition: A Contribution to the policy Debate*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, p. 15.
- Yagboyaju D (2009). *Issues in Public Policy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: College Press.