***Class-notes prepared and uploaded by-Dr Adidur Rahman***

***Dept. of Pol. Science, HAAC***

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***Public Policy & Administration in India***

**Topic: Importance (Relevance) of Policy-Making in Public Administration:**

Policy formulation is one of the essential functions of government. The essence of modern Public Administration is policy formation. Without a sound policy, Public Administration cannot function smoothly. It is prior to every action and pre-requisite of all management. It is a planning for action and which provides framework for the accomplishment of an objective. Policies help the executive to keep his activities within the ‘prescribed framework of action’. **Paul H. Appleby** has rightly been stated that policy formation is the ‘essence’ and ‘heart’ of modern administration.

Here we will analyse the relevance and role of policy-making in the field of Public Administration under the following points:

**(1) Helps in attaining organizational goals:** Policy formation is necessary and prior to every action in every form of organisation. It is the policy which lays down the framework within which organizational goals are to be achieved. The objectives of an organisation which are often vague and general get a concrete form through the formation of policy. That is why policy formation is of utmost important in Public Administration.

**(2) Provides framework for actions:** According to Appleby the essence of Public Administration is policy-making. Similarly, Marshal Dimock asserted that public policy is consciously recognized rules of conduct that guide administrative decisions. The formation of policy is vital in the task of planning a course of action. In fact, policies supply the standard guides which helps the public administrators to chalk out plan and to act in the line with legal requirement. Besides, it tries to realize the derived objectives within a definite frame of time. Thus, policy helps the administrators to keep his activities within a prescribed framework of action.

**(3) Deals with basic issues:** Public policies are framed with an objective to deal with basic issues in administration. These issues may be simple and limited in nature and they may also be complex and numerous. Policies are not methods or procedures. Rather, public policies are formulated to deal with basic issues, basic to the working of the whole administrative machinery. Policy formation means to decision as to what shall be done and how and where. Hence, policies are the consciously acknowledged rules of conduct that guides administrative decisions.

**(4) Guidance for administrators:** In modern administration, public officials are engaged both in policy formation and their execution. The government is a mixture of administrators and politicians. The administrators lay down rules for the future, determine what the law is, what it means in terms of action, what the right of political parties are in respect to administrative transactions. Public administrators also participate in another way in making policy for the future. They formulate policy recommendation for legislators**.** Public administrators thus, increasingly have been playing a role in policy making even up to the extent of legislative behavior.

**(5) A dynamic and flexible instrument:** Public policies are dynamic and flexible instruments in the hands of public administrators. Public Administrators has to respond to a range of problems which are dynamic in nature. Policies are formulated in the context of changing goals, shifting environment and varying situations. In fact, policy formulation is a continuous obligation. The reformation of public policy in the light of experience is important towards its formation. This obviously shows the relevance of policy making in changing circumstances.

**(6) Collective effort in administration:** Public policies are not made in vacuum at all. That is to say those policy-makers are not free to formulate policies arbitrarily. While formulating policies, public administrators are bound to take into consideration a number of related factors. For instance, the policy should be in consonance of the provisions of the constitution and laws passed by the legislature. Moreover, a policy should also confirm to the prevailing social customs, traditions and environment. The policy of a particular government agency has to get clearance from other agencies. Sometimes, even international laws and world public opinion give a tilt to policy formation. The stress created by pressure groups which consistently at attempt to mould policies in their direction. Thus, the policy formulation in Public Administration is the result of cooperative effort of many to achieve certain goals.

**(7) Gaining knowledge and understanding societal problems:** The study of public policy and their analysis may have relevance both in academic and political. It has been proved that the study of the process of policy formulation helps in many ways in understanding the socio-economic, environmental, political processes and their implications for society. Since policies determines the future shape of the society. Scientific knowledge and empirical studies need to be built-up about policy making. **Yehezkel Dror** has been advocating for more social science application to public policy. According to him, “*policy science can be partly described as the discipline that searches for policy knowledge that seeks general policy issue knowledge and policy-making knowledge, and integrates them into a distinct study*”. Thus, factual knowledge about public policy formulating process and its results are a pre-requisite for dealing with societal problems.

**(8) Public Policy for administrative planning:** Public Administration particularly in development administration adequate emphasis is given on planning. Plans are not simply economic models. They constitute programmes and projects and their success depends upon administrative planning to be done by public officials. The administrative planning is definitely based on administrative policy. Hence, policies are important even for the purpose of formulating economic planning.

Besides the above mentioned points, the following points would also reveal the growing significance of policy-making in Public Administration:

1. Public policy is essential to achieving meaningful changes or reforms or improvements in government administration and its services and activities. It is also instrumental in bringing about socio-economic development in a country.
2. Public policy plays an important role in shaping the responses of the various fields of human endeavour - such as education, housing, welfare, healthcare, agriculture, defense, transportation, etc to public needs.
3. Public policy serves as a tool or instrument for identifying issues of national concern or problems, implementing the best course of action for resolving the problems and evaluating the impact of the action taken by the government to resolve the problems or issues.
4. It consists of political decisions for the implementation of specific programmes to attain the objectives of the nation. It is therefore important as it is concerned with the goals of a country, intending to create positive impacts.
5. Finally, through public policy, the government strives to advance the collective well-being of a society.

Thus, from the above discussion it becomes evident that policy plays a significant role in Public Administration in modern days. It is policy which sets the task for Public Administration. Public policies are as old as governments. Dr. Appleby has rightly stated that the essence of Public Administration is policy making. Policy provides the standard lines for every organisation in the administrative set up to achieve the objectives.

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