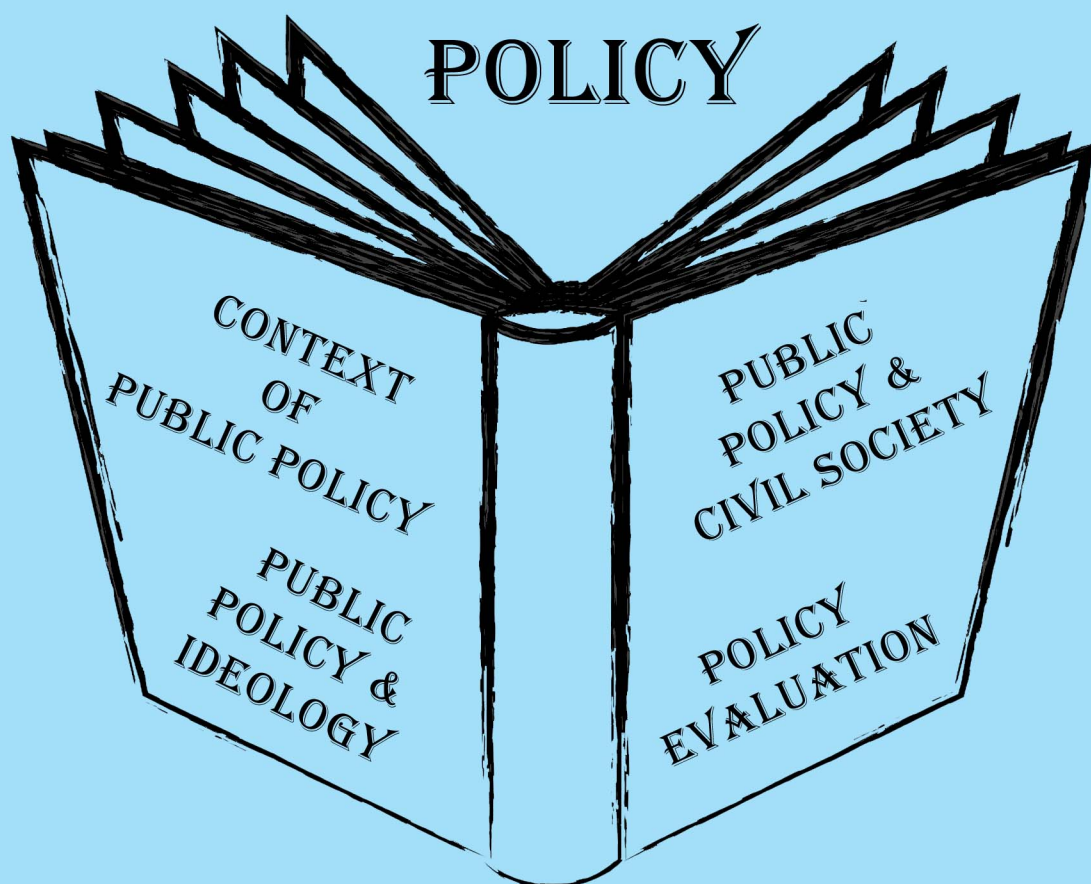


UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC POLICY



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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Public policies are the collective actions of government, taken over a sustained period of time, as a result of planned development strategies. These are policies that governments make to fulfill the Constitutional goals, as well as the contextual socio-economic objectives, in those spheres which are labelled as 'public'. Thus, public policies are a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding preferences concerning a given issue involving governmental bodies or its representatives. There are basically three types of public policies: restrictive, regulatory and facilitative.

As an academic pursuit, 'public policy' emerged in the beginning of 1950s and since then it has been acquiring new dimensions. Public policy studies form a significant component of the course curricula across the social science disciplines. It is this interdisciplinary quality, which makes the field of public policy interesting and relevant. In the past, studies on public policy largely concentrated on the institutional structures of government. The focus was rarely on the policies themselves. Things began to change when some thinkers started analysing the policy process. Now, policy studies is a full-fledged area of study, which encompasses analyses of the entire policy cycle, participation of non-government actors of the civil society in governance and monitoring of policy implementation.

This Course compliments the already existing curricula on public policy. It examines the way public policy shapes at the implementation level, the actors that get involved in the policy process, the goals it serves and the challenges it faces. Besides, there are introductory Units in the Course that explain the meaning, nature, scope and context of public policy. They focus on the need of policy studies to understand the functioning of the State. They also address questions as to how does the State make policies that work for the welfare of people and how can these policies be made better by the State.

This Course is divided into 4 Blocks. **Block 1 is called 'Context of Public Policy'**. It comprises 4 Units. The First Unit of the Course is titled 'Meaning, Nature and Scope of Public Policy'. It describes the scope of public policy in a globalising world; how liberalisation has impacted the public policy and how the notion of 'public' in public policy is shrinking. It brings out the meaning and nature of public policy.

Unit 2 of the Block is on 'Changing Nature of State and its Impact on Public Policy'. It examines the relationship between the nature of state and public policy. It discusses the nature of public policy which varies from Capitalist State, Developing State and Totalitarian State. It brings out the difference in the nature of public policy in different States.

Unit 3 is titled 'Understanding Policy in Context of Theories of State'. Policy process can be best understood in the context of the State. In order to have a good understanding of policy, we need to explain the place of public policy in the realm of State theories. The study of the policy process is essentially the study of the exercise of power by the State in the making of policy. Thus, this Unit attempts to understand the concept of public policy, explain the theories of State with regard to public policy, describe the terms 'Marxism', 'Pluralism', 'Elitism', and as well as examine the globalist perspective of policy process.

The Unit on 'Models of Policy Making' is Unit 4 of Block 1. It tries to explain the nature of policy by going into different models or theories; namely David Easton's Systems model, Yehezkel Dror's Normative Optimum model, Herbert Simon's Rational Decision-making theory, Geoffrey Vickers' Policy Analysis model, and Charles Lindblom's Incremental approach. Political Process Approach is explained in detail in the Unit. Though there is a difference of degree if not of kind between a model, approach and theory, this Unit has used the terms interchangeably.

Block 2 of the Course is on 'Public Policy and Ideology'. Unit 5 of the Course, which is the first Unit of this Block is called 'Impact of Political Ideology on Public Policy'. It is commonly felt that political ideology has an important role to play in the determination of public policies. In a multi-party democracy like India, no government has an option of imposing its ideology on people. Legislators do face many external pressures and internal constraints that curtail their freedom to choose policies they personally favour. This Unit discusses the meaning and nature of political ideology, examines the connect between political ideology and public policy; and explains the challenges of evaluating the impact of ideology on policy.

Unit 6 is on 'Ideology and Policy of Nehruvian Vision'. Jawaharlal Nehru with whom the word 'Nehruvian' is associated, subscribed to certain political, social and economic ideals. These ideals found place in his vision for independent India. Without having a grasp of Nehru's vision and policy, it is not possible to understand the nature and essence of public policy in the country today. This Unit discusses the nature of Nehruvian ideology. It describes the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru in the context of public policy; and explains the essence of Nehruvian vision with regard to specific policies related to agriculture, nuclear technology and community development.

Unit 7 of Block 2 is on 'Policy in Context of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation'. It discusses the meaning and importance of terms 'liberalisation', 'privatisation' and 'globalisation' or the LPG. It analyses the impact of LPG on national policy agenda; and examines the constraints of world economic restructuring. The national policy agendas are being largely shaped and formulated in the face of events of LPG. This Unit discusses the nature of the LPG context and its impact on policy agenda.

Block 3 is titled 'Public Policy and Civil Society'. It has 3 Units. Unit 8 is on 'Role of Interest Groups'. We all know that policymaking is not a one person show. It is not limited to mere government by the legislators and the executive. It involves different stakeholders and has to take care of the dynamic relationship between all interest groups. They use lobbying, electioneering, as well as educating and mobilising public to achieve their goals. This Unit discusses all these issues. It explains the meaning and nature of interest groups. It describes the different types of interest groups. It examines the strategies used by interest groups to influence public policy; and critically analyses the role of interest groups in the policy process.

In post-LPG phase, civil society has gained prominence in negotiation and advocacy with the State, especially at the national and global levels. The increased demand of democracy and accountability has further strengthened the voice of civil society in policy process. Unit 9 is on 'Role of NGOs and Social Movements',

which form an integral part of civil society. It explains the meaning and nature of NGOs. It also describes the nature of social movements. The role of NGOs, social movements and other civil society organisations in policy process is examined; and specifically, the significance of civil society in the policy process is clearly brought out.

Unit 10 is titled 'A Case Study of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan' or the MKSS. It describes the concept of MKSS and discusses its genesis and growth. The Unit examines the importance of people's participation in democracy; and elucidates the major achievements of MKSS, which is a classic example of the role of social movements and NGOs in policy making. This is one of the very few grassroots level organisations, which could be credited for mobilising the people and ensuring their participation in government demonstrations and *Jansunwais*. It is one of the most prominent Indian social movements, which works towards a just and equal society, and has been instrumental in the implementation of Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2005.

Block 4 is the last Block of the Course and is called 'Public Evaluation'. It includes 4 Units. Policy and social processes are interrelated and affect each other immensely. Public policy aims at social change and development. This is not possible without understanding the social values, customs, beliefs and traditions of people. For public policy to be responsive, it needs to be conscious of the social goals. Moreover, social processes provide a framework to government's vision on social development, social action, social policy and social administration. Unit 11 on 'Impact of Social Process on Public Policy' discusses the nature of social processes in India. It describes the concept of social policy, examines the impact of social processes on public policy; and elucidates the social policy measures in India.

Unit 12 is titled 'Tools and Techniques of Policy Evaluation'. Policy evaluation is essentially an important component of the policy process. Yet, it has drawn little attention from the policymakers. This Unit discusses the meaning and characteristics of policy tools. It explains the meaning and purpose of policy evaluation. The Unit examines the relative strengths and weaknesses of policy evaluation, tools and techniques. It also explains policy evaluation problems and suggests remedial measures.

Unit 13 is on 'Nature of Policy Analysis'. Policymaking is a cumbersome exercise. It requires the efforts of government (politicians in authority), the administrators (civil servants), as well as the support of the people (for whom the policy is meant). Public policies fail in the delivery of goods and services, if they are not adequately formulated and implemented in the public interest. The development of policy analysis is related to the pertinence of role of the State and politics in policymaking activities. This Unit describes the term 'policy analysis' and describes the significance of policy analysis. It explains the development of policy analysis as a field of enquiry, as well as discusses the different types of policy analysis. It also examines the limitations in the way of policy analysis.

Implementation of a public policy programme (including delivery of goods and services to the target subjects) carries no meaning or serves no purpose for which it is intended, unless it is adequately monitored. Policy monitoring is of critical importance to the government, as well as to the public in general, in terms of

achievement of intended results or goals of the public policy. It must be realised that a policy, if it is to achieve its intended goals, and better its performance, must be monitored and controlled. Unit 14 on 'Policy Monitoring and Analysis Techniques' describes the concept of public policy evaluation. It explains the purpose and objectives of policy evaluation. The Unit examines the nature of policy evaluation tools and analyses the techniques of policy monitoring. The Unit also brings out the constraints of policy performance.



ignou
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UNIVERSITY

The logo of Pignou University, featuring a stylized 'P' inside a circle, is positioned on the left side of the page. A vertical line separates the logo from the text on the right.

BLOCK-1

Context of Public Policy

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UNIT 1 MEANING, NATURE AND SCOPE OF PUBLIC POLICY*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Ideas of 'Public' and 'Policy'
- 1.3 Meaning and Nature of Public Policy
- 1.4 Scope of Public Policy
- 1.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 Glossary
- 1.7 References
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and nature of public policy;
- Describe the scope of public policy in a globalising world; and
- Examine the difference between public and private policies.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As an academic pursuit, 'public policy' emerged in the beginning of 1950s and since then it has been acquiring new dimensions. As a study of processes of government, policy forms a significant component in many a course and programme in disciplines such as political science, public administration, economics, management and so on. So rapid is the growth of this field of study that many researchers, teachers, public administrators now feel that it is becoming more and more unmanageable. The disciplines required to comprehend public policy cut right across the old academic lines of demarcation. Indeed, it is this interdisciplinary quality, which makes the field of public policy interesting and thought-provoking.

'Public policy' is a concept much in vogue. It is a frequently used term in our daily lives. In the academic literature, we often make references to the national health policy, the new education policy, agriculture policy, foreign policy and so on. It is an area, which has to do with those spheres, which are labelled as public. These are actually the principles on which government bases its policies. Indeed, a key feature of *public policy* is that it addresses problems that are 'public'.

Public policy is thus a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding preferences concerning a given issue involving governmental bodies

*Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh.

or its representatives. In the past, studies on public policy were dominated by researchers and students of political science who largely concentrated on the institutional structure and philosophical justification of the government. The focus was rarely on the policies themselves. Political science was to some extent preoccupied with the activities of the various political institutions and groups in relation to their success in the pursuit of political power. It hardly recognised the role which such organisations played towards the formation of policy as one of its main concerns. Things began to change when some thinkers started analysing the policy process.

Thomas Dye (2004), a leading scholar of policy analysis, has observed that “traditionally, the Institutional approach in political science did not devote much attention to the linkages between the structure of government institutions and the content of public policy”. Instead political science studies, in general, described specific government institutions – their structures and functions – without analysing the impact of institutional arrangements on policy outputs. He further suggested that today the focus of political science is shifting to public policy — “to the description and explanation of the causes and consequences of government activity”. While the concern of political science about the process by which public policy is determined, has increased, most students of public administration would acknowledge that the public servants themselves are intimately involved in the shaping of the policies.

The study of public administration has hitherto tended to concentrate on the machinery for the implementation of given policies. It has attended to the organisation of public authorities, the behaviour of public servants and increasingly, the methods of resource allocation, administration and review. With such an approach, it is difficult to determine much about the way policy is formulated, although it is generally contended that the experience of policy implementation feeds back into the furtherance of policy-making process. But public policy is more ‘political’ than public administration. It is an effort to apply political science to public affairs, but has concerns with process inside the field of public administration.

In brief, past studies on public policy have been mainly dominated by scholars of political science and public administration and have tended to concentrate more on the content of policy, the process of its formulation and its implementation. It may be noted here that the study of public policy is a recent discipline. Daniel McCool (1995) argues that modern policy studies began in 1922 but also notes that “the study of public policy did not suddenly spring into existence in the 1950s and 1960s”. The study of public policy has evolved into what is virtually a new branch of the social sciences, called the Policy Sciences. This concept of Policy Sciences was first formulated by Harold Lasswell in 1951. Today, the Policy Sciences have gone far beyond the new and naïve aspirations for societally relevant knowledge. This Unit would draw home certain ideas of public and policy, while bringing out the meaning, nature and scope of public policy.

1.2 IDEAS OF ‘PUBLIC’ AND ‘POLICY’

It is important to understand the concept of ‘public’ for any discussion on public policy. We often use such terms as ‘public interest’, ‘public sector’, ‘public

opinion', 'public health', and so on. The starting point is what 'public policy' has to do with those spheres, which are so labelled as 'public', as opposed to spheres involving the idea of 'private'. We will be able to understand it better if we can decipher the ideas of 'public' and 'policy'.

The Idea of 'Public'

The concept of public policy presupposes that there is an area or domain of life, which is not private or purely individual, but held in common. Public dimension is generally referred to 'public ownership' or control for 'public purpose'. The public comprises that domain of human activity, which is regarded as requiring governmental intervention or common action. However, there has always been a conflict between what is public and what is private? It is argued that the public sector has *ten* major key differences from the private sector:

- The public sector faces more complex and ambiguous tasks;
- It has more problems in implementing its decisions;
- It employs more people with a wider range of motivation;
- It is more concerned with securing opportunities or capacities;
- It is more concerned with compensating for market failure;
- It engages in activities with greater symbolic significance;
- It is held to stricter standards of commitment and legality;
- It has a greater opportunity to respond to issues of fairness and justice;
- It must operate or appear to operate in the public interest; and
- It must maintain minimal levels of public support above than what is required in private industry (Massey, 1993).

Public administration emerged as an instrument of the State for securing public interest rather than private interest. Whereas, for the political economists, only markets could balance private and public interests, the Neo-liberal philosophy was based upon a belief that public administration was a more rational means of promoting the public interest. For Max Weber, the growth of bureaucracy took place due to the process of rationalism in industrial society. The civil servant was the rational functionary whose main task was to carry out the will of those elected by the people. Public bureaucracy was, therefore, different from that which existed in the private sector because it was motivated to serve the public interest. The rational public interest argument started eroding after the World War II. To Herbert Simon, bureaucracies exhibited a large measure of 'irrationality' or at least 'bounded rationality'.

Mueller (1989) felt that bureaucrats did not function in the public interest and displayed the capacity to have distinct goals of their own in this connection. As per his comparative study of bureaucracy, Aberbach (1981) has observed, "the last quarter of this century is witnessing the virtual disappearance of the Weberian distinction between the roles of the politicians and the bureaucrats, producing what may be labelled a pure hybrid". The public and private sectors reveal themselves as overlapping and interacting, rather than as well-defined categories.

The Idea of ‘Policy’

Like the idea of ‘public’, the concept of ‘policy’ is not very precise. Policy denotes, among other elements, guidance for action. It may take the form of:

- A declaration of goals;
- A declaration of course of action;
- A declaration of general purpose; and
- An authoritative decision.

Birkland (2011) has discerned the following *key* attributes of (public) policy:

- “Policy is made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention.
- Policy is made on the behalf of ‘public’.
- Policy is oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem.
- Policy is ultimately made by governments, even if the ideas come from outside government or through the interaction of government and non-governmental actors.
- Policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors who have different interpretations of problems, solutions, and their own motivations.
- Policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do”.

Unfortunately, the policy itself is something, which takes different forms. There is a thrust to designate policy as the ‘outputs’ of the political system (Easton, 1957). And in a lesser degree to define policy as “more or less interdependent policies dealing with many different activities” (Dror, 1968). Studies of public policy areas, on the contrary, have tended to focus on the evaluation of policy decisions in terms of specified values – a rational rather than a political analysis. The magnitude of this problem can be recognised from the other definitions, which have been advanced by scholars in this field. Y. Dror, one of the leading scholars of the Policy Sciences, has defined policies as “general directives on the main lines of action to be followed”.

1.3 MEANING AND NATURE OF PUBLIC POLICY

The concept of public policy presupposes that there is a domain of life, which is not private or purely individual, but held in common. The point for discussion of public policy is to understand what we mean by the idea of ‘public policy’. The term public policy, which comprises two words: public and policy, has already been discussed. To Cochran and Malone, the term ‘public policy’ refers to “the study of government decisions and actions designed to deal with a matter of public concern” (Cochran, 2014). For Guy Peters (1999) ‘public policy’ is the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the life of citizens”.

Birkland (2011) defines policy “as a statement by government – at whatever level – of what it intends to do about a public problem”. David Easton (1953)

defines public policy as “the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society”. Public policies are formulated by what Easton calls the “authorities” in a political system, namely, “elders, permanent chief executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councillors, monarchs, and the like”. According to him, these are the persons who “engage in the daily affairs of a political system”, are “recognised by most members of the system as having responsibility for these matters” and take actions that are “accepted as binding most of the time by most of the members so long as they act within the limits of their roles”. Public policy focuses on what J. Dewy (1927) once described as “the public and its problems”. Some more definitions of public policy are:

Anderson (1975) has suggested that policy be regarded as “purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern”.

Parsons (1995) has suggested that “a policy is an attempt to define and structure a rational basis for action or inaction”.

Lineberry (1977) has observed that “it is what governments do and fail to do – to and for their citizens”.

Dye (2004) has pointed out that “public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do”.

Henry (2012) has defined public policy as “a course of action adopted and pursued by government”.

In brief, ‘policy’ is a purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives. It should be added here that public policies are the policies adopted and implemented by government bodies and officials.

In these definitions, there is divergence between what governments decide to do and what they actually do. All public policymaking involves government at the appropriate level – national, state or local. Ultimately, public policy is about people, their values and needs.

Public policy is made by the government (even if the ideas come from the non-officials-pressure groups or political parties) in response to the public problems, but it is implemented by public and non-government actors. For understanding public policy, it is important to analyse its nature. A policy may be general or specific, broad or narrow, simple or complex, public or private, written or unwritten, explicit or implicit, discretionary or detailed, and qualitative or quantitative.

Understanding public policy is an art as well a craft. It is an art, as it requires insight and creativity in identifying societal problems, in devising public policies that might address them and in finding out whether these policies lead to a better quality of life. Public policy is a craft because these tasks often require some knowledge of social sciences. Here, the emphasis is on the ‘public policy’ (government policy) which a government chooses as a ‘guidance for action’. From the viewpoint of public policies, activities of government can be put broadly into two categories, such as activities based on: (i) definite or specific policies; and (ii) general, vague and inconsistent policies.

It is invariably found that a government rarely has a set of guiding principles for all its activities. Important public policies are often made more explicit, particularly where the issue of a law, a regulation, or a plan and the like is involved. The Supreme Court of a country like India may, through its decisions, give new interpretations to some of the Articles of the Constitution, which may amount to a new policy. Judicial decisions are also policy statements.

Furthermore, policies are often too vague or too general and are not always consistent with each other. In a turbulent environment, government departments often have to take immediate action without reference to any specific policy. Also, sometimes for political expediency, or for other reasons, a government may announce a definite policy without any intention of carrying it out. Therefore, it is possible to have an action without a policy, or to have a policy without an action. Public policies, because of their governmental nature, are mostly adopted formally by the government authorities, that is, those with the power to give them a legal authority.

A public policy may cover a major portion of its activities, such as a development policy. Socio-economic development, economic growth, social justice, equality, or self-reliance or similar broad principles of guidance for action may be adopted as a developmental policy or a national goal. Therefore, a single policy may be found in a number of written documents. A public policy may also be narrow, covering a specific activity, such as family planning restrained to a section of the people, or it may spread to a wider range applied to all the people in a country. For example, a government may adopt a policy that a person convicted for raping a girl under 12 years of age will be sentenced between 20 years to life imprisonment (Criminal Law 'Amendment' Ordinance, 2018).

Further, public policy is a field, which is generally defined by policy areas (such as health, education, environment, housing, economic, social and transport), and it is largely in this setting that interdisciplinary and intergovernmental interactions take place. Besides, each level of government – the Central, the state and the local – may have its specific or general policies. Then, there are the 'mega policies'. They are the general guidelines to be followed by all specific policies. According to Dror (1968), 'mega policies' act as a kind of a master policy, distinct from concrete discrete policies, and involve the establishment of overall goals to serve as guidelines for large sets of concrete policies. The broad policies, which are an expression of national goals mentioned earlier (such as economic growth, social justice and the like) are examples of mega policies.

Public policy is related to problem solving. An important question is whether a policy should contain a definite goal or an objective. By goal or objective, we mean the end towards which any action is directed. Since a policy is a guidance for action, it is essential for the public policy to have a goal, an objective or a purpose. All mega policies, in particular, are purposeful and goal oriented. But it is conceivable that a government can have a policy without any clear objective or purpose. It can also adopt a policy without specifying what the purpose or goal is, even if it does have one. Even though the goal or objective of a policy is explicitly stated, the policy by itself may be so vague or so general that it may become susceptible to various interpretations. A government may deliberately adopt vague, inconsistent, or even contradictory policies in order to satisfy all pressure groups and political parties.

As already indicated, a public policy is a purposive course of action. The course of action may be either positive or negative in form. In its positive form, it may involve some of overt government action to deal with a particular problem. Negatively, it may involve a decision by public servants not to take action on some matter on which a governmental order is sought. Public policies sometimes have a legally coercive quality that citizens accept as legitimate. For example, taxes must be paid unless one wants to run the risk of fines or imprisonment. This legal coercive nature of public policies makes public organisations distinct from private organisations. Policies ultimately gain considerable support, so their repeal is unlikely, as with education or health policies. They may be modified or expanded with certain changes.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the ideas of 'public' and 'policy'.

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2. Explain the meaning and nature of public policy.

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1.4 SCOPE OF PUBLIC POLICY

Much of the discussion on the scope of public policy has already been highlighted under the headings 'Ideas of Public and Policy' and 'Nature of Public Policy'. Public policy is an important area of study and practice. Since the emergence of public policy as a field of enquiry, it has expanded in theoretical scope and application. A significant part of the study of public policy consists of the development of scenarios and extrapolations of contemporary trends. The scope and sheer size of public sector has grown enormously in all the developing countries in response to the increasing complexity of technology, social organisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. At present, the functions of practically all governments, especially in the developing countries, have increased significantly. They are now concerned with the more complex functions of nation-building and socio-economic progress. Today, the government is not merely the keeper of peace, the arbiter of disputes, and the provider of common goods and day-to-day services, it has, directly or indirectly, become the principal innovator, the major determiner of social and economic programmes and the main financier, as well as the main guarantor of large-scale enterprises.

In many developing countries, 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 standard of living. These trends and developments have therefore enhanced both the size and scope of public policy.

Michael Teitz (1968) describes the outreach of public policy in terms of the citizen's life cycle:

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

Public policy focuses on the public and its problems. It is the study of, what Heidenheimer (1990) has observed as “how, why and to what effect, governments pursue particular courses of action and inaction” Dye (*op.cit.*) has put it, with “what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes”.

The line of argument developed here is that all of us are substantially affected by the myriad public policies in our everyday lives. The range of public policy is vast: from the vital to the trivial. Today, public policies may deal with such substantive areas as defence, environment protection, medical care and health, education, housing, taxation, inflation, science and technology, and so on. The expanding sphere of public policy is reflected in the passage of legislative acts and measures. For example, environmental regulations impose significant costs on individual and business. Regulatory policies allow the government to exert control over the conduct of certain activities. Government spending is a common indicator of governmental activities.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the scope of public policy.

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1.5 CONCLUSION

To conclude, it may be noted that the field of public policy has assumed considerable importance in response to the increasing complexity of the society. It is not only concerned with the description and explanation of the causes and consequences of government activity, but also with the development of scientific knowledge about the forces shaping public policy. The study of public policy helps us to understand the social ills of the subject under study. Public policy is an important mechanism for moving a social system from the past to the future.

In the current phase of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, the role of the government has changed. Its ability lies in making policies and executing them. Public policy involves improving the democratic or political capacities of people, and not simply the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of goods and services. For Lasswell, public policy as public education is essential if democracy is not to fall prey to the interests and manipulations of powerful elites. The major aim of policymaking, he has suggested, is the formation of values, which could shape the full development of individuals in the society. The goal of policy analysis should be to facilitate the policy-making process, which is informed by enlightenment and emancipation and which can keep “alive the pluralism of authority and control that prevents the absolutisation of political power”.

Parsons (1995) has observed “It is the clarification, shaping and sharing of values, so as to extend and enhance democratisation, which still remains the core and vital tasks of the theory and practice of public policy”. Policies do more than effect change in societal conditions. They also hold people together and maintain an orderly state. Ultimately, it is by public policies that the citizen-centric societal goals could be achieved. This Unit has elucidated the meaning, nature and significance of public policy in detail.

1.6 GLOSSARY

Classical Liberalism: The ideological system that emphasises individual liberty and the ownership and acquisition of private property as a means to better the overall wealth and happiness and discourage social conflicts.

Public Interest: It is a term which is hard to define, but broadly refers to needs of the public in whose name policy is made.

Policy Analysis: Policy analysis is the study of how governmental policies are made and improved. The focus in policy analysis is on rational thinking.

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1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- The public sector faces more complex and ambiguous tasks.
- It employs more people with a wider range of motivation.
- It is more concerned with securing opportunities or capacities.
- It is more concerned with compensating for market failure.
- It is held to stricter standards of commitment and legality.
- It has a greater opportunity to respond to issues of fairness and justice.

- It must operate or appear to operate in the public interest.
- It must maintain minimal levels of public support above than what is required in private industry.
- Policy is made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention.
- Policy is oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem.
- Policy is ultimately made by governments, even if the ideas come from outside government.
- Policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors who have different interpretations of problems, solutions, and their own motivations.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- The concept of public policy presupposes that there is a domain of life which is not private or purely individual but held in common.
- For Guy Peters ‘public policy’ is the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the life of citizens.
- David Easton defines public policy as “the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society”.
- Public policy focuses on what J. Dewy once described as “the public and its problems”.
- ‘Policy’ as a purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives.
- Public policy is related to problem-solving.
- A government may deliberately adopt vague, inconsistent, or even contradictory policies in order to satisfy all pressure groups and political parties.
- A single policy may be found in a number of written documents.
- Public policy is a purposive course of action.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- The scope and sheer size of public sector has grown enormously in all the developing countries.
- The scope has become complex as a response to the increasing complexity of technology, social organisation, industrialisation and urbanisation.
- Public policy focuses on the public and its problems.
- It is the study of, what Heidenheimer said, as “how, why and to what effect, governments pursue particular courses of action and inaction”.
- Dye puts it, public policies deal with “what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes”.
- Today, public policies may deal with such substantive areas as defence, environment protection, medical care and health, education, housing, taxation, inflation, science and technology.

UNIT 2 CHANGING NATURE OF STATE AND ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC POLICY*

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Relationship between the Nature of State and Public Policy
- 2.3 Public Policy in a Capitalist State
- 2.4 Public Policy in a Developing State
- 2.5 Public Policy in a Totalitarian State
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Glossary
- 2.8 References
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the nature of public policy in different types of States;
- Discuss the relationship between the nature of State and public policy; and
- Bring out the difference in the nature of public policies in different States.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The nature of State has been given utmost importance by the social scientists. The powers and functions of the State have been adequately analysed. The State has been described by different names; be it ‘a necessary evil’, ‘a benefactor’, ‘a coercive power’ or ‘a legitimising authority’. The State has been changing complexion as per the changing context. From a Police State to a Welfare State, its trajectory has seen many shades. A State can be Liberal, Socialist, Capitalist, Developing or Totalitarian. The different types of States have their specific policy. Many scholars like Harold Lasswell and David Easton have focused on the need of policy studies to understand the functioning of the State. Against this backdrop, we can say serious work on policy began to take root in the 1950s. WorldWar II had played havoc with the economies and State intervention became a necessary factor; its influence on public policy became an academic field of study. It, thus, becomes important to understand the interplay between public policy and nature of State.

Thomas R. Dye (2016) has observed that “public policy is whatever government chooses to do or not to do”. Indeed, public policy is the expression of the will of the State. It is as old as government itself. No matter what form of government is

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there, public policies have always existed in one form or other, depending upon the nature of State. With new developments and technical advancements, needs of people are changing.

Hence, the State is also undergoing a sea change in its nature and scope accordingly. The dynamic character of State leaves an imprint on public policy framework as well. Initially, as we all know, the State was a Police State limited to protection of people and tax collection. It gradually turned into a Welfare State, widening its area to people's upliftment and public welfare strategies. Hence, the scope of policy making has increased tremendously.

As Ferrel Heady (2001) has pointed out, "the State is everywhere. It hardly leaves a gap". It stands true of policy making also. In the Welfare State, policy is formulated for every task, as is often observed 'from womb to tomb'. In a similar way, in a democratic Welfare State, government frames liberal and progressive policies, while in a totalitarian State, the case is entirely the opposite. Depending upon the nature of State, there are different types of public policies like regulatory, substantive, distributive and redistributive etc. These have been discussed in our CBCS Course (BPAC 108) on Public Policy and Administration in India. This Unit would try to explain the relationship between the nature of State and public policy. It would also describe the nature of public policies in different types of States.

2.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATURE OF STATE AND PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy is the product of governments' will and goals. It is a conscious course of action taken by the government to achieve certain pre-defined goals. From the various definitions of public policy, we can conclude that public policies are governmental decisions. They are actually the results and byproducts of activities undertaken by the government in pursuance of certain pre-decided goals and objectives. Thus, the scope of public policy is determined by the type of role that the State has adopted for itself. In capitalism, where economy is market-driven, the State leaves the market free and does not intervene much in the economy. Market forces shape the society and life accordingly. In a socialist State, there is a State ownership of businesses and services. The State adopts the policy of planned development, thus, increasing its reach and impact.

We have to, therefore, understand the changing role of the State, if we want to understand the nature of public policy. Since policies are the result of the actions of State, it differs according to the nature of State. At the time of origin of State, it had very limited functions like maintaining law and order and collecting taxes. Slowly, the States adopted Mercantilism and started controlling almost every aspect of life. Towards the 18th century, the States had petty laws related to what kind of food people should eat and on what days. There was excessive restriction on freedom of commerce and trade. Against this mercantilist control of State on Industry, the Physiocrats of France started raising their voice for Laissez-Faire State. Laissez-Faire is a French term, which means "Leave Alone". Industrial Revolution further boosted this demand of non-intervention by State in economic activities and giving a free hand to industries. It set limits on regulatory powers of the State.

In a Laissez-Faire State, the scope of public policy is limited. Public policy is generally concerned with routine work. There is a lack of public policies related

to administrative development or administrative reforms. Most of the policies are related to foreign invasion, maintenance of peace, law and order. We do not find any major policies on health, education etc. Moreover, we do not find public policies related to development and welfare. Public policies are more or less simple due to the restricted nature of public administration. Slowly, due to shortcomings of Laissez-Faire State, demands were put forward for extensive State ideology that could save the people from exploitation of the capitalist countries in the post-industrial revolution phase. Demands were raised for the protection of weaker sections of the society.

Rise of Nation States and democracies along with the rise of capitalist and socialist countries paved the way for welfare States. In the 1930s, in post-economic upheaval (Great Depression), the world witnessed the rise of various Fascist powers. On the other hand, planned economies of socialistic countries were performing well. This made capitalist countries rethink on their policies. They adopted welfare State model. In a welfare State, social security, health, education is the prime responsibility of the State. In a Welfare State, private enterprises exist along with the redistribution of national income by taxation and positive discrimination for weaker sections. Since the scope of the activities of welfare State is very wide, the public policy is also very comprehensive. We find extensive policies in welfare State, ranging from health, education to providing employment, social and economic equality to people. In a welfare State, policies are not limited to economic administration or general administration. In fact, the State acts like a change agent.

Hence, we find policies in socio-economic as well as cultural aspects also. Welfare State takes care of the vulnerable sections of the society. It formulates policies related to their socio-economic development. The policy is so extensive that it covers all the broad themes of development like environment protection, protection of weaker sections, prevention of crime and promotion of science and technical development. In the social sphere, the State plays a pro-active role and frames policies to curb the social evils. These policies are implemented in the form of Dowry Prohibition Act, Domestic Violence Act etc. Public policy is very specialised in a welfare State. Various agencies like National Women Commission undertake research on various policy issues. Let us now focus on the nature of public policy in different types of State.

2.3 PUBLIC POLICY IN A CAPITALIST STATE

In a capitalist society, the State is assigned a very limited role. State is a regulator and not promoter of social and economic activities. Unlike a socialist society, the State only regulates and is not a major player in social and economic activities. Most sectors of the economy are under the private sector or public-private partnership. The State plays the role of change agent in promoting and shaping various social and economic policies in a capitalist order. This change on the part of nature of State also affects the public policy. Public policies expand their scope from that of regulation to that of development. They also have to keep in view the needs and objectives of various stakeholders like civil society groups and corporate players.

Rise of capitalist State is visible ever since the industrial revolution. Market forces have always wanted a free hand in the economy. The need for a capitalist State has had a deep impact on policy making. Capitalist State has promoted

liberalisation and privatisation. The State has been rendered inefficient and unproductive for many economic activities. Hence, many of State's functions have been handed over to market forces and private players. This has impacted the sphere and domain of public policy.

In the capitalist countries, the State's policies are limited to law and order, revenue functions and somewhat regulation of market. Major economic activities like economic growth and development, industrialisation and so on are taken care of by market itself. State's policies are mainly directed at preventing/correcting the distortions created by market and other private players. The State has to make adequate policy mechanism that can handle any socio-economic crises created by the market.

The State acts as an umpire in capitalist economies. Although capitalism is based on the assumption of perfect competition, it is more or less a Utopian concept. In reality, it is always an unequal competition scenario. So, market needs some rules and regulations, which can ensure rational, equal and reasonable ground for competition. So, in capitalist economy, the State frames the policies to provide for fair competition. It also ensures that these policies are properly followed and implemented. It gives the State a free hand to interfere and restrict some economic activities and control the market. This promotes the scope for State's public policy even in market dominated societies.

So even in capitalist countries, the State has to formulate policies. It is a change of role for the State. Capitalism does not mean absence of State and public policies. Many have suggested that some control of the State is mandatory for smooth functioning of economies. We need State policies, especially to protect the property rights. The State has to formulate policies under which its various institutions like police and courts can ensure proper implementation of these rights. All schools of capitalist thought believe that State regulation through monetary policy and fiscal policy is necessary for macro-economic forces. Although, they differ in as to what extent the State should interfere through policy, strictly or mildly, they all agree to the need of State policy for regulating the market.

We will be able to understand the nature of public policy in a capitalist order better, if we compare it with the nature of policy in socialist States. When State under capitalist order adopted a limited policy control that was specifically limited to protection of property rights, ensuring fair and balanced competition as well as regulation of macro-economic forces, the world became a mute spectator of widespread unrest. There was large-scale exploitation of poor people and labourers by the capitalists. This unrest led to socialist revolutions in different parts of the world, resulting in the emergence of various socialist States across the globe.

The emergence of socialist State and its idea of constructing just, equal and rational economic order dominated the circles of public policy in the 20th century. A wave of socialism was felt in various prominent countries like Russia, China and many East European countries through communist revolutions. The rise of socialism and its impact on the policies was not merely limited to the socialist States. Various non-socialist countries were also influenced by socialist policies, in order to plug the lacunae of capitalist order. World's biggest capitalist States like the UK and USA started giving way to Welfare Economics. An increased regulatory policy of government in these countries was the result of the socialist imprint on public policy, as well as the global economic crisis of that time. This was the period,

when a majority of globe's public policies came under the Keynesian economic paradigm.

After independence, the Indian government adopted socialist planning. It not only increased the scope and reach of public policy, as State took the task of socio-economic development, but also increased the number of public agencies to frame and implement public policies. For example, Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog), National Development Council etc., were set up to facilitate socialist policies for planned development. Various economic policies have been converted into laws and statutes like Bank Nationalisation Act, Land Tenancy Act etc. Five Year Plans had main policy components guiding and deciding policy framework for economy as a whole.

In a socialist State, the ambit of public policy is very broad. The State formulates policies for almost every field. Even the means of production like agriculture and industries face direct governmental intervention in terms of policies, not only for their regulation, but also for their promotion. Government, broadly, defines the policies; dictating the areas of economy, which are reserved only for government and its agencies like electricity, railways and telecommunication. In a socialist State, policies do not remain limited to economic sphere, but the State also lays down the policies for social development and equality. Hence, in a socialist State, public policy is widespread and exhaustive in nature, covering all spheres of socio-economic life.

So as far as impact of State's capitalist or socialist nature is concerned, we must understand that capitalist State has more of regulatory policies, whereas a socialist State acts directly as producer, regulator and promoter of economy, so it has all these policies imbibed in it. These days, more States are of capitalist nature. The aftermath of new-liberalisation era of 1990s has witnessed a metamorphosis in the nature of State.

With the collapse of erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the opening up of its economy in China has dealt a severe blow to socialist States. This has led to privatisation making inroads into many economies. Earlier in capitalist as well as socialist States, many functions were reserved only for States. But now many of them are being given to market forces and private players. Though the State is divesting many of its functions and authority, but we can not say that its role in the economy has been undermined.

The State now plays a role of regulator, facilitator and arbiter. It uses more of indicative planning. Public policy has changed only in its content; it still works under the umbrella concepts of social justice and equity. Market can never replace the State. Even if all sectors of economy and society are left free, we will still need the State and public policy in one form or other to correct distortions, balance competition, prevent discrimination, end poverty and deal with crises. These functions can never be taken care of by the market policies. It is only the public policy which can take up all the tasks of socio-economic development, either led by free market or State itself, with great responsibility and accountability.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. How does the nature of State impact public policy?

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2. Describe the characteristics of a capitalist State.

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3. What is the difference in policies of capitalist and socialist States?

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2.4 PUBLIC POLICY IN A DEVELOPING STATE

Development is a continuous process. All states strive for development, with different rates of success. At what stage of development a State is has a huge impact on its nature of public policy. That is why there is a difference in the policies of developed and developing countries. Now many developing countries are getting a taste of capitalism, as it has reached their doorstep with the wave of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation or the LPG. Dror (1983) has elaborately discussed policy making process in developed and developing countries. His book 'Public Policy Making Reexamined' has suggested different shades of nature, scope and influence of policies in the developing and developed world.

In order to understand the nature of State in developing countries, we should look at the context in which they operate. In the developing countries, public policy is characterised by an elite legacy. So, policies are not framed in the general interest of the public, but somehow the vested interests of elite sections shape the policy. Policy strategy is neither rational, nor a result of consciously made efforts. Political reasons rather than rationality dominate the policy process. Politicians use policies to garner votes, instead of achieving the desired ends. That is why the political executive does not adhere to comprehensive policy planning and keeps changing it according to the mood of public. This leads to lack of consistency in policies, hence they are not able to achieve the desired targets.

The executive uses policies to garner support of the people. Thus, they are not in line with reality, but only sound appealing to public. Just for the purpose of rhetorical show, they choose very ambitious goals and targets. This makes the execution of policy pretty tough. In the absence of proper implementation, goals of policies are never realised, and more or less they remain on paper. In the

developing countries, the executive dominates the policy process. Legislature is secondary for all policy matters. Political executive is stronger than permanent executive in the policy process. Whenever any new government takes over, the policy of former government is abandoned and new policies are brought in. It makes their evaluation difficult and policies fall short of targets.

This negatively affects the continuity of long-term policies. Policy quality is below average, as those concerned with policy making, especially political executives are not equipped with proper knowledge and skills required for it. Majority of people in developing countries are not fully aware of the prevailing socio-political conditions. Hence, they vote in an irrational manner basing their choice on factors like caste, religion, region etc. In a multi-party electoral system, which exists in most of developing countries, anyone can win election with little jugglery of numbers. This does not ensure that people's representatives are worthy of their job, as they should be. Muscle and money power help even the incapable candidates to win elections. Such candidates are unable to frame progressive policies. Neither voters nor academicians play any significant role in policy matters. The professional standards for policy, its execution and feedback remain weak and compromised. That is why it is often stated, 'people get the government they deserve'.

The reality is changing fast. Many people have become very keen on understanding politics, which is turning more efficient, real, socially and economically feasible. Legislature has a major role in determining policy process, which is assisted by voters and well-qualified intellectuals. Voters are aware of the needs of the society and economy. They vote for the government on the basis of socio-economic ideology and not on any irrational basis. This makes only capable persons to win the confidence of the people. Politicians know that people will evaluate them on the basis of their work and not any rhetoric, so they make the best possible policies which are in national interest.

In the developed states, the political culture is very mature. They do not abandon the policies with the advent of a new government. This provides continuity to the policies. In a stable environment, even long-term policies bear fruits and their evaluation becomes easy. Citizens are better educated and aware. They are in the position to provide fair feedback. This improves policy process and allows government to make necessary adjustments whenever required. In developed countries, pressure groups are also more organised and conscious. Hence, they exert significant impact on public policy. They also help the government with their rational ground level research. This improves the quality of public policy. A fully merit based, experienced and professional civil service is always there to help the political executive. This makes the executive better informed and efficiently capable of handling policy matters. Thus, policies in developed States are well thought of, planned and executed.

2.5 PUBLIC POLICY IN A TOTALITARIAN STATE

In early period of human history, most of the States were totalitarian in which authoritarian governance dominated all walks of life. State's goals and agenda were supreme. No individual or group activity, ideology or thought contrary to State's vision was allowed. Leader's or king's wish used to be the guiding force

for all policy processes. Wishes or needs of people were not taken care of. Policies were means to achieve the will of the leader and State. The States used power to make arbitrary policies. No opposition or divergence of view was allowed in policy process. In totalitarian States, policy process used to be concentrated in the hands of the ruling family or leader. They used it to make policies at their own whims and fancies. Their policies were directed not for public interest but for the interest of ruling class.

Although we had some good examples also where benevolent kings used their policies for the welfare of their people. However, these cases were few. Majority of rulers gave priority to their individual interests, while making any policy. In modern times also, we witness some totalitarian States, where any military general acquires the power through military coup or the State is ruled by one particular ideology like communist countries. In these totalitarian States, one single ideology dominates the entire policy process. Even the intellectuals and political parties have to adhere to the same ideology as far as policy is concerned.

Policies in totalitarian States are restrictive in nature; crushing the freedom of people. Policies have nothing to do with the interests of public, rather they restore the interests of State authority. The State uses the policy with foul tactics of terror or foreign military threats to demand compliance from people. State has anti-people policies taking away all their powers of freedom of expression. In totalitarian State, all policies are based on a particular ideology of State. No policy contrary to this policy is decided. It is how a leader perceives the needs of people that matter. People's will or feedback is not at all important in a totalitarian State. Judiciary plays a minimal role in policy process. Whatever is on the agenda of ruling party or leader is given the form of policy, however, irrational or anti-people it may be. In fact, in a totalitarian State, policies are not public policies; they are policies of particular ideology or person. Public welfare hardly comes into picture.

In contrast to totalitarian State, in a democratic State, policies are the expressions of the will and needs of people. Since legislature and executive represent the people who are ultimate sovereigns of the nation, so it is understood that policies are made with participation of people. No democratic government can ignore public interest in policies as they are at the mercy of people. They know if they will not honour public opinion, needs and aspirations, public will oust them from their authority in the next elections. So instead of making policies in specific interests of a section of society, democratic government makes policies in general interest. Various rights of the people in democratic State like people's right to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of press and media help in making conducive environment for participatory policy process. People express their needs, and their concerns through these rights, which are duly taken care by the governments.

In a democratic State, legislature plays a very active role being the representative of people. Heads of the governments, be it any form of government, Presidential or Prime Ministerial, play a very important role in policy making. Judiciary also plays an active role and checks if all policies are made within democratic and constitutional framework. People are free to seek justice from independent judiciary against any unjust policies of the government. Judiciary can also guide the State in making desired policies through judicial activism. Constitution is the prime guiding force for guiding the policy making process in any democratic

State. Democratic government can not violate the basic features of Constitution, while formulating the public policies.

Any policy against the spirit of Constitution and its values is declared null and void by the judiciary. This maintains the ethical, just and democratic character in the policies framed. Voters also have a significant say in policy matters. They put forward their presence through elections. Political parties also play a very dominating role. Even if they are in opposition, they try to avoid the policies which are against the common interests of people. They also help in creating public opinion, ultimately leading to a healthy public policy process. To aid the political executive, there is a well-trained professional bureaucracy, which is selected in a democratic process on the basis of their merit through open competitive exams. Their capability and experience enhance effective policy making.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Write a note on people's participation in policy process in democratic countries.

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2. Explain the main characteristics of policy making in developed States.

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3. What do you understand by a totalitarian State?

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2.6 CONCLUSION

We can thus say that public policy works in a contextual setting. Depending on the kind of State, governance sets the tone of public policy. In a capitalist State, its role is very limited and it interferes in the economy only to ensure fair competition, but in a socialist State, it acts as a major player in production. Hence, the nature of policies change from restricted to extensive. As Ferrell Heady (*op.cit.*)

has observed, “State is everywhere. It hardly leaves a gap”. Same stands true of public policy also. We have different policies for different issues.

With the concept of Welfare State and rise of neo-liberalism, there is a substantial increase in the functions of State. No activity in the society is out of the bounds of State. For every problem, the public looks at the government. For every task, however, big or small, ranging from economic issues to social welfare, technical development to cultural feasts, recreational activities to development of transportation and communication, protection from external aggression to protection from climate change, the public needs the policies of the State.

This transition of Police State to administrative State, through different phases of capitalist, socialist States, Laissez-Faire has totalitarian States, has greatly influenced public policy process. The success or failure of any particular area of activities depends upon policies. We find policies not only related to economic and social development, but to the State acting as a change agent. The State formulates policies for nation building, reducing poverty and saving the country from any crisis-economic or social. State has the policies with democratic ethos. Public policy has become the central power of State. It is vital for every type of planning and guides every decision of the State. Public policies are turning multifarious and multidimensional in nature. Also, with technical advancement, public policies are becoming more specialised and focused. Hence, the evolution of State into an administrative State has a positive multivariate impact on the reach and scope of public policy.

2.7 GLOSSARY

Capitalist State: A State where price, production and distribution of resources are left to private players and State rarely interferes in economy and acts as a facilitator.

Democratic State: A system where people are ultimate masters. Their wishes and needs are taken care of well by their representatives in any decision making.

Great Depression: It was a worldwide economic slowdown in the 1930s. It lasted almost a decade. It began in the US and spread across other countries, devastating economies and rendering people jobless.

Keynesian Economics: It is an economic theory that came up in the aftermath of the Great Depression. It talks of total spending in the economy and its effects on output and inflation. John Maynard Keynes developed it during the 1930s. He advocated for increased government expenditures and lower taxes to stimulate demand and aid the economy.

Laissez-Faire State: A State, which leaves the economy free to the market forces and doesn't interfere or regulates economy. It has a minimal role of maintaining law and order in the State.

Physiocracy: It is an 18th century economic theory which puts emphasis and productive work as a source of natural wealth.

Socialist State: A State where all decisions of production and distribution of resources are vested with the government. Individual depends upon the State for every economic and social service.

Totalitarian State: A State that controls all aspects of individual life by coercive measures and individual rights are subordinated to State authority.

Welfare State: A system by which government takes care of weaker sections of the society and provides various social services like health, education, housing etc.

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2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- In a capitalist State, government has an unlimited role.
- It does not interfere much in economics. The economy is left free to the market forces.
- State acts as a regulator and not a promoter of economic policy.
- State's role is limited to law and order, revenue collection and little regulation of market.
- State has no role in major economic activities like industrialisation and development.
- State only ensures that competition is fair and just.

2. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- In a socialist State government is supreme.
- It controls all means of production and distribution.
- State itself is a player in economy and acts as a producer of many things.
- Economy is strictly under the control of State.
- State controls all socio-economic and cultural activities.

3. **Your answer should include the following points.**

- In a capitalist State, the scope of public policy is very limited while in a socialist State it is very broad.

- In a capitalist State, government policies are more concerned with law and order and regulatory functions, while in a socialist State policies are concerned with socio-economic development.
- In a socialist country policies are made for planned development, while in a capitalist State development is left to market forces.
- In a capitalist State, only regulatory policies are there but in socialistic countries, we find development policies along with regulatory policies.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- In a democratic State, policies are the expressions of the will and needs of people.
- In a democratic State, legislature plays a very active role as the representative of people.
- Voters also have a significant say in policy matters. They put forward their presence through elections. Various rights of the people in democratic state like people's right to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of press and media help in making a conducive environment for participatory policy process.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Legislature has a major role in determining policy process, which is assisted by voters and well qualified intellectuals.
- There are separate and specialised institutions for carrying out policy making research and development.
- In developed countries, pressure groups are also more organised and conscious. Hence, they exert significant impact on public policy. Professional civil service is always there to help political executive. This makes executive better informed and efficiently handle the policy matters.
- Policies in developed states are well thought of, planned and executed. Hence, they satisfy the needs of the population.

3. Your answer should include the following points:

- In a totalitarian State, authoritarianism dominates all walks of life.
- State's goals and agenda are supreme.
- No individual or group activity, ideology or thought contrary to State's vision is allowed. Leader's or King's wish is the guiding force for all policy processes.
- Wishes or needs of people are not taken care of.
- Policies are means to achieve the desires of leaders and State.
- One single ideology dominates entire policy process. Even the intellectuals and political parties have to adhere to the same ideology as far as policy is concerned.

UNIT 3 UNDERSTANDING POLICY IN CONTEXT OF THEORIES OF STATE*

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Concept of Public Policy
- 3.3 Pluralist Theory of State and Policy
- 3.4 Elite-Mass Theory of State and Policy
- 3.5 Marxist Perspective of State and Policy
- 3.6 Globalist Theory and National Policy Agenda
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Glossary
- 3.9 References
- 3.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of public policy;
- Explain the theories of State with regard to public policy;
- Describe the terms 'Marxism', 'Pluralism' and 'Elitism'; and
- Examine the globalist perspective of the policy process.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Making of public policies is a prime function of the State (presently there are 193 member States in the United Nations, engaged in making varied policies). On public policies depends the governance of the entire polity. How does the State make policies that work for the welfare of people and how can these policies be made better by the State are big questions that need to be addressed. It is argued that public policies would be better, if only different people exercise more influence on policy process. The policy process is a complex political process in which there are many actors: politicians, pressure groups, civil servants, academic and professional experts, journalists and even sometimes those who see themselves as the passive recipients of policy (common citizens).

Policy process can be best understood in the context of the State. In order to have a good understanding of policy, we need to explain the place of public policy in the realm of State theories. This Unit will discuss the concept of policy with

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regard to Pluralist, Elitist and Marxist theories of State. The study of the policy process is essentially the study of the exercise of power by the State in the making of policy.

3.2 CONCEPT OF PUBLIC POLICY

Meaning of Public Policy

It means different things in different contexts. There are many actors involved in public policy. Policy can be written or unwritten, but it is the force behind State's process to achieve the desired goals. Let us see what it actually means.

The Chambers Dictionary has defined 'policy' as "a course of action, especially one based on some declared and respected principle". This definition looks at policy as something more than a decision. Unfortunately, the policy itself is something which takes different forms. There is a thrust to designate policy as the "outputs" of the political system and in a lesser degree to define public policy as "more or less interdependent policies dealing with many different activities". Dror (1968), one of the foremost advocates for the development of policy sciences, has defined policies as "general directives on the main lines of action to be followed".

David Easton (1965) has defined public policy as "the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society". Public policies are formulated by what Easton calls the "authorities" in a political system, namely, "elders, permanent chief executives, legislators, judges, administrators, councillors, monarchs, and the like". According to him, these are the persons who "engage in the daily affairs of a political system", and are "recognised by most members of the system as having responsibility for these matters", and take actions that are "accepted as binding most of the time by most of the members so long as they act within the limits of their roles".

Birkland (2011) has discerned the following key attributes of public policy:

- (i) "Policy is made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention.
- (ii) Policy is made on behalf of the 'Public'.
- (iii) Policy is oriented towards a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem.
- (iv) Policy is ultimately made by government, even if the ideas come from outside; government or through the interaction of governmental and non-governmental actors.
- (v) Policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors, who have different interpretations of problems, solutions, and their own motivations.
- (vi) Policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do".

In view of Thomas Dye (1978), "public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do". B.C. Smith (1976) has suggested that "the concept of policy denotes....deliberate choice of 'action' or inaction, rather than the effects of interrelating forces". He has emphasised 'inaction' as well as action and reminds

us that “attention should not focus exclusively on decisions, which produce change, but must also be sensitive to those which resist change and are difficult to observe because they are not represented in the policy-making process by legislative enactment”.

Taken as a whole, policy may be defined as a *purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives*. It should be added here that public policies are the policies adopted by government, but implemented by both government officials and private actors. Ultimately, public policy is about people; their values and needs.

Public Policy in Context of State

When we talk of public policy in context of the State, *two* dimensions have an important role to play in the political process: (i) politics involving conflict, power and ideology; (ii) administration, involving analysis, organisation and methods. It must be recognised that the power flows from the State (government in action). When applied to the acts of governments in backing up their policy decisions with the effective use of sanctions, it is commonly referred to as ‘State power’. Power conveys the notion of a capacity to inflict penalties through coercion of a kind usually reserved by the State itself. On the other hand, influence conveys the notion of inducement and persuasion (Wootton, 1970). Thus, the State has the legitimacy of power in public policymaking. This, however, takes us into *two* difficulties- one about the nature of the State, the other about the role of the State as a provider of policies.

Max Weber (1947) has defined ‘State’ as: i) “an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, and ii) claiming binding authority....over all actions taking place in the area of its jurisdiction”. It can be identified in terms of both the institutions that make it up and the functions these institutions perform. State institutions include legislative bodies, executive bodies, including governmental bureaux and departments of State, and judicial bodies with responsibility for enforcing and, through their decisions, developing the law. State institutions are located at various levels-national, regional and local.

But in addition to these, there are also inter-and supra-State institutions which act, to some degree, as superordinate States or larger umbrella States. These include both international organisations, the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the World Health Organisation, the World Bank, etc., which may seek to impose policies on Nation States – and supra-national institutions like the European Union, which operate quite specifically as superordinate law makers. The increasing importance of supra-State bodies and from changes within the Nation State (sometimes known as the ‘hollowing out’ of State). The discussion here relates to specifying a variety of theories of State, which may help us to understand the study of the policy process.

3.3 PLURALIST THEORY OF STATE AND POLICY

Pluralist theory/approach of State assumes that public policy is ultimately the outcome of a free competition between ideas and interests. According to Robert Dahl, who represented such views in his text, ‘*Who Governs*’ (1961), pluralist accounts for democracy in which power was seen as widely distributed and the political system, so organised that the policy was essentially driven by public demands and opinions.

However, this view of liberal democracy was challenged by Schattschneider (1960), when he argued: “it is not necessarily true that people with the greatest needs participate in politics most actively- whosoever decides what the game is about, will also decide who gets in the game”. Thus, his remarks show that there was a liar, which operated in favour of some and against others. Lindblom, originally a pluralist, has in the *Politics and Markets* (1977), argued that policymaking was constrained by the workings of capitalism, specifically, the interests of business and the market. Dahl (1982) too was also to modify his view in this direction. Decision-making, he concluded, is not a neutral affair; the demands of business interests predominate over the demands of other groups.

Pluralist approaches have also developed new models, which aim to take into account the evolution of policymaking processes and structures, which have taken place in recent decades. One of the most important of these is the notion of policy networks and communities. Smith (1976) has argued that the idea of policy networks/communities is, however, multi-theoretic and may be applied by approaches other than that of Pluralism. In the context of new developments, a Pluralist model might provide a common framework within which a multiplier approach to public policy could develop. It is certainly a new direction.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What do you understand by the term ‘public policy’?

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2. Discuss the impact of Pluralist approach of State.

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3.4 ELITE-MASS THEORY OF STATE AND POLICY

Much of the current literature on political power adopts the Elite-Mass theory perspective. Elite-Mass model suggests that power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites. Policymaking, according to the Elite-Mass theory, is a process, which works to the advantage of these elites. The theory argues that in the society, there are those at the top ‘with power’ and at the bottom, the masses ‘without power’. The theory also holds that the elite, whose members share common values and have more money, education and power, governs the masses, who are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy. In an environment, which is characterised

by apathy and information distortion, elites influence mass opinion on policy issues more than masses influence elite opinion. Policy flows downward from the elite to the masses.

Thus, one way to study policymaking is through the Power approach. This approach views decision-making as something, which is influenced and determined by the structure of power: class, interest groups, bureaucratic and political arrangements and so on. According to Birkland, policymaking under the influence of elites is “dominated by the best educated, wealthiest and most powerful elites”. In the Elitist perspective, public policy is viewed as “the preferences and values of a governing elite” (Cited in Dye and Zeigler, 2000). Public officials and bureaucrats merely implement the policies decided on by the elites.

Although this theory is associated with sociologist C. Wright Mills, it has its origins in the work of Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto. They have argued that, contrary to Karl Marx, Elitism is inevitable and that classless society is a myth. Later, Mosca modified his view and argued that democracy could be viewed as a form of politics in which elites compete for the people’s votes in order to secure legitimacy for the elite rule. Drawing upon Mosca’s ideas, Robert Michels in a study of political parties has argued that there was an ‘iron law of oligarchy’, which operated in organisations (Michels, 1915). Over time, organisational elites tend to generate their own interests and goals, which are different from those of the masses. The decision-making process, according to Dahl and Lindblom (1976) in their revised view, is biased in favour of the powerful, and functions to the disadvantage of the less powerful and less well-resourced.

Propositions of the Elite-Mass Theory

Some of the important propositions of the Elite-Mass theory are as follows:

- (i) In the society, there are those at the top ‘with power’ (elite group) who govern and have the power to decide on public policies, and those at bottom ‘without power’ (the masses) who are governed and do not have power to decide on public policies.
- (ii) Elite members are drawn disproportionately from the higher socio-economic strata of the society. They share common values and have money, education and power than the masses that are apathetic and ill-informed.
- (iii) The bases of elites, who share consensus on the common values of the social system, are the sanctity of private property, limited government and individual liberty.
- (iv) Public policies do not reflect what the masses (the governed class) demand, but rather the preferences and values of the governing elite (the ruling class).
- (v) Elites shape mass opinion on policy issues more than masses shape elite opinion.
- (vi) The Elite-Mass theory recognises the scope of elite-mass conflict.

Critical Evaluation of Elite-Mass Theory

The Elite-Mass approach, like many other approaches to the policy process, is subjected to a lot of criticism. First, decision-making, according to the Elite-

Mass theory, is a process which works to the advantage of elites in whom power is concentrated. This theory holds that public policy does not reflect the demands of the masses so much, as it does the preferences of elites. Therefore, changes in public policy occur as a result of redefinition by elites of their own values and choices. Because elites share a consensus in preserving the social system, changes in the public policy are brought about through reforms (incremental in nature) when events threaten the system.

The stability of the system, therefore, depends on elites sharing in a consensus about basic values underlying the system, and only policy alternatives that fall within the shared consensus will be taken into account. For example, the welfare of the masses may be an important element in the elite decision-making, but the responsibility for the welfare rests on the shoulders of elites rather than masses.

Second, Elitism views the masses to be apathetic and ill-informed about public policy. It is found that elites manipulate mass opinion and sentiments on policy questions more than masses manipulate and influence elite values and opinion. In his study of the hidden dimensions of the elite power and domination, Gaventa (1980) has noted that power is a dimension of politics, as it may involve “locating the power processes behind the social construction of meanings and patterns that serve to get ‘A’ to act and believe in manner in which ‘B’ otherwise might not, to A’s benefit and B’s detriment”.

3.5 MARXIST PERSPECTIVE OF STATE AND POLICY

Karl Marx sought to show how power is exercised in a capitalist society in ways beneath the surface levels of political institutions. For Marx, people who are socially and politically strong ignore the desires of the politically weak and exploit them. Marxists have come to accept a picture of class domination in a society as everlasting. In the view of Marx, State is an instrument of class power. This so-called ‘instrumentalist’ approach has focused on the surface levels of decision/policy-making. Ralph Miliband (1977), for example, has argued that the State in a capitalist society is an instrument of a ruling class, which rules in the interests of that class comprising politicians, civil servants and business and financial elites, who come from the same social class and are educated at the same schools.

But structural critics of this theory, such as Nicos Poulantzas (1973), have disputed this view of the State as an instrument of capitalism, as it fails to take account of *two* factors. *First* is the ‘structural’ power of capitalist (and not the ruling class), which ultimately structures the decision-/policy-making process. And, *second* is the State’s autonomy from the capitalist system (capitalist interests) to make decisions.

This model of the State being autonomous from capitalist interests in a capitalist society, has been widely applied in critical or radical approaches to the study of the policy process. In a sense, this Relative Autonomy model argues that decision-making in capitalist society is more complex than the one in operation under the State as an instrument (Instrumental model). Poulantzas (*op.cit.*), for example, has maintained that the State in a capitalist society is engaged in multifarious activities. The State on the one hand, is involved in a process of maintaining or managing different ‘fractions’. On the other, the State appears as some kind of arbiter or neutral force as to better serve the interests of capital and the capitalist

class. The 'Functionalists' have sought to show how, in order to maintain social order, the State promotes the interests of capital accumulation, and in order to secure legitimacy, the State manages public policy through allocating resources between 'social expenses', 'social investment' and 'social consumption spending' (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987).

This Dual-State model, as maintained by Cawson and Saunders (1983), argues that the State in a capitalist society seeks to structure policy-making to address the policy concerns of the capital at the higher reaches of State decision-making. However, at the lower levels, where legitimacy is of prime concern, the State will permit a more pluralist policy-making style. They argue that decision-making takes place in a corporatist form at the level of central ruling-class (producer) interests and a more pluralist open form, at the level of working-class and middle-class (consumer) interests.

However, Goldsmith and Wolman (1992) have suggested that this model is more appropriate to the UK and Scandinavian circumstances than to the US. In particular, they observe that "Saunders is wrong in assuming that the local level was not concerned with production issues" and that corporatist modes of decision-making do not take place at the local level. The key point is that where Marxists saw an evolutionary process leading towards social crisis, sociologists in the United States or Western Europe saw their own societies as 'progressing', with their institutions adapting in response to evolving social needs.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the Elite-Mass theory.

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2. Describe the impact of Marxist theory of State.

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3.6 GLOBALIST THEORY AND NATIONAL POLICY AGENDA

Globalist theory has developed on a massive scale, and in the process, it has contributed to contemporary policymaking. As has been already mentioned that the country's 'political system' also functions within the 'world system' and the boundaries of the political system are no longer impermeable to outside pressures

and influences. The world has become a single social system as a result of growing ties of interdependence. The point is that there is a new kind of interplay between transnational companies (often called as ‘hollowing out’ of State) and national and world economies. To Giddens (1989), transnational corporations, growing economic integration, and the globalisation of communications and media are major factors that make for Globalism.

Globalisation as a term under Globalism has gained wide attention and recognition. To Albrow (1990), ‘Globalisation’ refers to “all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society”. He further states that “Globalism is one of the forces, which assists in the development of Globalisation”. The implications of the notion of Globalisation are that policy makers must consider agenda formation and problem definition within a global context. The “policy makers in one country seek to emulate the success of colleagues overseas”. In a global environment, it is possible to speak of the convergence of concerns for which global strategies may be formulated. As such in a global context, more and more issues will be structured by larger forces outside the nation’s Constitutional framework of public policymaking. The policy agenda is now becoming part of the global environment.

With Globalisation, there is a greater scope of interaction between a Nation State and other countries. A Nation State has now come to exercise less control on policy agenda than it was in the second half of the twentieth century. From the national perspective, this means that the policy agenda may be global, but the policymaking and implementation remain national.

Thus, there is a new kind of interplay between transnational companies and the national and world economies. Global politics has an added role to play in the determination of national policies, especially of the developing nations. Global issues interact with national issues, which in turn interact with the local level. Globalisation posits that these layers are becoming ever more interactive and permeable and that a new policy is emerging. What we have witnessed, March 2020 onwards, in the case of Covid 19, which is a world-wide pandemic, is a clear case of global policy and national level policy implementation.

Impact of Global Events on National Policy Agenda

It is important for policy-makers at the international level to take account of global issues, when considering the context of policy problems in a national setting. The Globalist theory faces several challenges of policy, such as:

- Environmental despoliation;
- Poverty and population growth;
- HIV/AIDS and Pandemics;
- Drugs and health issues;
- Trade and industry;
- Privatisation;
- Terrorism; and
- Other global issues.

Giddens(*op.cit.*) has identified *three* theories to explain the process of globalisation:

1. Imperialism and neo-imperialism: Globalism as the product of the expansion of capitalism;
2. Dependency: Globalism as uneven development and the domination of the underdeveloped world by the industrialised world;
3. World system: Globalism as the product of the world economy, leading to centralisation around a core, semi-peripheral and peripheral system of relationships.

It may be added that the world is becoming reluctantly internationalist, recognising that diversity of domestic social and economic issues (social welfare, trade, industry, agriculture, health, education, nuclear war, famine, etc.) are items on the national political agenda, which are tied up with global issues. This has been accompanied by growing regionalisation and internationalisation. The global environment forms much of the context of national policy-making.

In conclusion, it is largely felt that in developing as well as developed democratic countries, policy agendas are driven by global forces. Problems arise in a context in which economic and social conditions play a major role in shaping opinions and political strategies. For example, the economies that got stuck with the planning model experienced slow growth, stagnation, or worse. The collapse of the socialist economies was but “the final nail in the planning coffin”. Since the 1990s, countries around the world have been actively engaged in privatising public enterprises.

But the power of decision or policy and the capacity to implement it remains largely within the Nation States. There is therefore a tension between the spill over, which may be said to be taking place at the global level and the reality of the maintenance of national sovereignty. Against the pressure of global agendas, the fact remains that at time of crisis “governments are prone to withdraw from intergovernmental co-operations and supranational policy-making rather than move positively into closer collaboration”.

Common issues and problems within a global context may be increasingly identified in international terms, but decision-making and implementation still remain largely within Nation States. The global socio-economic framework interacts with the political processes and policies pursued by governments of Nation States. The success of Nation States in policy performance will diverge, notwithstanding the convergence of the global policy concerns. At some places, there appears to be a decline of globalisation worldwide. The UK’s withdrawal from the European Union signals that there is something with the ‘globalisation’ era that some states are not able to connect with. Now it is felt that most countries want to remain independent in their monetary, fiscal, immigration and labour policies.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Bring out impact of Globalist theory on State.

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3.7 CONCLUSION

A theory should be able to simplify and clarify our thinking about politics and public policy. It should offer explanations for public policy. Certainly, the usefulness of a theory lies in its ability to simplify political life or add order to it, so that we can understand the processes we encounter in the real world. In brief, the theory should communicate what is relevant about the worth of a public policy. The concepts ingrained in a theory make policy decipherable. We know what concept or approach is influencing policy.

There is a Feminist approach that influences public policy too. It propagates equality of treatment for women at work place and everywhere. It challenges male domination in public and private spheres. The 'gender' dimension of policy is the main focus.

If the government wants to go in for State protection of labour interests, we know the Marxist approach has an influence; and when Rights and Feminist approaches have their way, we understand why the wages for men and women have been made equal, or why laws against domestic violence have been made stricter. Likewise, when stakeholders like NGOs and civil society are given credence, we understand the influence of Pluralist approach on policy. The Elitist perspective becomes clear when policies for the private sector are made to favour certain businesses and corporate power houses.

A variety of State theories discussed in this Unit suggest that there is a need to look at the challenges posed by theoretical discourse, which are used to support distribution of power or to enhance the power of specific interests. Each theoretical framework posits a different set of issues for the State. It needs to be conceded that actions take place within the structures, and are influenced by those structures, but in actual practice, what happens is a complex situation.

3.8 GLOSSARY

Environmental Despoliation: An act of environmental plundering. Destroying environmental resources to a substantial extent and many a time, beyond repair.

Feminism: The belief that women should have the same rights as the men. Equality of sexes is central to Feminism for norms and values for work places, as well as home spaces.

Globalisation: Globalisation refers to all those processes (economic, political socio-cultural) by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society.

Hollowing Out of State: It denotes that the State is slowly losing many of its predominant functions. In a web of associations within a community wielding legalistic power; the State has been rendered as one of the associations. It has been taken over by private bodies or associations or partnerships between the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. The term was coined by Raw Rhodes in 1994.

Pandemic: A disease or a health condition prevalent throughout the country or the globe. Recent outbreak of COVID19 (Coronavirus disease) has spread over the entire world and has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation or WHO.

Pluralism: It is a 'representative democracy' in which a political executive responsible to a legislature is seen as making policy on behalf of the people.

Relative Autonomy of Capitalist State: This concept is based on Marxist distinction between the dominant class and governing caste. The holders of State power are not normally the same people as those who control the means of production. The State therefore has the potential to operate autonomously of the ruling class.

Superordinate: Something that represents a superior order or category within a system of classification.

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3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- Policy is a course of action.
- It is an authoritative allocation of values.
- It is what governments choose to do or not do.
- It is interpreted and implemented by multiple stakeholders.

2. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- In pluralism, power is widely distributed.
- It is essentially driven by public demands and opinions.
- Business interests conflict with public interests in pluralism.
- In Pluralist framework, multiplier approach to public policy could develop.

Check Your Progress 2

1. **Your answer should include the following points:**

- In Elite-Mass model, powers are concentrated in a few elites.
- Power flows downwards, from elites to masses.

- Elites compete for people's votes and legitimacy.
- Elite members are drawn from higher social and economic strata of society.
- Public policies reflect what governing classes desire.
- Policies are not connected with demands of the masses.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Marxist perspective shows how power is exercised in a society away from political institutions.
- State is involved in maintaining resolution amongst conflicting fractions.
- State promotes the interests of capital accumulation to obtain legitimacy.
- State manages public policy by allocating resources between social expenses, social investment, and social consumption spending.
- Relative autonomists in Marxists oppose the view of State as an instrument of ruling class.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- The Globalist theory helps in determining the importance of contemporary policy making.
- Transnational corporations, economic integration, communication and media make for globalism.
- Policy makers are compelled to consider agenda formation and problem definition within a global context.
- Policy agenda is a part of global environment.
- Global politics has a role to play in determination of national policies.

UNIT 4 MODELS OF POLICYMAKING*

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Eastonian Model of Policy Analysis
- 4.3 Vickers' Analysis of Policymaking
- 4.4 Group Theory of Policy Process
- 4.5 Rational Approach to Policymaking
- 4.6 Lindblom's Analytical Policymaking Model
- 4.7 Dror's Normative Optimum Model
- 4.8 Political Process Approach
- 4.9 Conclusion
- 4.10 Glossary
- 4.11 References
- 4.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the importance of models in policymaking;
- Describe the contributions of Easton, Vickers, Simon, Lindblom, Dror and Lynn to the Policy approach;
- Elucidate the Political approach to public policy; and
- Examine the limitations of the Rational policymaking model.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is significant to understand how policies are shaped by social, political, economic and other institutional factors. In order to understand a policy, it is necessary to focus on the context of policy and analysis of the policy process. We have to be concerned not only with the knowledge of the policy process, but also the knowledge about the formation and implementation of public policy. With a view to understanding and analysing the complexity of issues involved in public policy, we construct models, maps or think in terms of approaches. These models not only simplify and clarify our thinking on factors shaping public policy, but also offer explanations for its causes and consequences. We refer to the already existing models/approaches/ theories to decipher the policy process.

A model is an abstraction or representation of some aspects of a proposed structure, on a smaller scale than the original. An approach is a way of looking at a concept

*Contributed by Dr. R.K. Sapru, Professor of Public Administration (Retired), Panjab University, Chandigarh.

or idea through a specific methodology. A theory on the other hand, is a supposition; a system of ideas and concepts to explain a situation, issue or phenomenon. This Unit would try to explain the nature of policy by going into different models or theories; namely David Easton's Systems model, Yehezkel Dror's Policy Science approach, Herbert Simon's Rational Decision-making theory, Geoffrey Vickers' Policy Analysis model, and Charles Lindblom's Incremental approach. Though there is a difference of degree if not of kind between a model, approach and theory, we will not go into it in this Unit. We would, in fact, discuss the nature of policy process using these terms interchangeably.

4.2 EASTONIAN MODEL OF POLICY ANALYSIS

In contrast to institutional approaches, which looked at politics purely in terms of executive, legislature and Constitution, David Easton's little 'Black Box' offered the prospect of analysis in favour of the policy 'process'. As a whole, Easton's work on political analysis, is regarded as a significant contribution to the development of the Policy approach.

Characteristics of the Eastonian Model

In the Eastonian model, the policymaking process is regarded as a 'Black Box', which converts the demands (inputs) of the society into policies (outputs). Easton in his *Analysis of Political System* has argued that the political system is that part of the society, which is engaged in the 'authoritative allocation of values' (See Figure 1). The main characteristics and elements of the Eastonian model of policy analysis are briefly discussed here:

- **Inputs:** Inputs are viewed as the physical, social, economic and political products of the environment, which are received into the political system in the form of demands, supports and apathy.

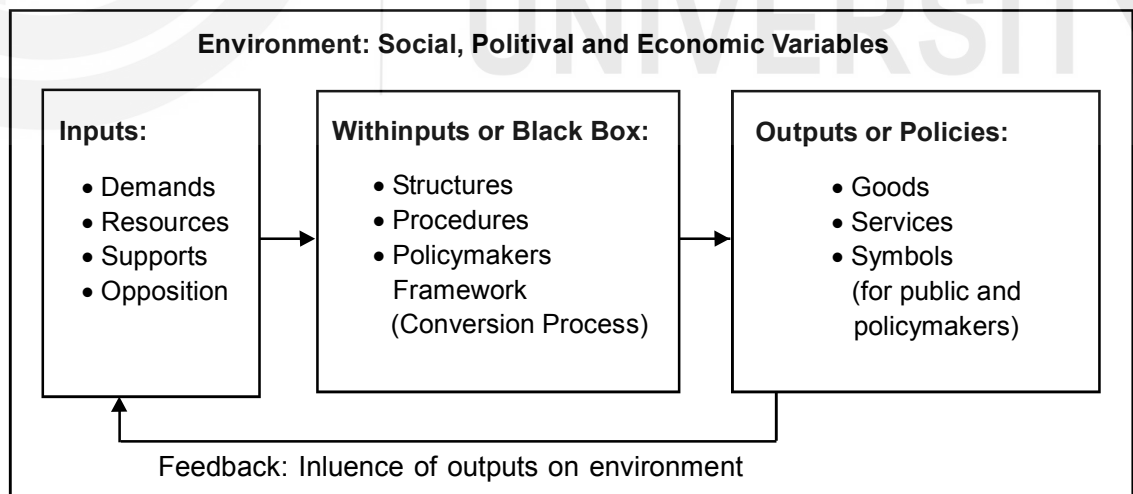


Figure 1: Eastonian 'Black Box' Model

Source: Adapted from Easton (1965)

- **Demands:** These arise from the public/interest groups and form part of the inputs. Demands are the claims made on the political system; by individuals and groups to effect public policy. The flow from the environment mediated through input channels (parties, media, interest groups) becomes the basis of demands.

- **Environment:** It is a condition or event defined as external to the boundaries of the political system. It comprises physical, social, economic and political variables in the polity. These variables influence the internal and external environment of the political system.
- **Supports:** These consist of rules, laws and customs that provide a basis for the existence of a political community and the authorities. Supports are rendered when individuals or groups accept the decisions or laws (such as obeying laws, paying taxes or even respecting the national flag). They constitute the psychological and symbolic or material inputs of a political system.
- **Withinputs:** The 'Black Box' or the 'conversion process' or 'withinputs' comprising structures, procedures and policymakers' psycho-social framework, are all involved in translating inputs into policy outputs. In the political scientists' version, it is the 'Black Box' crowded with personnel and institutions that can be called decision-makers.
- **Outputs:** These are the goods, services and symbols for public and other policymakers. These are the authoritative value allocations of the political system, and these allocations constitute public policy or policies. The Systems theory portrays public policy as an 'output of the political system'. Policy outputs may generate new demands and new supports, or withdrawal of the old supports for the system.
- **Feedback:** Such mechanisms are the means by which an organisation collects and analyses data with regard to the impact of its outputs. Feedback plays an important role in generating suitable environment for future policy. The concept of feedback indicates that public policies may have a modifying effect on the environment and the demands generated therein, and may also have an effect upon the character of the political system.

Thus, the main features of the 'Black Box' model is that of viewing the policy process in terms of received i) inputs in the form of flows from the ii) environment, mediated through iii) input channels (individuals, pressure groups, political parties) iv) demands within the political system (withinputs), their v) conversion into policy outputs (laws, services, etc.), and (vi) outcomes (effects of policy). This framework, which has dominated the field from 1960s onwards is derived from the combination of the Stages Approach. The textbooks which talked about the 'normal science' of policy analysis were majorly derived from the fusion of Lasswell, Simon and Easton's Approaches to decision/policy-making.

Critical Appraisal of Systems Approach

Easton and the other Systems theorists have argued that the public policy process as the product of a system is influenced by the environment in which it operates. The Systems model is a useful aid in understanding the policymaking process. Thomas Dye 1980 has suggested that the value of the Systems model to policy analysis lies in the questions that it poses. These questions are:

- What are the significant dimensions of the environment that generate demands upon the political system?
- What are the significant characteristics of the political system that enable it to transform demands into public policy and to preserve itself over time?

- How do environmental inputs affect the character of the political system?
- How do characteristics of the political system affect the content of public policy?
- How do environmental inputs affect the content of public policy?
- How does public policy affect, through feedback, the environment and the character of the political system?

The major criticism of the Eastonian model is that it treats the political system as a 'Black Box' (in which the actual workings of that system are unclear). The traditional Input-Output model ignores the fragmentary nature of the 'Black Box'. The missing ingredients in the Systems approach are the 'power, personnel, and institutions' of policymaking. The model is accused of employing the value-laden techniques of Welfare Economics, which are based on the maximisation of a clearly defined 'social welfare function'. Broadly, policy analysis involves the application of models of Welfare Economics in improving the rationality of decision-making.

This Systems model also ignores an important element of the policy process, namely, that the policymakers (including institutions) have also a considerable potential in influencing the environment within which they operate. The traditional input-output model would see the decision-making system as 'facilitative' and value-free, rather than 'causative' that is, as a completely neutral structure. In other words, structure variations in the systems are found to be having no direct causal effect on public policy.

Further, it is argued that this Input-Output model or Systems model appears to be too simplistic to serve as a useful aid in understanding the policymaking process. In a developing polity such as India, both the political and bureaucratic elite influence mass opinion more than the masses shape the leadership's views. Easton's work has made a vital contribution to the establishment of a Policy approach, in that it has provided a model of that political system, which has greatly influenced the way in which the emerging study of policy in the 1960s began to conceptualise the relationship between policymaking, policy outputs and its environment (Parsons, 1995).

4.3 VICKERS' ANALYSIS OF POLICYMAKING

Geoffrey Vickers, a British theorist, has been also regarded as a major contributor to the development of models for analysing the policymaking process. His work *The Art of Judgement* is important, but has had far less influence on the way in which the Policy approach evolved. Vickers' Model addresses policymaking as a complex activity in which values and reality judgements are modified and adjusted, and in which problems are never solved in the way goal-setting conceptualisations suggest. His work stresses the importance of analysing the interaction of value judgements and reality judgments, and represents syntheses of psychological, cybernetic and political ideas. Much of his work is devoted to the analysis of judgement in the terms of what is called an 'appreciative behaviour'. He believed that 'social institutions are best analysed in terms of systems and his published work...made far-reaching contributions to systems thinking in its application to human society' (Johnson, 1990).

Vickers has argued that the study of human regulations is an activity, which must be based on the notion that 'the mental activity and the social process are indivisible'. His contribution to the study of human decision-making covered the same kind of ground as done by Simon, which we will study in this Unit, especially in terms of the limitations on human rationality and cognition. Vickers's concise observation is that human systems are different from mechanical systems because they are informed by appreciation and the 'art of judgment'. The world is not a set of data, but a 'construct, a mental artefact, a collective work of art'. He has further argued that facts are judgments about reality and in themselves carry no meaning without value judgments.

In analysing the decision-making process, Vickers' framework emphasises the importance of understanding the way in which 'appreciation' constructs 'reality' and 'value' and sets the context, within which judgments are made about action in the light of the reality and value judgements. Action judgments are judgements about what to do, how to do, when to do and with what and by whom are to be understood as the outcome of an interaction between the appreciation of reality and value.

Judgements as to the outcomes of actions are must from Vickers' perspective, taking into account how unobjective 'objective' tests and criteria actually are. Since 'the appraisal of judgement is itself an act of judgement. In particular, judgements are logically incapable of being validated by any objective test. They can only be approved as right or condemned as wrong by the exercise of another value judgement. From this argument, it is clear that Vickers departs significantly from the notion that decision-making is about 'goal setting' or evaluating decision-making in terms of how goals have been met.

Vickers' Framework for Policy Analysis

To facilitate the making of judgements, Vickers' methods involve *four* analytical contexts or dimensions: mental, institutional, situational and ecological:

- **Mental Activity:** In the first place, the first task is to map the appreciative system involved in the decision. The analysis of the process involves understanding of how the network frames the 'mental' artefact, which constitutes an important dimension of the policymaker. The next aspect of the analysis of the appreciative system is a consideration of its key skills, namely (a) predication, (b) valuation and (c) innovation.
- **Institutional Setting:** This phase involves the examination of the institutional setting of the appreciative system.
- **Situational Context:** The next phase is the placement of decisions in their situational context, that is, in the context of ideas and events.
- **Ecological Context:** The final Vickerian analysis may be viewed as a process of placing the policy decision in a wider network of communication/ecological context. These four contexts or dimensions may be used in actual case study materials.

In brief, the Vickers' framework may be seen as a process of examining policy decisions in terms of focusing first on the psychological dimension of policy,

and concluding with placing the decision in the ecological context (Vickers, 1965: 173).

Prescriptions for Improving Policymaking Process

With a view to improve the policymaking process, Vickers has prescribed certain suggestions, including:

- The *first* task in this sphere would be to develop the skills and art of judgement, while recognising that the capacities of individuals to handle, arrange and combine information vary, as do moral qualities, courage and endurance. Organisations should be schools in which all are learners and teachers.
- *Second*, Vickers says that improvements in policymaking analysis can be brought about by the development of society, which can ‘learn not primarily new ways of responding...but new ways of appreciating a situation, which is new and new through our own making’.
- *Third*, Vickers has stressed on the use of systems analysis to improve the capacity of organisations and society as a whole to learn. Here, Vickers’ work is seen as contributing to the development of a ‘soft systems’ approach.
- *Finally*, as Vickers’ model addresses policymaking as a complex multi-valued activity, he has stressed on the need to recognise that policy decisions involve multiple values. Vickers’ approach in this respect is seen as being closer to the approaches of Lasswell and Lindblom than to other Systems models. Vickers’ work *The Art of Judgement* (1965) still remains a seminal contribution to the study of policy and decision. With the rise in interest in the role of values in the policy process, his work could receive wide recognition for the study of public policy in the 21st century.

As we have already read about the Elite-Mass theory in our previous Unit, we will not go over it again in this Unit. Suffice is it to say that it is an important theory of policymaking. Likewise is the Marxist perspective of policymaking or State, which has also been covered in the last Unit.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Critically elaborate the ‘Black Box’ model to policymaking process as proposed by Easton.

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4.4 GROUP THEORY OF POLICY PROCESS

Groups have long been a focus of study as political activity. Policymakers are viewed as constantly responding to group pressures. Individuals in a group sharing common interests often bond together formally or informally to pressurise the government for accepting their demands. An interest group becomes political if and when it makes a claim through or upon any of the institutions of government. Individuals are important in politics when they act as part of the group interests. In this way, a group becomes the essential bridge between the individual and the government. Politics is really the struggle among groups to influence public policy.

Group theory begins with the proposition that interaction among groups is the main staple of politics. For the ordinary citizen, the pressure group is certainly an important channel of influence and power. For the most part, a group interest seeks to influence the policy decision of the government. The group influence and power are dominant features of all democratic countries. Politics is indeed the struggle of power among different groups, although some are more likely than others to be concerned with political power. However, passive members in a group fail to resist conformity imposed by more assertive members.

Critical Observations

It is observed that Group theory has been applied to situations in which a policy or decision is made by a small group, which develops a strong commitment to a certain line of thought. The evidence provided by research in Group theory models is quite mixed. There is the general notion that groups can distort decision-making. Group theory attempts to describe all political activities in terms of the group struggle and policymakers are viewed as constantly responding to demands of the influential groups. However, it has been observed that there are evidences of illusions of vulnerability and pressures on dissenters to conform, as well as distortion of information. Thus, the scientific and analytical status of the study is still not very clear.

4.5 RATIONAL APPROACH TO POLICYMAKING

Rational Choice theory is a family of theories rather than a single theory that has challenged orthodox accounts of policymaking across a range of different contexts. It is best characterised as an approach to understanding the dynamics of public policy. A set of common building blocks that provide the foundation for the Rationalist approaches is briefly discussed in this section.

The idea of 'rationality' has been the key factor in the study of policy or decision-making in the post-Second World War era. The following *two* sources are mainly responsible for this Rational approach:

- The idea of ‘economic rationality’, as it grew in economic theory.
- The idea of ‘bureaucratic rationality’, as formulated by sociological theories of organisation.

To begin with, rationality, as it has been applied in public policies, has its roots in the construction of ‘economic man’, which is conceptualised in terms of ‘calculating self-interested individual’. The Weberian model (formulated by Max Weber, a German sociologist) of the rational imperative in decision-making constitutes the starting point for the analysis of rationality in public policy. The rationality precept emphasises that policymaking is making a choice among policy alternatives on rational grounds. Rational policymaking is ‘to choose the one best option’.

Thomas Dye (1980) has equated rationality with efficiency. ‘A policy is rational when the difference between the values it achieves and the values it sacrifices is positive and greater than any other policy alternative’. He has further stated that rationalism involves the calculation of all social, political, and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy...’.

Modern governments have come to increasingly expect that their administrative organisations and technical and expert bodies will provide the analytical capabilities necessary for the planning of public policies. Rationality is employed in the analysis of government since all organisations concerned directly or indirectly with government – NGOs, parties, legislatures and particularly executive departments – attempt to utilize the resources at their disposal to perform or achieve specific tasks or goals. They may be more or less successful in relating means to ends as their rationality may be limited.

Irrationality, to Sutherland (1994), has become a major fact of public and private decision-making. As such, its result can be disastrous. Irrationality can be caused by: i) the limitations of the capacity of the human brain to handle complexity of issues, ii) failure to make use of new tools including computers for rational analysis, iii) distorting reality to fit in with what is comfortable, and iv) lack of knowledge and capability to think. The rationalist paradigm is concerned with the nature of public goods and services, the relationships between formal decision-making structures and human propensities for action and the broad implications of technological innovation.

Requirements and Stages for Rational Analysis

Thomas Dye (*op.cit.*) has prescribed certain requirements to policymakers in selecting a rational policy. In his view, the policymakers must:

- Know all the society’s value preferences and their relative weights;
- Understand all the policy alternatives available;
- Know all the consequences at each policy alternative;
- Calculate the ratio of benefits to costs for each policy alternative, and
- Select the most efficient policy alternative.

Rational policymaking is a very difficult exercise. It requires capacity to foresee the consequences of alternative policies, and the intelligence to calculate correctly the ratio of costs to benefits. In rational decision-making, instead of making an

‘ideal’ decision as Simon (1957) has argued, policymakers will break the complexity of problems into small and understandable parts, choose the one option that is best and satisfactory and avoid unnecessary uncertainty. This means that ‘although individuals are intensely rational, their rationality is bounded by limited cognitive and emotional capacities’. We will discuss Simon’s approach in a while to better understand the Rational Choice approach.

Once a select policy decision is implemented, the rational policymakers are required to monitor this implementation systematically to find out the accuracy of the expectations and estimates. If necessary, the policymaker will complete the gap in the policy or give it up altogether. This may be called the feedback stage of rational policymaking. If decision-makers make use of feedback to monitor and adapt to policy, the policy system becomes self-correcting or cybernetic.

Assumptions of Individuals as Rational Actors

One of the assumptions of rationality is that individuals in the policy process are rational. Rational individuals are characterised as instrumental actors pursuing courses of action ‘not for their own sake, but only insofar they secure typically desired private ends’. In this sense, rational individuals are those actors who choose the feasible course of action or policy option, which is most likely to maximize their own utility. Rationality thus emerges from an actor’s capacity to calculate costs and benefits to available policy options, and to select the course of action that best maximizes his own utility. Policy actors are constructed as egotistical, self-regarding instrumental actors, ‘choosing how to act on the basis of the consequences for their personal welfare (or that of their immediate family)’.

Second, if the assumption of rationality is to hold, individual rational actors must possess preferences that are ranked-ordered and consistent in that they are both transitive and stable over time. This means that individuals are able to establish a hierarchy of preferences and a particular consistency of preferences that are taken to be both stable over time.

Premises of Methodological Individualism

Rational choice builds its explanations of policy outcomes on the actions of individual actors who constitute social structures. These structures are thereby conceptualised through the intentional behaviour of individual actors. Structures give rise to institutions, which become ‘instrumental products used by individuals to maximize their respective utilities’. As such, rational choice stresses on the production of causal mechanisms, underplayed in structural and functionalist explanations.

Deductive Reasoning

Most approaches to policy analysis, it has been argued, simply induce generalised propositions about political behaviour from systematic observations of what people actually do, which more or less says that the world is as it is because that’s how it is. The value of deductive reasoning in rational choice accounts lies in the fact that the explanation of political outcomes derives from motivational assumptions defined in another realm, that of the individual.

In sum, building blocks of mainstream that is Rational Choice theory offers a shortcut, which makes possible a naturalist science of the political, such as is

capable of generating through a process of deduction, testable and predictable hypotheses. The complexity of both individual motivation and the decision-making process is thus necessarily mobilised out of rational choice accounts in the quest for universal explanation of the public policy.

Limitations of Rational Choice

When considering in purely abstract terms, few would deny the need for rationality in policymaking. Yet practically, there are many obstacles to the realisation of the degree of rationality. Analysis of rationality in public policy is a difficult exercise. Some of the constraints to rational policy decision-making are briefly discussed below:

- ***Difficulty in Specification of Goals***

First, the clear specification of objectives required by pure rationality is very, very difficult in politics, where goals are determined by the interaction of many different political structures. There is the problem of goal consensus. The expectation that a rational policy will emerge is small. By the time the policymaker recommends a rational policy, the problem in question becomes so complex that rational prescriptions become decisions, which are made on the basis of societal goals.

Moreover, objectives are difficult to define and even more difficult to pursue, when more than one administrative agency is involved. For example, sharing of functions between the central and state governments probably produces the problem of expenditure and control.

- ***Difficulty in Securing Optimisation***

A rational policy is expected to produce optimal results. But in reality, it does not always do so. The public interest is taken to be more important than being merely the sum of individual interests in the polity.

- ***Barrier to Rational Decision-making***

As already stated, policymakers are not motivated to take decisions on the basis of societal goals, but instead try to maximise their own rewards, such as power, status and money. *Second*, the time for a thorough analysis of impending legislation may be short. In an emergency situation, action is sought immediately. But the time is too short for careful analysis. In routine policymaking also, the sheer number of potential issues limits the time available to analyse any one issue carefully.

It is also very difficult for the decision-makers to set out all policy choices and alternatives with the probabilities of their consequent outputs. Choices are also often arbitrary. This is because the decision-maker's information about the environmental context is at best an approximation to the real environment.

- ***Dilemma of Political Feasibility***

Politicians usually are faced with the problem of searching a feasible policy. The dilemma of political feasibility concerns itself with what is possible. By political feasibility is meant 'the probability that, however rational and desirable, a policy option would actually be adopted and implemented by the political system'.

Politicians too often resolve the dilemma of political feasibility by avoidance of conflict. Uncertainty about the consequences of different policy alternatives may force politicians to stick to previous policies. Elected officials do not want to sacrifice their chance of re-election at the cost of rationality, especially respecting the voice of the people. Moreover, the design of public policy is heavily influenced by the past decisions and policies. Postponement of decisions, appointment of commissions and setting up of group studies are common means of reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

- *Difficulty in Comparing Conflicting Benefits and Costs*

It is difficult for the policymakers to calculate the cost-benefit ratios accurately when many diverse social, economic, political and cultural values are at stake. For example, it is not possible to determine how much of the expenditure incurred in restoring a person to health by hospital contributes to the social objectives of minimising pain and disability. Apart from these, policymakers have personal needs, inhibitions and inadequacies, which render them incapable of making rational decisions.

- *Bureaucratic Problems*

Another obstacle to rational policymaking is the environment in which bureaucrats function. Dye (*op.cit.*) has observed, 'the segmented nature of policymaking in large bureaucracies makes it difficult to coordinate decision-making so that the input of all the various specialists is brought to bear at the point of decision. Fragmentation of authority, satisfying goals, conflicting values, limited technology, uncertainty about the possible policy alternatives, and consequences thereof, and other factors limit the capacity of bureaucracies and other public organisations to make rational policies.

Herbert Simon (1916-2001) stands out as a leading contributor to the development of the Rational Policy approach. His work *Administrative Behaviour* is central to the analysis of rationality in decision-making. His concern with human decision-making has centred on the idea of rationality, which is limited but not irrational as 'bounded rationality'. Simon (*op. cit.*) has therefore observed that we should direct our attention to the behavioural manifestations of decision-making and its cognitive limits, rather than to its subconscious dimension.

Simon has identified *four* phases of the decision-making process in the organisation.

- i) *Intelligence Activity*, that is, finding occasions calling for a decision.
- ii) *Design Activity*, that is, identifying, developing and analysing possible courses of action.
- iii) *Choice Activity*, that is, selecting a particular course of action from those available.
- iv) *Evaluating Activity*, that is, evaluating past choices to compare programmed and non-programmed decision-making in the organisation.

Simon has argued that decision-making is a complex exercise involving both technical and political determinants. In the sequence, each stage in itself can be a complex decision-making process. The design stage may call for new intelligence

activities. Problems at one stage can create several sub-problems for the other stages. Decision-making process is not only restricted to taking a decision, but also includes carrying out the decision. Thus, after a policy decision has been taken, the management having to implement it, is faced with a whole new set of problems involving decision-making; and this process continues.

Simon's Rationality Model

Simon has somewhat been critical of the Rational model. He has raised the question-on what basis does the administrators take their decisions? He has disputed the assumptions of total rationality underlying the theories of choice in economics, Game theory and statistical decision-making. For example, the Classical theory of the economists assumed complete rationality with its 'economic man' model. After studying various models of the decision-making man, Simon has proposed a new model of decision-making man, which he refers to as *Satisficing Man*, that is, a decision-maker who, because of the limits on his cognitive and analytical abilities, accepts alternatives that are merely satisfactory or sufficient with regard to his aspiration levels. Goals under this model are satisfactory and achievable.

Simon has rejected the concept of *Economic Man* and other traditional theories, as they are founded on *three* unrealistic assumptions:

- i) The decision-maker is omniscient, that is, he has knowledge about all possible alternatives as well as their future consequences;
- ii) The decision-maker has unlimited computational ability; and
- iii) The decision-maker has the capacity to put in order all possible consequences.

Simon has argued that these models promoted by economists do not really help us to understand the actuality of decision-making. He has also suggested that the economic model cannot sufficiently account for behaviour and, consequently, cannot effectively predict decision-making outcomes. Furthermore, he has argued that the model of *Satisficing Man* is a better description of decision-making behaviour and thus has better predictive power. Goals under Simon's administrative man are not optimal but acceptable.

Simon has asserted that any theory based on these assumptions is fundamentally wrong. He maintains that actual human rationality is neither perfectly rational nor irrational. Rather, it involves bounded rationality or limited rationality. It is in the concept of bounded rationality, that Simon has proposed a model of *Administrative Man* (in place of 'Economic Man'). While the Economic Man maximises (i.e., selects the best course from those available), the *Administrative Man* 'satisfices' – looks for a course of action that is satisfactory or 'good enough'.

Here, it may be mentioned that in taking/formulating decisions, *Satisficing Man* does not examine all possible alternatives; he ignores most of the complex interrelationships of the real world and makes decisions by applying relatively simple rules of thumb. In short, *Satisficing Man* simplifies and satisfices because he operates in an area of 'bounded rationality' with bounds imposed by the limits on available information and his own computational capacity.

In business terms, the *Satisficing Man* does not look for ‘maximum profit’ but ‘adequate profit’; not ‘optimum price’ but ‘fair prices’. He makes his choices taking into account just a few of the factors that he regards as most relevant. This enlarged definition of rationality is consistent with his claim that all human behaviour has a rational component and his insistence that we look beyond the rather narrow bounds of economic rationality in analysing and assessing human behaviour. Given the concept of bounded rationality, decision-maker chooses the decision that is most satisfactory. The concept that he develops to describe rationality, which is limited, but not ‘irrational’ is ‘bounded rationality’.

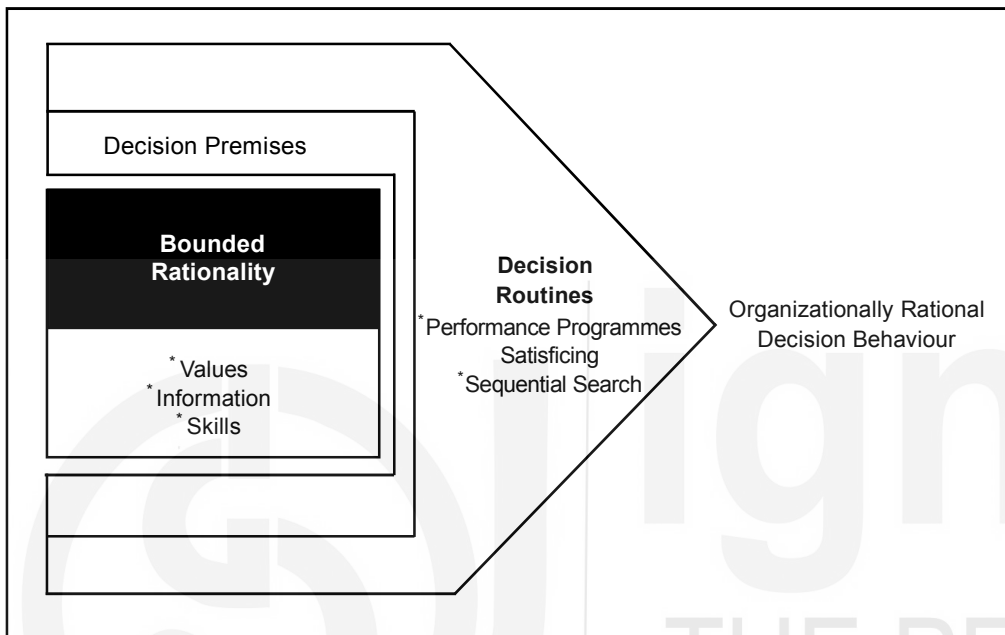


Figure 2: Simon's Bounded Rational Decision-making

Source: Choo, 2006.

According to Simon, human rationality is limited in terms of:

- Incomplete and fragmented nature of knowledge;
- Imperfect valuation of future consequences;
- Attention (decision-makers cannot think about too many issues at the same time);
- Existence of multiple values and the large measure of uncertainty;
- Storage capacity of the human mind;
- Psychological environment;
- Being creatures of habit and routine; and
- Organisational environment that frames the process of choice.

In his work *Models of Man*, Simon (*op.cit.*: 198) has argued, “the capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objective rational behaviour in the real world or even for a reasonable approximation to such objective rationality”.

Given these limitations, it is difficult for decision-making to be rational. For Simon, decision-making involves *two* tasks: theory and practice. At a theoretical

level, decision analysis involves the study and recognition of the limits of human rationality in organisational contexts. In practical terms, it entails designing the organisational environment so that ‘the individual will approach, as close as practical, to rationality in his decisions’.

A Critical Appreciation of Simon’s Model

Simon’s approach to administration in terms of decision-making activity is a valuable contribution to administrative theory, yet it alone is not adequate to explain the totality of an organisation. Decision-making is one of the managerial or administrative activities and is an important variable for organisational effectiveness, but it fails to explain the organisational phenomenon.

Simon has asserted that all human behaviour has a rational component, but the logical implication of that contention is that human behaviour also has a non-rational component. In this way, Simon’s definition of rationality provides little basis for distinguishing between the two. In addition, his model of *Satisficing Man* has limited predictive value. The model, as is acknowledged by Simon, does not provide unique solutions on precise predictions.

Chris Argyris has observed that Simon, by insisting on rationality, has not recognised the role of intuition, tradition and faith in decision-making. Simon’s theory uses satisficing to rationalise incompetence. Likewise, he has not taken into account the material conditions and historical and cultural factors, which largely govern human behaviour.

Charles Lindblom (whose Incremental model we will discuss in our next section) was not content with the Rational Choice model. This Rational Comprehensive or Synoptic model he felt assumed that decision-makers possess full information and could select the best alternative to realise known objectives. The decision process in the Rational model is based on non-partisan and scientific analysis that is not ‘contaminated by ethical issues’ (as in Harold Lasswell’s version of scientific policy analysis). Elevated to the policy process, the decision process is linear, that is, proceeding from problem definition to identification of alternatives, to selection of an alternative, to implementation and, finally, to evaluation.

The rational decision-making fails to describe the messy business that constitutes every day decision- and policymaking in the real world. Specifically, the Synoptic model suffers from *seven* problems caused by its lack of adaptation to:

- People’s limited problem-solving capability,
- Constraints of time and intelligence,
- Costliness of analysis,
- Inability to limited satisfying evaluation techniques,
- Bridging fact and value,
- Analyst’s need for strategic sequences of analysis; and
- Various forms wherein policy problems actually occur.

Broadly, Synoptic model confronts *two* fundamental problems: (i) uncertainty and (ii) multiple decision-makers: *First*, in the context of uncertainty, the decision-maker may be uncertain about objectives, about the alternative means of achieving objectives, about the relationships between alternatives and their consequences and about the consequences of those alternatives.

Second, the involvement of multiple decision-makers causes conflicting interests. The Synoptic model yields little practical guidance of dealing with this type of collective decision environment. The model suggests the formation of public preference functions, but it fails to provide a preference a measure, which helps interpersonal comparison of utilities.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit

1. Describe the features of Group theory of policy.

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2. Examine the role of Simon's Rational Choice model in policy process.

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4.6 LINDBLOM'S ANALYTICAL POLICYMAKING MODEL

Lindblom (*op.cit.*) has attempted to deal with the problems of the Synoptic model by offering concepts of incrementalism and bargaining. The problem of uncertainty is addressed by introduction of simplifications in both the bargaining and the incremental elements of Lindblom's approach. And the problem of collective decision environment, in which individuals share power and have conflicting interests, is dealt within the bargaining (mutual adjustment) portion of his approach.

Lindblom's Incremental Approach

As an alternative to traditional model decision-making, Charles Lindblom has presented the 'Incremental model' of the policymaking process. His article on the *Science of Muddling Through*, published in 1959, gained wide recognition in the development of policy analysis as concerned with the 'process' of making policy.

Lindblom has described 'Incrementalism' as a method of 'successive limited comparison' that would allow the decision-maker to easily revisit earlier decisions and correct them if necessary. In 1958, Lindblom spoke for the first time of 'muddling through'; a label that featured prominently in the *Public Administration Review* in 1959. 'Muddling through', he has argued, is a method or 'science', which advocates policy analysis.

In criticising the Rational model, as advocated by Simon and others, Lindblom rejected the idea that decision-making was essentially about defining goals, selecting alternatives and comparing alternatives. Lindblom wanted to show that rational decision-making was simply 'not workable for complex policy questions'. To Lindblom, constraints of time, intelligence, cost and politics prevented policymakers to identify societal goals and their consequences. He drew the distinction in terms of comprehensive (or root) rationality as advocated by Simon and what he regarded as the operative mode of decision-making as 'rational' activity: successive limited comparisons (or branch) or incremental decision-making.

Two Models of Decision-making

The Incremental approach (branch method) of decision-making involves a process of 'continually building out from the current situation, step-by-step and by small degrees' (See Table 1).

Table 1: Lindblom's Two Models of Decision-making

	Rational Comprehensive (Root) Approach	Successive Limited Comparison (Branch) Approach
(i)	Identification of societal values or goals is necessary to empirical analysis of alternative policies	Selection of values or goals and empirical analysis of the needed action are interlinked
(ii)	Policymaking is approached through means-ends analysis	Means-ends analysis is often inappropriate or limited
(iii)	The test of a 'good policy' is that it is a means to desired ends	The test of a 'good policy' is that various analysts find themselves directly agreeing on a policy
(iv)	Analysis is comprehensive involving every relevant factor	Analysis is limited and important. Possible outcomes and alternatives are neglected
(v)	Reliance on theory	A successive limited comparison reduces dependence on theory

Source: Adapted from Lindblom (1959)

The 'root' approach as favoured by the policy analysts would have to start from 'fundamentals anew each time, building on the past only as experience embodied in a theory, and always prepared to start from the group up'. In contrast, the branch method of decision-making involves a process of 'continually building out from the current situation, step-by-step and by small degrees'. Lindblom has proposed that 'successive limited comparison' is both more relevant and more realistic in condition of 'bounded rationality'.

The Incremental model is a more realistic approach to public decision-making because it provides greater flexibility in coping with time-sensitive policy problems. The following features characterise the decision-making in terms of muddling through:

- *First*, only a few policy alternatives can be considered at one time. It proceeds through a succession of incremental changes. Policymakers accept the legitimacy of existing policies because of the uncertainty about the consequences of new or different policies.
- *Second*, it involves mutual adjustment and negotiation. Agreement is arrived at through a process of adjustment and compromise. Thus, Incrementalism is of significance in reducing political stress.
- *Third*, Incremental model or approach involves the trial-and-error method. Objectives under this approach are set in terms of existing policies and resources. Existing policy serves as the base for change. Change occurs through decisions that have an incremental effect.
- *Fourth*, policy is not made once and for all. Incrementalism is more satisfying from a theoretical point of view, as it scores high on criteria like coherence and simplicity'. The Incremental model is thus a more realistic approach to decision-making.

Advocates of Incrementalism defend the muddling through process as more realistic, as being able to respond to the interests of many groups, as being able to respond to crisis or pressures and as not requiring the massive investments of time, money and effort that logical decisions require. Decisions to implement policy are usually made in small steps, incrementally, rather than through an all-encompassing rationality, which is not practically achievable.

Forms of Incremental Analysis

In 1979, Lindblom published his article 'Still Muddling Through', where he made it clear that the core idea in an Incremental approach is the belief in the skill for solving complex problems, and that his aim has been to suggest 'new and improved' ways of 'muddling through'. To do this, he has drawn a distinction between (i) Incrementalism as a political pattern (step-by-step changes) and (ii) Incrementalism as policy analysis. He has made a case for 'analytical incrementalism' as a method of securing a balance of power in a pluralist polity in which business and large corporations tend to exercise a powerful influence over the policymaking process. Lindblom has argued that there are *three* main forms to Incremental Analysis: (i) Simple Incremental Analysis, (ii) Strategic Incremental Analysis; and (iii) Disjointed Incrementalism. Let us explain these now:

Simple Incremental Analysis

It is a form of analysis in which only those alternative policies, which are marginally different from the existing policy are analysed. According to Lindblom, simple incremental analysis is a useful tool of proceeding to make decisions. 'Focusing on small variations from present policy...makes the most of available knowledge'. Thus, this method allows the decision-maker

to consider and profit from feedback from previous experience and decisions.

Strategic Incremental Analysis

Lindblom has argued that since completeness of analysis is not possible because of many constraints, an analyst should take a middle position: 'informed and thoughtful' use of methods to 'simplify problems' so as to make better choices. These methods include 'Trial and Error Learning; Systems Analysis; Operations Research; Management by Objectives; and Programme Evaluation and Review Technique' (PERT). In using these methods, Lindblom has suggested that analysis should not aim for the 'Synoptic/Root' ideal, but should aspire to deploy them in the development of strategies.

Disjointed Incrementalism

Disjointed Incrementalism is an analytical strategy, which involves 'simplifying and focusing' problems by *six* methods: (a) limitation of analysis for a few familiar alternatives, (b) intertwining values and policy goals with empirical analysis of problems, (c) focusing on ills to be remedied rather than on goals to be sought, (d) trial-and-error learning, (e) analysing a limited number of options and their consequences; and (f) fragmenting of analytical work to many partisan participants in policymaking.

In brief, Incrementalism as a paradigm serves to simplify the decision process in the following ways:

- (i) Limiting the number of alternatives that are considered (only those that are marginally different from the previous practice);
- (ii) Allowing the decision-maker to rely on feedback from previous experience; and
- (iii) Managing risk by making the process serial and remedial (to avoid large errors).

A Critical Appraisal of Lindblom's Approach

Lindblom is a key contributor to the development of policy analysis. Despite this, his work has attracted quite a bit of critical attention. The most general criticism of his work is that Lindblom has presented sweeping generalisations, but has not supported them adequately with empirical evidence. Both Dror and Etzioni have not been convinced that Incremental model is either realistic, normative or satisfactory account of decision-making. To Dror, this model is profoundly conservative and is suitable in those situations, where policy is deemed to be working or is satisfactory, where problems are quite stable over time, and where there is availability of resources. Further, Dror has observed that Incrementalism justifies *status quo* and ignores the possibility of fundamental change. It reinforced the pro-inertia and anti-innovation forces in society. However, Lindblom has surely made his mark. Possibly his most lasting contribution consists of Incrementalism in policymaking and Mutual Adjustment as instruments of social coordination.

4.7 DROR'S NORMATIVE OPTIMUM MODEL

Yehezkel Dror has presented a modified form of the Rational model of policy analysis. He has argued that policy analysis must acknowledge that there is a realm of world, which involves values and personal experiences. He has thus created an approach, which combines core elements of the Rational model with extra-rational factors, which are not included in the pure Rationality model.

In place of Incremental and Rational models, Dror has offered an alternative. His model in main seeks to accept:

- Need for rationality;
- Need for introduction of management techniques for enhancing rationality of decision-making at lower levels;
- Policy Sciences approach for dealing with complex problems requiring decisions at the higher levels; and
- Need to take account of values and irrational elements in decision-making.

Here it may be mentioned that Dror's aim has been to: i) increase the rational content of government, and ii) build into his model the 'extra-rational' dimensions of decision-making. Dror has called it 'Normative Optimatism', which combines core elements of the 'Rational' model (such as the measurement of costs and benefits) with 'extra-rational' factors, which are excluded from the 'pure rationality' model. Dror has argued, 'What is needed is a model, which fits reality, while being directed towards its improvement, and which can be applied to policymaking while motivating a maximum effort to arrive at better policies'. He has thus put forward an alternative to the Rational Policy approach. He has argued that the aim of analysis is to induce decision-makers to expand their frameworks to deal better with a complex world. Thus, in place of a purely Rational model, Dror (1968) has offered a more complex model consisting of some 18 stages:

I. Meta-policymaking Stage:

- i) Processing values;
- ii) Processing reality;
- iii) Processing problems;
- iv) Surveying, processing and developing resources;
- v) Designing, evaluating and redesigning the policymaking system;
- vi) Allocating problems, values and resources;
- vii) Determining policymaking strategy.

II. Policymaking Stage:

- viii) Sub-allocating resources;
- ix) Establishing operational goals, with some order of priority;
- x) Establishing a set of their significant values, with some order or priority;

- xi) Preparing a set of major alternative policies, including some 'good ones';
- xii) Preparing reliable predictions of the significant benefits and costs of the various alternatives;
- xiii) Comparing the predicted benefits and costs of the various alternatives and identifying the 'best' ones;
- xiv) Evaluating the benefits and costs of the 'best alternatives' and deciding whether they are 'good' or not.

III. Post-policymaking Stage:

- xv) Motivating the execution of policy;
- xvi) Executing the policy;
- xvii) Evaluating policymaking after executing the policy;
- xviii) Communication and feedback channels interconnecting all phases.

From the standpoint of analysis, Dror's model has suggested that we should analyse public policy as being made at two interacting sub-phases. Thus, the 18-stages outlined must be seen as a cycle, which has its rational and extra-rational aspects (See Figure 3). His model operates at *two* interacting phases.

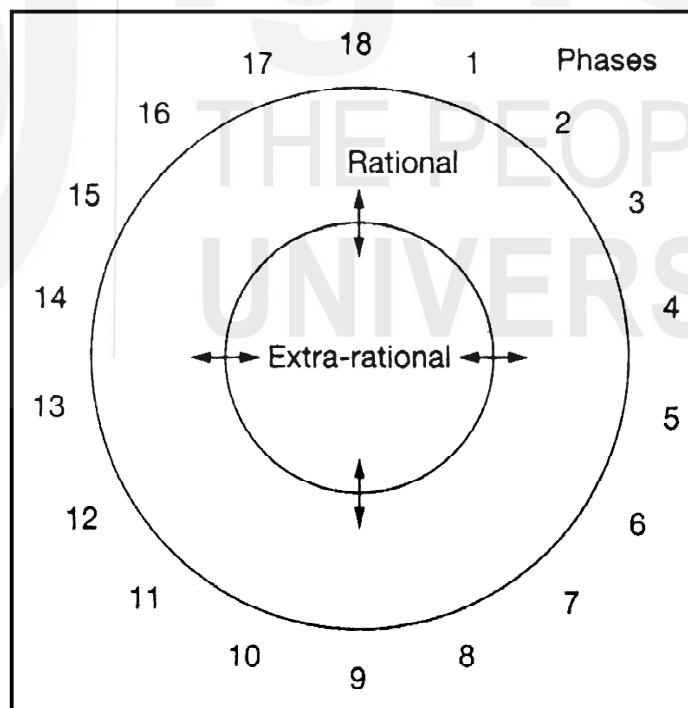


Figure 3 : Dror's Policy Cycle

Source: Adpated from Dror, 1968.

In Phase 1, 'the processing of values', decision-making would involve 'specifying and ordering values to be a general guide for identifying problems and for policy-making'. In Phase 2, the 'rational sub-phase', involves 'gathering information on feasibility and opportunity costs', and at the 'extra-rational sub-phase', decision-making will involve 'value judgement, tacit bargaining and coalition-formation skills'.

In Dror's Normative-Optimum model, which combines both descriptive (in the real world, decision-making is driven by rational and extra-rational influences) and prescriptive (improving both the rational and extra-rational aspects) approach, he envisages a radical reform of the public policymaking process. Thus, Dror's Model envisages decision-makers using rational analysis but also using intuition and feelings. Dror has created an approach, which combines core elements of the Rational model with extra-rational factors.

A Critical Appreciation of Dror's Model

Dror has viewed policymaking as a conscious awareness of choice between *two* main alternatives for steering societies. He is of the concerted view that a long-term strategy to improve public policymaking is necessary for human progress. Dror could be equated with Lasswell. Whereas, Lasswell saw Policy Sciences as having a 'role in enlightenment, emancipation and democratisation', Dror seems to have very little regard for the people in policymaking. Although agreeing with Lindblom that policymaking was a complex exercise, Dror was opposed to Lindblom's Incrementalism position and advocated alternative paradigm of rational analysis.

4.8 POLITICAL PROCESS APPROACH

The study of public policy is generally regarded as an important aspect of politics. Public policies address problems that are public, or more importantly, that some people think should be public. A significant departure from the Rationality model is the Political Process approach espoused in policymaking. This approach has been described by writers such as Laurence Lynn and Peter DeLeon.

In this approach, public policymaking is viewed as a 'political process' instead of a 'technical process'. The approach emphasises the political interaction from which policy is derived. It sees public policy as the output of government. Lynn (1987) has observed that "public policy can be characterised as the output of a diffuse process made up of individuals who interact with each other in small groups in a framework dominated by formal organisations. Those organisations function in a system of political institutions, rules and practices, and are subject to societal and cultural influences".

For example, Lynn has argued that individuals in organisations function under a variety of influences and 'to understand policy-making, it is necessary to understand the behaviour of interactions among these structures: individuals holding particular positions, groups, organisations, the political system, and the wider society of which they are all a part'. Therefore, instead of involving particular methodologies, policymaking in this approach is a matter of adapting to and learning to influence political and organisational environments. The policymaking is constrained by such factors as institutions, interest groups and even 'societal and cultural influences'.

The focus in this Political Process approach is on understanding how particular policies are formed, developed and work in practice. Lynn has argued that policymaking 'encompasses not only goal setting, decision-making, and formulation of political strategies, but also supervision of policy planning, resource allocation, operations management, programme evaluation, and efforts at communication, argument, and persuasion'. According to Lynn, 'managers of

public policy’ operate under a variety of influences. He has observed, ‘public executives pursue their goals within three kinds of limits: those imposed by their external political environments; those imposed by their organisations; and those imposed by their own personalities and cognitive styles’. Rather than being technical experts, effective managers of public policy, in the view of Lynn:

- Establish understandable premises for their organisation’s objectives;
- Attain an intellectual grasp of strategically important issues; identify and focus attention on those activities that give meaning to the organisation’s employees;
- Remain alert to and exploit all opportunities, whether deliberately created or fortuitous (happening by chance), to further their purposes;
- Consciously employ the strong features of their personalities as instruments of leadership and influence; and
- Manage within the framework of an economy of personal resources to govern how much they attempt to accomplish and how they go about it.

As such, this approach is a significant departure from the Rationality model. Managers use any means to achieve their goals. They work in this way because their own positions are at stake. Public policy is, therefore, more ‘political’ than ‘public administration’. It is thus an effort to apply the methods of political science to policy areas (e.g. health, education, environment), but since it has concerns with processes inside the bureaucracy, it is more related to public administration.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Examine the major features of Lindblom’s Incrementalism.

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2. What are the basic propositions of Dror’s Normative Optimum model?

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3. Explain the nature of Political Process approach.

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4.9 CONCLUSION

A model/theory/approach used interchangeably in this Unit is merely an abstraction or representation of some aspects of the real world. It may be used by a researcher or a policy analyst to show its worth. The Unit attempted to simplify and clarify concepts in the study public policy. It offered explanations for public policy process. A model or theory models should suggest hypotheses about the causes and, consequences of public policy. It should identify not only significant aspects of public policy but also its irrelevant variables. Certainly, the usefulness of an approach lies in its ability to order and simplify political life so that we can understand the relationships that we find in the real world. In brief, the model should be able to communicate what is relevant about the worth of a public policy. This Unit explained all the major approaches to public policy in order to make you understand the complexities of policy process, as well as the benefits and limitations of each approach.

4.10 GLOSSARY

Black Box: It is model of systems analysis popularised by David Easton (1965). Black Box denotes the processes, whereby the processing of inputs takes place to produce outputs/outcomes.

Bounded Rationality: The concept appears in Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behaviour*. According to Simon, human behaviour is neither totally rational nor totally non-rational. It has its limits. Hence, decisions are never the 'best possible' outcomes in choice behaviour on the part of decision-makers, but are only solutions that 'satisfice'.

Meta Policy-Making: A meta policy is 'policy about policies', that is, decisions regarding who will make the policies, and 'how' as well as 'what' authority and responsibility would be prescribed at each stage.

Policy Sciences: It provides an integrated and comprehensive set of procedures or policy framework for addressing local, regional and national levels in ways that help to clarify and secure the common interest.

Synoptic Model: It is a comprehensive and rational planning effort framework in which top executives formulate organisational goals, oversee their implementation and measure outcome; adjusting and adapting to environmental context.

Welfare Economics: It is a branch of Economics, which uses microeconomic techniques to evaluate welfare at the economy-wide level. It includes all interventions by the government to improve social welfare.

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4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

David Easton gave the Black Box model of policy process, which included:

- Inputs, which are viewed as the physical, social, economic and political products of the environment.
- Demands, which arise from the public/interest groups and form part of the inputs.
- Environment, which is a condition or event defined as external to the boundaries of the political system. It comprises physical, social, economic and political variables in the polity.
- Supports which consist of rules, laws and customs that provide a basis for the existence of a political community and the authorities.
- The 'Black Box', or the 'conversion process' or 'withinputs' comprising structures, procedures and policymakers' psycho-social framework.
- Outputs that are the goods, services and symbols to public and other policymakers. These are the authoritative allocation of values of the political system.
- Feedback, which plays an important role in generating suitable environment for future policy. The concept of feedback indicates that public policies may have a modifying effect on the environment.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- In analysing the decision-making process, Vickers' framework emphasises the importance of understanding the way in which 'appreciation' constructs 'reality' and 'value' and sets the context, within which judgments are made about action in the light of the reality and value judgements.
- Vickers departs significantly from the notion that decision-making is about 'goal setting' or of evaluating decision-making in terms of how goals have been met.
- Vickers' methods involve four analytical contexts or dimensions: mental, institutional, situational and ecological.
- Vickers has prescribed certain suggestions for improving policy analysis.
- Vickers' approach is seen as being closer to the approaches of Lasswell and Lindblom than to other Systems models.
- Vickers' work *The Art of Judgement* (1965) still remains a seminal

Check Your Progress 2**1. Your answer should include the following points:**

- Groups have long been a focus of study as political activity.
- Policy makers are viewed as constantly responding to group pressures.
- Individuals in a group sharing common interests bond together formally or informally to pressurise the government for accepting their demands.
- Group theory begins with the proposition that interaction among groups is the main basis of politics. For the ordinary citizen, the pressure group is certainly an important channel of influence and power.
- For the most part, a group interest seeks to influence the policy decision of the government.
- Group theory has been applied to situations in which a policy or decision is made by a small group, which develops a strong commitment to a certain line of thought.
- The evidence provided by research in Group theory models is quite mixed.
- There is the general notion that groups can distort decision-making.
- Group theory purports to describe all political activities in terms of the group struggle and policymakers are viewed as constantly responding to demands of the influential groups.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Rational Choice theory is a family of theories rather than a single theory that has challenged orthodox accounts across a range of different contexts.
- It is best characterised as an approach to understanding the dynamics of public policy.
- The assumption behind rationality is that individuals in the policy process are rational.
- Individuals are able to establish a hierarchy of preferences and a particular consistency of preferences that (preferences) are taken to be both stable over time and to be given.
- Rational Choice builds its explanations of policy outcomes on the actions of individual actors who constitute social structures.
- The value of deductive reasoning in Rational Choice accounts lies in the fact that the explanation of political outcomes derives from motivational assumptions defined in another realm, that of the individual.
- There are many limitations of Rational Choice approach, namely difficulty in specification of goals, and difficulty in securing

optimisation.

- Policymakers are not motivated to make decisions on the basis of societal goals, but try instead to maximise their own rewards, such as power, status and money.
- Politicians usually are faced with the problem of searching for a feasible policy.
- There is difficulty in comparing conflicting benefits and costs.
- Simon has given a scientific decision-making process comprising of intelligence, design, choice and evaluating activities.
- Simon has proposed a new concept of a decision-making man, which he refers to as *Satisficing Man*.
- Simon rejects the concept of *Economic Man* and other traditional theories.
- According to Simon, human rationality is limited in many terms.
- Simon's definition of rationality provides little basis for distinguishing between the rational and non-rational behaviour.
- According to critics like Chris Argyris, Simon has not recognised the role of intuition, tradition and faith in decision-making.
- Simon's theory, as per the critics, uses satisficing to rationalise incompetence.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Charles Lindblom was not content with the Rational Choice model.
- Decision making suffers as we cannot adapt to people's limited problem-solving capability, constraints of time and intelligence, costliness of analysis, inability to limited satisfying evaluation techniques, bridging fact and value, need for strategic sequences of analysis and various forms wherein policy problems actually occur.
- Lindblom has attempted to deal with these problems of the Synoptic model by offering concepts of incrementalism and bargaining.
- The problem of uncertainty is addressed by introduction of simplifications in both bargaining of the incremental elements of Lindblom's approach and the problem of collective decision environment, in which individuals share power and have conflicting interests.
- Lindblom presented the 'Incremental model' of the policymaking process.
- Lindblom wrote that Disjointed Incrementalism should be seen as an instrument not for solving social problems, but merely for dealing with social problems.
- He wanted to show that rational decision-making was simply 'not

workable for complex policy questions’.

- He drew the distinction in terms of comprehensive (or root) rationality and what he regarded as the operative mode of decision-making as ‘rational’ activity: successive limited comparisons (or branch) decision-making.
- The ‘root’ approach as favoured by the policy analysts would have to start from ‘fundamentals anew each time. In contrast, the branch method of decision-making involves a process of ‘continually building out from the current situation, step-by-step and by small degrees’.
- Lindblom proposed that ‘successive limited comparison’ is both more relevant and more realistic in such condition of ‘bounded rationality’.
- Features of Incrementalism include succession of incremental changes, mutual adjustment, negotiation, and trial and error.
- Advocates of Incrementalism defend the muddling through process as more realistic, as being able to respond to the interests of many groups, as being able to respond to crisis, pressures and as not requiring the massive investments of time, money and effort that logical decisions require.
- Decisions to implement policy are usually made in small steps, incrementally, rather than through an all-encompassing rationality, which is not practically achievable.
- As a method of successive limited comparisons, the Incremental model would allow the decision-maker to easily revisit earlier decisions and correct them if necessary.
- Lindblom has argued that there are *three* main forms to Incremental Analysis: (i) Simple Incremental Analysis, (ii) Strategic Analysis and (iii) Disjointed Incrementalism.
- The most general criticism of his work is that Lindblom has presented sweeping generalisations, but does not support them adequately with empirical evidence.
- Dror has observed that Incrementalism justifies *status quo* and ignores the possibility of fundamental change.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

In place of Incremental and Rational models, Dror has offered an alternative. His model in main seeks to accept:

- Need for rationality.
- Need for introduction of management techniques for enhancing rationality of decision-making at low levels.
- Policy Sciences approach for dealing with complex problems requiring

decisions at the higher levels.

- Need to take account of values and irrational elements in decision-making.
- Dror's aim was to : i) increase the rational content of government; and ii) build into his model the 'extra-rational' dimensions of decision-making.
- Dror has called it 'Normative Optimism', which combines core elements of the 'Rational' model (such as the measurement of costs and benefits) with 'extra-rational' factors, which are excluded from the 'pure rationality' model.
- He has argued that the aim of analysis is to induce decision-makers to expand their frameworks to deal better with a complex world. Thus, in place of a purely rational model, Dror has offered a more complex model of some 18 stages under meta-policy, policy-making and post-policy making stages.
- The real strength of Dror's analysis is not to be seen in terms of the prescription dimension of his model, so much as in the framework it provides to analyse the policymaking process.
- He was opposed to Lindblom's Incrementalism position and advocated alternative paradigm of rational analysis.

3. Your answer should include the following points:

- A significant departure from the rationality model is the Political Process approach espoused in policymaking.
- This approach has been described by writers such as Laurence Lynn and Peter DeLeon.
- In this approach, public policymaking is viewed as a 'political process' instead of a 'technical process'.
- The approach emphasises the political interaction from which policy is derived. It sees public policy as the output of government.
- Lynn has argued that individuals in organisations function under a variety of influences.
- To understand policy-making, it is necessary to understand the behaviour of interactions among these structures: individuals holding particular positions, groups, organisations, the political system, and the wider society of which they are all a part.
- Instead of involving particular methodologies, policymaking in this approach is a matter of adapting to and learning to influence political and organisational environments. The policymaking is constrained by such factors as institutions, interest groups and even 'societal and cultural influences'.
- The focus in the political process approach is on understanding how

particular policies are formed, developed and work in practice.

- Lynn has argued that policymaking ‘encompasses not only goal setting, decision-making, and formulation of political strategies, but also supervision of policy planning, resource allocation, operations management, programme evaluation, and efforts at communication, argument, and persuasion.
- According to Lynn, ‘managers of public policy’ operate under a variety of influences.
- Rather than being technical experts, effective managers of public policy, in the view of Lynn: establish understandable premises for their organisation’s objectives; attain an intellectual grasp of strategically important issues; identify and focus attention on those activities that give meaning to the organisation’s employees; and so on.



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