

## **STIMULATING EFFECTIVE POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SECTOR**

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### **Abstract**

*This study tries to explore policy monitoring and evaluation system in formulating government policies in Nigeria. While appreciable monitoring data and reports are being generated, the Nigeria Federal government still faces a lot of significant policy challenges. The current economic recession is a strong indicator, x-raying significant policy failure both from the previous and present administration. Issues discussed in this paper includes introducing policy monitoring and evaluation structure in the process of policy formulation; Comparative analysis of policy stability in some practicing countries in relation to the Nigeria experience. Deriving from the Marxian theory of social production, the potentials of change in government policy formulation strategy becomes very necessary and the institutional capacity of the federal government to engineer this change is problematized.*

**Keywords:** Monitoring, Evaluation, Public Sector, Policy Cycle.

### **Introduction**

Developing economies across the world are either battling with one economic reform, political reform or another, coupled with the global economic recession which many scholars referred to as caused by 'over dependence on oil economy' by most developing nations. In Nigeria, there are increasing pressures to reform government policies and practices especially in the public sectors.

This is evidence in the perceived manner in which various government agencies carryout most government policies. Past and present administrations have been accused by various stakeholders of practicing selective implementation of government policies especially in the areas of anti-corruption war. Recently the Jonathans administration was accused of being complacent over the issue of Anti-corruption. There are recent indications and revelations by the EFCC and the DSS of heavy corrupt practices perpetrated during the last administration. However, a lot of criticism have bedeviled President Muhammadu Buhari's Anti-corruption fight as partial, selective, vindictive and an avenue to intimidate members of the opposition parties and anyone who opposes his APC led government which rode to power through the 'change mantra'. Indeed, is widely recognized and accepted that an effective and efficient public sector is a prerequisite to achieving socio-economic growth, political development and a result oriented anti-corruption fight centered

towards national consciousness and development. Government accountability to its citizens is the provision of evidence based results of government policies in meeting desired goals and objectives. Scholars like Hatry (1999:5) posited that “focusing on result is an effective tool of public management through better resource decision-making, monitoring whether public policy initiatives are producing anticipated outputs and outcome and holding public servants accountable for their efforts”. Kettl, (2000:37) supports this opinion but further stated that “creating a system which provides information on the results of government actions and policies is a profound political act.” Most political acts are perceived with wide reservation and suspicion, due to past experiences of government policy implementation. Policy formulation process are equally not seen as the best interest of the general public. Policy formulation cycle especially in Nigeria are usually seen as political party interest based, set to benefit either a few loyalists in the government or proposed to victimize political opponents and contemporaries. However, result based approach to public policy formulation process, management and accountability can be seen as an act of political will power to sincerely address any national issue irrespective of political affiliations and political consolidation of power that is taken undue advantage of the suffocating situation of government ineffective policy implementation and the citizen clamor for good governance and policy reform. The PDP led Jonathan’s administration was voted out of the 2015 general elections due to the growing citizen’s political awareness and pressure for good governance, strengthening of anti-corruption campaign and the high-level insecurity in Nigeria especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. However, much is to be desired in the current president Buhari’s APC led administration. But either way, holding government accountable on good policy formulation and implementation will not work without government enforcement of a result based policy monitoring and evaluation to achieve performance based on evidential results.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

The analysis of the potentials of Nigerian public sector to adopt an effective policy monitoring and evaluation approach as part of policy formulation process is a step in the right direction aimed at ensuring that policy formulation in Nigeria is inclusive, participatory and people oriented. The effectiveness of policy monitoring and evaluation in the public sector in Nigeria is assessed under the Marxian theory of social production given the neoliberal dynamics of the global political economy and globalization as it affects developing economies like Nigeria. The Marxian theory of social production sees the inevitability of contradictions and crisis in the capitalist class society. This crisis in the capitalist society is seen to stem from the material production of use value in which labour produces value beyond its subsistence with the surplus going to the owners of capital. This means that in the Nigeria peripheral nexus of neo capitalist production, the Nigerian surplus go to the very privileged few in government cycles and other high-level government officials and senior civil servants who formulate policies to protect the rich. The socialization of production and private exploration of surplus emanating from socialized production is perceived

as the primary contradiction leading to crisis as evident in the contradiction between national and international accumulation (Marx, 1970b). This capitalist development contradiction refers to the fact that multilateral finance and credit agencies, the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) the London and Paris Clubs of creditors, MNCs, Nigerian business group and government agents interact to produce a highly integrated but unequal capitalist economy. The level of the Nigerian citizen's control over the national economy, extent of ownership of the market and the capacity to expropriate surplus from these so called international collaborators for national development defines the ravaging issues of rising unemployment, agitations against regional deprivation, non-inclusive governance among others. This point is that most economic policies operating in Nigeria since dependent are not nationalistic oriented (Ifesinachi, 2008). These policies are continuations of colonial precepts (Neo-colonialist policies). Nigerians were never consulted as to whether wanted liberal economy or not. For this reason, Nigeria has become a bee hive for every international donor agencies and the multinationals masquerading as development partners while collaborating with some government officials in looting Nigerians treasures starching the in foreign banks, buying properties all over the world with money meant for developmental projects which will stimulate the economy. This international conspiracy exacerbated the existing gap in policy implementation. This theory is a guide to appreciating the extant gap created by lack of policy monitoring and evaluation within the Nigerian public sector.

### **Conceptual Analysis**

Result based policy monitoring and evaluation according to UNITAR (2012) report, are indispensable elements of the policy cycle and are the prerequisite of well elaborated and implementable public policies. Result based policy monitoring and evaluation enables and facilitates implementation of public policies throughout their natural cycles. This reflects on the issues on ground and responds to reported challenges. RBM&E are important in creating sound policies which lead to the desired outcomes and set objectives, drawing from experiences gained from the success and failures of what is or has been implemented. UNIAR (2012) see monitoring as a routine process of collecting and recording information in order to track policy progress towards expected results. It also describes evaluation as the systematic assessment of the design, implementation and results of a programme, project, activities, policy, strategy or other undertaking. The intention of evaluation is to provide credible and useful information with a view to determine the worth or significance of a particular policy, incorporate lessons learnt into decision-making and enhance the overall quality of government operations. Monitoring and Evaluation are usually complementary but interdependent in roles. Studies has shown that processes such as appraisal or baseline studies are useful in defining or determining indicators for monitoring purposes, while results from monitoring progress can help to identify important evaluation questions based on evidence. However, policy formation based on evidence is centered on scientific approach. According to Cairney (2016) most policy makers need to demonstrate that they are making impact in

governance through their policies which is intended to bridge the evidence based-policy gap. In furtherance to Cairney's view, policy makers need to gather enough information before they make decisions on policies. Proposed policy needs should be tested through a result based approach inform of open debates, town hall meetings, symposia with stake holders and other methods of gathering enough information. The ongoing debate and law reform in Nigeria on Energy Act, Electoral Act and other economic reforms are succinct evidence of wrong or inadequate policy formulation process which lack result based monitoring and evaluation approach. Result based monitoring and evaluation is a powerful public management tool that can be used to help policy makers and decision makers to track policy progress and demonstrate the impact of a given project, program, or policy.

Monitoring involves collecting, analyzing and reporting data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact as well as external factors in a way that supports effective policy management. Policy monitoring provides decision makers and other stakeholders with regular feedback on progress implementation and results and early indicators of problems that need to be connected.

Evaluation is a time bound and periodic exercise that seek to provide credible and useful information to answer specific questions and to guide decision making by policy makers. It usually assesses relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Moreover, impact evaluation examines whether underlying theories and assumptions were valid, what worked, what did not and why. Evaluation can also be used to extract cross-cutting lessons from operating units' experiences and determining the need for modifications to strategic results frameworks.

### **Comparative Analysis of Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle as practiced in some Country and International Agencies**

Furtherance to the trust of this research, the paper tried to compare the applicability of various policies on monitoring and evaluation as practiced in some countries and international organizations like Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, UNDP, for purpose of comparison and policy reformulation where necessary.

The Uganda Government have a national policy on public sector M&E which provides a clear framework for strengthening the coverage, quality and utility and implementation of public policies and government investments across all government ministries, Agencies, Departments, Local Government, Parastatals. The introduction of National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (NIMES) in 2005/06 in Uganda was set to address policy issues capacity and infrastructure needs and strengthen performance assessment. This strategy did not work effectively hence the introduction of the balance score card which was initiated by the people to hold the government to account. The South Africa government practice the 'Government-Wide Monitoring & Evaluation (GWM&E)' policy framework which is set to shape the policy context within which electronic IT based system will operate. The GWM&E framework seek to embed a management system within public sector organizations which articulates with other internal management systems (such as planning budgeting and reporting systems) This may or may not be supported by I.T.

Software and other tools. However, its emphasis is on system integration and inter-operability. There is no centralized M&E System. Every Chief Executive of government MDAs are expected to establish an M&E system within the organization.

UNDP 2014 modified M&E policy, created the operation of a decentralized Policy Monitoring and Evaluation System with the executive board as the custodian of the evaluation policy. The independent evaluation office is the custodian of several aspect of evaluation with particular responsibilities (Assessment of Development Results, Programme and Theoretic Evaluations. The administrator is accountable for UNDP results, which includes responsibility to ensure that bureaux and country offices, under the oversight of this senior managers, deliver appropriately independent and impartial decentralized evaluations. While the evaluation units of associated funds and programmes are custodians of the evaluation function for their parent bodies.

In Nigeria, monitoring and evaluation is a department under the ministry of Budget and national planning set to develop and maintain a framework to support monitoring and evaluation and reporting of government performance at the national and sub-national levels in line with the national development goals and objectives. Nigeria has no national policy for monitoring and evaluation of government policies programmes project and other government activities. In 2011 under the Jonathan's administration the Nigeria government introduce mid-year score card for ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) by the then national planning commission as a data collection and analytic tool for monitoring and evaluation of MDA, performance and contributions in federal and states towards achieving the Nigerian vision 20:20:20.

### **Determining a Quality Framework for Policy M&E in the Policy Cycle**

A good public policy is a determinant of development and economic growth. However, measuring the performance of public administration is interlinked with the impact assessment of public policies. Therefore, the issue of indicators for assessing the quality of public services performance, activities and outcomes of public policies, upon which result-based policy M&E is anchored, becomes more important. In order to conduct a result-based policy M&E in an adequate manner, desired results and indicators for measuring the attainment anticipated targets need to be defined from the very beginning of the policy cycle. Moreover, well-defined policy formulation is key to proper implementation.

- Problem Structuring: defining the problem arena, including stakeholders
- Specifying criteria (in M&E these could be referred to as objectives, goals or outcomes)
- Development of alternative courses of action
- Preference modelling
- Assigning weights to the criteria

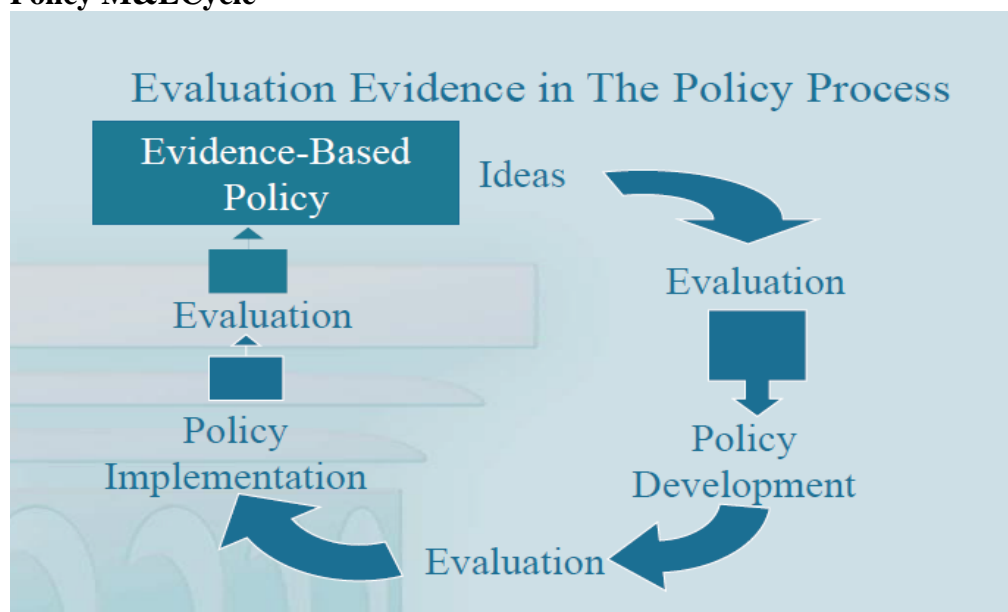
### **A Strategic Framework for Result-Based Policy M&E**

- a) Articulating Goals/Values/High level Objectives (or, put simply “what is the problem?”)
- b) Developing a ‘theory of change’ on how interventions will tackle the problems within the problem context
- c) Determining what activities will be undertaken to address the problems.
- d) Outcomes: medium to long-term outcome.

### **Result-Based M&E Policy Effectiveness**

- Intervention effectiveness - what works?
- Resource effectiveness - at what cost/benefit?
- Likely diversity of effectiveness across different groups – what works for whom and when?
- Implementation effectiveness - how it works?
- Experiential effectiveness - public’s views of policy

### **Policy M&E Cycle**



Source: Kusek, J.Z. (2011)

The effectiveness of the M&E in measuring the achievements of public policies is dependent on well-formulated indicators that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. Still, public authorities face limitations in the process of data collection which should be taken into consideration when developing indicators. Also, capacities across public institutions need to be assessed so that these functions are conducted properly.

## **Challenges affecting Result Based Policy M & E**

### ***Lack of Focus on Performance***

Weak monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Regulatory impact analysis (RIA) is important in strengthening of evidence basis of policies despite not being a specified M&E tool. As an ex ante evaluation, it involves a range of methods and requires a strong focus on measurement of outcomes of government activities. Though RIA is usually not done at the beginning of the policy cycle, it incorporates questions on the definition of the policy problem and justification of the government interest for intervention.

### ***Human Resources Capacity***

Limited capacity in performing systemic and key functions, for which proportionally greater administrative resources need to be deployed in order to tackle public problems. The following features can, thus, be identified:

- Low levels of specialization, are present both at the level of individual staff and institutions in their entirety;
- Reliance on informal structures, or policy, networks which creates a parallel realm of conducting activities;
- Overlapping political and bureaucratic activities, which result from a lack of a strategic approach to human resource management in the public service.

## **Conclusion**

This study focused on a detailed strategy for ensuring effective policy management and execution of projects, programmes and other activities of government through result based policy monitoring and evaluation. The paper argued that policy formulation process in Nigeria public sector is faulty and lacking in structure. In the course of our research it is apparent that more than 80% of government policies were not tested to see how it will affect the end point users, its acceptability to the people or group; the immediate and remote effect on the economy. It important to note that every policy has a targeted audience, issue(s) sort to address and a life line of which it is valid therefore it is expected that a proper policy cycle should include the mentioned stages of result based policy monitoring and evaluation in order to maximize the potentials of the policy. The recent war on corruption by the Mohammadu Buhari's administration is seen to lack result based monitoring and evaluation which is reflected in the Senate refusal to clear the nomination of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission Chairman (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu for two consecutive time. This goes a long way to show that the people have lost faith in ability of the current government to fight corruption effectively with absolute fairness. One major cardinal point focus of this administration is to fight corruption out of the Nigerian system; however their strategy has left much to desire. The anti-corruption policy is not living up to its desired expectation. There is ongoing debate on the inefficiency of the EFCC by scholars and stakeholders in the polity. Some scholars and public policy analysts opined that issue with the EFCC's inability

to effectively fight corruption is structural. They argue that some provisions of the law that established the EFCC is ambiguous hence created room for litigations and misinterpretation this evidence in the many cases in court that is being handled by the EFCC, no one has been successfully convicted either due to lack of substantive evidence occasioned by inconclusive investigations or inability of the EFCC to effectively establish a crime. Other arguments, though in tune with the initial thoughts, added that inadequate manpower and internal corruption within the EFCC poses a serious challenge in the ant corruption war in Nigeria. The big question now is – who investigates the investigator?

Finally, the paper discussed in detail the need for the Nigerian public sector to adopt a result based policy monitoring and evaluation in the policy formulation cycle in order to benefit and maximize every aspect of the policy. Result based monitoring and evaluation of pre-policy formulation and post policy implementation ensures effective policy formulation, implementation and accountability. It basically explained the various steps of result based monitoring and evaluation highlighting RBM&E national policies of some countries and international development agencies.

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