



PUBLIC POLICY

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Abstract

This paper attempts to present a thorough understanding of public policy, its traits, and the various models used to create and carry out policies. It evaluates different theoretical frameworks, including David Easton's, incrementalism, the rational-comprehensive model, game and elite theories and the advocacy coalition framework, drawing on well-established literature. The report also provides a thorough case study of the demonetization programme of the Indian government, outlining its goals, difficulties, and effects on the economy and society. This research advances our knowledge of the processes involved in policy formation, implementation, and evaluation by evaluating the characteristics of public policy models and a practical policy example.

Keywords

Goal-oriented; Incrementalism; Input/ Output; Rationalist; Game Theory; Elite Theory; Normative Optimum; Demonetisati

Introduction

No policy that does not rest upon some philosophical public opinion can be permanently maintained.

~ Abraham Lincoln

These words by the famous sixteenth president of America try to sum up the complexities associated with the term public policy. But what exactly does this wide array of phrases mean? Public policy, according to the eminent Thomas Dye, is "whatever the government chooses to do or not to do." According to Dye's definition, the government, not private companies, nonprofit organisations, interest groups, or other social organisations, is the main decision-maker when it comes to public policy. In light of this, it can be broadly described as a set of laws, regulations, strategies, and financial priorities covering a certain subject that are issued by a governmental body or its agents. A collaborative decision-making process is essential for resolving societal issues, so the Constitution gives rise to the concept of public policy, which consists of numerous plans, programmes, and initiatives. The founding principles of the field of public policy, which is one of the most prominent means through which the government maintains order and addresses the needs of its citizens according to the constitution.

It would be preferable if we were clear about the relationship between public policy and politics before moving on to the discussion. Politics and political activity both include the formulation of



policy. A political system, according to Gabriel Almond, is a collection of interactions and structures, each of which carries out its duties to maintain the system as an ongoing concern. It is also a collection of processes that regularly transform inputs into outputs. Almond divides the inputs to political systems into general functional categories including interest aggregation, interest articulation, political communication, and political socialisation and recruitment. Activities that are accepted by a political system as a response to demands or stressors placed on the system in the form of inputs are known as output activities. Governmental policies, programmes, decisions, etc. are examples of outputs.

As a result, the public policy process is a very complex and dynamic process that takes place in public forums. The first step is the identification and recognition of the public's problems. Additionally, the formulation of public policy will aid in problem solving. These regulations may be social, political, economic, or cultural in nature. Take traffic infractions as an illustration. Consider how lenient the penalties for traffic offences used to be in India. However, they have since been altered and are now fairly stringent. But they are still not quite as strict as the ones present in Hong Kong or Singapore. This can be chalked up to the public policies of the nation.

Meaning

Public policies are those that are created by governmental organisations and representatives. Public policies have unique qualities because they are created by the "authorities" in a political system, which David Easton defined as "elders, paramount chiefs, executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councillors, monarchs, and the like." These individuals, according to him, are those who "engage in the daily affairs of a political system," who are "recognised by most members of the system as having responsibility for these matters," and who take actions that are "accepted as binding most of the time by most members so long as they act within the limits of their roles."

Public policies, in essence, are decisions made by representatives of the government and its agencies. They frequently have a significant impact on a number of people. According to Carl J. Friedrich, an individual, group, or government may suggest a course of action within a particular environment that offers possibilities and challenges that the proposed policy was intended to take advantage of and overcome in an effort to realise an objective or purpose.

From the aforementioned, it is evident that public policies are decisions made by the government and are actually the outcome of actions taken by the government to further specific goals and objectives. A well-planned pattern or sequence of action is also stated to be involved in the formation and execution of public policy. It calls for intensely intimate ties and interaction between the major governmental institutions, including the political executive, legislature, bureaucracy, and judiciary.



Characteristics

Goal-Oriented - All public policies ultimately strive to achieve a number of objectives that the government has in mind. The welfare of the nation's citizens served as the inspiration for the creation and application of these programmes. In order to conduct government programmes and accomplish its objectives, the government can adopt public policies.

Depicts Concern of the Government - A societal issue can be resolved through public policy. This indicates that the government has approved the option for improving society. Therefore, it is crucial for business owners and entrepreneurs in a nation. They require reassurance that the government is also taking care of their issues and financial interests. And if the government remains silent or unconcerned, it shows their lack of knowledge or concern. This will alert the populace to the government's lack of compassion and consideration.

Result of Government Action - All government activities taken collectively produce public policy. Therefore, public policy is formed as a result of the combined acts and efforts of all elected authorities. The joint activities of our government's officials support the entire legal system. The foundation of our judiciary is made up of everyone from the nation's highest court's decisions to solicitors and clerks.

Courses and patterns - Instead of being the result of individual, discrete decisions made by government officials, policies are courses of action or patterns of behaviour adopted over time. It is challenging to consider decisions made by the president to honour a movie star or by the Social Security Administration to grant Joe Doaks disability compensation as public policies. A policy involves not only the choice to enact a law or rule on a particular issue, but also the subsequent choices made with the intention of enforcing or carrying out the law or rule. Industrial health and safety policy, for instance, is formed by a number of administrative regulations and judicial rulings that interpret, elaborate, and apply (or do not apply) the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 the act to particular situations.

Future based - Creating policies with the future in mind. This is one of its key traits because it incorporates the inescapable aspects of uncertainty and dubious prediction that form the framework for almost all policymaking.

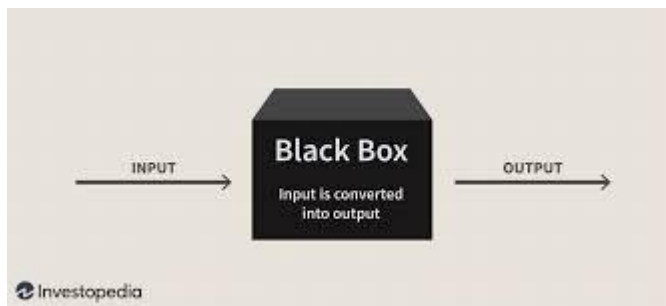
Because the future is so unclear, actual policy making frequently formulates policies in nebulous and elastic words. It enables decision-makers to prepare for unforeseen events and allows them to modify their policies in response to new information.

Coordination - Coordination between many people and institutions is necessary for public policy making. When each of them works properly with their roles and obligations, the procedures produce a successful public policy. As a result, creating public policy is an extremely complicated process. Additionally, it is a dynamic process that occasionally alters.

Types of Public Policies

- Substantive – policies that are generally concerned with regards to the general welfare and development of the society.
- Regulatory – the ones that deal with the regulation of trade, business, safety measures etc.
- Distributive – which primary focus on specific sectors of the society
- Redistributive – these are concerned with the rearrangement of policies trying to make socio-economic changes.
- Capitalisation– Under these types of policies, the Union government comes forward and provides subsidies to different lower levels of government and other business undertakings.
- Constituent Public Policy - It is the policies aiming to constitute new institutions/mechanisms for public welfare.
- Technical Public Policy - These relate to the policies made for the arrangement of procedures, rules and framework which a system ought to provide for discharge of action by various agencies on the field.

Models: David Easton's Black Box Model



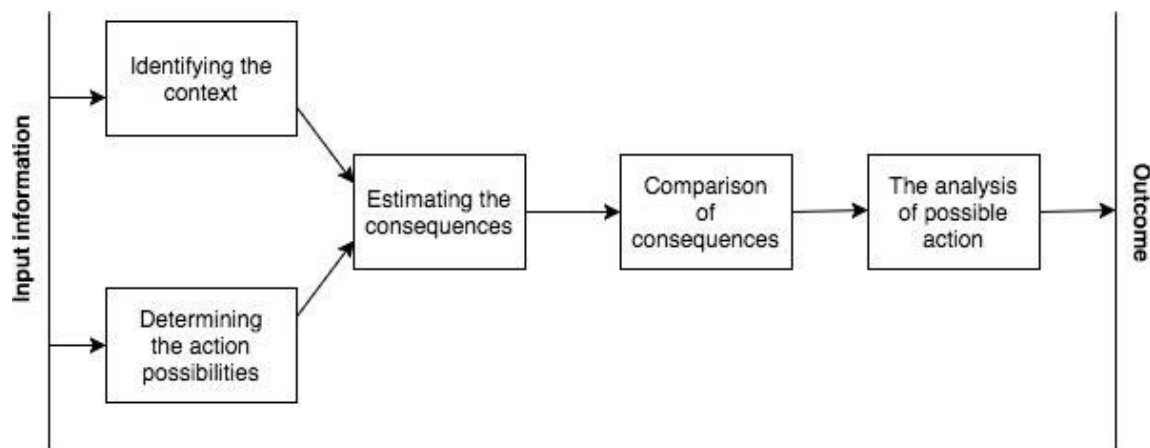
A political system model had been provided by David Easton. This Easton model or policy-making process is viewed as a "blackbox" that transforms societal demands into policies.

Demands might include calls for regulations governing wages and working hours, as well as for access to education, recreational opportunities, and transportation systems. Support is the force behind organisations or acts that advocate for and oppose a political system. Support might be material, such as paying taxes or other levies, according to rules and laws, etc.

The inputs—demands and support—that the political system gets in the form of inputs from the environment are transformed into outputs by the system. The efforts and effects of output are fed back into the system and inputs through a feedback mechanism. According to Easton, a political system is a complicated cyclical operation where a number of processes routinely transform inputs into outputs. Within a political framework, Easton's government creates public policy. Decision-

making and policy-making go hand in hand. But not every choice is equivalent to a policy. Finding a problem, carefully analysing all viable solutions, and choosing one to pursue are all steps in the decision-making process. The policy selections offer a diverse sense of direction to the courses of administrative action.

Rationalist Model



Source - Réjean, 1980, p.16

Owen E. Hughes claims that Lindblom accurately defined the rational model, stating that when a rational person is presented with a problem, he first defines his goals, values, or objectives, ranks or otherwise arranges them in his mind, and then makes a list of all significant potential strategies for achieving those goals. He looks into all the significant ramifications of each potential policy in further detail. When he can compare the results of each policy with his aims, he will select the one whose results are the closest to those of his goals.

This is the result of utilitarianism and the idea of the “economic man” which assumes that people act in their own self-interest by selecting the course of action that would most likely maximise their joy and reduce their suffering. The rational actor model could also be perceived as more logical because it establishes its objectives and goals first, necessitating more daring or radical actions to achieve them. Before making a choice, the means of reaching a goal or target are assessed in terms of their dependability, cost, and efficacy.

Instrumentalism

Many people believe that the incremental method of decision-making is more realistic, both in terms of the concept itself and what actually occurs in politics today. Many see it as a Conservative approach, which aligns with their stereotypically conservative ideological viewpoint. Obviously, this is not totally accurate; it sees public policy as a continuation of earlier government initiatives with minor changes. Contrarily, time, knowledge, and financial



limitations prohibit policymakers from fully defining the range of policy possibilities and their effects. Incrementalism is conservative in that it bases decisions on new initiatives and policies as well as increases, cutbacks, or tweaks to existing programmes, policies, and expenditures of the existing programs.

The legitimacy of existing programmes is typically acknowledged by policymakers, who also implicitly support maintaining past regulations. In light of the uncertainty surrounding the effects of wholly new or different policies, recognised when the effects of new programmes cannot be forecast, policymakers acknowledge the legitimacy of prior policies. Conflict is exacerbated when policy decisions are made in an "all-or-nothing," "yes-or-no" fashion that involves significant profits or losses. The familiar, or policy alternatives that are similar to current policies, is where this search typically starts. The decision-maker will only pursue more radical policy innovation if these alternatives seem inadequate.

Institutional Model

It outlines the functions and setup of bureaus and departments with a focus on the traditional structure of government. It takes into account judicial rulings, common law, administrative law, and constitutional laws. It focuses on institutional structures like presidential commissions, executive reorganisations under federalism, etc. Political science has traditionally focused on government bodies that have the authority to decide, carry out, and enforce public policy, such as the Congress, presidency, courts, political parties, etc. A policy isn't technically a public policy unless it's adopted, put into effect, and enforced by a governmental body.

Government gives policies legitimacy, making them legitimate; Government applies policies universally to all members of society; Government monopolises the ability to enforce policies and punish policy breakers. Traditional academic research that used the institutional method concentrated on institutional structures, organisation, responsibilities and function, without investigating their impact on public policy.

Elite Theory

According to this hypothesis, the governing elite's preferences and values determine public policy. It contends that people lack active participation in, interest in, and knowledge of public policy. Public policy does not originate from the masses. Mass opinion is actually shaped into a policy question by the elite. As a result, it turns out that elites' tastes really do dictate public policy. Administrators and public servants merely implement the policies selected by the elite. According to this theory, policies are 'downward' flown from elites to the masses rather than being a result of popular requests. The elite theory and the group theory are very similar in that they both speak about the formation of policy as a result of pressure from particular social groups. Elite theory is inherently monistic, whereas group theory is largely pluralistic.



Group Theory

According to group theory, societal policies are influenced by the interests and attitudes of the group. Group conflict produces public policy. "What may be called public policy is the equilibrium reached in this (group) struggling at any given moment," writes Earl Latham, "and it represents a balance which the contending factions or groups constantly strive to weigh in their favour." As various interest groups compete with one another for control over public policy, real policy-making in the government tends to lean more in favour of the groups that are growing in power. Public policy, in contrast, steers clear of the demands of the losing groups. As a result, public policy will always reflect the interests of powerful groups.

The problem with this theory is that it overestimates the significance of groups while underestimating the independent and innovative role that public servants play in the formulation of policy. It is also inaccurate and ineffective to describe politics or the creation of policies in terms of a conflict between groups, ignoring the importance of other elements such as ideas and institutions.

Normative Optimum Model

Dror makes an effort to offer the best strategy for enhancing and strengthening decision-making, notably through customising a model to the situation. He referred to this concept as "a normative-optimum model for policy-making". He reminds us that optimal policy making is a desirable objective and one that most theorists probably strive for, even though it is debatable whether he actually accomplishes such an end. Dror's model offers numerous stages and is quite detailed. He aims to take into account qualitative, as opposed to just quantitative, components of policy through his normative-optimum approach. He wants to give decision-making models more reasonable content.

In the meta-policy-making step of the model, the decision-maker must take the best course of action into account. In various situations, it might, for instance, be more acceptable to take an incremental or sensible approach. Although some intuitive processes are permitted in the extra-rational dimensions, they should be as informed and logical as feasible. As a result, there are some similarities between the model and Vickers' art of judgement model. Last but not least, post-policy-making includes evaluation or feedback elements that are absent from the majority of other models. According to the model's title, Dror (1989) aims to develop a prescriptive model that will help achieve the best possible public policy. The model has drawn criticism for its ambiguous variables, weak, residual categories for non-rational sources of information, and statements of commitment to rationality and non-rationality without means of achieving them. These flaws, as well as the model's assumptions that these values and assumptions will affect the decision-making process, are all part of the problem. Although policy is being created and adjusted on the fly, in many instances there may not even be a defined decision-making process; it may just be another minor response to the situation.



Government's Policy: Demonetization

- A monetary unit in circulation has its legal tender status revoked through the process of demonetisation. The Indian government announced the demonetisation of all 500 and 1,000 rupee notes from the Mahatma Gandhi Series on November 8, 2016, anticipating favourable adjustments to the liquidity structure overall. Additionally, it announced the release of fresh 500 and 2,000 rupee banknotes in place of the currencies that were demonetised.
- According to the government, the exercise's primary goal was to reduce black money, which includes income that had not been recorded and was therefore exempt from taxation, as well as money made through corruption, the sale of illegal items, and unlawful activities like human trafficking. Other claimed goals were raising the tax base and number of taxpayers, decreasing the amount of cash used in transactions, cutting off the funding for terrorists and extreme organisations like Maoists and Naxalites, and integrating the official and informal sectors.
- In accordance with a 2018 report from the Reserve Bank of India, the banking system held deposits for about 99.3% of the demonetised banknotes, or Rs. 15.30 lakh crore (15.3 trillion) of the total amount that had been demonetised. Analysts concluded that the attempt to eradicate black money from the economy had failed since the banknotes that were not deposited were worth 10,720 crore (107.2 billion).
- Initially, a number of bankers and some international commentators supported the action. The action was denounced for being unjust and ill-thought out, and it was met with protests, legal action, and strikes against the government in several locations across India. The decision was also the subject of discussions in both houses of Parliament



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