

DEPT-POLITICAL SCIENCE

POL-H-CC-T-8(SEM-4)

UNIT-5

and also test general propositions pertaining to causes and consequences of public policies. It is always the case that policy analysis is a supplement. Wildavsky (1980) argues that '[t]he purpose of policy analysis is not to eliminate advocacy but to raise the level of argument among contending interests. The end result, hopefully, would be higher quality debate and perhaps eventually public choice among better known alternatives'.

The policy analysis has the following concerns:

- explanation of policy
- rigorous search for the causes
- develop and test general proposition

There is a specific distinction between policy analysis and policy management, but, in practice, these two overlap each other. In the words of Yehezkel Dror, "policy analysis" is concerned with the substantive examination of policy issues and the identification of preferable alternatives in part with the help of systematic approaches and explicit methods: policy-making and policy-preparation processes, to assure that it produce high-quality policies'. Policy analysis entails many methods and concepts. A few of them are concerned with quantitative aspects. They include social experimentation and game simulation apart from contingency planning. In spite of the differences between the two, they should be treated jointly since policy-making covers a major part of the responsibilities of the senior administrators in government.

Public Policy Inputs and Policy Outcomes

Public policy inputs are called demands on a political system by citizens and groups for taking an action or inaction about certain perceived problems. The demands by the citizens or groups or associations may be in the nature of insisting that the government must have to do something on a proportional basis for specific action on the issue or problem.

David Easton is of the opinion about public policy output that 'output are said to constitute a body or specific inducements for the members of political system to support it, either by threats of sanctions, rewards for support given or by socialization into the political norms of the society'. Therefore, policy outputs can be termed as actual decisions by the implementers. They reflect what the government does from what the government likes to do. Policy outputs are distinct from policy outcomes. The outcome refers to what actually happens to the climate or target groups directed to be affected by the public policy. If the desired change does take place, it may then be presumed that there is something somewhere.

THE NEED TO STUDY PUBLIC POLICY

Thomas R. Dye is of the opinion that public policy should be studied for various reasons, which are as follows:

- Public policies help to understand the causes and consequences of policy decisions improves our knowledge of society.
- A public policy can be viewed as a dependent variable and one can ask what socio-economic conditions and political system characteristics operate to shape the content of such a policy.
- Alternatively, public policy can be viewed as an independent variable, and one can ask what impact public policy has on the society and its political system.
- By asking such questions, one can improve their understanding of the linkages among socio-economic forces, political processes and public policy.
- An understanding of such linkages contributes to the breadth, significance, reliability and theoretical development of social science.
- Understanding the causes and consequences of public policy enables us to apply social science knowledge to find practical solutions. Factual knowledge is a prerequisite to prescribe for the ills of society. If certain ends are desired, the question of what policies would best implement them is a factual question requiring scientific study. In other words, policy studies can produce professional advice in terms of 'If ... then ...' statements about how to achieve desired goals.
- To ensure that the nation adopts 'right' policies to achieve the 'right' goals, it is frequently argued that political science should not be silent in the face of great socio-political crisis and that political scientists have a moral obligation to advance specific public policies. An exclusive focus on institutions, processes or behaviours is frequently looked on as 'dry', 'irrelevant' and 'amoral' because it does not direct attention to really important policy questions facing the society. Policy studies can be undertaken not only for scientific and professional purposes, but also to inform political discussion, advance the level of political awareness and improve the quality of public policy. Of course, these are very subjective purposes—Americans do not always agree on what constitutes the 'right' policies or the 'right' goals—but we will assume that knowledge is preferable to ignorance, even in politics.

It is pertinent to mention that the scholars of public administration are aware that the bureaucracy is closely involved in the processes of policy-making.

Public administration, so far, was concerned with the implementation of public policies that were already laid down by the legislature. According to R. K. Sapro, public administration was mostly concerned with

- organization of public authorities
- the behaviour of public servants
- the methods of resource allocation

Thus, public administration is confined to the said approach; it might be stated that it was difficult to assure that it had to do much with the policy formulation. Of course, feedback that comes from implementation of public policy and experience gained while implementing the policy might help policy-making processes in future. It might be appropriate to state that in the past, scholars of political science dominated studies on public policies. Public administration was engaged in the implementation of public policy. The study of public policy is studied under policy science to make it more focused on the process of policy-making.

TYPES

SCOPE OF PUBLIC POLICY

The quantum of government's work is enormously increasing, particularly in the Third World countries. This is taking place in response to growing complexity of technology, social organization, industrialization and urbanization. The governments, even in the changing economic scenario under liberalization, privatization and globalization, have to discharge several functions—regulatory as well as developmental. Modern governments play the role of chief innovators and also act as major players with respect to important socio-economic activities.

According to the UN, 'In countries where the problem of poverty is less serious, there is great pressure on governments to accelerate national development, make use of up-to-date and relevant technological innovations, adopt and facilitate necessary institutional changes, increase national production, make full use of human and other resources and improve the level of living'. Therefore, the trends increased the scope of public policy. In this context, let us make note of Michael Tertz's comment, which reads as follows:

Modern urban man is born in a publicly financed hospital, receives his education in publicly supported school and university spends a good part of his time traveling on publicly-built transportation, facilitations, communicates through the post-office or the quasi-public telephone system and his public drinking water system, dispose of his garbage through the public removal system, reads books in a public library, picnics in his public parks, is protected by public police, fire and health systems eventually he dies, again a hospital.

and may even be buried in a public cemetery. Ideological conservatives notwithstanding, his everyday life is inextricably bound up with government decisions on these and numerous other public services (Michael 1968: 36).

It is not an exaggeration to state that every citizen is affected greatly by public policy in day-to-day life. Therefore, it may be appropriate to state that public policies have a great influence on citizens. They may be from trivial to vital in nature; it would be appropriate to state that public policy covers everything under the Sun.

TYPES OF PUBLIC POLICIES

It becomes incumbent at this point of study to comprehend various types of public policies, which could be categorized as follows:

- i. **Substantive:** Substantive public policies are more concerned with the concept of general welfare and the general development of the society. The programmes that are taken up under the general welfare and development may include programmes like provision of education, employment opportunities, law and order enforcement, and anti-pollution programmes. Economic stabilization could be described as substantive policy formulation in the arena of public policy. Such policies affect the general welfare and development of the society at large. It should be safely stated that substantive public policies do not relate to any particular section or a privileged segment of the society.

It must be remembered that such types of public policies have to be framed in tune with the chief characteristic features of the constitution and the socio-economic fabric of the society, including socio-economic problems that confront the society. It may also deal with the level of moral claims of the society. The general welfare of the society appears to be the primary concern of the substantive public policy, which has a large bearing on the society. The development of the society is also a primary concern where the sectors like socio-economic and cultural attention is taken up by the public policy-makers. Substantive policy formulation that invites a wide range of discussion and ample information pertaining to the issues does become quite important.

The concept of development, especially for the Third World countries, may refer to providing shelter, food and clothing apart from attending to health needs by the public sector. It may not be surprising to include certain regulatory functions that are to be taken up by the government under this type of public policy. Such a policy relates to law and order enforcement and revenue administration, the policies of which certainly affect the society.

- ii. **Regulatory:** Regulatory policy, here, refers to policies that are normally implemented by the use of force. Regulatory policies are policies that are concerned with the regulation of trade, business, safety measures, public utilities dealing with tangible and intangible services and so on. Such types of regulations are carried out by autonomous organizations. These organizations carry out their primary and subsidiary activities on behalf of the government. Public corporations, for instance, are examples of such types of organizations.

In India, for instance, the best examples are Life Insurance Corporation of India, State Transport Corporations, Reserve Bank of India, Hindustan Steel, State Electricity Authorities, State Financial Corporations and Civil Supplies Corporation. Such organizations are meaningfully engaged in extending regulatory activities in the service of the people. The policy-maker for these areas is the government, i.e. the legislature and the executive. Since certain services mentioned earlier are mostly commercial in nature, public policy for this category is called regulatory because the state has to govern and oversee their functioning not keeping them directly under their line of command as such types of activities do not fall under the line of command of the executive branch of government. Since the government cannot enter into business in certain areas like marginal profit-making, these corporations were set up to deal with such types of activities.

- iii. **Distributive:** Public policy dealing with distributive aspect refers to a specific segment of the population. It can be safely stated that distributive policies of the government are primarily meant for specific segments of the society. It may be in the area of grant of goods, public welfare or health services. Distributive policies may mainly include all those activities that come under the umbrella of public assistance and welfare programmes. One can also include certain other types of activities like flood relief, social insurance, vaccination camps, health camps, nutrition camps, food camps and adult education programmes under this category.
- iv. **Redistributive:** Redistributive policies are primarily concerned with the rearrangement of policies that bring about basic social and economic changes in society. Under this category, the public policy may pertain to certain public goods and welfare services. Such services are disproportionately divided among certain segments of the society and the goods and services falling under this category are streamlined through the redistributive policies.
- v. **Capitalization:** The public policy pertaining to this framework is concerned with the levels of government. The capitalization policies may deal with financial subsidies that are given by the union government

IMPORTANCE

to the states as well as the local governments. Apart from these, such subsidies are also extended to the central and state commercial undertakings or some other important sectors if required. Capitalization policies are different in nature when compared to substantive, regulatory, distributive and redistributive policies.

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC POLICY

The role of the state in the past was limited; it was a mere 'regulator' and not an 'initiator' of socio-economic development. The state did not enjoy any role as a promoter in socio-economic sectors. But the modern state accepted the concept of general welfare as well as planned development. Thus, the state's role remarkably changed and it became the biggest change-agent in shaping society in carrying out various activities. Consequently, the scope of public policy also expanded to orient itself to development. The scope of public policy expanded remarkably resulting in the establishment of several governmental institutions and structures for formulating and implementing public policy.

As the concept of planned development was adopted by India, the Planning Commission was established to bring in the necessary socio-economic changes. Several wide-ranging policies were initiated and many statutory agencies came into being. In addition, several acts like the Industrial Development and Regulating Act and the Land Tenancy Act came into force for the welfare of the people. Five-Year Plans which were devised for development became a guide for all policy directions. Such policies were of two types: regulation and promotion.

In addition, certain laws were also laid down so as to what type of goods and services are to be produced and provided by the government and the entrepreneurs. The challenges in India are multifarious and one among them is the socio-economic transformation. In addition, there are problems like environment, national integrity and external threat and so on. Therefore, India, since independence, is striving to raise the living standard of people through public policies socially and economically. However, the formulation and implementation of such policies are not easy as the government often finds itself in conflicting situations.

For example, the government initiated land reforms towards social and economic justice. On one hand, the government wanted to increase productivity of agriculture, which could be possible only through massive investments in agriculture. Such an investment is possible only for agricultural landlords. At the same time, the government wanted to provide some land to the poor farmers in tune with the principle of social justice. It was a delicate and sensitive situation for the government as under the prevailing conditions, land reforms and increase in agricultural productivity were

difficult to realize at the same time. Therefore, land reforms in India provide a classic example of conflicting positions of the government.

Another example to substantiate the importance of public policy with reference to India is the dilemma of the Government of India regarding centralization and decentralization of authority and powers. On one hand, the state governments are demanding more and more autonomy while on the other hand, the rise of extremism and global terrorism has increased the worries of the union government. If the union government does not accept or accede to autonomy demands of the state governments, commotion will take place. If the union government accepts the demand for autonomy, the states are not in a position to tackle extremism as in the case of Jammu and Kashmir.

Therefore, the government has to formulate coherent policies, which are in tune with national interests and the common man's interests in the short- and long-term. This is particularly true in the era of globalization, where the functions of the government are being regulated by international agreements. Even small issues are being governed by international laws. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for government agencies to formulate public policies to please the people. Therefore, public policy as an area of interest and importance has grown in the recent past.

In conclusion, it can be stated that a public policy is the sum of all government activities that influence the lives of citizens either directly or indirectly. Every public policy has the potential of influencing the lives of people in the present or future. The study of public policy enables us to understand the causes and consequences of policy decisions and improves our knowledge about the society. It also enables policy-makers to improve their understanding of the linkages among socio-economic forces, political processes and public policy. Such linkages pull the government in different directions; hence the study of public policy assumes importance. Even in the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization, the government plays an important role by formulating new public policies, modifying the existing policies, etc. Therefore, it can be stated that public policy as an activity and area of study continues to hold relevance as long as one finds the process of governance.

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- Public policy as a separate field of study is very new to us. This area of study came into prominence under the umbrella of various branches of social sciences, particularly political science and public administration. Public policy is derived from various bodies of government agencies, and such policies are executed by different government agencies with requisite authority.

- In spite of its recent publicity, the history of public policy can be traced back to the eighteenth century BC. The systematic form of policy advice is explicit in the writings of Machiavelli and Francis Bacon. Subsequently, it was given shape by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Bentham, Mill, Montesquieu and others. Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Woodrow Wilson made significant contributions to the study of public policy. Statistical tools have been used by economists to analyse social problems. In 1929, John Dewey developed a method of enquiry by which the best alternative could solve the problems among various alternatives. Harold Laswell's book *Policy Sciences* (1951) heralded a new enthusiasm in the discourse of social science. Social and political developments led to the development of policy studies. In 1960, a large number of social welfare programmes encouraged the growth of policy analysis, and this only accrued during the 1970s.
- Policy indicates three attributes, namely: stated goals and objectives, course of action, and social values inherent in the policy. In the course of policy formulation and implementation, it requires closed relationship among various agencies like executive, legislature, bureaucracy and judiciary. Public policy includes certain characteristic features like its subjective character, changing perspectives, purposes of policy framers, government's positive and negative attitude, resource crunch and technological constraints. One should not confuse policy-making with decision-making. Similarly, there are differences among policy-making, planning and setting goals or objectives.
- Thomas R. Dye analysed the importance of studying public policy. According to him, policy analysis improves the knowledge of the members of the society. Policy formulation helps us to get clear knowledge of the contemporary socio-political conditions. Factual data is needed in order to formulate appropriate policy. Political scientists should play a major role in formulating the right policies and fill up the ignorant aspects of knowledge in the process of policy formulation. A narrower view of public administration focuses only on implementation of policies, but such implementation also enables policy-makers to develop their policy and formulate better policies.
- In view of the increasing pressures on government and growing complexity of industrialization, urbanization and social organization, government acts as the major player in the socio-economic development of the country. Government's enormous role is reflected in public policy. Public policy, therefore, has a great impact on citizens of any country.
- Public policy, in a comprehensive way, may be categorized under the following heads: substantive, regulatory, distributive, redistributive

and policy of capitalization. Substantive policy includes the general development of the society, whereas regulatory policy imposes restrictions on various kinds of activities like trade, fiscal measures and other safety measures for public utility. Distributive policy targets only a specific set of beneficiaries for public assistance and welfare programmes. Redistributive policy is designed to bring partial social and economic change in society. Capitalization policy indicates grants of union government to the state governments, local governments and other public undertakings.

- The developmental role of the state has replaced the earlier exclusive regulatory stand. Accordingly, public policy has been developed in volume and quality. The state has proved itself as a catalyst of development in every walk of public life. In India, five-year plans have heralded a new era of development by the government's policy of land reform, public distribution, population, food and nutrition, and many others relating to the general welfare of the people. Government's policy of decentralization and demands of the state for greater autonomy, in many cases, is a cause of concern to the government. A glaring example of this is the growing terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. Liberalization and privatization of government's policy has curtailed the scope of public policy in many cases, but the importance of public policy in democratic polity cannot be ignored.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by public policy? What are its characteristic features?
2. Give a brief outline of the origin and development of public policy.
3. Analyse the various types of public policy.
4. How would you analyse the importance of public policy in the modern state?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Distinguish between policy-making and decision-making.
2. How would you relate policy analysis with policy advocacy?
3. Make a distinction between policy and goal.
4. Do you think that policy-making has any impact on planning? Give reasons for your answer.
5. What is meant by policy inputs and policy outcomes?
6. Point out the role of policy analysis in the process of policy management.

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