

Salient Issues in Building Better Employees

Aderibigbe, Adejare Morenikeji
Assistant Director of Studies, Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Topo-Badagry

Olla, John Oluwafemi
Ict Facilitator, Elint Inspirations Global Services, Ibadan-Oyo State

Abstract

This presentation wishes to look at policy capacity as a concept and an instrument in the hands of managers and administrators for effectiveness in service delivery. The concept of policy capacity is — complex and ambiguous, but is typically concerned with policy advising — specifically, the availability of high quality information, analysis and advice to support decision making. The new public management in Nigeria, like management in other countries of the World, needs to strengthen her capacity to develop policies that are people oriented and which are relevant for the realization of her mandate. The management also needs to establish and empower all the necessary organs of government to ensure that the right things are done for the provision of greater quantity and quality of goods and services for the greater majority of the populace. The word Management will be used interchangeably with the word Government in this discussion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over time concerns have been expressed about the ability of governments to make intelligent choices, to evaluate the environment and set strategic directions, to weigh and assess the implications of policy alternatives and to make appropriate use of knowledge in policy making. Concerns have also been expressed about the ability of existing processes and structures to ensure an appropriate flow of information, analysis, advice to decision makers and issues of policy implementation and delivery.

The new Management in Nigeria has endeavored to make policies necessary for the realization of her Transformation Agenda and other areas of concern that are important for the delivery of goods and services to the greater majority of the citizenry.

This discussion will attempt to define Policy Capacity and Management as a prelude for the presentation of the facts related to the issues at stake.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Policy can be defined as a set of ideas and proposals for action which culminate in government decisions.

Capacity, which can also be referred to as competency and capability, is defined as the availability of resources and the efficiency and effectiveness with which societies deploy them to identify, pursue and realise their developmental goals on a sustainable basis.

Policy capacity, therefore, refers to the situation where the ideas and proposals of government that culminate in decisions are strong enough to drive the available resources efficiently and effectively for the pursuance and realization of developmental goals of a given society.

Public refers to a group of people who share particular interest or who are involved in the same activity. It is connected with government and the services it provides. It describes something relating to or concerning all people in a community or country.

Management is the act of running and controlling a business or similar organization or the art or skill of dealing with people or situations in a successful way. It is a process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the efforts of organisational members and the use of other organisational resources in order to achieve stated organisational goals.

The general interest of the inhabitants in a given territory or boundary and not for selfish ends. Public management forms policies to regulate the interactions or relations of the people. It establishes the law enforcement agencies to protect the territorial boundary of the country, secures life and property, administers justice and maintain law and order. It generates revenue, pays civil servants and finances its programmes to ensure people's welfare and happiness are delivered to them. It discharges its political functions, provides basic and reasonably justifiable regulatory framework for the economy to grow. It provides infrastructure and social services to help generate employment and it plans and strives to improve the welfare and standard of life of the people. It establishes the education system. It conducts harmonious relationship with neighboring countries.

3. DISCUSSION

Public management is the agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and

realized and it consists of the persons that employ available resources to carry out the purposes of the state. It is the embodiment of the means, arrangements, actions, and processes by which the policies, programmes, purposes and goals of government are realised. (Maduabum, 2008:30).

The discourse on policy capacity of Nigeria, and that of any other country, will revolve on the following concerns:

1. The skills and abilities required for research, analysis and advice of the public service
2. The ability of the public service to employ and retain manpower with requisite knowledge; skills and experience.
3. The nature of relationships between officials and political executives.
4. The survival of the advising role of the public service in a dynamic, pluralized and contestable environment.
5. The ability and willingness of the public service to promptly deliver government commitments and priorities to the citizenry.
6. The possibility of manifest and latent consequences to come up from governmental policy interventions and provide to address them appropriately.

The new public management headed by President Goodluck Jonathan *GCFR* has as its mandate the fulfillment of the functions of public management enumerated above in its

4. TRANSFORMATION AGENDA.

This agenda is comprised of the following:

1. Good Governance — security of lives and property, law and order, anti-corruption, public service reforms and enabling environment.
2. Infrastructure — power and energy, road, rail, water and irrigation.
3. Real Sector — agriculture, manufacturing, oil and gas.
4. Human Development — education, health care, skill acquisition and capacity building.

The general purpose of the Transformation Agenda is to create employment, reduce poverty, and create wealth.

The major thrust of this agenda by the development experts manning the sensitive sectors of public management is to formulate policies that will move the Nigerian economy in one major direction, and that is from a nation that imports all its essential goods to one that makes most of the products it consumes and have enough for export.

The question now is whether or not the capacity of the policies formulated as driving forces for the realization of this agenda can really deliver its components to the people for which they were made. Minister, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina has insisted that Nigeria must produce most of the food it eats or eat all what it produces, leading to massive campaign to make Nigeria self-sufficient in rice, fish and fertilizer production. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Olusegun Aganga and his team have also ventured into policy formulation for the real sector. This has resulted in delivering the Nigerian economy from its unfortunate dependency on other countries for essential 'industrial commodities like cement. The recently launched sugar master plan is yielding positive dividends. The petrochemical, the power and health sectors are also receiving attention, though yet very minimal. The skill acquisition programmes are being enjoyed by a select few.

What is generally believed in every quarter is that apart from the few areas of the economy, including the ones above, the various components of the Transformation Agenda have remained elusive to the citizens. There is wide spread insecurity in the country, corruption is prevalent at all levels of governance, good roads and rail lines are almost nonexistent, the manufacturing sector cannot yet thrive until the power sector improves, the education sector is in disarray except for private schools and universities and the poverty level is still not abetting.

The controversy now is whether these widespread failures are consequent on weak policy capacity or disposition of those that should implement them. The truth of the matter is that the policies are capable of delivering these services to the citizens of this country, but the major operators and stakeholders constitute the major obstacles to the realization of these goals and objectives.

The reasons for the failure of public management to deliver these goods and services to the public hinge majorly on lack of co-ordination, short-term view, reactivism (instead of proactivism), policy instability, over politicisation, corruption, public sector dominance, ineffective regulatory framework, aspirin solution, benefit capture, deceit of the elite, miracle mentality and inactive citizenship.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to the many problems associated with the successful implementation of policy capacity variables which would lead to overall growth of the Nigerian economy and general wellbeing of the populace we wish to recommend as follows:

1. Public management should be made more result oriented, efficient and effective by separating it from politics or the manipulations by the politicians.

2. The new management should formulate policies that will incorporate diversification into other sectors of the economy as against the current over dependence on the oil sector.
3. The operation of spoil politics which leads to considerable corruption and nepotism in appointments is an obstacle to the achievement of efficiency in public management. It should be eradicated in the country.
4. There is need to straighten the path of public management to make it less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organizations and to crown its duties with dutifulness (Henderson, 1970).
5. The public administrators, as professionals in their own right, should not be aloof but should provide necessary advice to the politicians in policy formulation and implementation, among others areas of governance.
6. The economic wastages associated with the bloated machinery and manpower of government should be addressed by reducing the avoidable retinue of political employees.
7. Deep and long lasting solutions should be propounded for the numerous national problems by addressing the solutions to the real causes responsible for them instead of applying “aspirin solutions” method.
8. appropriate punishments as a deterrent to others.
9. The national financial resources should be channeled appropriately to where they are really needed to execute projects that will benefit the greater number of citizens.
10. Public management should make available relevant technology and infrastructure as permissive factors for growth.
11. The quality of institutions driving the growth process should be enhanced and adequately manned and equipped for the task which they were established to handle.
12. The manufacturing sector and other industries should be enhanced for production of goods and provision of employment.

6. CONCLUSION

The beauty of a policy depends on the capacity of the policy managers to carry out in details the policy implementation and evaluation to ensure that they benefit the larger number of the citizenry and to make available all the resources, both materials, human and financial necessary to make the policies realizable.

The success or otherwise of the new public management to formulate policies that are capable of delivering these goods and services to the public depend seriously on how well the different agencies of government can be co-ordinated, how short and long term proposals are vigorously pursued, how proactive the management is to critical issues that border on national security and welfare of the populace, formulate stable policies, reduce over politicisation of national issues, address all issues regarding the wide spread corruption prevalent in all sectors of the economy, reduce public sector. dominance of the economy, draw up effective regulatory framework, identify the problems in the country and finding long lasting solutions far beyond the aspirin solution method, change the miracle mentality of the policy makers and executors who believe that a divine being will solve our problems even when we refuse to do the right thing and then put up all the machinery necessary to make the citizenry active in their own little way.

It is only with this that the Transformation Agenda of the New Management in Nigeria can be realised.

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