

Understanding the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper understanding the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in Nigeria, is a modest effort in explaining the Objective and Directive Principle of State Policy in Nigeria as contained in 1999 Constitution as Amended. The review is anchored on secondary data source and employed textual analytical method. It aimed at exposing the reader on the core objects of state policy, citizens' rights and governments' contract roles to its citizens for harmonious relationship and suitable socioeconomic development.

Keywords: Fundamental Objective, Directive Principles, State Policy, Citizens Rights, government Obligations.

INTRODUCTION

Policy is a predetermined set of ideas or plans that is used as a basis for making decision in politics, economics, business and general affairs. It involves actions taken or to be taken which involve both decision making and choice making. It is a statement of what an organization wants to do, what it is doing, what is not doing and what it would not do (Institute of strategic management Nigeria, 2024). Robert Simmons et al (1974 in Amali, 2016) regard policy as indication of an intention, a guide to action, encompassing values which set priorities and relations. Jenkins (1978 in Amali, 2013) defines policy "as a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or a group of actors". From the foregoing, policy represents decisions and actions taken.

Public policy could then be referred to as decisions and actions of government. Chandler and Piano (1988 in Okeke, 2015) regard public policy as the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems of governmental concerns, Robert and Clark (1982 in Okafor 2017) define public policy as:

"Series of steps taken by government to solve problems, make decisions, allocate resources or values, implement policies and in general to do the things expected of them by their constituencies"

Because of the shortcomings of the above definitions of public policy, the one by Jenkins (1978 in Amali, 2016) is regarded more encompassing. Here public policy is defined "as a set of

inter-related decisions by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where the decisions/ in principle; be within the power of the actors to achieve".

Fundamental objectives and Directive principles of state policy implies the fundamental objectives of the Government - what government wants to do in relation to the people. Here, the government shall govern the people in accordance with the principles of democracy and social justice. Accordingly, sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria; security and welfare of the people shall be government's responsibility, and peoples' participation in their government shall be ensured. National unity, federal character and national integration shall be promoted, all in the conduct of national affairs.

Against the above backdrop, government policy in the areas of political objectives, economic objectives, social objectives, Educational objectives, foreign policy objectives, Environmental objectives, cultural aspirations shall be geared towards the national policy. In this work, Obligations of the mass media and the Citizens including the national ethics are provided to ensure the comprehensiveness and actualization of the state policy in Nigeria.

THE FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION OF GOVERNMENT TO THE CITIZEN.

The chapter two, section 13, of 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended provides that, "it shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons, exercising legislative, executive or judiciary powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this chapters of the constitution". This provisions include objectives on political, economic, social, educational, foreign policy, environmental, cultural, media, national ethics matters among others.

Political Objectives

The Nigerian national motto is "unity and faith peace *and* progress". In consonance with this aspiration national integration', devoid of "discrimination on ground; of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties-should be encouraged in order to promote national integration, adequate- facilities to encourage people's mobility goods and services throughout the federation, full residence rights of every citizen in all parts of the federation, encouraging inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin or of different religions, ethnic or linguistic association or ties, promotion or encouragement of the formation of association that "cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers, shall be the responsibility of government. Furthermore, the state (government) shall foster a feeling of belonging and involvement among the various peoples of the federation, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties. Also, government shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power.

Economic Objectives:

The economic objectives are what the government wants to achieve for her citizens and it include stable price or low inflation, steady sustained economic growth, low unemployment or full employment. In Nigeria, the major objectives of policy are the attainment of price stability and sustainable economic growth. Others are full employment and stable long-term interest rates and real exchange rates.

The specific economic objectives in Nigeria state shall include:

- A. Harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, a dynamic and self-reliant economy.
- B. Control the national economy in such a manner as to secure, the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity.
- C. Without prejudice to its right to operate or participate in areas of the economy, other than the major sectors of the

economy, manage and operate the major sectors of the economy.

- D. Without prejudice, to the right of any person to participate in areas of the economy within the major sector of the economy, protect the right of every citizen to engage in economic activities outside the major sectors of the economy.

In consonance with the above, the direction of the state policy shall include:

- A. the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development.
- B. that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good.
- C. that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or of a group.
- D. that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and employment opportunities, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.

In order to give effect to the above economic policy, an Act of the National Assembly shall be made to set up a body whose power shall be as follows:

- A. To review, from time to time, the ownership and control of business enterprises operating in Nigeria and make recommendations to the President on same.
- B. To administer any law for the regulations of the ownership and control of such enterprise.

Social Objectives:

A social objective is a written or unwritten statement that details a specific desired outcome of a project that is related to interaction of individual, groups and institutions within a given state or society. It is aimed at improving wellbeing of the general public. The Social Policy of Nigeria is an umbrella policy framework that incorporates related social agenda paradigms intended to reduce poverty and provide a life of dignity for all citizens. It is aimed at ensuring Freedom, Equality and Justices for all and to bring social order in the State. Further to that, it ensures that:

- A. Every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law.

- B. The sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced.
- C. Governmental actions shall be humane
- D. Exploitation of human or natural resources in any form whatsoever for reason, other than the good of the community, shall be prevented
- E. The independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law, and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained.

The Policy direction shall be therefore towards ensuring that:

- A. All citizens without discrimination on any group whatsoever have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment.
- B. Conditions of work are just and humane and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and social, religious and cultural life.
- C. The health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused.
- D. There are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons.
- E. There is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or on any other ground whatsoever.
- F. Children, young persons and aged are protected against any exploitation whatsoever and against moral and material neglect.
- G. Provision is made for public assistance in deserving cases or other conditions of need.
- H. The evolution and promotion of family life is encouraged.

Educational Objectives:

The Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended, provides that the educational objectives of the state as "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. It shall further promote science and technology, free, compulsory and universal primary education; free university education and free adult literacy programme".

The specific objectives are as follows:

- A. The government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are adequate and equal educational opportunities at all level.
- B. Government shall promote science and technology.
- C. Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, government shall, as and when practicable, provide:

- 1. Free, compulsory and universal education
- 2. Free secondary education
- 3. Free university education and
- 4. Free adult literacy programme.

Foreign Policy Objective:

- A. The foreign policy objectives shall be the promotion and protection of the national interest.
- B. Promotion of Africa Integration and support for Africa Unity.
- C. Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations.
- D. Respect for international law and treaty obligation as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication.
- E. Promotion of just world economic order.

Environmental Objectives:

The goal of National Policy on the environment is to ensure protection and the conservation of national resources for sustainable development. Its strategic objective is to coordinate environmental protection and natural resources conservation for sustainable development. Specifically:

- A. The state shall protect and improve the environment.
- B. Shall safeguard the water, air and wild life in Nigeria.
- C. Protect the forest and the animals.

Nigeria Cultural Objectives:

The National Policy on Culture in Nigeria aims to provide guidelines and general directions through which the federal government will seek to meet the current and future cultural needs of the country. It shall further ensure that:

- A. The state shall protect and promote the Nigerian cultures which enhance human dignity and are consistent with the fundamental objectives of the state.
- B. Encourage development of technological and scientific studies which enhances cultures and values of Nigeria State.

NATIONAL ETHICS

Ethics are the rules of conduct which regulate people's

behavior. These rules of conduct spell out what people should do or not do. It is through such rules that approved behaviors can be inferred. One's behavior is good or bad, then it must have been measured or such behavior is weighed against the approved conduct. The national ethics are therefore, given as: Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labor, Social Justices, Religious tolerance, Self-reliance and Patriotism, loyalty to the nation, obedience to authority, respect of elders and seniors in authority, participation in national services, payment of tax, reporting criminals and members of cults to the police among others.

Obligations of the Mass Media:

The constitution of Nigeria in section 22, gave the obligation of mass media as "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives and uphold the responsiveness and accountability of the government to the people".

DUTIES OF THE CITIZEN.

A duty, also called an obligation, is something citizen is required to do by law for the development of the state. They include obeying laws, paying taxes, defending the nation and serving on juries. Everyone is under the law, must know the law and obey it. Furthermore, it is a duty that:

- A. Every citizen of Nigeria is expected to abide by the constitution, respect its ideals and its institutions, the National Flag, the National Pledge and legitimate authorities.
- B. Help to enhance the power, prestige and good name of Nigeria, defend Nigeria and render such national services as may be required.
- C. Respect the dignity of other citizens and the rights and legitimate interest of others and live in unity and harmony and spirit of common brotherhood.
- D. Render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.
- E. Declare his income honestly to appropriate and lawful agencies and pay his tax promptly.

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