



## POLICY EVALUATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: SELECTED CASES IN NIGERIA

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### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examined policy evaluation and national development, aimed at understanding how 132/33kv electricity transmission substation at Billiri in Gombe state and 187km Abuja-Kaduna railway construction translated to national development. The research data were both primary and secondary and qualitative analysis. Formal evaluation theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. All social sciences concepts are contextual contested concepts. Concept of policy, evaluation, policy evaluation, development and national development were conceptualisation to guide the reader. The independent variable of the research was policy evaluation while the dependent was national development. There is a symbiotic nexus between the variables. Billiri electricity substation is yet to be completed while Abuja-Kaduna railway was completed later than planned. As a result of this research, we recommended that terms of contract should be observed fully; cost-benefit and sources of funding projects should be considered while making public policy and more so, contracts should be awarded based on merit only.

**Keywords:** Policy; evaluation; policy evaluation; development and national development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Governments of all ages ought to be the driving force/guide for national development. No wonder at different times and situations the Nigeria's government came out with policies. Such policies are geared toward national development. Different actors played varying roles in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy. Their

interest can either enhance policies toward national development or otherwise.

The role of policy evaluators in national development is equal to the policy objectives. This implied that they will bring to light the dreamed development or otherwise. How they evaluate policy has a long way in determining national development. It's at this junction that they will ensure that the material

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designed to be used by contractors are used which means that such a project can last as designed. When they compromise, although the project is executed it may not last as planned.

Formal evaluation policy theorists argued that in order to determine the impact and effectiveness of a particular policy, the policy content should be in the mind of policy evaluators [1]. This can be done during policy implementation, after implementation or both. Both are prepared in case of challenges. The outcome, when negative, can be corrected with little modification in the course of implementation (in the light of time, incentives etc) or making a new policy.

National development is the manifestation of a well packaged public policy, when implemented accordingly. In Nigeria public policies have mixed results. Thus, it often tends to produce a complete negative outcome. Hence public policy doesn't solved the real problem designed for or any other – abandon government's projects. On this premise, this paper examined policy evaluation and national development, limited to electricity (33kv sub-station in Billiri of Gombe state) and railway construction (187km Abuja-Kaduna) are examined.

## 2. CONCEPTUALISATION

This subsection will conceptualize the following concept: policy, evaluation, policy evaluation, development and national development in order for reader to achieve maximum ends.

### 2.1 Policy

According to Sherri [2] public policy or policy seeks to achieve a desired goal that is considered to be in the best interest of all members of society. Policy is what an individual or group always does sometimes with little understanding of what it's. Examples of government policy may include: clean air, clean water, good health, high employment, an innovative economy, active trade, high educational attainment, decent and affordable housing, and minimal levels of poverty, improved literacy, low crime and a socially cohesive society, to name but few. Each of these policy options should have a time frame, resources, institutional framework for implementation and incentives for effective implementation.

Melissa & Louise [3] defined policy as 'a decision made by the government to either act, or not act in order to resolve a problem'. A policy often comes in the form of general statements about priorities, written regulations or guidelines, procedures and/or standards to be achieved. At its simplest, policy refers to a

distinct path of action which is suitable for the pursuit of desired goals within a particular context, directing the decision making of an organisation or individual.

Policy is a 'course of action or inaction chosen by government to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems, or the way in which the course of action for achieving the appropriate goals are determined' [4]. This implied that policy is not only what the government does but also what it refuses to do. Like in Nigeria the inability of the government to address insecurity is a policy. Governments respond to outbreak of Lessa fever and Ebola, or numerous symbolic policies on electricity, infrastructures, education, many but few to mention. The General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia definition of policy will be the working definition of this paper. More so, for any policy to be termed public it ought to possess legitimate, universal and government can employ monopoly of coercion.

### 2.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project or program, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability [4]. This, in the light of formal evaluation theory of policy evaluation, the guide line is the policy objectives and method of implementation as revealed by policy makers.

Evaluation is the systematic process of judging the worth, desirability, effectiveness, or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purposes. Evaluation has two essential elements: purposeful in one hand and elements of criteria, evidence and judgment [5]. By systematic process it connotes scientific and objective manners. Evaluation is carried out based on established criteria and result orientated which is rooted in the objectives of the policy under evaluation.

While to Dunn [1] evaluation refers to the production of information about the value or worth of policy outcomes. When policy outcomes do in fact have value, it is because they contribute to goals and objectives. Evaluation serves three functions which include: it provides reliable and valid information about policy performance; it contributes to the clarification and critique of values that underlie the selection of goals and objectives; and it may contribute to the application of other policy analytic methods, including problem structuring and prescription. Dunn's view of evaluation is adopted working definition.

## 2.3 Policy Evaluation

Anisur and mizanur [6] Policy evaluation is a tool for measuring the worthiness, performance and efficacy of any policy or program. Policy evaluation can be undertaken during implementation and after implementation of any policy or program. Anisur and mizanur, sees policy evaluation in the light of tools that determine the efficacy of a government policy which can take place during, after implementation or both. Thus for all the two stages is far better than one.

Policy evaluation is used to examine content, implementation or impact of the policy, which helps to understand the merit, worth and the utility of the policy [7]. The end result of a policy will always remain unknown till policy evaluation which will help in understanding to what extent the policy addresses the issues that brought the policy about and what should be done. Sometimes it resulted in formulation of a new one with different policy's content or otherwise.

According to Gerston, policy evaluation is 'to assess the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intentions and result' as cited by [6]. Gerston conception of policy evaluation is centred on evaluators examining the objectives of the policy to see whether it is achieved or not. This, can further be deduced, policy objectives are a vital reference point for effective policy evaluation. Gerston (1997) definition of policy evaluation will be the guiding conception of the paper.

## 2.4 Development

The concept of development has been viewed in different way, in the words of Woleola [8] development can be defined as an encompassing process involving the steady and systematic change in the cultural, economic and political spheres of society in a way that increases production, empowers the people and their communities, protects the environment, strengthens institutions, grows quality of life and promotes good governance. Woeola viewed development as a process. Such a process is endless and every society strives to continue to increase in a holistic manner.

Elizabeth, John and Nanji [9] 'the pride of any government should be the attainment of a higher value level of development in such a way that its citizens would derive natural attainment to governance. And development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life'. This concurred with truism in political science that

governments exist because of problems and without there will be no need for.

Tolu and Abe [10] cited Gboyega, defined development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. Human life is not stagnant; development is a quest to improve it. This starts from an idea and then an attempt will be made to realize it. Failure to improve or when it has been improved does not mean a peak. Because there is no development peak or end.

According to Rodney [11] development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Like a rejoinder to Euro-centric conception, to Rodney, development should be seen in many-sided but first individuals. It is this individual level of development that makes up the society level of development. It measures in terms of skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. This is the working conception of this paper.

## 2.5 National Development

Ebeh [12] national development we are concerned about quality improvement in the various sectors of our national life such as the political, ethical, socio-psychological, economic spheres of national existence, which combined, to define and assure quality and productive existence for the citizens of a country. Ebeh conceived national development as a means by which the end is better life for citizens. One of the indices of the development gap between developed and developing society is how the state invests in the life of its people. For example when the U.S and Nigeria populace are compared, the US invests more than Nigeria in human development. This can be ascertained by frequent strikes by Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) demanding increased funding of Universities among other things to make the learning environment conducive.

National development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people e.g. by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation infrastructure, medical care, etc. [13]. Here national development is considered as the core onus of the government of any country. This accounts for governments' annual budget, planned project, program and policy in order to actualize its mandate.

This paper adopted the Ebeh conception of national development as its working definition. This is born out of the fact that it is more comprehensive and is a citizen/human development centre. More so, when human developments become the heart desire of the government, all other forms of development will automatically be achieved.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the nature of the research's problem, this article employed primary (online interview and observation) and secondary sources of data with content analysis. National dailies, articles, text books and online materials are the major sources of information for this research. Phone call interviews in case of electricity (33kv sub-station in Billiri of Gombe state) was utilized and on ethical grounds, they responded on anonymity.

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

There are many theories postulated by scholars to explain and aid policy evaluation. Dunn [1] highlighted three theories which include: pseudo-evaluation, formal evaluation and decision-theoretic evaluation theory. In the light of the paper case studies, formal evaluation approaches prove to be more relevant.

According to Dunn [1] formal evaluation is an approach that uses descriptive methods to produce reliable and valid information about the outcomes but evaluates such outcomes on the basis of policy-program objectives that have been formally announced by policy makers and program administrators. The major assumption of formal-evaluation is that formally announced goals and objectives are appropriate measures of the worth or values of policies and programs. Hence, it does not question the formally announced policy goals and objectives.

Formal evaluation approach used the legislation, program documents and interview with policy makers and administrators to identify, define and specify formal goals and objectives. Its major forms are developmental evaluation, experimental evaluation, retrospective process evaluation and retrospectives outcome evaluation. There are two types of formal evaluation theory: i.e. formative and summative formal evaluation approach.

Summative evaluation theory involves an effort to monitor the accomplishment of formal goals and objectives after a policy or program has been in place for some period of time. Formative evaluation theory

involves efforts to continuously monitor the accomplishment of formal goals and objectives.

The objection of formal evaluation theory is that since it does not question the formally announced policy objectives, sometimes it may not make significant contribution where there is need to temper with policy objectives during the implementation process. Where policy objectives are not clearly stated it will be difficult to evaluate such policy with the aid of this theory. Another constraint is that policy makers or administrators may give wrong information or decide not to say anything which will hinder effective evaluation.

#### 3.2 Variables

The variables in this study are 'policy evaluation' and 'national development'. The independent variable is policy evaluation while the dependent is national development.

#### 3.3 Nexus between the Variables

According to [14] Nigeria has had a relatively long experience in development planning beginning with the colonial development plan (1958-68). Medium-term development plans and national rolling plans were also developed and implemented with mixed results. Other major strategic initiatives- such as the structural adjustment programme: the national Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy; the strategy for attaining the Millennium Development Goals; and the seven point agenda were not seen to have been effectively implemented.

What is wrong? Why is Nigeria at its present development level? What should be done to aid Nigeria's development? This section looks into the relationship between policy evaluation and National development in Nigeria. First and foremost, the variables are rooted in the concept of policy making. Policy evaluation, according to Gerston is 'assesses the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intentions and result' and such intentions are national development. A well formulated public policy without implementation will not be translated into national development, so also implementation without monitoring and evaluation.

There is a symbiotic relationship between policy evaluation and national development. Policy evaluation metamorphosed public policy objectives into national development and national development made policy evaluation easier. For example the evaluation of the construction of the faculty of management sciences in the University of Jos, showed

the level of national development. This will help policy evaluation to answer why the construction of the Faculty of Social Science in the same University of Jos for many years is under construction. As observed, such resulted in a change of contractor, (researchers' observation).

Electricity is a critical element in national development. The Nigerian government over the years has been making many plans to increase power supply in the country. In 2015, the World Bank and Federal government of Nigeria in collaboration with some state government signed a memorandum of understanding to construct 132/33KV transmission substation in new Kano in Kano state, Billiri In Gombe state, Kabba in Kogi state and Abor (9 m) in Enugu state. For instance in Billiri the sub-station will supply stable power to Federal University of Kashere, College of Education in Billiri, College of Health Sciences in Kaltungo etc. this dream development is paused by lack of monitoring and evaluation.

National development is sustainable in nature. Based on policy objectives, evaluation ensured the use of standard material required for the implementation in order for impact to last as designed. Almost all roads constructed in Nigeria do not last as planned. The first and better way to ensure that they last is through policy evaluation. The outcome of the evaluation can either lead to change in time frame, change of contractor, addition of cost or increase incentive. In either way, just to ensure that the end is achieved as designed and if possible with minimal cost.

An integral aspect of national development or development is the issues of safety of lives and property. Policy evaluation or evaluation of the Abuja-Kaduna railway project have led to many changes that brought the dream into reality that today people travel safely (Abuja-Kaduna via trail). The completion of this project is a product of critical assessment/evaluation that led to many changes and revisions of the project.

### **3.4 132/33kv Electricity Transmission Substation at Billiri in Gombe State**

The construction of the 132/33KV electricity Transmission substation at Billiri in Gombe state is a project of the federal government in collaboration with the World Bank and Gombe state government. The project was designed to be implemented in four places as the same time new Kano in Kano state, Billiri in Gombe state, Kabba in Kogi state and Abor (9 m) in Enugu state, [15]. The project is part of the effort of the government to improve power supply in the country which will enhance economic growth and

development. Thus, the paper is limited to that of Billiri in Gombe state.

According to the tenet of formal evaluation theory for effective evaluation, evaluators need to know the objectives of the project. Hence, the project has the following objectives as outline in the project document [15]:

1. Provide a readily available electricity supply;
2. Improve transmission and supply of electricity state wide;
3. Promote industrial growth;
4. Create job opportunities; and
5. Create revenue for Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

To ensure effective implementation of the project, weekly reports will be recorded, and submitted to the TCN and the contractors as necessary but at a minimum on a monthly basis. Monthly reports should be compiled into quarterly and annual reports to be submitted to the World Bank, [15]. The contract was given to China Harbour Engineering Company Limited (CHECL).

According to TCN-PMU [15] the project will be implemented by the PMU of TCN and is intended to commence in January / February 2016. Construction time is estimated at 18 months. Allowing for commissioning the substations should be online within two (2) years (i.e. 2018). All required assessments and consultations were conducted in accord with international best practice in 2015. Compensation was also paid to the owner of the 88.8ha of farm land design for the implementation of the project.

When the researchers asked one of the surveyors, on the date that the construction work started, he said construction commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 not January/February. Furthermore the transformer for Billiri was taken to new Kano until the World Bank project manager came and ordered it returned to Billiri. According to Nasir Jibrin, Assistant General Manager in charge of Transmission, Gombe sub-Regional Office, the delay for the execution of the project was caused by the contractor handling the project. He stated that the TCN revoked the contract and may either reassign to new contractor or hand over the project to its in-house engineers, [16].

Some businesses are either operating at lower output or they are close, more especially some that came into being as a result of the project. This is born out of the fact that the expected power supply is not forthcoming. While some that started earning a living

during the project are not earning. Patronage of goods has become low or remains stagnant.

### **3.5 187km Abuja-Kaduna Railway Construction**

The idea for the modernisation of railway in Nigeria was conceived during the administration of former president Obasanjo. According to Oscarline [17] 'On 27 October 2009 the federal government signed a new agreement with China and Engineering Construction Cooperation (CECC) for the first phase of the Nigeria Railway Modernisation Project. Abuja-Kaduna railway was one of the targets of the project. The track laying for the single standard gauge line was officially launched in July 2013 by President Goodluck. According to Nurudeen, in October 2014, the Federal Executive Council approved 6.6 million dollars for the execution of the project. The project was given to China Civil and Engineering Construction Cooperation (CEECC), [18,19].

Abuja-Kaduna Railway was estimated as \$875 million [17]. The Rail line involved the construction of 30 Railway bridges, including five box bridges. The bridges are being built using precast T-beams. \$500million was borrowed from the Chinese Export-Import Bank. A kilometre was constructed at the cost of N1.7 billion, [20]. According to [19] 'the project was planned to be completed in 2014'. However, the project was stalled due to inadequate funding. President Buhari administration revived the project in 2015 and inaugurated the line on July 26, 2016, [18].

The Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has disclosed that Abuja-Kaduna train service generated over N960 million in 2018 through ticketing, stating that the service generated about N80 million monthly. The operating cost is N100 million due to use of fuel rather than electricity, said managing director of Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) Fidiet Okhiria. Increasing insecurity in Abuja-Kaduna high way is increasing the patronage of the trail, [20].

## **4. FINDINGS**

Is one thing to make a policy and another to implement it as designed. The construction of 132/33KV electricity transmission substation at Billiri in Gombe state commenced later than planned. According to the policy template it was planned that construction activities would commence in January/February of 2016. But it was not until 21 September 2016. The commencement of the construction affirmed that compensation was truly given to the owners of the 88.8ha farm land for the project implementation.

According to one of the surveyors who speak on anonymity, 'the water content of the project area, also delay the execution of the project as designed and transfer of Billiri transformer to New Kano halt the implementation of as planned. More so, lack of finance is what put the project on hold for many months now'.

The fourth objective of the project which is creation of jobs has been partially achieved by employing local labour as outlined by the project guide line by the contractor. Whereas weekly, monthly and annual reports have stopped vis-a- a-vis the project. Lack of internal adequate evaluation of the policy has not only stopped the execution of the policy but rate of development to be attained.

The project that was planned to be commissioned by 2018 is still under construction at the time of this research. This implied that for it to be completed it will attract additional cost. According to Nasir Jibrin, assistant General Manager in charge of Transmission, Gombe sub-Regional Office, they will collect the project from the contractor and reassign it to another.

Poor implementation of this project, for instance in man power development, the students of Federal University of Kashere, College of Education Billiri and College of Health Sciences Kaltungo who will benefit from the power supply are using alternative means which is costly and indirectly reducing their performance.

Local industries in the area output have not increased and production remains costly. High cost of production led to high cost of product and due to low purchasing power, it landed in low patronage. Low patronage resulted in the death of some businesses which lowered development and increased the rate of unemployment and crime.

Lack of stable and adequate electricity in Nigeria has remained a challenge to development and increased expenditure to both individuals and groups (government inclusive). According to the managing director of Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) Fidiet Okhiria, the trail is operating at the cost of N100 million monthly and generating N80 million in a month. They have not reached a break even.

The Abuja-Kaduna railway construction is the first modern rail to be implemented in Nigeria, [17]. It was planned to be completed by the year 2014, but due to lack of funding it was not realized until 26 July 2016, [19]. This delay has definitely increased the cost beyond projection. Following the commissioning by president Buhari in July 2016 and increasing insecurity in Abuja-Kaduna highway, the trail

patronage has increased and is safer for both persons and goods, [18]. This safety via the railway can be deduced to alternative security which is a mark of national development.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Although the heart desire of every state is to develop, which is put down in the government blueprint, is not a guarantee that such policies are implemented. This without policy evaluation (by formal, informal or both evaluators) remained unknown. The outcome of any policy evaluation may be that the problem is fully solved; partially addressed or the resources have been channelled to something else.

This is not different from what this paper discovered in the case of 132/33kv electricity transmission substation at Billiri in Gombe state and 187km Abuja-Kaduna Railway construction. The substation in Billiri is suffering from a setback due to many factors outlined and the timeframe for the complete execution of the project was 2018 and it was not commissioned as planned. Hence, the beautiful view of the future as a result of the project is still an idea.

On the other hand, 187km Abuja-Kaduna railway construction is completed and commissioned. Thus, not as planned, the project that means to be executed in two years becomes a four year project. The increase in timeframe and personality invariably has a corresponding increase in finance. Increasing insecurity in Abuja-Kaduna has increased patronage of the trail, whereas the modern trail system is operating at high cost that can be remedied. Hence, some recommendations in order to complete the on-going project in the case of Billiri electricity substation and others related on-going and reduction of operating cost of Abuja-Kaduna rail.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a huge gap between policy making and implementation. This is even when all consultation/analyses and required things are put in place. Such explained why Nigeria is where it is now. Is on this note, the following recommendations are enumerated:

1. Assigning contracts to contractors should be based on merit. And TCN should as a matter of development, reassign the 33kv Billiri substation on no other ground.
2. Personal interest should not come into play in policy execution as in the case of exchange of Billiri and New Kano transformers.
3. The faulted contractor(s) should be prosecuted

4. Cost-benefits and sources of funding projects should be in the mind of policy makers always in order to avoid delay or abandoning projects
5. In order to cut the expense of operating Abuja-Kaduna trail, electricity or order sources of power should be provided in time.
6. Terms of contract should be observed fully.

## DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

## CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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