



## LECTURE 1

### Objectives

1. To conceptualize public policy
2. To know the features of public policy

### What is public policy?

Public policy refers to the commission or omission of government. It involves those things that government chose to do or not do. According to Ikelegbe (1996) it is 'actions taken or to be taken by government'. Public policies are those decisions that a government takes. The primary function of government is to ensure that citizens live in a secured and prosperous society. If the government is to achieve all these, then it must necessarily take certain actions. These actions are simply referred to as public policies.

While individuals in their private capacities can make decisions pertaining to them, they cannot take decisions that are binding on the whole society. It is the duty of government to make decisions that are legitimately binding on whole societies. It is in this light that Chandler and Plano (1988:107) defined Public Policy "as the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or government concerns".

Public policies are made to deal with specific problems in the society and the reasons for adopting these policies are usually stated in public policy documents.

### Features of public policy

1. It is about choice- public policy is about choice. The government must make decisions about which way the trajectory of governance will head. Public policy decisions are about picking from among a competing number of pathways.

2. It is often in the form of a proposal- policies are in the form of proposals. They are tentative templates for running societies. As such they are subject to periodic reviews.
3. It is goal oriented- public policies are geared towards achieving specific goals and objectives. They are set up to meet specific needs of the society.
4. It usually deals with concrete problems- as a corollary to the above, public policy places huge emphasis on solving problems. The challenges that society face are the fundamental template for public policy formulation and implementation.
5. It provides a sense of direction for government- the state needs a good sense of direction. Public policy provides this direction to states everywhere.

## **Lecture 2**

### **Objective**

1. To fully comprehend the meaning of public policy analysis
2. To understand the reasons behind government actions and inactions

### **Meaning of public policy Analysis**

Public policy analysis is a scholarly endeavour geared towards describing and aiding the practice of public policy. In the opinion of Olaniyi (1988) it involves two separate terminologies- 'public policy' and 'Analysis'.

Public policy analysis involves "a set of techniques that seeks to answer the question of what the probable effect of a policy will be before they actually occur" (Shafritz 1986:409)".

Public policy thus interrogates the anticipated consequences of policies in the public domain. It is a disciplinary mechanism to enhance the functions of government as they relate to policies geared towards achieving overarching state objectives. A policy analysis takes on the issue in a tentative manner, scrutinizing the pros and cons of the policy with an eye for evaluation.

For Roberts and Edwards (1991:98), analysis of policies involves the study of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy. This frequently involves the values of policy makers and the influence of the environment or ecology.

In the final analysis the study of public policy analysis is important because it makes students, practitioners and the general public to fully appreciate government actions and inactions.

### **Lecture 3**

#### Public policy cycle

#### Objective

1. To understand the various stages of the policy cycle
2. To know the actor conducting each stage

We can deploy biological living organisms to explain the public policy cycle. The duration of a policy is usually interactive, circular and continuous. There are certain fundamental stages that a policy takes.

1. Policy initiation
2. Policy adaptation
3. Policy legitimation
4. Policy implementation
5. Policy evaluation

Policy initiation involves needs identification. Policies are initiated based on the identified needs of society. For example, if it is observed that motorists continue to flout traffic rules on regular basis, public policy may need to be geared towards ensuring that people comply with traffic rules. Mobile courts may thus be set up to enforce traffic laws.

Policy adaptation has to do with the stage at which there is a template or proposal to react to the identified needs. This template will then suggest a set of prescribed directive to be followed by public policy to bring succour to society. When such steps are concretized, then they are known as approved policies.

Policy legitimation entails the provision of legal backing and framework for approved policies. There are different kinds of policy legitimation depending on the type and level of government. In a democratic

dispensation Acts of parliament or national assembly at the federal level is a legitimating mechanism. In military dispensation, edicts or decrees are deployed as legitimating mechanisms.

Policy implementation is the most crucial area of public policy. This stage determines the rate at which public policy initiatives are accomplished. Policies may be well formulated, but where they are improperly implemented society will suffer the consequences. Sometimes policies that appear beautiful when not properly implemented will become problematic for society.

Policy evaluation refers to the assessment of the policy so pursued. It is the stage at which the stated objectives are scrutinised to show if there is a gap. Where there is a vacuum between intended objectives and the actual outcome, there is an implementation gap.

Actors in the policy process

There are two types of actors in the policy process; governmental actors and non-governmental actors.

#### **Lecture 4**

Governmental Actors

These include bodies that have political connotation and operate with legitimate state power.

Legislative bodies- parliament and legislative bodies have influence over the initiation and formulation of public policies. The National Assembly and legislative bodies everywhere are saddled with the duty of law making. In making laws they inevitably direct the course of public policy formulation and implementation. The oversight functions these bodies carry out on the executive also mean that they have influence over public policy decisions.

Executive- the overarching duty of the executive in the modern state is the formulation and implementation of public policies. Public policy is anchored by the executive. It is by far the most influential body in the policy process as it initiates policies and lobbies legislators in the course of governance.

Judiciary- the judiciary has a strong power to review the decisions of executive, parliament and bureaucracy. The judiciary ensures that public policy is in line with the rule of law. Whenever there is a disagreement between the executive and legislature, the judiciary move in to adjudicate on the matter. As such, the body holds considerable power over policy making and implementation.

Bureaucracy- the bureaucracy is the axle upon which executive decisions are driven. The bureaucrat brings experience, competence, rationality and skills to public policy formulation and implementation. This carries the huge burden of policy implementation as the bureaucrat is saddled with executing decisions reached by politicians and other governmental top personalities.

## Lecture 5

### Nongovernmental actors

Aside governmental players in the policy process, there exist domestic non-state actors whose existence influence public policy process.

### Political parties

Political parties exist either as sitting government or as opposition in the modern state. Their activities include the mobilization of the populace behind a particular ideology with a view to properly deploying the resources of the state to better people's lives. In this context political parties affect public policy since the people often listen to their suggestion regarding policy direction of the state.

### Pressure/interest groups

Pressure groups and interest groups try to influence public policy decisions in favour of their members. In plural and heterogeneous societies they are very powerful and can redirect state policies to suit them. These groups normally have close ties with governmental actors who may in their private capacities be in sympathy with the group in question.

### Media

The media plays a crucial role in public policy formulation and implementation. Traditional media like television, radio and newspapers still have wide influence on policy. Furthermore, the coming of new media or

better still, social media has increased the power of the media to influence public policy decision. Facebook, twitter, whatsapp, snapchat, linkedin and other social media outlets have become very powerful information disseminating mechanisms in recent times. In fact, elections can be won and lost on these platforms. As a consequence, they have huge influence on public policy as politicians and other governmental policy actors can no longer afford to ignore them.

### Citizenry

The citizens of a nation to a certain extent influence public policy decisions. The power to elect public officials in the modern democratic state gives the citizen much bargaining power in the process of policy formulation and implementation. They also constitute the immediate environment that receives these policies. They therefore react either negatively or positively towards state policies. This ability to serve as feedback mechanism gives them an advantage as the government often gauge its level of popularity by carefully analysing the reaction of citizens to the policies adopted by it. The tendency then, is for citizens to continuously ask critical questions regarding the betterment of their existential conditions. This therefore has huge ramification for public policy.

### Models of decision making in public policy

#### Lecture 6

Rational-comprehensive

#### Lecture 7

Satisfying

#### Lecture 8

Mixed scanning

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

#### Lecture 9

Concept and Strategies of CBA

Cost benefit analysis has been defined as ‘the estimation of the economic cost and economic benefits that will result from a proposal as well as helping to determine the decision with the highest social benefit’ (Benett, 1972).

CBA is usually deployed at two levels: proposal and assessment.

## Strategy or technique for deploying CBA

There are certain technical steps for adopting CBA

1. Goals must be clearly stated
2. All the pathways to goals must be known
3. All the resources required (physical and otherwise) will be made explicit
4. Resources should be quantified and put in monetary form
5. All advantages and benefits derivable are worked out
6. The benefit/cost ratio is determined by dividing the benefit by the cost

The net result thus amount to what society gets from the proposal.

## Lecture 10

### Strengths of CBA

There are a number of advantages derivable from deploying CBA

1. It determines goals and provides a focus for public policy
2. It ensure that there exist alternatives and also scrutinize these alternatives.
3. It brings to the table a large amount of information, making it relatively easy for public policy makers to formulate better proposals.
4. CBA ensures adequate public policy programmes by carrying out proper feasibility studies and evaluation.
5. CBA may lead to the abandonment of a project if proposed cost outweighs proposed benefit, preventing waste of scarce resources.

## Lecture 11

### Weaknesses of CBA

Despite its having a lot of advantages, CBA nevertheless face some pressing challenges.

1. It is very difficult and perhaps impossible to know all the costs and benefits associated with a particular project.
2. It wrongly assumes that public policy decisions are taken purely on rational basis, with economic motives. This is not always true since political decisions may sometimes determine public policy decisions.
3. It is usually not possible to determine the net benefit of a project because there several factors, economic and social, involved. Intangible factors may not be easy to quantify in monetary terms.
4. The impact of a project may not be easily quantified, especially in African countries where there are frequent political upheavals.

5. CBA do not take into cognisance the constraint of time against public policy makers. Time factor may prevent them from conducting effective CBA.
6. CBA may be difficult to use since the public policy process is not always a linear process. Objectives may be redefined midway.

Lecture 12

Revision