



COURSE CODE: POL 312

COURSE TITLE: Public Policy Analysis

NUMBER OF UNITS: 3 Units

COURSE DURATION: Three hours per week

COURSE LECTURERS: **Prof. S.M Omodia and Mr. O.G Igechi**

Introduction

The aim of the course is to help students understand new ideas and concepts in the area of public policy. The course will attempt:

- i. Introducing students to the basic principles and concepts in public policy analysis.
- ii. Demonstrating how these principles can be applied.
- iii. Exposing students to current practice in public policy making.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

Define the basic concepts in Public policy discourse.

Explain the importance of Public policy Analysis.

Carry out a research on public policy formulation and implementation

Lecture note 1

What is public policy?

Public policy is a proposed course of action of government or one of its divisions.

Features of public policy

It has to do with governmental actions

It is the output of the process of governance

It affects wide areas: education, economy, health, defence, social welfare etc etc

What is Public policy Analysis?

It is a scholarly endeavour.

An inquiry into the origin, causes, uses, formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policy.

A scientific attempt at gathering data to describe, explain and prescribe policies for the state. It is an applied social science discipline which uses multiple methods of inquiry and argument to produce and transform policy relevant information that may be utilized in political settings to resolve policy problems.

Features of PPA

- 1. It is geared towards public sector**

2. It is Problem-oriented
3. It is prescriptive
4. It is analytical.
5. It is multi-disciplinary, drawing from a variety of disciplines

Importance of PPA

1. It helps us to define and solve important public problems
2. It develops scientific tools that aid decision making
3. It contributes to public policy implementation and its performance
4. It helps to determine the outcomes of policies and programmes
5. It helps government to anticipate and forecast future problems.

Lecture note 2

Public policy Cycle

Stages in the policy cycle

1. Needs identification
2. Policy proposal
3. Policy legitimation
4. Policy implementation
5. Policy evaluation

Need identification

- In this stage, public objectives, desires and goals are clearly identified.

Policy proposal

- Here, the objectives identified are put into a formal document. A proposal that will be sent to parliament or the legislature.

Policy legitimation

- This is the act of providing legal backing to the approved policy proposal. In a democracy policy legitimation is done by sending a bill to the legislature.
- When the bill is accepted it becomes an Act of parliament.

Policy implementation

- This is the most important stage in the policy process. At this stage governmental machineries are utilised to translate ideas and concepts contained in policy statements into concrete and tangible actions and services.

Policy evaluation

- This is the stage at which we determine whether or not the stated objectives are achieved. Oftentimes there exist a gap between the stated objective and the achieved objective. This gap is known as implementation gap.
- It is from policy evaluation that we determine the need that has not been met. And it is at this point that the policy cycle begins again.

Lecture note 3

Actors in the policy process

Governmental and Non-Governmental actors

- There are persons, groups and institutions that active in the policy process. These actors influence the environment, the political system and every stage of the policy process.
- These actors can either be governmental or non-governmental actors.
- Legislature, Executive, Bureaucracy and Judiciary
The Legislature
- The legislature has control over public policy from its initiation and formulation to implementation, control and review. The power that legislative bodies have over public policies emanates from their law making functions and their oversight functions.
- The legislature deliberates over bills which eventually becomes law in the form of parliamentary Acts. These Acts are channels through which public policies are formulated and implemented.
- However, the legislature has less influence on public policy when compared to the executive. Many legislatures are institutions for legitimizing policies that have been formulated by the executive.
The Executive
- The executive is a term that collectively refers to the chief executive, cabinet, top political officials and advisers. The executive has the power of policy implementation. It has the responsibility of overseeing, supervising, directing, co-ordinating,

and managing the administrative agencies, departments and corporations of government.

- The executive branch of government is clearly the most important unit of government in terms of public policy. In most countries, the executive takes the lead in policies concerning the economy, foreign relations and internal security. The executive articulates and formulates policy proposals and passes it to the legislature for legitimation. Even at the legislature the executive mobilizes and influence legislators to enact its policy preferences.

The Bureaucracy

- The bureaucracy is a formally established organization designed to accomplish large scale administrative tasks by systematically co-ordinating the activities of many officials.
- In the modern era the bureaucracy has become a major organizational structure that drives policy making, implementation and evaluation.
- The major function of bureaucracy is to bring professionalism, expertise, skill and competence to bear on policy making and implementation.
- The bureaucracy is seen as a neutral and anonymous body which is not controlled by politics. As a result, it is able to function on behalf of the state.

- The bureaucracy is therefore considered the most important actor at the level of implementation. This because it constitute the administrative machinery for executing public policy. It has the structures, processes and staff needed to drive public policy making and implementation.
- However, the bureaucracy may become perverted implement policies according to its interest and values.
- Again, it may fall under the corrupting influence of politics. It may become the play thing of politicians who may use it for selfish purposes.

The Judiciary

- The judiciary refers to the body of judges and courts that interpret the law and constitution. It settles disputes between various institutions of government, groups and individuals.
- The judiciary has the power of judicial review which enables it to examine and re-examine the constitutionality of legislative, executive and bureaucratic actions. In this way the judiciary ensures that every governmental action conforms to the law.
- All these powers of adjudication, interpretation and review make the judiciary an actor in the policy process. This is more so as the judiciary can invalidate public policies that violate the law. The judiciary can kill certain public policies by declaring them null and void and therefore unconstitutional.

- However, there is considerable limitation in the power of the judiciary to influence public policy.
- This is because it does not formulate or implement policy. It can only make pronouncement and reviews concerning the legality of public policies.

Political parties

- Political parties have some form of influence over public policies. This influence arises out of their role in the political process.
- Political parties are preoccupied with winning elections. To do this they must adopt a particular belief, philosophy and idea about governance. This ensures that they hold opinion about specific policies.
- The views of political parties thus tend to carry some weight as they may influence those formulating and implementing public policies with their constant criticisms.
- Political parties, whether they are in power or not help in the articulation and aggregation of policy issues. They articulate the needs, demands and interests of their members and supporters.

Interest groups

- An interest group is a collection of individuals with some common features and interests, and they interact frequently. Interest groups influence the policy process at most stages.

- They articulate the interest and demands of their members present them before governmental actors and seek to influence these actors to enact their demands into policy actions.
- By engaging in advocacy, interest groups can build support for specific projects and mobilize public opinion and resources at their disposal to ensure these projects are carried out by government.

Citizenry

The citizenry or population of a nation also play an important role in the policy process.

- Firstly, the citizens constitute the human environment of policies. The human environment involves the values, preferences and demands which influence policy formulation. Citizen demands shape policy actions.
- Secondly, is the fact that policies are made for the benefit of citizens. They are the core targets of public policies and as such their preferences and wishes must necessarily affect policies. Thirdly, the citizens contribute resources needed for formulation and execution of policies. This contribution comes in form of payment of taxes and other kinds of loyalty that citizens give the state.
- However, there are claims that public opinion has little influence over public policy. This is because majority of citizens may have little knowledge of policies and may simply don't care.

Experts and professionals

- Experts and professional bodies have a measure of influence on public policy.
- Government often consult and seek policy advice from experts and professionals in different fields.
- Their advice are more independent, innovative and free politics.
- It also gives the citizens the belief that government is trying to do the right thing and as such they will give the government their support.
- These experts who are mainly drawn from universities, research institutes and professional bodies can be very useful in the policy process

- As the problems and challenges facing government is increasingly becoming complex, there is need to consult experts who are more competent than political office holders.

- There are structures and institutions that provide access to professionals and experts.
- In Nigeria they include such bodies like Nigerian Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), National Institute for International Affairs (NIIA), Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER).

- In Nigeria, as elsewhere, governments are increasingly relying on private organisations, universities and think tanks to drive public policies.

